

Angela Zimmermann, Executive Director Report

March 2022

Pandemic Update

The Library is fully open with no restrictions in place. Most programs have resumed in-person with some still being conducted virtually out of efficiency and for flexibility purposes. There are no restrictions in place for in-person programs currently. The mask ordinance was also lifted by the City and in relation to employees, it was left to the discretion of each Department Head within the City. I have chosen to leave it thus at the discretion of each employee. Most continue to wear masks at the public service stations while behind the scenes, we're a bit more 'carefree' with mask wearing.

Personnel / Operations

Dan Schultz retired from RPL on March 24th and we bid him farewell with a retirement card, letter, and gifts on behalf of the staff and the Board. Evelin Garcia will begin as the new Business Manager for RPL on March 21st. I anticipate Evelin's onboarding will take quite a bit of my time. While Evelin is joining us from Water-Wastewater within the City, they do not use MUNIS (the City's accounting/financial system), so there will be a period where she will have to acclimate to using this software and balancing all of the expectations of the role initially and also learning all aspects of Library operations and functions. I'm very eager to get her up and running though in her role, well-supported, and expectations clearly set for the financials for the library.

Internally we are still spending quite a bit of time figuring out functionality, communication and best operations with everyone now solidified in their new positions/titles. It will naturally take time to coordinate everything but I feel, overall, we're working together well as a team to streamline it all.

We're also still encountering quite a few community members and patrons who still don't realize the library is even open, so we're trying to become as creative as possible to get that message properly marketed across all avenues.

American Rescue Act Plans – ARPA Federal Infrastructure Funding

If you refer to past Board packets, we're receiving ARPA funding through two various sources: WI Humanities/Community Powered Project and the City Library Collective.

WI Humanities Initiative

To learn more about the project, please visit the website which is live now:
<https://wisconsinhumanities.org/programs/community-powered/>

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. Racine Public Library being one of the collaborative libraries. The mentors on our end will be Carrie Richmond, Teen Librarian and Rebecca Leannah, Local History Librarian. They will both take part in a weeklong mandatory Community Powered training and will be part of the hiring process for our Community Powered Project Coordinator, who we look forward to welcoming in June of 2022 through May of 2023.

City Library Collective (along with 10 other libraries throughout the state)

This 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.

The ARPA funds will soon be disbursed in the amount of \$143,783 (RPL being the fiscal agent) and will be used towards Whole Person Librarianship training for all 11 libraries’ staff, allocating funds to WiLS for their support in areas such as a data and assessment, information sustainability and sharing, and overall project support, and individual local library projects. I’ve earmarked \$10,000 for RPL’s project which we’re still finalizing but plan to put efforts towards either addressing homelessness or staff training on de-escalation methods.

Please note that both of these ARPA projects are quite complex and have many moving pieces so I’m happy to field any questions about either project at the Board meeting.

Lakeshores Library System / SHARE Updates

SHARE and LAC meetings should soon be returning to in-person, which will be nice. While there were some in-person meetings last fall, many still chose to attend virtually, so it’s odd to think...but I still have not met in-person many of the SHARE/LAC Directors since I’ve been in the position at RPL.

Steve Ohs, Director at Lakeshores Library System, is making visits to all of the individual libraries to meet with the Directors. He visited RPL at the end of February. One thing I did express to Steve was the increase of maintenance costs for all EnvisionWare equipment we have, with the highest cost being, obviously, the automation sorter. Overall, the invoice was a 32% increase for us as compared to last year. He is going to discuss with the Lakeshores team and get back to me

to see if there's any possible way to allocate some funds our way, or at least make inquiries as to why there was such a cost increase (specifically concerning the automation sorter).

Lakeshores System / Arrowhead System Merger Exploration Update

The last system merger meeting was held on March 7th. All documents concerning the potential system merger and the exploration of conducting such a merger can be found on [here](#). That site also has the link to the shared drive which holds all of the agendas, minutes, information, and resources related to our meetings. Our last meeting, we discussed all potential issues and topics which the committee came up with which others may either need information about or descriptions of in order to make a well-informed decision about a merger (as a reminder, the committee will be voting on the idea of a system merger in June of this year). The issues list was divided into topics we'd have to consider pre-merger and those which could be answered after a merger decision has been reached. We also discussed the answers to a questionnaire which was released as a way for us to gather information on all items we should be considering when discussing a system merger. The next meeting is in-person on April 4th.

The idea of a potential system merger is a fairly big deal so I'm happy to answer questions or logistics about the process at the Board meeting.

Various Projects

Quick update on various projects:

New Website and Community Engagement Platform

Both the vendor and the internal team have been given the firm deadline of June 1st. The new website must be live by that date.

2nd Mobile Library / Techmobile

The chassis is completed and is at the body company. The body is being built and we should have a date soon on the body completion date. Graphics are also completed, all sponsorships are displayed, and we're still crossing our fingers for a debut of the 2nd mobile library in the 4th of July Downtown Racine parade. Internally, we're meeting this coming week to discuss the acquisitions of all of the equipment and materials since the funds have been raised.

2nd Floor Renovation

This has consumed a lot of my time in the past month or so. This is on the agenda for discussion this evening.

Nick Demske, Deputy Director

Deputy Director Report for March 2022 Board Packet

The cold weather did not slow our staff down this February and they were hard at work as always on countless efforts to serve the community. A few highlights that I've had the chance to be involved with more closely:

We did a giveaway of the book "The Soul of America" by John Meacham, in collaboration with Kenosha Public Library. RPL had about 125 copies and all were gone within less than a month. To support this community read effort, there is also a series of book discussions and other programs related to voting rights that both RPL and KPL will be doing in the months of March and April.

We're making great strides in preparation for our Seed Library to be available to the public, with April 1st as the date we plan to have it first accessible to community members. The unit we're primarily using--an enormous, antique card catalog that Trustee Cruz helped connect us with via contacts at RUSD (where it formerly lived) --was in need of serious repair when we received it. Mike Monday has brought back much of its original glory since, though, and has also stabilized it so it can stand sturdy independent of any wall anchors. Dawn in TSD did incredible work organizing, packaging and labeling the seeds, as well as making a digital inventory of them. And our own Brianna Fuentes will be adding some artistic flare to the piece before it is live to the public. Amy Macemon and UW Extension have been exceptionally helpful partners in creating this new resource, as have the Master Gardeners who work with the library. This is exciting, as it is a project we've discussed doing for years now, and we've been actively working on it since last spring. So it has been a long time in the making.

Staff from every department, 125th committee members, and the Friends of the Library came together to help make our first Winterfest a huge success. It was without a doubt one of the busiest days we've had since before the pandemic, largely thanks to the coordinating work of the 125th committee and Julia Heiser, Outreach and Marketing Assistant. We are still getting positive feedback from patrons who attended that event last month.

February Programming Statistics

The Library presented 22 programs in February, which reached a total participation of 648 people. In-person programs had an average attendance of 34 people per program. Pre-recorded programs had an average of 14 views. Live Virtual programs had an average of 6 people per program. There were no programs posted to Facebook and the only program posted to YouTube received 14 views.

Programs	# of Programa	Participants	Format
Create a Laser Engraved Valentine's Card	1	4	Live Virtual
Open Gaming Lab	1	1	In-person
Girls Who Code - Walden	3	29	In-person

Cubelets Outreach to Gilmore	3	55	In-person
Girls Who Code - Real	2	10	In-person
Afternoon Book Group	1	9	Live virtual
Black History Month Take & Make	1	20	In-person
Innovation Lab at Winterfest	1	39	In-person
Girls Who Code - Fratt	2	25	In-person
Craft Time for You & Me	1	14	Pre-recorded
Girls Who Code - Starbuck	1	4	In-person
Computer Basics	1	1	In-person
Spice It Up! Thyme	1	24	In-person
Classics Book Group	1	5	Live virtual
Senior Outreach - Marian Housing	1	8	In-person
Winter Fest	1	400	In-person
Totals	22	648	

Patron Services

Staff answered 1522 questions via phone and chat and 3432 in person. A total of 4954 questions were answered across all methods of communication. 69% of the reference questions were asked in person, while 31% were received over the phone or via chat.

Total # of phone calls	1483
Total # of questions via call center	1165
Avg. # of calls per day	49
Avg. # of calls per hour	5.3
Total talk time	3597 mins 53 secs
Avg. call length	3 mins 6 secs
Total chats	39
Total chat messages	312
Avg. # of messages per chat	8
Total phone and chat questions	1522
In-person reference questions	3432
Total # of reference questions answered	4954

Computer usage - total logins	692
Computer usage - total time	520hrs
Computer usage - avg. time per login	45 mins
Faxes	467
Scans	1046

Social Worker – Submitted by Ashley Cedeño

Agencies met with:

- American Heart Association- Tim Nikolai
- Higher Expectations for Racine County- Elizabeth Erikson and Ben Taft
- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, Amy Macemon
- Carthage College Nursing Department- Janet Levey

Patron Interactions (drop-in or by appointment): 20

September 21': 6

October: 15

November: 15

December: 19

January 22': 24

Need/Concerns: Emotional support (2), Housing(5), Employment(2), Applying for Benefits/Financial Support(4), General Concerns (2), Legal Assistance (1), Veteran Support (1), Sensory Room (3)

Sensory Room Updates:

- Successful Grand opening of the Sensory Room! 28 community members, patrons and staff attended this event.
- Ever since the Grand Opening of the Sensory Room, reservations have been steady and continuous! Many people in the community and agencies have reached out to ask questions about the room or request a tour of the space.

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.
- Routinely check-in/discuss with YSD staff various situations that come up in the Sensory Room and the general procedures for cleaning the room and reserving it. Hopefully soon we will increase the days that the room is available to be reserved. The purpose of starting off with only Mondays and Fridays was for staff and myself to become acclimated with the use of the room and to work out any situations that we did not think to anticipate upon the opening of the room. Any issues, concerns or feedback is continuously discussed between staff and I.

- Positive Patron Interaction: I do not have a specific positive patron interaction in mind for this month, but I would like to note that there are a handful of patrons who I have met with on a regular basis over the past few months who I've been able to build strong relationships with, and this has overall been a positive experience for myself, and on many occasions these patrons have expressed that it is for them as well.

Circulation Report of February Activities 2022 - Submitted by Christopher Tobias

RPL circulated a total of 36,144 in February of 2022. 33,515 items from Main and 2,993 items from the Bookmobile. January 2022 circulation was 34,559. Approximately 9,355 holds were placed and filled. 5,345 items loaned from our collection to other libraries, and 4,358 received for RPL patrons. 301 new library cards were issued during the month of February. 1,355 items were loaned out to patrons via our Home Delivery Service in the month of February.

- In February circulation staff inducted 77638 items through the automated material handler (AMH).
- Circulation Clerk Mariah Thompkins left employment with the RPL. We wish Mariah the best in her new career path.
- Our open Circulation Clerk job has been posted. We hope to fill this position in mid-March.
- Our Public Allies partner, Michael Smith, has returned to the RPL and is under the working supervision of Glynis Kimbrough. Michael has various duties in Circulation and with the Adult and Youth services desks.

Technical Services Report of February Activities 2022 - Submitted by Christopher Tobias

Ordering and Processing:

In January TSD staff placed orders for 1326 items and received 1130 previously ordered items. A total of 1446 items were added to the catalog.

Beyond Books Collection:

- 8 new BBC items were added in February. Items include:
 - o 7 wonders [game]
 - o Concept [game]
 - o Karaoke machine
 - o 2 Seasonal affective disorder lamps
 - o Touch screen roll up piano keyboard
 - o Video conference light
 - o WonderWash : portable washing machine

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.
- Beyond Books Collection project to reclassify items has been completed by Stephanie.

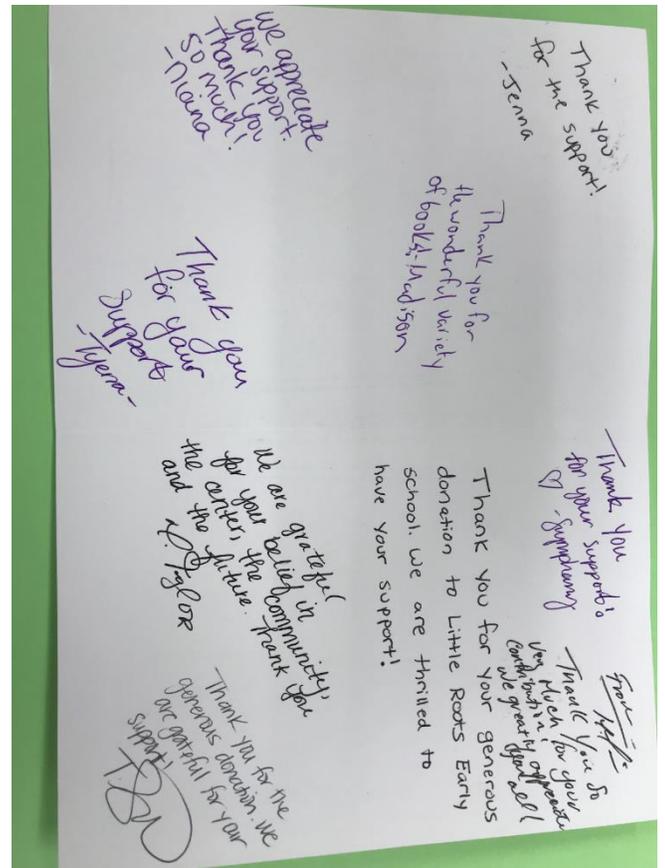
TSD staff is continuing to assist librarians with the current large scale weeding project in the Adult Department.

Staff Activities and Patron Interactions

Four staff members reported participating in a total of 14.5 hours of Continuing Education opportunities in February.

From Youth Services Supervisor Keiko Skow:

“I received an email from Pam to contact a nearby preschool, Little Roots Early School. Right away I contacted them and they asked me if the Library could donate some books for their children. I made a box of 25 books and called them back right away. A short time later, a teacher came to pick it up. Some days later I received a thank you note from them. I really appreciated it!!”



Shay King, Head of Business Development

Inside the library
125th Anniversary

Winterfest

Winter Fest on Feb. 26 was very well attended by families and kids, with steady attendance coming through until about 2 p.m. The library team sold 30+ shirts (about \$600 in income) and distributed flyers promoting social services, Trivia Night and the overall anniversary events. Multiple visitors commented on their enthusiasm about the library and its direction and how friendly the staff were. The crowds brought in a burst of activity to the youth services department especially.

Trivia Night

Trivia Night will be held by the adult services windows 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. So far, two full tables of attendees have been booked.

General

Preparation is also in progress for the next several anniversary events: Retro Gaming Night, National Library Week, Earth Day Cleanup and the 125th Block Party. Earth Day Cleanup in particular is gaining momentum, with partnerships forming with Antoine's Nursery, Pike Root River and the Great Lakes Corps.

Two of the library's four anniversary shirt designs are complete: [Ha Ha, Made You Read](#) and [I Love the Racine Public Library](#). They are displayed for sale at the circulation desk and have continued to sell since Winter Fest.

We ordered a starter batch of 2,000 [anniversary activity bookmarks](#), which have so far been distributed on book displays and at Winter Fest. 1,000 will be included in the Downtown Racine Corporation's Reefpoint Marina boater welcome bags. They will also be distributed at the circulation desk and upcoming community events.

The executive director and head of business development have been coordinating with Ivan Barra Films to develop a series of inspirational library videos to celebrate the new direction of libraries and invite the community back into the library, both in commemoration of the anniversary and in response to the public's misconception of the library remaining closed.

Press highlights

Since the Feb. 10 report, the library has been referenced in the media [at least 32 times](#), which is consistent from the previous report on Jan. 13. The 125th anniversary - especially Winter Fest and Trivia Night - and the sensory room have been gaining the most traction, and press requests continue to come in for sensory room stories.

Owned media highlights

Website

After a pause to focus on the launch of Winter Fest and other 125th anniversary activities, the new website is under full development again. **The website's final launch date will be June 1.** Out of its 103 webpages, landing pages and forms, 59 are set to complete by the launch date, with 44 to be released as they are on the current website and refreshed after the site is live.

Current progress:

- 13 pages pending staff content
- 2 pages in active development
- 14 pages pending vendor corrections
- 30 pages not started

Completed since last report:

- Current website: Refreshed COVID-19 protocols
- Current website: Launched [125th Anniversary webpage](#)
- Current website: Added "we're open" slide to homepage
- Both websites: Refreshed hiring webpages. Moved new website's hiring page to "pending staff content" stage.
- New website: Identified priority webpages for launch
- New website: Continued work with vendor to fix an outstanding batch of formatting and usability issues. Out of a starting batch of 92 issues, 17 issues need further attention.
- New website: Updated all menus for consistency of formatting and links, with a focus on clickthrough landing page menus. Moved to "pending vendor corrections" stage.
- New website: Refreshed staff page. Moved to "pending vendor corrections" stage.

Newsletter

The business development team is in the beginning stages of reimagining its weekly newsletter. The newsletter will be rebranded with a sleek and modern design, and it will have standing sections for a top news feature, key programs, updates on the anniversary and renovation, a book recommendation, a library services highlight, and a rotating spotlight of staff members, collections, etc. As the newsletter is reworked, it will transition from Constant Contact into SirsiDynex's email platform to incorporate its targeting and automation features.

Since the last report, the **newsletter has been averaging a 24% open rate and 1% click rate.** The highest click rate was 1.2% on the February 18 newsletter, the Winter Fest preview newsletter, with **103 clicks (about half of all visitors who clicked) occurring on the Captain Mike's foodtruck menu.** In general, content related to foodtrucks gets the most attention out of any content in our newsletters.

Social Media

Facebook

Over the last month, almost all metrics have improved compared to the previous period. We **reached 17,324 people (74% more than last period) and received 549 page views (44% more).**

Our posts with the highest reach were the [Winter Fest collage](#), [Main Street Bakery donut thank-you](#), and a [welcome-back to Gail Navratil](#).

Instagram

After the early 2022 leap in activity, posting - and subsequently, engagement - has slowed down, but we did gain followers 2.4% faster than since the previous report. The posts with the highest reach were a [thank you to Johnson Financial Group](#) and a video of our [Black Stories Matter display](#).

TikTok

Our videos had a total of 1,571 views since Feb. 14, and our profile gained 40 views in that time. Follower acquisition remains slow, pointing to a need to continue building a consistent posting schedule in order to attract people to our account over the long term. **Our most successful video to date remains the [TikTok of special things and spaces from around the library](#), which is now at 1200+ views** (200+ more since the last report). Our second most viewed videos since then were a [book display follow-along](#) (500+ views) and a [Winter Fest puppy advertisement](#) (300+ views).

Melissa Donaldson, Head of Digital Services and Innovation

Programming

Digital Services and Innovation Lab staff hosted 15 programs with a total 176 people in attendance.

- Finished up the first round of Girls Who Code at Walden III, Real School and Fratt Elementary.
- Participated at Winter Fest where patrons could make their own personalized bookmark or dog tag using the Laser Engraver.



Tech Support

Digital Services and Innovation Lab staff had 60 appointments with patrons this month. This comes to about 30 hours of work for staff.

DSI staff also provided support on 16 helpdesk tickets in February.

