

Angela Zimmermann, Executive Director Report

December 2021

Pandemic Update

Again, no significant change here in relation to operations. We receive many requests from the public for the play area and the Youth Services Department computers to be reopened and reinstated, but I'll wait a bit longer considering the vaccine has not been out that long for children ages 5-11. I'll also rely on the input from the YSD librarians and their comfort with reinstating these two services. All of the City employees and staff are at around an 80% vaccination rate.

Personnel / Operations

Based on statistics provided (see below under Darcy Mohr's report), I've allowed the Call Center to be brought down to only one employee considering it's significantly trending more towards people coming in-house.

Many of the staffing changes that took place this past month were forecasted out in my November report. In a nutshell, Nick Demske assumed the Deputy Director position on December 1st. Nick and I have been meeting quite often the couple of months to get him acclimated and up-to-speed on many projects and responsibilities which are under his job duties now.

We will be hiring several for the Public Services Assistant position (formerly Professional Substitute Librarian) and they will begin in January. As a reminder this position does not provide set hours and is used as a 'fill-in' for full-time librarians. Hours are not promised with this position.

Darcy Mohr, Head of Adult and Youth Services will be retiring on January 7th. A written letter of thanks will come from the Board and be signed by the Board President. A retirement gift will also be given to Darcy on behalf of the Library and the Board.

American Rescue Act Plans – ARPA Federal Infrastructure Funding

As mentioned at the November meeting, we were informed that the Department of Public Instruction had received 57 applications totaling \$6.6 million in requested funding. All categories were competitive for funding with only a total of \$750,000 available per category (or \$2,250,000 total). End of November and into December, grant winners were announced. For our two individual requests we made, we were not awarded any of the grant funding. Lakeshores Library System, who applied collaboratively and on behalf of all interested LLS member libraries, was also not awarded any grant funding.

We were, however, awarded grant funding through both of the other groups/consortiums we applied collaboratively with: the City Library Collective (inclusive of ten other libraries

throughout the state) and the WI Humanities Council (inclusive of three other libraries throughout the state).

For the WI Humanities project, Northern Waters Library System was the fiscal agent for the project (Spoooner is one of the other involved libraries) and the grant was submitted for \$60,000 towards the Library as a Center for Resiliency for Community Powered Initiative. The project is based on a decade of community-engaged public humanities work by architecture professor Arijit Sen of UWM, working with his students and community leaders in racially and ethnic diverse MKE neighborhoods that face a variety of challenges, and also now in the town of Merrill, where WH connected him with the local library at the library's request and where he has worked with a local citizen group to help them do some incredible community projects. WH is now developing the Community Powered pilot project to build on Arijit's past grassroots humanities-based work, with our library partners as the anchor institution in each community. Wisconsin Humanities will develop the Community Powered curriculum and materials, and train 4 young, full-time paid local Community Powered Coordinators and their library partners in techniques such as oral history collection, history harvests, and a variety of digital story collection/ storytelling approaches. And Racine Public Library being one of the collaborative libraries. We are very much in the beginning stages of this project and we currently have the job description for the Community Powered Coordinator, we are to review it and provide feedback to WH, and they'll run it through HR at UW System Administration.

Awarded grant amount: \$60,000

The City Library Collective project: As a reminder, the City Library Collective (CLC), was formed earlier this year, and brings together eleven libraries across the state that serve mid-sized communities of 30,000 to 100,000 (ok, Racine serves a bit more than this). All the CLC members are then working together to address common issues and use collective knowledge and experience to improve their organizations and services to their communities. We applied collaboratively with the City Library Collective towards the Library as a Center for Community Resiliency Supporting Community Crisis through Concepts of Whole Person Librarianship. The grant request was submitted for \$200,000. RPL submitted the application on behalf of the CLC and therefore will serve as the fiscal agent.

The project, will consolidate progress and carry forward efforts to promote the model of "whole person" library services, which informs policy and practice with relevant concepts, tools, and techniques from social work, in Wisconsin. Through combining highly collaborative activities with individual library pilot projects the goal of this grant is to aim to develop infrastructure for all libraries needed for "resiliency readiness," including community data gathering and analysis, staff training, and identifying and funding incubator projects at select libraries that position the library as community resiliency partners and serve as a model for other CLC partners. Since we've received the funding, team outcomes, deliverables, individual local projects, plans for whole person librarianship training across all interested of the 11 libraries, project management needs, etc. and all such conversations begin this week.

Awarded grant amount: \$143,783

Meetings

I attended the Wisconsin Library Association Conference in Green Bay from November 16th – 18th (I returned early due to the Board meeting on the 18th). Several sessions I attended, I was particularly excited about since they involved post-COVID library planning as well as how to use data to drive decision making within a public library. Many of this information was very helpful as we move forward with the 2nd floor renovation and needs assessment projects. SRLAAW (System and Resource Library Administrators Association of WI) was also held on Tuesday of that week and this was my first time meeting many of these colleagues in-person.

The architects have returned twice since the last Board meeting. Our discussions are very centered around functionality, shelving, locations of a variety of things (OPACs, holds location with the new staircase, overall patron seating, etc.) storage, etc. At the last meeting, they also brought their engineer onsite to discuss mechanical issues with the DPW. Next meetings will discuss final things like electrical locations, light fixtures, door functions, final stair details, furniture finishes, and the construction phasing diagram. There will be one more meeting in January, and then the project can go to bid.

Other meetings included the monthly Lakeshores and SHARE meetings (nothing too much to report out from here), the WI Resource Library Directors' meeting, discussions with the City about our collaboration into the community centers, the 125th anniversary core committee and committee meetings (I am sporadically in these), an all-staff meeting at the beginning of December, monthly meetings with the Mayor and City Administrator, weekly senior leadership meetings, and outside organization meetings with Higher Expectations, United Way, and TEMPO Racine. Leadership Team meetings have finally resumed again internally at RPL, since with all of the changes, the management team has entirely changed since I started a year ago.

I mentioned that as the Resource Library Director, I'm also on the Joint Merger Exploration Committee to explore whether and/or how to merge Lakeshores Library System and Arrowhead Library System. This potential merger would come into effect 2023. According to the state statutes, two library systems may merge if approved by the System Boards of Trustees and the County Boards of Supervisors of the participating counties. The Joint Merger Exploration Committee will be tasked with producing a formal recommendation to both systems' Board of Trustees and creating a roadmap of what must happen for a successful merger. The kickoff meeting for this committee is this Wednesday, December 15th.

Also, as mentioned last month, all the City Department Heads are going through Workforce Equity Training with the City Administrator and Payne & Frazier Consultants. We had our first half day of training, discussion, and goal-setting at the beginning of November. The departments were to refine their goals further and our next session will be an all-day session in

January. After goals are set, I'll bring those back to the Leadership Team to refine further and ultimately to the Library Board for approval.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library meet on Tuesday, December 14th this month so I don't have much to report out here since we haven't met yet. The Library and the 125th Anniversary Committee will be asking the Friends to sponsor several things in relation to the first 125th event, which will be held on Saturday, February 26th from 4:00-9:00 pm.

Various Projects

Just a *quick* update on various other projects going on which I haven't provided updates on lately:

Project	Anticipated Completion Date
New Website	<p><i>March/April 2022.</i> As mentioned in previous packets, this project has been a disappointment with the vendor originally chosen. They presented us with a 'completed' website but there were so many errors and I will not allow this to go live until it's 'perfect'. Incredible kudos to Shay, Head of Business Development, who is going through the delivered product with a fine tooth comb. They are doing an exceptional job.</p> <p>We will also be attempting to explore options and/or tweak and rebuild the Events calendar formatting ourselves, as SirsiDynix has not been able to fulfill our requirements for it yet.</p> <p>I am working with the City Attorney to be ready to argue both invoices (from the web developer and SirsiDynix) as most of this work, at this point, has been done in-house.</p>
1 st Book Bike	<p><i>February 2022.</i> This one was technically debuted during the Fall Literacy Festival but needs to be painted properly and updated with the new Library GO! logos. To debut again during Winterfest.</p>
2 nd Book Bike	<p>This is the one which was originally sponsored by the Rotary Club. We chose to go with Haley Tricycles (a small business in Pennsylvania) to build this bike. This project has been significantly delayed. For the past months, we've been requesting updates and have received none. We found out this past week this was because the owner's father was battling a severe form of cancer and passed away last week. We have received communication that they hope to be able to update all customers soon about the status of their projects.</p>
2 nd Mobile Library (Techmobile)	<p><i>July/August 2022 (hopefully).</i> LDV finally received a build-date from Ford for the chassis and that being mid-January. It will take about a month for LDV to build it and then it will go to the body company for a bit. Once they receive it back, LDV has stated it should go fairly quick yet but that's all TBD yet.</p>

Graphic Wrap for 2 nd Mobile Library (Techmobile)	<i>December 2022.</i> The graphic wrap has been designed (I believe it was shared in a previous Board packet), and the company is solely waiting on us to supply them with all of the Techmobile sponsors who sponsored \$2,500 or more to have their logo placed on the back of the vehicle. This should all be finalized by year's end.
Communications and Marketing Plan	<i>To begin in 1st quarter of 2022.</i> Rebuilding the RPL brand awareness and adopting a design-based engagement process.
Community Needs Assessment Project	<i>To begin in 1st quarter of 2022.</i> If anyone is the most keenly aware of how we lack in certain areas in regards to programming and services, it is me. Beginning in 2022, to guide us better and into the future, we will conduct a community needs assessment to assist with tailoring library services, outreach, programming, and partnerships.

Building

I mentioned last month that I have asked the architects to come back to us with solutions for the front doors. As I understand, there used to be awnings/windbreakers (ugly ones) on the front doors to assist with the intense weather the library sustains being so close to the lake, and I'm looking to get some sort of protection back on there as we are going to continue having problems with the front doors. I'm still waiting on information from the architects.

The library is decorated quite nicely for the holidays. Credit goes to several of the departments and staff for assisting with the holiday decorations. Also, on the 2nd floor, we've redone several of the book displays to appear more 'bookstore-ish'. We're obviously working with what we have as I'm not going to go out and buy new furniture when the 2nd floor renovation is so close to beginning.

Darcy Mohr, Head of Adult and Youth Services Report

***Note: Nick Demske assumed the Deputy Director position on December 1st, therefore Darcy as Head of Adult and Youth Services supplied the November report for this packet.*

Programming

The Library presented 33 programs in November, which had a total participation of 480 people. In-person programs had an average attendance of 12.5 people per program. Programs posted to Facebook averaged 68 views each and YouTube videos averaged 9.5 views each. Zoom programs had an average attendance of 7.4 participants.

November Programming Statistics

Program	# of Programs	Participants	Format
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1st Chapter Friday	3	23	YouTube
Adult Informational	1	6	In-person
Adult Informational	1	6	Zoom
Anime Club	1	1	In-person
Book Club	1	13	In-person
Craft for Children (Instructions)	1	12	YouTube
Craft for Children	1	20	Take and Make
Craft for Teens	1	15	Take and Make
Crafts for Teens	1	27	You Tube
Maker Monday	1	8	In-person
School Visits - Elementary	4	64	In-person, outreach
School Visits - Middle	6	60	Zoom
Storytime	3	46	In-person
Storytime	2	136	Facebook
Storytime	6	43	YouTube
Totals	33	480	

Patron Services

Staff answered 1,185 questions via phone and chat and 3,228 in-person. A total of 4,413 questions were answered across all methods of communication. 73% of the reference questions were asked in person, while 27% were received over the phone or via chat, which demonstrates that in-person services continue to rise.

November Reference and Computer Use Statistics

Total # of phone calls	1,061
Total # of questions via call center	1,155

Avg. # of calls per day	44
Avg. # of calls per hour	4.6
Total talk time	60 hrs 20 min
Avg. call length	3 min 25 sec
Total chats	30
Total chat messages	227
Avg. # of messages per chat	7.5
Total phone and chat questions	1,185
In-person reference questions	3,228
Total # of reference questions answered	4,413
Computer usage - total logins	701
Computer usage - total time	583 hrs
Computer usage - avg. time per login	50 min
Faxes	660
Scans	964

Materials Budget

As of December 2, 2021, 98.5% of the print materials budget, 81% of the non-print materials budget, and 95% of the total materials budget had been spent. All orders for print and non-print materials were submitted to the Technical Services Department by November 30. TSD staff are working on placing the final orders for the year.

Social Worker

Agencies met with:

Aurora Health Center Outreach Coordinators

Health Care Network

*Went to WLA Conference in Green Bay (11/16-11/19)

Hospitality Center

Higher Expectations, Racine County

City Hall, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships

Unite Us

Patron Interactions (drop-in or by appointment): 15

Patron demographics: *Not tracked consistently this month as there were interactions by phone, as well as repeat interactions with the same patrons.

Need/Concerns: Emotional Support (5), Housing (3), Employment (2), Mental Health (1), Applying for Benefits (3), COVID-19 (1), Rental Assistance (1),

Sensory Room:

- This month a lot of time went toward gathering resources and researching policies/procedures of other sensory rooms in libraries in the United States. A rough draft has been created for Policies and Procedures for the RPL Sensory Room.
- Organization and placement of equipment in the room; built bigger items, checked inventory and continuously making sure things in the room are functional.
- Researched peer-reviewed articles on sensory-related issues, along with benefits of having a Sensory Space. Hoping to include a select few of these resources on the new website.

Collections

The Adult Fiction and Genre Fiction collections are being heavily weeded. Items that have not been checked out for at least three years are evaluated and considered for removal from the collection.

Staff Activities

Staff participated in a total of 10 CE hours in November. Two staff members attended the Wisconsin Library Association Conference in Green Bay.

Christopher Tobias, Lead of Circulation and Technical Services

Circulation

RPL circulated a total of 34,371 in November of 2021. 30,845 items from Main and 3,526 items from the Bookmobile. October 2021 circulation was 35,473. As comparison to the year 2020, November circulation was: 24,447. November 2019 circulation was 48,378. Approximately 8,071 holds were placed and filled. 5,134 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 4,010 received for RPL patrons. 256 new library cards were issued during the month of November. 988 items were loaned out to patrons via our Home Delivery Service in the month of November.

- In November, Circulation Staff inducted 80,173 items through the automated material handler (AMH).

- Part-time Circulation Clerk position was posted with interviews expected to take place in December.

Technical Services

Ordering and processing:

In November TSD staff placed orders for 653 items and received 1258 previously ordered items. A total of 1521 items were added to the catalog.

Fiscal cycle rollover preparation in Workflows:

- Material order deadline for selectors have been set for December 4th with final orders being placed by TSD staff on December 13th.
- Our main material vendor Brodart will cease shipping and invoicing on December 17th.

Current Project Updates:

- Adult nonfiction call number updating is continuing. Sections remaining to complete include 600s, oversized and WI history.
- Stephanie is continuing spine label updates to adult audiobooks.
- TSD staff is continuing to assist librarians with the current large scale weeding project in the Adult Department.

Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Services and Innovation

Programming

The Digital Services and Innovation staff hosted 13 programs and outreaches in November. Below are some highlights.

Girls Who Code is in full swing. We have four clubs running this fall. There are three middle school clubs (Walden, Real, and Starbuck) and one elementary club. For the time being, the Middle School clubs are virtual. We are hosting them from the DSI office. Our partners at RUSD are in the classroom with the girls. We have a total of 40 girls participating in clubs this semester.



We are in-person at Fratt Elementary. After the first club, we received feedback from the School Librarian, who stated that she felt we reached girls who may not have been interested in STEAM before.

We received thank you notes from kids we visited at 21st Century Preparatory School and from Racine Montessori for Techtobor. These reinforce the importance of the outreach events that we do.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QRA4K4ykbiFDGTlzgwpkD0cUqAKF4ACU/view?usp=sharing>

Staffing

We have a new team member that joined the DSI staff on 11/15. Brianna Fuentes has exceptional digital art skills and speaks Spanish. Her skills will allow us to offer tech help and computer classes in Spanish. Brianna is also a skilled artist. She is helping out with the 125th anniversary by creating trading cards to celebrate Racine's history. Brianna also produces videos and adds animation to them. Please be sure to check out the video she made for our elementary school Girls Who Code Club. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qY6Yhe6MCQrg9-3EeasiyDsZ9wUbPMMa/view?usp=sharing>

We have also replaced one of our Innovators in Residence Interns. Jackson Teply left in October because basketball was starting at school. We have selected Trillian Hunt to replace him. She is in the IT Academy at Case High School.

One-on-one Tech Help

Digital Services and Innovation staff were able to help 23 individuals with their tech questions. It's about 11.5 hours dedicated to this specific task.

Staff Tech Support

The DSI Staff handled 26 help desk tickets submitted by staff. Issues ranged from RFID Pads not working to printer settings issues.

Research

- Melissa met with Wonder Workshop rep Tim Tomaso for a demo for Wonder Workshop class connect to see how this service could help with Tech classes in the future.
- The DSI staff is researching alternatives to SirsiDynix's cash management system, looking for something a bit more intuitive than the current system.

Continuing Education

- Brianna, Terrence, and Melissa learned the Dash and Dot robots and their version of Blockly through various online tutorials. These are what we are using at Fratt for Girls Who Code.
- Brianna completed the Libby training. She is also learning Scratch through various tutorials.

Partnerships

- Angie and I continue to have conversations with the City MIS Department and Park and Recs Department to create a partnership to help with digital literacy in the City. We will provide more information as the project moves forward.

- DSI staff reached out to CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) to see if they could help us with Cybersecurity training for staff. Also, they can help us figure out how vulnerable our network is. We have submitted the paperwork and are waiting to hear back from them.

Shay King, Head of Business Development

Inside the library

Filling the 2022 Techmobile

More than \$43,000 of our \$55,000 goal has been pledged to fill the Techmobile's collection. Our #GivingTuesday ask centered around this campaign, asking for donations dedicated to loved ones, who will each have their name placed in one of the Techmobile's books. In addition, the Dec. 7 Noodles & Co. fundraiser is designated to support the Techmobile collection. The Noodles & Co. fundraiser ran from 4 to 8, donating 25 percent of the evening's sales to the library. A total will be available in the coming days.

Mural Update

The library's new mural is located behind the circulation desks. This is Racine's third installment of ArtRoot's "Poems on Walls" series. The art is by Dee Hutch, and the poetry is by Dan Nielsen. Photographer René Amado was present throughout the painting process to capture the mural's emergence.

Diana Panuncial, one of the library's media advocates, interviewed the creators and facilitators of the mural for an [article in the Journal Times](#).



125th Anniversary

The Outreach and Marketing Assistant, Julia has completed the logo for the 125th Anniversary:



Four shirt/tote bag designs to sell at anniversary activities, a bookmark of the year's activities, a bookmark with bestselling books over the last 125 years, a special-edition anniversary library card and more are in the works. Planning is in full swing for the first anniversary activity, the Winter Fest on Feb. 26, 4 to 9 p.m. If interested in supporting the evening by volunteering, please email Shay King (shay.king@racinelibrary.info).

Outside the library

On Nov. 13, the Bookmobile participated in Racine's [holiday parade](#).

Press highlights

Since the last report, the library has been referenced in the media [at least 30 times](#) — equal to its previous number of monthly placements. Ashley Cedeño's hire continued to circulate over the last month, primarily in CBS58. [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#) The Racine Public Library was [referenced in the Chicago Tribune](#) as the place a columnist was introduced to Stephen Sondheim's work. The library continues to get routine placement almost daily in Patch and almost weekly in the Journal Times and Racine County Eye.

Owned media highlights

Website

After the inclusion of editing for SEO and mobile responsiveness into the progress tracker, the new website's pre-launch audit stands at 28%. The majority of quick updates (URL and webpage title changes, alt text for all 600+ images, tagging blogs, etc.) are complete. Progress will proceed slowly over the next several weeks as the audit focuses on reworking incomplete and outdated content. The current rough projection is that the site will be complete by the end of February, but it's challenging to make an exact estimate on how long it will take to update each page's content.

The first two batches of edits for DesignsTouch — any formatting changes, etc. that require more extensive knowledge of coding or WordPress — have been submitted. These edits are partially completed and pending further details from the library team.

Social Media

Facebook

Over the last month, the post with the highest reach and engagement — nearly two times the reach of the next highest post — was the [book sale preview post](#). The two posts with the next highest reach were the [study room promotion](#) and [popcorn machine post](#). The second and third most engaging posts were a [celebration of Leah's customer service](#) and the [mural's progress photos](#). Based on the last few business development reports, this indicates a tendency of our Facebook audience to prefer posts that show direct visuals of the library's activities and services or highlight community members.

Instagram

Followers increased faster since Nov. 9 than during the previous month, rising to a total of 915. Our most reached and most interacted posts were [Leah's shout-out](#), a [photo of Nick Demske and Dee Hutch](#) planning the new mural and the [mural progress photos](#). On Instagram, the posts that gain the most attention tend to be specifically the ones focused on community members.