



School of Information Studies

For Immediate Release

April 14, 2009

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

UW-M School of Information Studies Statement of Support for the West Bend Library

In recent weeks, two citizens of West Bend, Wisconsin have petitioned the West Bend Community Memorial Library to remove gay-themed books from a section designated "Young Adults," arguing the books should be reclassified and placed in a restricted area requiring parental approval prior to being released to a minor. They further demand that the books be labeled with a warning about their content, arguing that they are obscene and pornographic.

The books in question include:

- "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky (MTV Books, a division of Simon & Schuster)
- "The Geography Club" by Brent Hartinger (HarperTeen, a division of HarperCollins)
- "Deal With It! a whole new approach to your body, brain and life as a gURL" by Esther Drill (Pocket, a division of Simon & Schuster)

The books are from major publishers, sold in general bookstores, and are available in public and high school libraries throughout the state.

Throughout the history of the American public library, special interest groups have attempted to exert a disproportionate degree of influence on the development of a community wide resource. Whatever the intentions of any of these groups, the public library is required to maintain a standard of intellectual integrity within a sometimes-volatile situation.

The public library was developed to be the anchor of free inquiry in our democracy. We believe that mission is still relevant today. Over 15,000 public library branches throughout the United States maintain access to quality materials collected and arranged according to national standards developed by thoughtful and committed information professionals. The administration and staff of the West Bend Community

Library are among those professionals and public scholars dedicated to principles of open access, inclusive collections, and community service. The education of these professionals is rigorous and expansive, demanding sophisticated skills in assessment, development and leadership; it ensures their preparedness to take the lead in developing and delivering information resources to their communities.

We, the faculty and teaching academic staff at the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, along with the SOIS Graduate Student Organization, commend the West Bend Community Memorial Library Board of Trustees, administration, and staff for their support of the principle of intellectual freedom in the face of pressure to abandon their professional and communal commitments.

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The School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee offers several degrees and programs including the Bachelor of Science in Information Resources, a Master of Library and Information Science (accredited by the American Library Association), a PhD in Information Studies, and Advanced Certifications. With a student body of over 800, SOIS strives to meet the demand for information professionals at all levels in such institutions as libraries, archives, corporations, government agencies, trade associations, schools and in higher education. Visit SOIS online at:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SOIS/>

SOIS, in collaboration with the Center for Information Policy Research and the Milwaukee Public Library, is hosting a conference on the "Ethics of Information Organization" on May 22-23, 2009. Details at:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SOIS/cipr/ioethics.html>

INFORMATION our focus
INTERNATIONAL our scope
INTERDISCIPLINARY our mindset

