

Angela Zimmermann, Executive Director Report

March 2021

Pandemic Response

Beginning March 1st, we streamlined our curbside pickup hours, internet access hours, and call center hours to all coincide. We're currently functioning 9:00 am – 6:00 pm Mondays through Thursdays, and 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Fridays and Saturdays. It's been well-received by patrons. We'll return to our normal hours once we're able to reopen.

We received notification from the City on March 9th that staff were eligible through the City's Health Department to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. A good portion of the staff has already received their first shot either through the City or through Kenosha County Health Department. No word on a phased reopening yet though for the library, as of this writing.

2nd Floor Renovation

The architects from Product Architecture & Design came on Tuesday, March 9th for a meeting with myself and the Department Heads to discuss the vision for the 2nd floor. They will be working on getting us a proposal soon.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library met last on Tuesday, March 9th and they approved the funds to be used for the Books for Babies Program and for funds to go towards an annual zoo membership with the Racine County Zoo. This zoo membership would circulate like any other item and be part of our nontraditional collection. The Friends of the Library have also spruced up their membership brochure which is currently being included in all curbside pickup bags for patrons. I also discussed with the Friends ways in which we could start bringing them in some revenue by having book carts and book bundles for sale in the lobby.

Staff Training/Meetings

We'll be holding two all-staff virtual meetings in March with guest speakers at both: *March 19th*, we'll be joined by Dasheika Kidd, the Racine Financial Empowerment Center Program Manager. Racine's Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) offers one-on-one professional financial counseling as a free public service. Services are available to all residents regardless of income. As you are aware the library partners with FEC to bring in referrals for those that may be in need of this service. Dasheika will be joining us to provide the staff with further training to get everyone familiar enough and aware with the program to refer library patrons.

And on *March 26th*, we'll be joined by Carli Spina, the Head of Research & Instructional Services and Associate Professor in the Gladys Marcus Library, Fashion Institute of Technology in NY.

She's going to be speaking to us on dealing with patron conflicts in remote and socially distant environments.

As an FYI, the entire staff has completed a total of 2,243 continuing education hours since the building shutdown last March.

We also continue to train all staff to learn how to respond to basic reference and circulation inquiries. All staff should be able to and will be able to answer these questions to minimize 'ping-ponging' patrons and increasing the customer service experience exponentially.

Meetings

Monthly marketing meetings have begun between myself, Darcy Mohr (Head of Adult and Youth Services), Melissa Donaldson (Digital Services and Innovation Coordinator), and Julia Heiser (PR & Marketing Assistant) to facilitate communication and ensure we're making progress towards goals of creating a cohesive marketing and communications plan. The two items on the agenda for action will immensely assist in this area.

Other organizations within the community of which I've connected with or presented before since the last Board meeting include but are not limited to: Higher Expectations, United Way of Racine County, Rotary Club, Park High School, NHS and Key Clubs, Open Hearts and Minds to End Racism, Habitat for Humanity, Racine Interfaith Coalition, and Downtown Racine Main Street Committee.

Personnel

Anne Callaghan, Youth Services Librarian will be retiring at the end of March. She has served at the library for 26 years. As Darcy Mohr has stated: "Anne Callaghan was an integral part of the Youth Services team for 25 years. Anne's lasting legacy was the development of the Battle of the Books program, which has been more successful than any of us could have imagined. Anne was creative and innovative when developing services and programs for youth and their families, and she touched countless lives through her service. Anne could always be relied on to volunteer for extra projects and to help out her coworkers whenever needed. Anne is going to be missed by myself, her colleagues, and community members."

A letter will be written on behalf of the Board, the Mayor, and a gift will be given in recognition.

RPL Foundation

As was reported at the last Board meeting and the funding requests which were fulfilled by the Foundation, all those purchases have been made and the items are in-house. The 20 WiFi hotspots are in circulation and the equipment for the future MakerSpace is in the hands of the Tech Team to become acquainted with it.

Darcy Mohr, Head of Adult and Youth Services

Programming

The Library presented 23 programs in February, which had a total participation of 858 people. Facebook continues to be the most popular platform for the Library's online programs. The Literary Feud event and Black History Month Read-In were highlights of the month.

February 2021 Programming			
Program	# of Programs	Participants	Format
1st Chapter Friday	4	23	YouTube
3D Prints	1	4	Take and Make
Black History Month Read-In	1	65	Facebook
Book Club	1	9	Zoom
Craft	1	17	Take and Make
Genealogy Club	1	12	Zoom
Phone a Story	1	3	Phone
Literary Feud	1	24	Zoom
Storytime	8	94	YouTube
Storytime	4	607	Facebook
Totals	23	858	

Patron Services

How to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine and where to get help filing taxes were two frequent asked questions in February. Community members who lack connectivity or digital literacy skills turn to the Library to help with issues that require Internet access. The fact that VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) is requiring all tax documents to be submitted virtually this year, has made this process next to impossible for some people. Our staff members have worked diligently to provide the needed assistance, in some cases working one-on-one with individuals for over an hour.

Staff answered 1891 calls, 85 chats, and a total of 3605 questions during the month.

Total # of phone calls	1891
Avg. # of calls per day	78.8
Avg. # of calls per hour	8.75

Total talk time	6784 minutes
Avg. call length	3 min. 36 sec.
Total chats	85
Avg. # of chats per day	4.25
Total chat messages	720
Avg. # of messages per chat	8.47
Total # of reference questions answered	3605
Computer users	140
Black and white prints	2581
Color prints	86

Collections

The Juvenile Non-Fiction section got some sprucing up in February. While Anne Callaghan (YS Librarian) weeded the collection, Ali Michalek (YS Librarian) moved the titles geared to K-2nd grade from the Non-Fiction section into the Beginning Readers area.

Rebecca Leannah (Adult Reference and Local History Librarian) researched vendors of Graphic Novel eBooks. The product ComicsPlus was selected, and will be available to the public on April 1. This will give our patrons unlimited, simultaneous use access to thousands of digital Graphic Novels. Overdrive has a relatively small collection of Graphic Novels, so this product will provide greater access to our patrons.

The Library added WiFi hotspots back into the collection. Additionally, four Rokus have been purchased and will be available for checkout soon.

Staff Activities

Adult and Youth Services staff members participated in a combined total of 103 hours of continuing education in February. This includes webinars, online classes, workshops, and podcasts. That is an average of 7 hours of continuing education per staff member.

The Tech Team worked with Angela to identify potential vendors for a redesign of the Library's website.

Ali Michalek and Rebecca Leannah organized the new Book Bundles service, which started on March 1st. Patrons can come to curbside pick-up and check out pre-selected titles from a variety of genres.

Nick attended the Library Legislative Day opening session (virtually) where he lobbied three state representatives and two state senators for increased Library funding.

The Tech Team developed training on working in the Call Center in order to cross-train staff from other departments on providing this service.

Staying connected with the community

Rebecca Leannah is working with a local historian on documenting the history of the Jewish Community in Racine.

Carrie Richmond had a very rewarding interaction with a patron who needed assistance downloading eBooks to her computer. The patron was thrilled with the outstanding customer service she received and was eager to get back into reading.

The Tech Team researched Community Engagement Platforms that will allow us to coordinate the Library's marketing efforts across multiple sites. The team recommended a platform available from SirsiDynix, which is on the March Board agenda for consideration.

The library coordinated a winter clothing drive the week of February 8th, thanks to the idea from Julia Heiser (PR & Marketing Assistant). The drive had a resounding response from the community. We received tons of like-new and brand name coats, gloves, boots, hats, sweaters, etc. Blankets, socks, sleeping bags, and hand warmers were delivered to the HOPEs outreach team. A full van of clothing was dropped off at the Hospitality Center. The Library then hosted a distribution day, when patrons could come pick up items if they were in need.

Bob Margis, Head of Circulation Services

Bookmobile

The bookmobile has been out at all of its regularly scheduled stops throughout the past month and with no hiccups since the heater issue which kept it out of service most of January. The bookmobile had a total of 2,493 circs in February.

Circulation

Use of the curbside pickup at Main continues to be steady with an average of 135 people visiting each day to pick-up materials. We circulated 20,411 items from Main. Approximately 11,402 holds were placed and filled. 5,819 items loaned to other libraries. 362 library cards issued.

Circulation also had a visit from SCLS (South Central Library System) at the end of February so they could see our automation sorter system in action as they are interested in something similar.

Technical Services

Ordering and processing:

In February TSD staff place orders 1074 items and received 1075 previously ordered items. A total of 1356 items were added to the catalog.

Current Project Updates:

- Adult nonfiction call number updating is continuing. Sections completed or currently being worked on includes 900s, 800, 700, 000s and 100s. We are finding a large number of items that require mending.
- Juvenile picture book spine labels are completed in the main section with the Holiday and Wordless sections being the last to do.
- Urban fiction spine and genre labels have been updated.
- Juvenile DVD/Blu-ray labels and disc checks have been completed. Discs have been cleaned or resurfaced as needed.
- Juvenile paperbacks series labels have been completed with the exception of Pokemon.

Additionally:

TSD staff has received their new laptops. All have been configured and are running fine.

LLS has compiled a list of libraries that gives permission for other libraries to rfid tag their materials. General tagging guidelines are included for each library.

Procedures for adding titles for the Favorite Authors Club have been reviewed with LLS. There was some general cleanup with the authors on the list. I would like to thank Dawn Seeger for being our point person with maintaining the list. Also we have looked at the number of Racine patrons by authors that use the list to better anticipate the number of copies to order.