

Angela Zimmermann, Executive Director Report

February 2022

Pandemic Update

There has not been much change in this area since the last Board meeting. I have most programs/events remaining virtual until the end of February (excluding Winterfest which will be held outside in a heated tent with masks required, as well as various computer classes with limited numbers). Beginning in March, I have allowed the staff to resume planning in-person programs with all safety precautions in place.

With the mask ordinance still in effect, we have noticed lately an uptick again in patrons confronting us about the ordinance. We continue to, of course, uphold it and inform them that it is a citywide mask ordinance and we need to be below a certain metric for the City to even consider lifting it. Unfortunately, many of the times security does have to get involved.

Overall, the library building continues to be a bit slow. I'm hoping if we continue to see a downward trend with COVID, continue to keep all safety precautions in place, and begin to host programs and events again in-person, we'll hopefully see more people come through our doors.

Personnel / Operations

There have been quite a few HR dealings/issues in the past month or so which have taken a lot of my time, as well as Deputy Director Nick's time. We've been working with HR through various ones and taking their guidance/recommendations.

Business Manager, Daniel Schultz retires on Thursday, February 24th. Interviews for his position began last week and while I'm hopeful I'll have someone in the position in the coming month, I'm also very passionate about finding the right person for this position, one who will also fit in well with our current Leadership Team, and understand the importance and have a passion for equity, diversity, inclusion and community service.

American Rescue Act Plans – ARPA Federal Infrastructure Funding

I've updated the Board thoroughly in past packets about the two collaborative groups we are part of which have received ARPA funding: 1) the City Library Collective and the Library as a Center for Community Resiliency and 2) through the WI Humanities Council and that project is specifically focused around oral history, digital storytelling and history harvests. Planning for both projects is coming along nicely and are near ready to be publicly announced. (In the correspondence section, you'll notice I included an article from Oshkosh and the Director of the Oshkosh Public Library (Jeff Gilderson-Duwe) was interviewed and mentioned the City Library Collective.) I can certainly speak to both of these ARPA initiatives further at the Board meeting.

Lakeshores Library System / SHARE Updates

The monthly system merger meeting for Lakeshores and Arrowhead library systems with WiLS facilitating, was held this past week. All participants were tasked with brainstorming all potential conflicts/issues/concerns when considering a system merger.

The SHARE consortium will be moving forward with a new mobile app - Blue Cloud Mobile app from SirsiDynix for the SHARE catalog and the system is currently going through the implementation and back-end stages but this will be a fully-customized new app with marketing of our third-party resources (databases, events, etc.), social media URLs, and patron self-service features (i.e. checking out your own items from your phone). We're looking at mid to end of April as an implementation timeline for the new app. (Our current app, BookMyne, will be cutoff at the end of May.)

The system is also working to set-up the Hoopla database for member libraries which is VERY exciting. Hoopla is a streaming platform for audiobooks, comics, e-books, movies, music, and TV, and is frequently requested by our patrons. The Hoopla collection will use the "Instant Borrowers" content model (no waitlist - so a different model from OverDrive). One distinct benefit then is that Hoopla provides a bit of supplemental coverage to OverDrive/Libby. Implementation timeline for Hoopla will be end of March/beginning of April.

2nd Floor Renovation

There isn't too much to update here since the last Board meeting, except that the bid was out for advertisement twice in the newspaper (February 4th and 11th). This Thursday and next week, any interested contractors are invited to come to RPL for a walkthrough with the architects and myself.

Bids are due then on March 2nd. The plan is to go before Public Works on March 8th and Common Council on March 19th.

Friends of the Library and the Racine Public Library Foundation

The Friends of the Library met this past week and pledged \$2,000 in funds towards the Books for Babies program (as they always do support this program), confirmed their presence with a book sale at the upcoming Winterfest, and reviewed the provided wish list from the library for the 2022 year.

The Foundation also met this past week and discussed various important issues such as the current vacancies and the importance of finding members with fundraising/capital campaign experience, the portion/percentage of the Foundation appeal letter and what is given to the Friends (capped at \$3,000), providing an update on the funds received during the appeal letter and for the techmobile (\$38,254.24 with \$27,302.38 restricted for funding the techmobile; \$50,677 has been raised in total for the equipment for the techmobile), and the capability/availability of both the Foundation and the staff to lead a potential matching

campaign for the 2nd floor renovation (a generous donation has been pledged for the 2nd floor renovation but with the donor desiring that a matching campaign be done).

Various Projects

Currently no further updates on the book bikes nor any updates for the 2nd mobile library/techmobile. The graphic wrap is completed though for the 2nd mobile library/techmobile and has been sent to LDV.

The ‘Battle of the Books’ books finally arrived and will be sent out/picked up by the schools. SC Johnson generously donated again this year to our Battle of the Books program. Unfortunately, though, due to COVID, it does continue to look a bit different but Youth Services Librarian, Ali Michalek has done a great job of communicating and implementing everything with the schools.

The new YSD shades (as approved by the Board) have been installed. This was a pretty big deal so I have to extend a very grateful thanks again to the Board for approving this. The YSD area looks so much more welcoming!

Various Meetings

Other various meetings, outside of the usual weekly ones, have included meeting with a developer, Lee Jamarillo and the County Executive, Jonathan Delagrave about a potential apartment/luxury condo site the developer is building in Mt. Pleasant of which he’d like to include a library as part of the community. These talks are very much not even yet at ‘ground zero’ but it is important the library is at the table. All stakeholders would eventually have to be included (Village of Mt. Pleasant, Lakeshores Library System, etc.) if this truly does start to gain momentum. Statutorily, we can’t necessarily just set-up a branch of RPL in another municipality, so the Village of Mt. Pleasant would have to be involved. This also, would of course, not be to RPL’s favor if any of the surrounding municipalities did indeed decide to invest in their own library, as it would affect our funding since we service those TNRs (True Non-Residents, or, people who live in a municipality without a library). Additionally, the Village of Sturtevant and their Board would like me to either present and/or meet with one of the trustees and the Village President. I’m definitely willing to meet with the other municipalities we service and discuss what could be and how RPL could potentially play a larger role in the areas of the county we serve without libraries.

Further meetings (again outside of the usual monthly meetings) included conducting public library trustee orientation with Damian Evans, potential donor meetings, Department of Workforce Development about a forthcoming partnership, RUSD Family Empowerment meeting about upcoming collaborations, meetings with a few people interested in becoming public library trustees, and a TEMPO professional women’s network luncheon.

Nick Demske, Deputy Director

The Library presented 5 programs in January, which had a total participation of 53 people (this number does not include all virtual storytimes and book readings done by the Youth Services Department nor all of the programs led by the Digital Services and Innovation team). In-person programs had an average attendance of 14 people per program. Virtual programs had an average of 5 people per program. Many programs across all departments were planned for January but due to COVID and everything switching to virtual, it has naturally affected our numbers.

January Programming Statistics

Programs	# of Program	Participants	Format
Scratch Outreach to Racine Montessori	1	17	In-person
Book Discussion	1	9	Live virtual
Outreach to Racine Montessori	1	19	In-person
Senior Outreach (Marian Housing)	1	7	In-person
English Reading Hour	1	1	Live virtual
Totals	5	53	

Patron Services

Staff answered 1259 questions via phone and chat and 3434 in person. A total of 4693 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.

January Reference and Computer Use Statistics

Total # of phone calls	1198
Total # of questions via call center	1008
Avg. # of calls per day	49.9
Avg. # of calls per hour	5.35
Total talk time	4199 minutes 28 seconds
Avg. call length	3 min 30 seconds
Total chats	61
Total chat messages	319
Avg. # of messages per chat	5.23

Total phone and chat questions	1259
In-person reference questions	3434
Total # of reference questions answered	4693
Computer usage - total logins	669 sessions
Computer usage - total time	498 hours 43 seconds total time
Computer usage - avg. time per login	44.728 minutes per session.
Faxes	316
Scans	751

Social Worker

Agencies met with:

- Holly White, Project Coordinator- Racine County, Professional Services Group, Inc
- VITA; Lori Riffer and Hunter Wagner- met with them to discuss their services, and on a separate occasion they came to the library to scope out space and determine dates and times for VITA services at the library

Patron Interactions (drop-in or by appointment): January, 24

September: 6

October: 15

November: 15

December: 19

Need/Concerns: Emotional support (2), Housing(13), Employment(1), Applying for Benefits/Financial Support(7), General Concerns (1)

Sensory Room Updates:

- Continued finalizing last pieces of the Sensory Room to prepare for opening. Grand opening scheduled for 2/7/22.
- Conducted Sensory Room walkthroughs with staff members to ensure all staff is educated on use of all equipment in the Sensory Room.

Misc.:

- Continuing to meet with Library Social Workers around the country to discuss best practices around the work that we do
 - Topics include: documentation of patron interactions, resources in the community, building relationships and programming ideas.
- Positive Patron Interaction: There is a patron who is deaf who I've met with on multiple occasions, mostly for employment assistance. After a few interactions, I offered to connect him to an agency that specializes in assisting disabled people obtain jobs. This patron rejected this offer and expressed to me that I have helped him more in the last few weeks than any agency has helped him in years. Building a relationship with this

patron over the last few months has been such a positive experience for me, and it is very heartwarming to know that he feels the same way!

Circulation Report of January Activities 2022

RPL circulated a total of 34,559 in January of 2022. 30,954 items from Main and 3,605 items from the Bookmobile. December 2021 circulation was 30,341. Approximately 10,269 holds were placed and filled. 5,483 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 4,483 received for RPL patrons. 229 new library cards were issued during the month of January. 1,465 items were loaned out to patrons via our Home Delivery Service in the month of January.

- In January circulation staff inducted 79224 items through the automated material handler (AMH).
- Kenneth Michur began work on January 10th as our new part time Circulation Clerk
- Outreach deliveries were postponed during January due to covid restrictions.
- Circulation began a project to both review messages added to patron accounts (to remove or update as needed) and to update municipal codes.
- With many circulation staff out sick in January it was appreciated by all in circulation the help we received from Adult, Youth and Technical Services in maintaining essential circulation services.

Technical Services Report of January Activities 2022

Ordering and Processing:

In January TSD staff placed orders for 1535 items and received 271 previously ordered items. A total of 721 items were added to the catalog.

Beyond Books Collection added:

- 12 new BBC items were added in January. Items include:
 - Sewing machine
 - Cricut easypress mini
 - Cricut explore air 2
 - Knitting needles set
 - Loom knitting set
 - Wooden weaving loom
 - 6 hot glue guns

Fiscal cycle roll over all was completed and fund accounts have been updated. Materials ordering restarted on January 12th.

Changes to material processing:

- Based on numbers from 2021 we can project an approximate yearly savings of \$6800 if we move RFID tagging in house and \$5500 if we eliminate Brodarts laminated covers on soft cover books.

- Starting in mid-February TSD staff will begin RFID tagging all items in house and will eliminate the use of Brodarts laminate for soft cover books.

Current Project Updates:

- Adult nonfiction call number project has been primarily completed. Items being returned along with a few small groups of books remain. Dawn is still doing the recent returns.
- Stephanie is continuing spine label updates to adult audiobooks.
- Stephanie is moving along with the Beyond Books Collection project.
- TSD staff is continuing to assist librarians with the current large scale weeding project in the Adult Department.
- RPL is developing a Seed Catalog. We are working in conjunction with UW Extension and Master Gardeners.
 - Dawn Seeger, who is serving as lead on this project, had a ZOOM meeting (with Nick, Michael and Amy) and the program will go LIVE March 31. They are still deciding who will restock - supply etc. A trip to DP Wigley is planned. Dawn continues to separate and label and bag seeds.

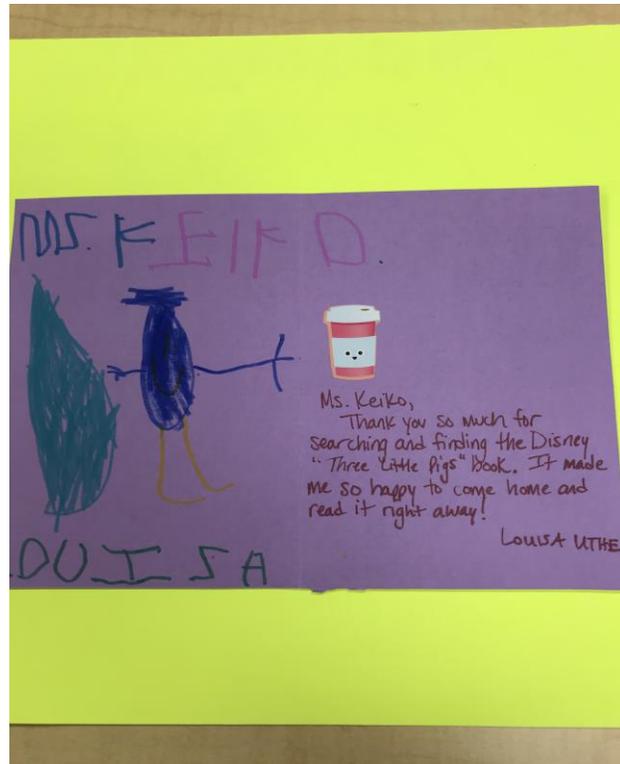
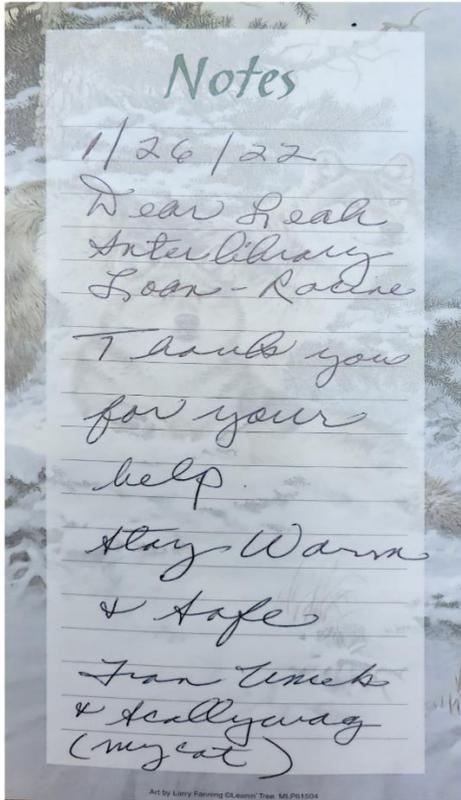
Staff Activities and Patron Interactions

Four staff members reported participating in a total of 12.5 hours of Continuing Education opportunities in January.

One staff member who is continuing their education outside of work hours, for their own personal benefit, is seeing it benefit the community we serve as well. [Jessie Carpiaux](#). Last month she was able to help some patrons in Spanish with technology issues in person and also has been able to assist others in Spanish over the phone. The RPL helped make it possible for her to travel and study abroad a few months ago now. Regarding that experience, she said “Having been able to take even a short time off of work to concentrate on getting myself closer to my goal [of being fluent in Spanish] has helped me break a learning plateau and I just wanted to mention that I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do so.” And now we can be grateful that she is bringing those skills she developed back to help our community.

We regularly receive positive feedback from patrons regarding our staff and services and we’re so grateful when people go out of their way to acknowledge them. I received a voicemail on my phone near the month’s end praising and thanking the library for hiring Ashley, our social worker, and the patron said Ashley has been an immense help to her.

We also sometimes receive written thank yous. Two from January are included below--one which was given to Leah in interlibrary loan (from a patron and her dog, Scallywag) and the other which was made collaboratively by a mother and 3-year-old daughter for Miss Keiko for finding the book they wanted.



Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Services and Innovation

Programming

We had many programs scheduled in January. Attendance has been low. Weather and pandemic concerns seem to be an issue. We held 3 outreaches to Racine Montessori. We taught Scratch, Cubelets, and Dash robotics. Girls Who Code was paused until COVID cases started to drop in the schools. They are starting back up in February.

One-on-one Tech Help

January was busy for tech help. This isn't unusual. It's right after the holidays and people get new tech that they want to learn how to use. The Digital Services and Innovation staff provided 44 appointments this month to patrons. It's approximately 22 hours of staff time devoted to this task.

Staff Tech Support

Digital Services and Innovation Staff helped with 9 staff support requests.

Continuing Education

- Terrence completed IT Security Foundations: Network Security Course on Linked-In Learning
- Brianna took the the How to Train Your Community Libby given by OverDrive

Partnerships

- Digital Services staff helped at the Adult Services desk. Terrence is working Wednesday evenings and Brianna is working Fridays. Melissa filled in a few times where it was needed in January.

Shay King, Head of Business Development

Inside the library

125th Anniversary

Winterfest

After initial talks of moving the Winterfest to a virtual format, the anniversary team has officially planned to hold the Winterfest outdoors in the library circle. The updated time will be Feb. 26, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event takes place under a heated, open-air tent that will be monitored for capacity and COVID-19 safety measures. Activities will include adult and children's stories by our librarians, a Badger Talk from the University of Wisconsin's Professor Klaus Anderson on hygge, a book sale by the Friends of the Racine Public Library, and food and crafts for sale from local vendors. Free samples of sweet potato and poblano chili, hot chocolate, popcorn and s'mores will be available. The Winterfest is also a stop on Downtown Racine Corporation's chili and ice sculpture walk; an ice sculpture will be carved beside the library, and participants will have to stop by the library to complete their scavenger hunts.

Trivia Night

The trivia competition originally planned as an addition to an indoor Winterfest has been broken out into a distinct fundraising event on March 26, 7 to 9 p.m. [Tickets are \\$30 a person or \\$200 for a table of eight](#) and include a charcuterie meal box and one beer or wine ticket. The competition will be facilitated by American Pub Quiz, thanks to a sponsorship from the Friends of the Racine Public Library, and catered by Captain Mike's. Also on the menu is a custom anniversary brew for the library's 125th anniversary, crafted by Rustic Brewing Company.

General

[One of the library's four anniversary shirt designs](#) is complete, and another is undergoing final adjustments. Once complete, the library will order 200 to sell and 60~ for an all-staff anniversary photo.

A starting batch of 200 [anniversary activity bookmarks](#) are in processing to print professionally, with more to come. The bookmarks will be available on book displays, handed out in circulations and distributed at community events.

Outside the library

Techmobile Fundraising

The Techmobile fundraiser is at \$54,000 pledged towards its goal of \$55,000 for interior technology and materials. The most recent donations include \$500 from the Alpha Delta Kappa Tau Chapter, \$4,000 from Carla and Jim Wilks, and \$2,500 from the Friends of the Racine Public Library.

Spanish-Speaking Audience Strategy

The outreach and marketing assistant, head of business development and digital services and innovation assistant met to set in motion the Racine Public Library's marketing strategy for Spanish-speaking populations. While this effort is still being finalized, it would include guidance on when to translate marketing materials, what locations to best connect with our Spanish-speaking populations and what services and programs would be most supportive and inclusive.

Press highlights

Since the Jan. 13 report (previous Dec. 13), the library has been referenced in the media [at least 32 times](#). Placements are up 28% from the previous report as announcements about the anniversary, Winterfest and the sensory room circulate in addition to routine programming and staffing updates.

Upcoming appearances include the executive director and social worker's appearance on the American Bar Association's Gavel Talks Podcast to discuss social work in libraries, and the outreach and marketing assistant's Feb. 23, 7:30 a.m. appearance on WMLW to promote the Winterfest and anniversary.

Highlighted articles:

- [Racine Public Library Hosts Winterfest, Celebrates 125th Anniversary](#)
- [Watch now | See, touch, hear, play: Racine Public Library debuts its new sensory room](#)

Owned media highlights

Social Media

Facebook

Facebook followers continued to increase slowly but steadily over the last month. **Post reach was up 24%, and post engagement was up 83%.** Reach was highest on Feb. 2, most likely due to the popularity of the previous day's [post about VITA coming to the library](#). Engagement, however, was highest on Jan. 26, when 59 people clicked on a [post about box car craft kits in youth services](#). And the posts with the highest individual numbers of interactions were the [sensory room video collage](#) and a shared post about one of the people behind Spiderman's mask: [a Black woman and librarian](#).

Instagram

Our activity has leapt since early winter; **accounts reached are up 75%, accounts engaged are up 156%, and total followers have increased by 1.5%**. Top posts for the month all included a video and/or photography component, with the highest being the [sensory room video collage](#).

TikTok strategy

The outreach and marketing assistant worked with the digital services and innovation assistant to publish a [TikTok of special things and spaces from around the library](#). **This ended up being our most successful TikTok to date, gaining 80+ likes and 900+ views.** This is the first of what will become a weekly TikTok video, in a growing effort to supplement promotional marketing with increasing amounts of educational, entertaining and thought-provoking content.