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Griswold Memorial Library Director to Step Down in August to Pursue Doctoral Research on Library Services for Incarcerated Communities

Colrain, MA — Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Director of the Griswold Memorial Library (GML) since 2019, has announced her resignation, effective July 18th, 2025. Jordan-Makely will pursue a doctoral degree from Simmons University and has been selected as the Dean's Fellow for Data/Information Analysis. In addition to her PhD studies, Jordan-Makely has also accepted a part-time position as a Researcher with Knology, Ltd., a nonprofit social science research organization.

"It has been a privilege to serve the Town of Colrain and to be a steward of a library with such an incredible legacy. Certainly, it has been one of the best chapters of my life," said Jordan-Makely. "It is bittersweet to move on, but I am excited to continue and expand on my research regarding library services for people impacted by incarceration."

During her six-year tenure, GML launched innovative programs such as the Carol Purington Poetry Collective, William Apress Day, and the StoryWalk at Pine Hill Orchards, while also expanding outreach initiatives in the community. Jordan-Makely regularly took a "pop-up library" to the Colrain transfer station, and also provided service at the Franklin County Jail, alongside Sarah Hertel-Fernandez of Belding Memorial Library (Ashfield). These efforts were supported by grants from the American Library Association (ALA) and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

In 2024, the Griswold Memorial Library was honored with the National Medal for Museum and Library Services from the IMLS, the nation's highest honor for libraries. Jordan-Makely accepted the award on behalf of the library in Washington, D.C., bringing national recognition to Colrain and a \$10,000 cash prize, which the library has allocated towards a new, hand-carved sign.

Beyond programming and outreach, Jordan-Makely contributed to the library's long-term growth through strategic planning, governance updates, and a feasibility study to improve accessibility and preserve the historic 1908 library building.

"Chelsea brought heart, vision, and deep integrity to her role as Director," said Dago Driggs, co-chair of the Board of Trustees. "Her leadership helped brighten Griswold Memorial Library as a beacon of creativity and care—both locally and beyond. While we're sad to see her go, we're incredibly proud of her next chapter and confident the library will continue to grow in strength and purpose."

While serving as the Director of the Griswold Memorial Library, Jordan-Makely also worked as a consultant/owner of Renewed Libraries, LLC. She began researching library services to people impacted by incarceration in 2020. As such, she contributed to the ALA's Expanding Information Access Initiative, funded by the Mellon Foundation, and the Colorado State Library's "PRISM Project," funded by the IMLS. Jordan-Makely also served on the advisory group that helped to revise the ALA's Standards for Library Services for the Incarcerated or Detained, which were approved by the ALA Council in 2024. She has also served as the Co-Chair for Library Services to the Justice Involved, an ALA interest group, since 2021.

“Someone I love was incarcerated, and that motivated me to learn about what library services were available to people in jails and prisons,” Jordan-Makely said. “Most people who go to jail or prison will return to their communities, and we have a responsibility to ensure they have access to the information and services to be successful upon their re-entry. But even for those people who are away for life, they have a right to information, too.”

The Griswold Memorial Library’s mission is to provide tools, resources, and services to support the enjoyment of reading and the informational, educational, and communication needs of the public. The Board of Trustees has begun the search for a new director, with hopes of having the position filled by September 1st of this year. The job description is available on the town website, <https://colrain-ma.gov/>