TO: RPL Board of Trustees  
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director  
DATE: January 29, 2020  

**Action Items**

**Permission to Close Rundel Early on May 15 (Uttaro)**
The Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival organizers have asked to hold their author dinner in Hacker Hall on Friday May 15. This year marks the return of the festival, which went on hiatus after the death of founder Stephanie Squicciarini. More than 50 authors will be on hand for the reboot of the TBF, which is also changing its location from Nazareth College to RIT. The dinner will host all the authors as well as the staff and volunteers who are planning this festival. Set up for the dinner requires closing the 1st floor of Rundel at 3:00 pm.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval to close the 1st floor of Rundel at 3:00 pm on Friday May 15, 2020.

**RPL FY19 Audit (Harrison)**
The Library’s auditors, Freed Maxick CPA’s, have completed their audit of the 2018-19 RPL fiscal year and met with the RPL Board Finance Committee on December 18, 2019 to review their findings. The Board Finance committee members will provide their summary and recommendation to the Board, with the attached management report and financial statements.

**Board Action Requested:** Accept Freed Maxick’s audit of the 2018-19 fiscal year.

**Agreement, Foodlink Career Fellowship (Harrison)**
As discussed at the November Board meeting, the RPL and Foodlink have developed a plan for utilization of the café space on the first floor of the Central Library Bausch & Lomb building. Operation of the café as part of Foodlink’s career fellowship workforce development program satisfies the RPL’s goals of contributing to regional workforce development as well as a downtown need for “grab and go” food provisions.

Foodlink will operate 1,129 square feet of the café space, with RPL retaining the seating area as a shared, designated public eating space. Operations will be Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 3:30pm. The term of the agreement shall be three years, with a two-year renewal option. Foodlink shall be responsible for all costs of improvements, equipment and operations, and shall pay the RPL $4,000 annually to represent the estimated utility cost share of the café for the agreement term.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of a facility use agreement with Foodlink, Inc. for the terms and services outlined.

**Grant Acceptance, Eastman School of Music Arts In the Loop Program (Harrison)**
The University of Rochester’s Institute of Music Leadership is a sponsor and underwriter of Arts In the Loop, an initiative to energize Rochester’s center city by leveraging the Arts, Entertainment and Media sectors with an initial focus on the Main Street corridor. The $2,500 grant award will support Teen Central staff and students to gather more complete and diverse feedback from the community on impressions of the arts and creative sector.
Through support of staff and teen artists paid via stipend, the RPL shall interview residents of the 14621 neighborhood and downtown library users to obtain perspectives on public art in Rochester, with a focus on the Joseph Avenue area and the future of downtown. Interviews will be recorded utilizing equipment from a prior Story Corps project, with training provided by Lincoln branch manager Sarah Lehman. Teen artists will synthesize interview findings in a media format of their choosing (video, audio, etc.). Interview files will be archived at the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County.

**Board Action Requested:** Acceptance of an Eastman School of Music grant award of $2,500 for the purpose and services described.

**Agreement, Early Literacy Training (Uttaro)**
Staff from the Children’s Institute have been retained to provide early literacy and family engagement workshops for staff and clients. These workshops will help staff and clients in developing story times, behavior management, organic marketing strategies, and collaboration strategies for early childhood programming. Workshops will occur in March and April 2020. The cost, including all materials and supplies, is $1,600 and will be funded from the Family Literacy grant, transferred for administration from the MCLS to the RPL operating budget.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of an agreement with the Children’s Institute, for an amount not to exceed $1,600, for the services described.

**Approval of MCLS-RPL Services Agreement (Uttaro)**
The RPL has an agreement with the Monroe County Library System that outlines the services to be provided by RPL to MCLS and its members. The agreement specifies the primary system and support services to be provided. It provides the same flexibility from previous agreements between MCLS and RPL and maintains the ability to increase operational support for system services. The current agreement expired on December 31, 2019.

Previously, this agreement has been a three-year term; however, we are proposing a one-year term considering the pending expiration of the Document of Understanding between MCLS and its member libraries on December 31, 2020. A team of member library directors shall review current system services and charges, with recommendations to be incorporated in a Document of Understanding effective in 2021. While it is unlikely changes would impact the key terms and broad services outlined in the MCLS-RPL agreement, revisions or edits proposed in the Document of Understanding may benefit corresponding language in the agreement. Therefore, the proposed agreement term will be from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 (copy enclosed).

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of an MCLS-RPL Services Agreement for the period January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

**Discussion Items**

**Proposed Bylaw Amendments (Karin)**
At the May 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting, an updated board Bylaws was approved that, in part, established that the annual election for officers would occur at the November meeting. Due to an oversight, an internal inconsistency in the approved Bylaws needs be corrected. These items are presented for discussion and will be voted on at the next regular meeting.
Article III paragraph 1 shall be amended as follows: The officers of the Board shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer and a Secretary. All officers shall be Library Trustees. [The terms of Officers shall be the calendar year.]

Article IV, paragraph 1a shall be amended as follows: The Nominating Committee shall be elected at the October meeting. It shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be appointed by the President and two of whom shall be elected by the Board. The Nominating Committee shall meet as needed and shall make recommendations to the Board for officers and new Board members. The Nominating Committee shall develop a slate of candidates for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, which [slate] shall be presented to the Board at the November meeting [and voted on by the Board at such meeting]. for the vote of officers at the January meeting.

**Vendapin Agreement Termination (Harrison)**

In March 2020, the Central Library will be discontinuing its relationship with Vendapin LLC. The current agreement was established in 2012 with automatic renewals and a 90-day cancellation notice provision. Vendapin provides vending card services and terminals for public printing. This relationship was established given the distribution of public computers throughout Central Library, to reduce cash collection points. With the pending Technology Center opening in spring, print service points will be reduced to the Technology Center and Local History Division. As a limited number of library users hold an escrow/balance on their Venda Cards, beginning on February 1, 2020 patrons will be notified to cash in their Venda Cards. The library will issue vend refunds out of the cash registers in BLB and Rundel for the escrow/balance amount on the card. Once the relationship with Vendapin has ended and equipment is returned we will no longer be able to check the escrow/balance amount on Venda Cards. At that point we will offer the patron $1.00 for return of the Venda Card. We will buy Venda Cards back until May 1, 2020. The current estimate of outstanding card balances is approximately $200.

**Report Items**

*Patricia Uttaro, RPL Director reporting*

**Recommended Reading**


**Upcoming Events**

- Saturday, February 1 – Take Your Child to the Library Day – events happening all over MCLS. Check the events calendar at libraryweb.org for details at specific libraries.
- Tuesday, February 25 – Library Advocacy Day in Albany. See Adam Traub for details.
RPL Strategic Plan Progress

Education & Engagement

New in the Carl Library Software – MCLS now has access to a new field in the patron template, the Full Legal Name field. This will contain the patron’s full legal name while the original name field will allow staff to enter a preferred name. The preferred name will be used in all communication from the library. Communications regarding collection agency or legal matters will be addressed to the patron’s legal name. As Chad Cunningham, Central Circulation Supervisor shared, this was important for a person who had gotten out of a domestic violence situation and preferred an alias for safety. It will also make the library more welcoming to the transgender community; however, it can also have benefits for those who simply don’t use their legal name and wish to be called something else, even if it’s just a shortened version of their name.

Library Cards at Monroe High School – Jennifer Daly from Monroe High School reached out to RPL’s Xandi DiMatteo due to a long-established relationship. There is a new administrator who is very supportive of public libraries as community resources. They have made a study of students who have library cards (79% do not), an app to read electronic books (81% do not) and how often do you read for pleasure (24% never and 32% once a week). Rebecca Hudson and DiMatteo spent three days in December doing intensive outreach during lunch times at Monroe High School with Daly. This provided new library cards to hundreds of students.

ROC SPIN – Dr. Reeves and I have begun participating on a new community team addressing the need for a comprehensive community-wide plan for delivering summer learning opportunities to students in Rochester. ROC-SPIN (Summer Providers Integration Network) is led by Luis Perez of the Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association and is working on developing a short-term plan to help align community organizations to respond to the anticipated 3000 RCSD students who will be without formal summer learning programs in 2020. The group will also develop a long-term plan to better align organizations that deliver summer learning programs and activities.
Mayor’s Book Club – The library and I have been supporting the new Mayor’s Book Club, which launched in December 2019. I have provided some consultation on possible titles for the community reading in 2020 and facilitated the in-person discussion of the first book, *Voice of Knowledge*, on December 6. The second book, *The Year of Yes* by Shonda Rimes, is set to be discussed on March 26. RPL buyers have assisted by purchasing multiple copies of the selected books and by encouraging their patrons to read the selections. Children’s librarians have contributed recommendations for the Mayor’s “Recommended Books for Children” list which should come out later this year.

Sustainability & Resources

Advocacy Updates – In-district meetings with State Legislators started Friday, January 10, at Pittsford Community Library with Marjorie Byrnes. Other scheduled visits are:
- Friday, January 24 at 10:00 am with Assemblyman Mark Johns in his Fairport office
- Friday, January 24 at 2:00 pm with Senator Pam Helming in her Geneva office
- Thursday, January 30 at 1:00 pm with Senator Robert Ortt in his Lockport office
- Friday, February 7 at 11:00 am with Assemblyman Stephen Hawley at the Brockport Library
- Friday, February 7 at 3:00 pm with Senator Joe Robach in his Greece office

Further details on each visit are available from Traub or Alicia Gunther in the MCLS Office.

The MCLS office will not be able to host a bus for Advocacy Day this year because Uttaro, Traub, and Gunther will all be out in Albany the day before for additional training. We did not feel comfortable sending a bus without appropriate system staff to manage it. Visits with legislators during Advocacy Day will be handled by Uttaro, Traub, Gunther, and other MCLS staff who plan to attend, as well as by representatives from the Rochester Regional Library Council and School Library Systems.

The Director’s Office is also planning a Legislative Breakfast for new County Administration and new County Legislators for some time in March. This will introduce the Central Library and offer staff and trustees time to meet and greet our new friends in the County. More information to follow.

Finally, Adam Traub was selected as the ALA/NYLA Key Congressional Contact for New York’s 25th district. This pilot program is targeting three states, including New York, to assign members as volunteer ambassadors to help educate and inform federal legislators about libraries and the work they do in their local communities. Should this pilot be successful, the goal is to expand the program and assign a Key Congressional Contact for every member of Congress.

Stewardship & Curation

Macmillan Update – The number of libraries refusing to buy e-content from Macmillan Publishing continues to grow. It is estimated that over 1,100 library locations in North America have agreed to not purchase Macmillan content. This represents about 14% of the U.S. population, which accounts for ~2% of their profits. Use of the system’s OverDrive content continues to grow even though new Macmillan content is not being added to the collection. The MCLS office has also seen little to no negative response from library users.
Social Media

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Central Library Updates

This note was received through the RPL web site in November:

To the Staff at the Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County,
I wanted to leave a heartfelt compliment to the woman who helped me at the checkout desk tonight. I did not catch her name, but I wish that I had. I really appreciated her grace and altruism; she didn’t have to help me in the way she did, but she did it out of the kindness of her heart which meant a lot to me. I left not only with a pleasant experience at the library, but with the reminder that human goodness exists around us. She inspired me to pay it forward today and I felt compelled to let you know :) Thank you very much for all that you do, especially the woman at the desk - I appreciate it!

Best,
Haley

Arts & Literature, Nanci Nugent reporting

Programs

- Local artist Frank Wolfs taught a two-part class on Linoleum cutting. In the first, class students learned the very basics of this process. They were given linoleum and cutting tools and Wolfs instructed them on how to hold the tool and what to expect when they begin cutting and printing. Students took their linoleum home so they could begin creating their image. In the second class he taught students how to ink their lino plate and how to print their image. Students printed their edition on the tabletop press owned by the Arts Division. Students are asking for more fine art classes and they very much enjoyed this two-part class. Comments received by Nugent were, “This process was well presented.” “I was glad to learn a new creative experience.” and “Keep having presenters and classes like this one.”

- Artist David Burke created a painting of Rochester’s Little Theatre while visitors watched and asked questions. An exhibit of David’s work (including the painting he created in the library) is in the Arts and Literature Division’s Riedman cases until February.
• The Central Library held a handful of classes creating holiday decorations. Large ornaments, evergreen and burlap wreaths, twig stars, and crocheted snowflakes brought in students for holiday fun. Students raved about their teachers and shared pictures of their favorites.

![Image of holiday decorations]

• In partnership with the Levine Center to End Hate, Literature Librarian Carol Moldt hosted a book discussion and conversation with the authors of *The Gift of Our Wounds: a Sikh and a Former White Supremacist Find Forgiveness After Hate*. Authors Arno Michaelis and Pardeep Singh Kaleka, who were visiting Rochester from Wisconsin, shared their experiences with finding forgiveness after hate. They spoke to a sold-out audience on November 21 at the Lyric Theatre, and we were fortunate enough to have them visit our library earlier in the day to meet with a very engaged group for an intimate discussion. We had a wonderful turnout and an amazing conversation with these two remarkable men. This conversation attracted some new patrons to Central Library, and many remarked on how grateful they were to have had the opportunity to engage in such a frank conversation with two inspiring individuals.

• Moldt continued her community outreach efforts by facilitating a book discussion group at Valley Manor on December 16. Participants engaged in an enthusiastic discussion of the novel *Caleb’s Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks. The group has really enjoyed having an outside facilitator and has asked Moldt to continue to lead the discussions in 2020. Amy Discenza, librarian in the MCLS Outreach Department, has been doing a great job providing copies of large print and audio books to the Valley Manor participants.

• The Brownbag Book Discussion group led by Moldt wrapped up a great year of reading and discussion with its annual potluck holiday lunch. In addition to celebrating the holidays, Brownbag celebrated its eleventh-year anniversary. A delicious spread of food was enjoyed by all, while participants engaged in an excellent discussion of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Less* by Andrew Sean Greer. It was perhaps the first time in our eleven-year history that half of the group absolutely loved the book – found it hilarious and brilliantly written – and the other half despised it – finding it full of pathetic characters. We were all intrigued hearing a point of view other than our own, which is of course, one of the very best things about a book discussion group.

**Business Innovation Center, Jennifer Byrnes reporting**

**Outreach**
• Byrnes attended the Rochester Downtown Development Corporation luncheon.
• Byrnes and Lily Anthony taught a class on business research for the Rochester School Modernization Program – Business Opportunity Program. They received an excellent evaluation from participants.

**Consulting**
• The Carlson Center for Intellectual Property assisted: 9 in person, 4 by email.
• Patent Virtual Assistance Center: 1
• Hours of in-depth market research: Byrnes – 22; Anthony – 7
• Database Usage
  • Frost & Sullivan: 18 downloads. Value: $63,900
RPL Board Director’s Report—January 2020 (Continued)

- IBISWorld: 136 Downloads. Value: $44,697
- InnovationQ: 14 users with 101 searches.
- MarketScope Advisor: 8 visits, 43 page-views.
- Mergent Intellect: Logins: 36 Searches: 336
- Statista: Searches: 182 Downloads: 137
- ValueLine: Logins: 162 Searches: 3,365 Downloads: 754
- VentureSource: 15

Anecdotes

The following excerpts are from an email received from patron, Barbara Ann Lake:

I initially met Kate (who I have named “Kate the Magnificent!”) who then introduced me to Lily, (“Lily the Excellent!”) and am without enough words of praise and gratitude for the resources they provided, as well as networks of others for me to pursue. But wait...there’s more...in a phone conversation after my initial visit I asked when they might be available to meet again as I have a Clinical Educator/Project Manager R.N. who has joined me in my business pursuit, that I am preparing to launch via the web. I was astounded when they said they would be available on Saturday. I could go on and on as there are so many ways that they have gone what I would call, "above and beyond!"

Please know I am happy to share my experience and recommendation with any marketing/PR campaign or in any ask for financial resources during the budget planning process. I have worked in CRM from several perspectives throughout my diverse career (which has encompassed 44 years) and have never experienced such a positive, professional, knowledgeable and thorough experience as I have with your library staff. There isn't a scale with a high enough satisfaction box to use.

Children’s Center, Tonia Burton reporting

Outreach/Community Contacts

- Alla Levi conducted a tour for Young Women’s College Prep Charter School for 24 young women and two teachers.
- Tonia Burton joined Early Intervention staff at Room to Bloom in Gates. Burton shared information on library programs around the county, Toys for All Tots items (toys that have been adapted for patrons with small motor challenges) and discussed ways libraries can support Early Intervention families.
- Katie Powell conducted 2 storytime visits for all toddler and preschool classes at the Carlson Metro YMCA.
- Levi conducted a tour for students and teachers from Irondequoit High School Special Education Department. After the tour, Jen Cesare read them some stories and did projects with them in the Secret Room.
- Burton met with Kelly McDermott and Dr. Andrew Aligne from the Hoekelman Center. They are interested in working together on early literacy curriculum and have invited her to be part of their research team. The Center will be applying for a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to study teaching children foundational literacy skills in preschool. Dr. Aligne and Dr. Carol St. George, Warner School of Education would be the researchers and Burton would serve as the community member. The project would also give training on becoming community leaders.
- Burton presented training at the Chili Library on Community Asset Analysis. Participants were chosen as part of the 2020 Family Literacy Grant program.
- Burton attended the ABC Head Start Policy Council meeting. The meetings have helped inform Burton about practices at the Head Start sites and needs as well as challenges parents and teachers face.
On December 15, Burton and Sarah Ngo (Douglass) attended the annual Monroe County Toy Drive sponsored by Monroe County and The Pirate Toy Fund. Santa and some of his friends met 3000 children. The children played the Snowman Challenge, based off the book *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert, and picked out a brand-new toy. Burton and Ngo challenged families to work together to use the pictures available to create a snowman in under one minute and test their small motor skills by using tongs to get “snowballs” into a bottle. Families had so much fun competing against one another that there were times we had to move them along because the line for Santa was being held up by our activities.

Programs

- Sesame Street Anniversary - So much of what Children’s Center does is only possible because of partnerships. Over the years we have worked hard to build relationships throughout the community and that work has paid off once again.

  WXXI and Central Library collaborated to celebrate 50 years of Sesame Street. Several community partners joined us to share fun activities. The morning began with a special Sensory Friendly visit for VIP’s. Children with special needs were sent private invitations to experience the event before the crowds. The Sensory Break Room tents were also set up throughout the day which made the event more inclusive for children who have sensory processing disorders.

  Sally’s Bakery offered a cookie tasting station, Greater Rochester After School Alliance had a Stem Challenge, Area First Responders came with their vehicles, horses, and even bomb robots. Maker Faire sent staff who conducted a string art station that resulted in the creation of a string Cookie Monster, which was donated to the Children’s Center. Waste Management and Monroe County Department of Environmental Services offered a trash/Oscar station, and so much more was available.

  There were 2700 people who had a great time enjoying the sunny day. This was the perfect number of attendees. Throughout the day, all stations were busy, but it was not out of hand. Thanks to the dedication of Jeff Bostic and Sarah Ngo (Douglass Library), families could upload photos from Flickr. The amount of stations would not have happened without the collective work of Children’s, Maintenance, imagineYOU, Circulation, Media, Delivery, Graphics, and LAS.
• Once again, Alla Levi hosted The Mitten Tree project and it was a huge success! Staff and patrons donated 225 items consisting of mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks. A book was attached to each item and these were donated to the Hillside Children’s Center for their Special Santa Program. The staff at Hillside were very grateful to receive these items for their children.

• Girl Scouts - This month, librarian Katie Powell arranged two visitors from STEM fields: Dr. Linda Clark from Black Physicians Network and Clark Occupational Medicine and Dr. Chiara Borrelli, Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Rochester. Dr. Clark talked to the girls about her experience as a Girl Scout, time at Brown University, and work in preventative medicine. She shared that Girl Scouts helped her develop self-confidence and problem-solving skills that have helped her in her career. Dr. Borrelli, a marine biologist and climate scientist originally from Italy, showed participants images and specimens from her fieldwork. We ended the month with an art class from Small Fry Art, an art studio located in the South Wedge. Girls learned about artist Henri Matisse’s collages, created their own, and presented them to the group.

• To accompany our “DIY Craft: Thankful Tree” we put a big paper tree on the windows of our bridge and asked people to add leaves with what they’re thankful for. Several were thankful for the library!
Raising a Reader

- Lauren Seaver has received anecdotes from teachers about the impact of RAR on their classrooms. A teacher at VOA shared that the children have a small red book bag they take turns using and have puppets carry around while they sing the RAR red bag song about books. A teacher at Hart St. shared that the class sings the songs shared during classroom visits throughout the week, and they have even made up some of their own verses to the songs. Teachers at VOA have noted that most of their families are enthusiastically participating in the bag rotation.

- On December 14th, the entire RAR team collaborated to plan and run the Winter Celebration event for all participating RAR families at Central Library. Burton, Seaver, Cholewa, Hahn, Nesbitt, Ngo, and Santiago attended, and Jeff Bostic photographed families during the event. Each of the RAR team members offered early literacy and learning activities including matching and sorting games, sensory fun, counting and letter identification games. The event culminated with an interactive storytime led by Burton and Seaver. 32 people attended and all seemed to greatly enjoy the event, staying through to the end! Families had many options! There was a photo session station, several literacy stations and the event ended with a fun interactive storytime. Families were also given brand new beautiful books thanks to a grant from First Book. Photos courtesy of Jeff Bostic- imagineYOU media specialist. Jeff has been very generous with his time to assist with children’s programs!

Circulation/Information, Chad Cunningham reporting

- New Borrowers: 248
- Access cards: 7
- Notarial Acts: 222

Anecdotes

- An elderly gentleman came to the Information Desk with a dilemma. He draws Social Security income and receives his payments on a debit card. He went to an ATM to use the debit card and asked someone to help him draw out money. He gave the person the card and his PIN and the person walked off with his card. He was very concerned that on the first of the month, this person would withdraw his Social Security check. He worked with a staff member for about 30 minutes and we reset his PIN, cancelled his old card, and had a new card mailed to his home address. The elderly gentleman came in with the card that Social Security sent him. Staff helped him register his new card and set up his new pin. He was very happy that now his first-of-the-month Social Security payment is safe.
• Recently, a gentleman came to the information desk needing help to re-register his car in Florida. He was in his 80s and had never done this online before. We sat down together and went to the Florida DMV site. The process went smoothly, we found his registration information and made the necessary payment. When I told him that he was all set and that I would print up the receipt for him, his face lit up and he smiled broadly. He thought the process was going to be very difficult and he was so happy with the help and relative ease of everything— he said he knew he came to the right place for help.

Local History & Genealogy, Christine Ridarsky reporting

Frederick Douglass and his legacy in Rochester continued to capture the attention of Local History & Genealogy Division staff throughout November and December 2019. Division manager and City Historian Christine L. Ridarsky continued to monitor the process of vacuum freeze drying the badly damaged time capsule that was discovered under the Douglass statue in Highland Park in October and to make arrangement for its preservation upon its return to the City. In the meantime, Ridarsky was tasked with sorting through the contents of a storage facility previously leased by the now-defunct Frederick Douglass Resource Center. When the center closed permanently, its directors transferred ownership of the contents to the City. Ridarsky was tasked with sorting through the material to determine what was historically significant and needed to be preserved as archives and artifacts. This proved to be a massive task, as the storage facility included materials not only from its business office, library, and exhibit area but also from its catering service, gift shop, and art studio. In all, Ridarsky spent a total of seven days working in the cold, damp basement storage area determining what was trash, what could/should be sent to City surplus for possible sale, and what might be historically significant. Historical Researcher and Deputy Historian Michelle Finn also provided two days of labor on the project. With assistance from the City’s Building Services Department, they filled at least two roll-off dumpsters with trash, transported two van-loads of archival material to the library, and packed approximately 12 pallets of books, possible artifacts, and surplus materials for transport to a City facility for further assessment. Ridarsky will work with staff from the Rochester Museum & Science Center in January to more closely assess artifacts for historical significance. Items of historical value will be transferred to the museum for preservation.

Exhibitions
• The division’s well-received exhibit, *Everyday People: The Dinkle Family and Rochester’s African American Past*, remains on display until August 31, 2020. We hosted an opening reception in November, a very successful event attended by 75 people! The next program scheduled as a companion to this exhibit will be an African American Genealogy-focused session of TGIS (Think Genealogy, It’s Saturday) in February.
• The library’s traveling woman suffrage exhibition, *Because of Women Like Her...Winning the Vote in New York State*, remains on display at the Richardson-Bates House Museum in Oswego, NY; 178 people visited in December. Another version of the exhibit was also displayed at the Parma Public Library in November; it received 1,690 visitors.

Community Outreach/Meetings
• Finn attended the Women’s Rights and Justice in New York State conference, hosted by the Women’s Rights Alliance of New York State, in Syracuse in November. She presented as part of a panel with Kathryn Murano-Santos (Rochester Museum & Science Center) and others involved in the planning of the museum’s 2020 exhibition to commemorate the centennial of the 19th Amendment. The focus of the session was on inclusion and authentic representation in community-curated exhibitions. Finn discussed the library’s 2017 women’s suffrage exhibition, *Because of Women Like Her...*, and its 2019 LGBTQ+ exhibition, *Stonewall: 50 Years Out*, presenting these exhibits as models for community curation and cross-institutional collaboration.
• Ridarsky and Finn attended the 2019 Researching New York conference in November. Ridarsky organized and presented on a panel, “50 Years After Stonewall: Documenting, Preserving, and Presenting LGBTQ+ History,” which highlighted the variety of efforts to study and share LGBTQ+ history in Rochester, including the library’s 2019 community-curated exhibition Stonewall: 50 Years Out. Finn also organized and presented on a panel, “Across the Divide: Collaboration Between Academic and Public Historians.” The other panelists were representatives from the history departments at SUNY Geneseo and The College at Brockport, SUNY, who have been longstanding partners with the City and the library on various public history projects.

• Ridarsky worked with the City Communications Department to plan the City’s 2020 celebration of Susan B. Anthony’s 200th birthday and the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment that recognized women’s right to vote. Ridarsky will be working with Ryan Hughes of the Rochester Regional Library Council to revive, redevelop, and maintain the RocSuffrage.org website that we created during the 2017 NYS woman suffrage centennial. The website, which will be unveiled at a press conference with the mayor in January 2020, will serve as the community’s gateway for information on all women’s rights-related events in 2020.

• This month three community partners approached the Local History & Genealogy Division for help on special projects. Ted Capuano from the City of Rochester turned to us for information about the career of Dwight Hubbard, a former city employee who passed away on December 3. Teej Jenkins from WXXI approached us for help identifying images from the library’s collection that she could use for an upcoming segment on Susan B. Anthony. And the Rochester Institute of Technology asked us to provide historical context on a downtown space that will inform student proposals for their annual interior re-design project, Hyperspace, in January 2020. (Note: the selected location is to remain a secret until announced to students on January 14.)

Special Collections
Brandon Fess developed finding aids for several collections in the final months of 2019, including Helping People With AIDS records (a non-profit organization supporting AIDS patients in the 1990s and early 2000s), the Ellen Yacknin files on the case of Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley v. City Assessor, City of Rochester (Yacknin was the attorney for the Alliance in this critical case over the non-profit status of the Alliance), the Margaret Mary Lau and Cynthia Burch papers (personal papers mostly concerned with 1970s and 1980s LGBTQ+ religious organizations in Rochester), the Collection of Bills and Receipts (a collection composed of bills and receipts from diverse Rochester businesses, originally housed as a vertical file series, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union records (records of local branches of this famed reform organization), and the Livingston Park Seminary records (operating records of a prominent Rochester school for young women). He finished processing on two collections—the Children’s Playground League records and the Lynn Varricchio Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS records; finding aids will be developed in the new year. Fess also completed the accrual of materials to the Hugh Mitchell environmental activism collection discussed in October’s report.

Digital Projects
Planning for the development and installation of a digital asset management system continued with a meeting of the Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) Team (Librarian II Gabe Pellegrino, Fess, Brenda LaCrosse, Adam Traub, Mary Royce, and Mary Jane Wright) in November. This meeting gave the team a chance to discuss a report submitted by Fess in October that outlined possible solutions to the need for a comprehensive means of preserving, managing and providing access to the Local History & Genealogy Division’s digitized assets.

Rochester Voices
The Erie Canal for the Classroom project entered its final stretch in December. Supported by a grant from the Erie Canalways National Heritage Corridor, this project involves the creation of new educational materials on the Erie Canal that will be available on the Rochester Voices website for use by 4th-grade teachers and students. The educational materials will include a curated selection of primary sources from the library’s collections and a suite of classroom lessons drawing from these and other primary materials. The Educational
Consultant who is creating these lessons is an expert on curriculum development and inquiry-based learning that is aligned with the Social Studies standards for New York State. The project is on track to be completed by the end of January 2020.

Volunteer/Intern hours
Docents from the Rochester Genealogical Society contributed 45 hours of service to the division and assisted 18 patrons in November and December. In addition, we were aided by five unaffiliated volunteers (Nancy Martin – 10.75 hours, Ira Srole – 56.75 hours, Kevin Allen – 10.5 hours, Clara Arnold – 22.25 hours) and one intern from the Rochester Rehabilitation Employment Connection (Dakota Spinner – 64 hours). In all, volunteers contributed 216.25 hours.

Reynolds Media Center, Joseph Born reporting

- Reynolds Media Center started circulating 10 Mi-Fi units in late November. As of the end of December (five weeks) they have 43 circulations (one on the hold shelf and six holds waiting). We will be looking at adding more units after two months of circulation.
- In December RMC also started circulating “Binge Boxes” purchased through Midwest Tapes. Binge Boxes are different groups of DVDs with a common theme (e.g., “Don’t Mess with Denzel,” “Christmas Gone Wrong,” “Dude, Where’s My Comedy”). The 13 different boxes have been popular, with 34 circulations in three weeks and RMC staff are now looking at making their own “Binge Bundles” using second copies from the stacks and copies coming in as gifts, so no cost to us.
- The Friday First Film series showed “Fast Color” on November 1, and “I Kill Giants” on December 6. After “I Kill Giants” (which is about a young girl who has created a vast imaginary world for herself to avoid the fact that her mother is dying), a gentleman who had watched the film said how much this movie had affected him. “I really liked this movie. It helped me a lot. There’s been a lot of people in my family who have died recently, and I avoided seeing them. And now I understand why. So, thank you very much for showing it. Movies can really help people.”

Sciences and History, Darlene Richards reporting

Programs
- Sarah Bishopp Vélez attended the Community Engagement: Partnerships for Health event at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC), which was hosted by Dr. Theresa Green, Professor for the Community Health Improvement Course (CHIC) and the Director of Community Health Education and Policy at URMC. The event was an excellent opportunity for community agencies involved with CHIC to network and share what they do with potential student interns. This was especially helpful for the library since, with Nurse Barb’s resignation, Health Central needs additional staffing. Several of the students that Sarah talked with were very eager to gain community experience by working with the library! After networking, the students and community agencies sat down for a brief discussion and Q&A. Dr. Michael Mendoza, Monroe County Public Health Commissioner and faculty member at URMC, was present and spoke about challenges to primary care in the United States. Dr. Green then talked about the logistics of medical students volunteering and how they could potentially earn a Distinction in Community Health by working with community agencies, such as the library.
- Health Central received our third medical student intern through the Community Health Improvement Course (CHIC) at URMC. Kwanza Warren worked with the library throughout November, helping as much as she could in-between traveling cross country for several residency interviews. She created three health information handouts on topics such as cancer screenings, heart disease, and women’s health. Kwanza interviewed patrons who received the handout on cancer screenings to see if they were more likely to get
screened, based upon the information provided. In most cases the patrons answered positively. She was also instrumental in helping the library to procure new Narcan kits from Strong Recovery. Kwanza assisted a total of 31 people, performed health screenings and answered health related questions.

Anecdotes
Patron Ralph Slocum originally came to the library over a year ago asking for research help on a project he was doing on his great grandfather, Joshua Slocum (b. February 20, 1844 in Nova Scotia - Lost at sea on or about November 14, 1909), the first man to sail around the world solo in the sloop “Spray” (April, 1895 – June, 1898). Mr. Slocum met Librarian Steve Nash who proceeded to check books and databases for information. Mr. Slocum came in numerous times and asked Nash for information on the geography, history, maps and pictures of Exmoor (National Park), Dunster Castle and other aspects of southwest Great Britain. Mr. Slocum’s goal was to produce a family history and the origin of the name “Slocum.” He completed an anthology, “The Origins of Slocum Circa: 1308 – 1909,“ and presented Nash a signed copy as a thank you.

Teen Central, Dennis Williams reporting

Programs
Antoine McDonald was responsible for a profoundly needed financial literacy program: https://youtu.be/6U1t9AgCQRk The guest speakers included bankers, financial analysts, and advisors. Also, the Young Men’s Book club continues to be a success. The young men’s book club has maintained steady attendance with about 3-5 teens that come on a consistent basis. More importantly is the high level of participation from those 3-5 teens. McDonald and the young men read out loud and have informative conversations about difficult topics.

Outreach/Community Contacts
- I continue to work with the Genesee Valley Youth Ambassadors. We provide space, technical, and educational expertise to the group. Action for a Better Community work with us regularly for programming and space. Both RIT and MCC programs that target urban youth contacted me this month regarding further collaboration.
- I was also contacted by a woman filmmaker who is seeking to do self-help outreach with our young girls. We also worked with the Urban League on several visits this month. Each visit they brought with them over 20 kids. They sought out our space and technical expertise to work on digital projects. Champion Academy also brought students by this month for our technical expertise and space.
- I worked with several teens this month to help them with their music, online promotion, and video production. Here’s one: https://youtu.be/eWNzLhb3J7o And, here’s another https://youtu.be/czmEq5EkeBw

imagineYOU
- 802 Visitors-November and December
- Post-Production: In this look around the lab, during the holiday break, you can see a few kids utilizing the lab for E-sports and Virtual Reality and 14-year-old Yazz adding special effects to the music video he shot in the library using Adobe After Effects. https://drive.google.com/open?id=16RTMpMsMU_nS1_zqQmDmxEhpD6WVROiP
- The e-sports computers have now been connected to the YouMedia wi-fi giving our teens a chance to be very competitive. Check out this video of imagineYOU’s best Fortnite player winning a match after already having eliminated 16 other players. https://drive.google.com/file/d/14LuhDmWDTodsWC_ilmRhdoGV3FUAA9-hH/view?usp=drivesdk
- Girl Scout Gold Award: Zaria Gibson-Stevenson is an African American girl scout and the first girl scout from the west side of Rochester to receive the Gold Award. She utilized the imagineYOU lab to complete
her project to qualify for the Gold Award. Read more about it and see her video here: https://wp.me/p2ML12-zo

- **Virtual Reality:** The Oculus Rift has been upgraded to an Oculus Rift S+, featuring a new headset with surround sound and new hand controls. Five new games have been added as well. The boxing game is a huge hit and Mr. Jeff holds the record for the hardest punch. The Oculus Rift got a lot of use this month. Boxing continues to be very popular and our roller coaster game was very popular with a special-needs teen.

- **Monthly Contest:** Dakota won this month’s photoshop contest, adding himself, snowballs, and a reindeer to a cool winter cabin picture.

- The studio held its monthly certification. Six people were certified. One teen was brought to be certified by his mentor in the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.

- **Drawing Tablet:** Some younger teens spent time making some great illustrations that will be displayed on the ceiling in imagineYOU.

- **Saturday Classes:** The Saturday classes have been scheduled and put up on the library website. Classes will start at the end of January.

**Branch Library Updates**

*Assistant Director Tolley Reeves, EdD, reporting*

**Volunteers of Legal Services**

I met with Dr. Muhammad, Director of Community Engagement, Volunteers of Legal Aid. We discussed ways to extend their services into other RPL branches. We were able to pilot a few services at Sully and Lincoln, however, there was low turnout. We will continue to discuss creative ways to engage patrons and members of the community.

**Strive Together/Roc the Future Team**

We were able to secure funding to create 350 home libraries for students attending Schools #19 and #39. The home library includes a three-tiered bookcase, lamp and rug. We also held two events at Barnes & Noble and received 3000 donated books that will be distributed to the students. Our goal is to provide RCSD students at selected schools with home libraries and books on a monthly basis. This is an opportunity for RPL to extend our efforts in working with RCSD and parents to continue to create and build lifelong learners.
Branch Facilities and Operation Plan
On December 19, Patty Uttaro and I met with the Deputy Mayor to discuss our needs and concerns about the current state of services, programs and maintenance of the Maplewood Library. In addition, Dr. Danielle Lyman-Torres, Commissioner of DRYS joined us to discuss a potential partnership similar to our current models at the Sully and Douglass branches. We envision a shared multi-purpose building that could embrace the changing needs of the diverse and growing population. Currently, Maplewood averages about 15,000 patrons per month. We have outgrown the space and have challenges providing multi programming etc. We are unable to provide extended services based on lack of full-time staff and limited space. Next steps include meeting with staff in City Real Estate to discuss the land acquisition process.

Thank You Luncheon-Community Partners
Rebecca Fuss and I met to discuss a possible Thank You Breakfast or Luncheon for our community partners. Many of our programs and services are based on partnerships, relationships and funding. We thought it would be a great idea to acknowledge their efforts and celebrate our successes. I’ll be creating a team to assist with planning the event.

Safe to Be Smart, Derrick Coley reporting

The Arnett Site
• Shetora Banks has been working with several teens in job readiness. Recently, she mentored a female sophomore student from the School of The Arts (SOTA). Banks has assisted this young student with school projects and most recently a referral letter to the National Honor Society. The student stopped in to let Banks know that she was inducted into the National Honor Society on November 19 of 2019!
• Banks collaborated with Ms. Selena, from METRO Council for Teen Potential, a few times and engaged teens with games and snacks. She is an instructor for Making A Difference. The curriculum concentrates on Sexual Risk Avoidance Education and is geared towards 11-13-year-olds. We are hoping to have a small committed group to complete a minimum of 5 out of 8 sessions.

The Phillis Wheatley Site
• Lynnicsha Bostick returned from injury with no restrictions on November 18, 2019.
• Bostick facilitated a thankful tree craft and STEM program using Mason jars to create luminaries.
• She also facilitated arts and crafts that supported the Kwanzaa Coalition. The youth set-up of table-top decoration and the librarian added Kwanzaa books to the endcaps and wall displays throughout the teenspace. The youth were able to make a gift in a jar with Kwanzaa coalition staff to take home.

The Maplewood Site
• Yaliza Frank has been mentoring teens to take responsibility for their own behaviors. She has group and individual discussions with teens that have behavioral issues in the branch. Frank is implementing positive reinforcement approaches to help teens cut down on disruptive behaviors.
• In addition, she facilitated the teen book club at Maplewood. The book reading is taking longer than expected due to the branch having only two copies. However, the group discussions are very active after the readings.
The Lincoln Site
- Vera Haygood focused on health awareness with the teens. She created an awareness bulletin board acknowledging diabetes, lung cancer, healthy skin, suicide survivors, and family caregivers.
- Haygood created a “Thankful Board,” in which the teens posted a personal thankful message on a cutout of their hand.
- Haygood captured various youth at the “Motivational Wall and Mirrors,” discussing their actions at school and home.
- Haygood continues to provide teens with internet assistance, email set-up, online job application assistance, homework help, and gaming options during out of school time.

The Sully Site
- George Carter facilitated the Sully Book club with a mixed group of girls and boys this month. The past groups have been predominantly teenage boys.
- Carter collaborated with staff in library and Recreation Center to create family Christmas baskets. Many youth and adults worked together collecting, organizing and distributing the baskets to families that frequent the Sully Branch and Thomas Ryan Center.
- Carter facilitated the Christmas card program for youth. The youth decorated and wrote on their own card to prepare it to be mailed to a relative or family member local or out of town. Carter said many of these youth never mailed anything before and had fun learning how to format and use the postal system. He served cookies and punch for their great achievement.
- Carter brought a group of young men to the first Mayor’s Book Club discussion at City Hall on December 6. These young men had insightful things to say about the book and the Mayor was very impressed with their knowledge and participation.

Teen Central Site
- Lydia Williams-Hylton and John Hylton attended the RCSD budget meeting in support of STBS teens that were going to speak.
- Williams-Hylton has been providing homework help to a group of teen girls that have been visiting consistently.
- Hylton conducted a one-on-one craft program for a male teen who requested the help. The teen did not want to be looked at by his peers as non-masculine by doing crafts.
- Hylton also facilitated a MK11 tournament on the PS4 gaming system. The MK11 game involved high level thinking and problem-solving strategies.
- Williams-Hylton and Hylton facilitated a Thanksgiving Dinner for the teens with the theme of being thankful and grateful. Over 25 teens responded verbally to what they were thankful for and were served a meal.
- Williams-Hylton provided some family mentoring to a young adult couple with a two-year-old son.
- Hylton focused on mentoring a teen that has been bullied in school about his appearance. Williams-Hylton and Hylton received parental consent to provide resources to the teen for a makeover. Hylton linked the teen to a neighborhood barber that provided him with a new haircut to his liking. The barber also gave him some clothing items that helped to create a new look and smiles from his peers. The teen reported that the bullying had stopped!

Arnett Branch, Bruce Tehan reporting

Programs
- Raising a Reader story times continue to go very well. Nancy Cholewa was very excited last month when a non-verbal student of a four-year-old class said “hat” when he was voting for which book to read during
story time. Both his teacher and Cholewa were stunned into momentary silence by this breakthrough. It is so gratifying to Cholewa, knowing that she had a small part in making that milestone happen.

- We had a lot of popular children, teens, and adult programs during November and December. The teen area was especially busy. Cholewa held a variety of classes and programs.

- The first two classes of Arnett’s sewing series where a huge success. We had 10 participants in each class. They were all very pleased with the information they came away with and are eager to continue sewing and learning. Several were talking about continuing working with SewGreen to improve their skills until we hold our next classes. Georgia (from SewGreen) and Cholewa are looking at scheduling additional classes in February and March. The class participants made a small pillow (or two) in the first class and went home from the second class with their measurements and a sample pattern to study.

- We wrapped up the year with a technology petting zoo. All interested parties got a chance to work with and experiment with a variety of technology devices that we borrowed from Central. The most fun were the mouse races that were set up with the programmable digital mice and an obstacle course. The kids requested that we work with the technology pieces again soon, as they didn’t have time to work with all of the different components.

- Ginger Brewer-Bennet, Adult Librarian, reports that the computer class continues to grow at the library with a significant number of adults showing interest. The adults are having fun (their words) learning Microsoft Word basics and learning the steps needed to create projects. Many of the adults have been meeting one-on-one in order to focus on computer commands and feeling comfortable with what they are doing. Brewer-Bennet stated that she has high expectations for future classes and participation.

- A few patrons have requested one-on-one appointments with the computer tutor. Their interests consist of gaining further knowledge about computer functions such as inserting pictures, adding words, borders, and functions of the Ctrl key, etc. It is nice to see how much confidence the adults are building and the eagerness they have to learn about computers. More importantly, they are letting others know about the fabulous programs at the library.

- As requested by patrons, a Resume Workshop was conducted by the librarian showing the dos and don’ts of a resume. One patron didn’t know how to create a resume as they had been on their former job for 21 years. Another patron did not have much computer or work experience. The patrons were very appreciative of the help and now have a better understanding of how to create an effective resume.

- Arnett had the pleasure of hosting a job fair in collaboration with Recruiting on the Road. Various employers in Rochester and the surrounding areas were present to highlight the benefits of working for their company. More than 200 people flooded the library dressed for success in hopes of finding a prospective employer. This event was hugely successful and will definitely be scheduled again at the library in the near future.

**Community Outreach/Meetings**

- Nancy Cholewa, Ginger Brewer-Bennet and I attended various outreach events including Raising-a-Reader sessions, Children’s Book Festival, several block club and community association meetings.

- We are seeing a lot of evidence on how outreach can draw people into the library. For example, a puppet show that was arranged last summer when one of our volunteers stopped by Books By Bike at a farmers’ market took place on December 28, and was enjoyed by 42 people. Also, the partnerships with School #16, Arnett Block Association and many other groups resulted in 200 plus students enjoying a holiday themed field trip to the library. Spreading the word about adult services librarian Ginger Brewer-Bennet’s outstanding computer classes and Arnett’s adult and child tutoring programs have brought more and more patrons to the library.
Anecdotes/Other

- A longtime young adult patron of the Arnett Branch Library, Stephen Passero, was one of the honorees at *Do the Right Thing* awards ceremony held at the Rochester Public Safety Building. Stephen earned his award for his excellent work as a volunteer at the Arnett Branch Library. Stephen is the young man on the viewer’s right in this photo.

- While Cholewa was putting together the sewing series for next month, the word got out that she knows a bit about sewing. One of our patron’s did not want to wait for the classes and has visited her regularly over the past month to get assistance on modifying, and laying out a commercial pattern, as well as getting advice on assembling the garments. They have spent roughly 6 hours together over the past month, with Cholewa ducking in and out. To date, the patron has made a pair of pants, a skirt and a top, and is working on a dress and a cape/coat.

- We’ve gotten feedback from countless adult patrons this month on how much they enjoyed our education, job search, and entertainment themed programs.

Charlotte Branch, Paul Tantillo reporting

Programs

- In December, we had holiday and school vacation activities. There was a Christmas craft for adults, and the Children’s Room had a tree-trimming party at the beginning of the month.

- We had a Noon Year’s Eve party on the 31, (Noon Year’s is a mid-day New Year’s celebration for children who are too young to stay up until midnight to see the new year in).

- Children’s librarian Kim Whittemore borrowed the MCLS giant chess set for the entire month of December. Children love to play with it whether they know how to play chess or not, but our literacy aide Jasika is quite good at chess and she introduced the game to several kids.

- We received the usual abundance of holiday treats from well-wishers. Notable was Patty Uttaro’s box of carefully crafted and beautifully packaged homemade cookies. My nomination for most creative cookie this year goes to Patty’s polar bear paws! Whittemore also received a lovely card from a grateful grandmother.

Anecdotes/Other

- In November we borrowed a floating collection of books from Central to enhance our local collection. Alicia Gunther, MCLS Office selected an assortment of materials for us to try out on our patrons. She made the process very easy. In the future, we’ll request materials on specific topics, which will enhance the range of items we can offer, as well as giving us some excellent display material.

- Whittemore and adult librarian Karen Duff received their scores on County and City Civil service tests in December, and I’m happy to report they both scored very high. For many years librarians with several years’ experience garnered oddly low scores on the tests, even though they had continuously grown in skill, experience and responsibility. It looks like this situation may have been corrected, and Whittemore and Duff are now well-situated to pursue well-deserved advancement in RPL and/or MCLS.
Frederick Douglass Community Library, Erin Clarke reporting

Programs

- Sarah Ngo children’s librarian hosted two WXXI Science Fridays. The kids and Nazareth College students were active in using their creativity and ingenuity to create a handheld marble game out of paper plates, paper, marbles, and lots of tape. We also made marble tracks around the library using the same materials.
- Ngo also participated in the protest organized by the sixth graders from School #12 on December 12. A few of these students visit the library daily and asked Ngo to join in their protest to support their teachers. Ngo assisted some students in making signs at the library the day before. Many parents also rallied and joined in the march up and down the South Ave sidewalk in front of the school and the library. School #12’s PTA was there with hot chocolate because it was only 18 degrees!
- Catilyn Stahovic-Barnes, YA librarian, celebrated World Kindness Day, she put out coloring pages that said, “Throw Kindness Like Confetti.” The kids liked the saying and how it involved confetti but as they colored, they talked with Stahovic-Barnes about some of the things they do at school and with friends that show kindness. Stahovic-Barnes told them a little kindness toward someone can change everything.

Anecdotes

We received numerous thank-you gifts and cards in December. Patrons wrote and even called to let us know how important we are to them and how much they appreciate everything we do for them and the community. We also received a $100 donation from a family in the neighborhood.

Lincoln Branch, Sarah Lehman reporting

Programs

- Library Assistant Jasmine Santiago had a visit from School #12. The group had lots of fun with a sing a long, and a story about making a snow man! They also made sock snowmen using rice, glitter, and googly eyes! The children had a great time making their own versions of the craft! Some children even made little hats for their snowmen!
- During the month of November, Tim Ryan YA librarian made a connection with Baden Street Settlement. Their staff will be coming into the Lincoln Branch Library every Wednesday for the next few months in order to conduct educational programming and mentoring services to the teens. They began by establishing and building relationships with the teens that frequent the Lincoln Library during November. As time goes on, they will begin programming efforts to meet the needs of the teens in the community in correlation with Lincoln’s teen librarian and Safe To Be Smart staff.
- In December, Ryan met with a few teens that were in the library and discussed the history of Kwanzaa. Ryan discussed the five common sets of values that are central to the activities of the week-long celebration of Kwanzaa: ingathering, reverence, commemoration, recommitment, and celebration. He also discussed the seven principles of Kwanzaa, unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith, and how these principles are represented by the candles. This was new information for the teens as they only had minimal knowledge regarding the celebration of Kwanzaa.
- We also worked with Cornell Cooperative to hold a class on creating a budget for nutritious eating. We only have one attendee to the program, however we received very positive feedback about the program.
Toy Library Update

- November was a wonderfully exciting month for the Toy Library. We reopened on October 21, after our six-week renovation. We held the Renovation Celebration on Saturday November 9. A team of volunteers from AP Intego, a business insurance provider, organized carnival games and ran eight different stations. Each child collected stamps on a bingo sheet which they turned in for prizes. We also had support from Texas Roadhouse Grill. They sent one employee to monitor the refreshments which were served in the Community Room. The door count was 416 for the day, but it all went very well because of the excellent volunteer support. We were happy to welcome Councilman Patterson and Senator Robach to the celebration as well. Both were a large part of securing the funding for the project. The overall response to the renovation has been very positive. Many patrons have said that the Toy Library looks bigger. There has been specific appreciation for the scale of the play structure and the fact that it is intended for toddlers. Parents have said that there is more need for structures like this on playgrounds because the ones available are usually designed for bigger kids.

- Finally, Victoria Friele stopped by Lincoln to create a wonderful story in the D&C for the Toy Library. I have been working with Ms. Friele to schedule a time to come in for a follow up interview on the amazing work and close relationships our staff have developed with our Spanish speaking population. Hopefully Ms. Friele will be able to come by in early December for a second article.


- The Toy Library staff are now turning their attention to accessioning toys to make room in the storage area for Pirate Toy Fund donations. We will plan a trip to the Pirate Toy Fund warehouse in February to select 150 new toys. I was interviewed at Aquinas HS by WHAM TV on December 6 to promote the Pirate Toy Fund’s contributions to the Rochester community.

Community Outreach/Meetings

- Throughout December, there were several highlights to note. Library Clerk Victoria Velazquez and Lehman attended the Joseph Avenue Business Association’s annual holiday party where they gave out approximately 150 books as presents for the children there.

- Lehman sat down with Nancy Laugher from the US Census department to discuss ways the department is working to increase participation in the upcoming 2020 Census. They discussed multiple options including holding an information session at the branch, hosting a session at the branch to have Census staff on hand to assist patrons in filling it out and outreach opportunities within the branch to build awareness.

- Raising A Reader has been a great learning experience for Library Assistant Santiago! She has been able to practice story times with the good, the grumpy, and the sleepy as she spends time with each awesome classroom from Ibero to Peter Castle!
Anecdotes/Other

• In the month of December, Tim Ryan spent time assisting an adult patron, Pastor Tony, with some biblical research he was trying to incorporate into one of his sermons. Pastor Tony is a regular patron and aside from research assistance, he also needed help putting together a flyer for a fundraiser his church was participating in as part of the holiday season. Pastor Tony is always very appreciative, and he does a tremendous amount for the people in the community.

• Stephanie Frontz, substitute librarian, and I were able to work together to help a patron connect with a rehab clinic. The patron approached the desk looking for assistance as her car had broken down and her cell phone had been stolen. She had a spot waiting for her at a clinic in Schenectady, but with the loss of the cell phone was unable to contact the clinic to arrange for transportation. While we were able to get in touch with the clinic through the library, the clinic would not send out transportation without having a reliable way to get in touch with the patron. Working with a local center called Open Access, the librarians were able to successfully work out an arrangement for the patron to wait at the Open Access Center and staff at Open Access agreed to have their center act as contact for the clinic while the patron waited for transportation.

Lyell Branch, Shamika Fusco reporting

Programs

• We have found that at Lyell Pop-Up story times are more of a success. When several children gather that is a cue for Mrs. Jess to pop open a book. The children always seem to enjoy the time and love to pick out a book when possible.

• This month was our first time ever doing Teen Cooking Club program. We made Ultimate Nachos with over 5 toppings. Some of our adult patrons were just as excited to try the finished product. Next month we will be making pasta!

• What’s It Really Like in Palestine? Naublus-Boulder Sister City Program: Interested community members attended after much outreach efforts were conducted. Essrea Cherin, the presenter had always wanted to speak with a committed community group interested in starting a sister city program of their own and that’s exactly what the interested audience members were there for. Audience members included representatives from one of the three Unitarian churches, in addition to folks representing Jewish Voices for Peace, the D & C, and interested neighborhood and area residents. Much was learned during her talk, such as: There are apparently only five Sister City programs that the U.S. has with Palestine, while there are 500 with Israel by contrast.
• Food for Fines has been approved for November & December, so the pantry is slowly being restocked. We received potatoes, hot chocolate, peanut butter, tuna and a variety of canned goods. Patrons have asked if they could pay it forward for other patrons. We have a few regular patrons that visit this shelf. One of our patron’s father just got out of the hospital and she was thrilled that she found a brand new tie in a box. She said she was going to give it to her dad for Christmas.

Anecdotes/Other
• Captured here is a very special mother-daughter reading-out-loud together time. Michelle & Zoe usually come in every Friday to visit us. They also try and support Saturday programming too.
• Children’s librarian Jessica Smith had an older patron ask for help finding first-grade-level books. While helping her we learned that she is 60 years old and just learning how to read thanks to the literacy tutor here at the library, as well as the encouragement of her grandchildren.
• This is one of our star youth patron volunteers of the month! Skyler! He did a tremendous job and was an incredible help with setting up everything for our Produce Distribution that day. He is often in Fusco’s office looking for ways to be a better citizen in his community.
• Fusco also offered to do mock interview to teens that were applying for jobs this month.
• We had the opportunity to celebrate the second day of Kwanzaa “Kujichagulia” by bringing in the visiting artists, Womba Africa. They performed music by drumming and playing instruments, as well as dance.
• We provided 10 food baskets to community members in the Lyell-Otis neighborhood. The baskets included a variety of products including frozen meats, canned goods, boxed meals, dessert items, etc. The items were donated by Foodlink but assembled by Kiwanis Club of Southwest Rochester at the Lyell Branch library.
Despite the cold weather, patrons were eager to get fresh produce. This month’s variety included bananas, raspberries, cucumbers, salad, bread, and a host of other goods. We are extremely thankful for our dedicated volunteers who’ve been with us since the beginning a year and a half ago, and to our newer volunteers!

Pictured below is our phenomenal patron Mr. George and Shamika Fusco. They were featured in the Democrat & Chronicle. He talks about how libraries play a role in his life and she speaks about how libraries are hidden gems.

Maplewood Community Library, Johanna Buran reporting

Programs

- In November, the children, tweens, and teens created thank you cards in the spirit of Thanksgiving and in honor of World Kindness Day. In addition to the cards there were construction-paper turkeys, Thanksgiving themed crosswords, coloring pages and word searches. There was a day of fun with Boondoggle at the request of our patrons. There are many more planned themed crafts for the month of December.
- Our monthly activities were well attended once again. The younger domino patrons from last month have improved greatly on their patience skills and designs. There was a great turn-out for the new Play-Doh program this month. The Connect 4 Tournament continues to grow each month. Eight more spaces were added to the tournament this month and they immediately filled up. Due to the overwhelming turnout we will now be holding a teen and children’s tournament next month.
- Several teens joined in the writing workshops for Nanowrimo (National Novel Writing Month), the goal was to write 50,000 words by the end of November. On Fridays the library offered workshops and a quiet space to write with others in the meeting room.
- The Gingerbread House activity was a great success and has become a tradition we celebrate at the Maplewood Library. The Story Book Cook brought all types of candy, graham crackers and tons of icing. The children and teens created their own unique designs when they didn’t eat all their supplies. It was a lot of fun and involved a lot of icing which some of the children enjoyed more than others. It was well attended, and we plan to do it again next year.
- Brian Yanish, a local author and illustrator, showed our patrons how to make toys out of household items. He taught all of us how to make a parachute action figure out of a paper towel roll and a plastic bag. We had patrons launching their characters all over the library. It was a blast.
• Maplewood had such a huge turnout for Connect 4 last month that we split Connect 4 into a children’s and teens tournament. We held the children’s during the second week of December and the teens on the third. If there was room in the teen tournament the highest players from the Children’s could compete against the teens. This also inspired our patrons to hold their own Uno tournament. On Fridays our literacy aides have been holding gaming tournaments on the Nintendo Switch. They have been keeping statistics so that students can compete each week to see if they improve.

Community Outreach/Meetings
• Evanna DiSalvo went to the Wachuku Foundation, School #50 Parent Event which was focused on English Language Learners. She also attended a recruiting event by Census 2020 partnership specialist Mike Rivera and Nancy Laguer
• Ethayu Soe and Jeannette Gonzalez from RCSD Department of Multilingual Education stopped by with a draft of the handbook for parents of English as New Language students. They asked DiSalvo to be on the committee reviewing the handbook that would be distributed to the council they are putting together.

Monroe Branch, Mary Clare Scheg reporting

Programs
• Children’s librarian Margaret Paige reports that she had her first visit of the school year from School#23 UPK on November 21, 2019. Thirty-two children, teachers, and parents/caregivers came to the program. The focus was on the senses and we chose the theme of popcorn to cover all the senses. While the story time concentrated on hearing, we did talk about the different ways to experience popcorn through smelling, tasting, seeing, and touching. We sang an action song about popcorn where the kids used their bodies to change from a tight, small corn kernel into a puffy, big piece of popped corn. Then we read The Ear Book by Al Perkins and finished with an action rhyme with clapping and pretending to cook corn on the stove. We also ad-libbed at the very end as we pretended to throw a piece of popcorn into each other’s mouths. Students also participated in a sense craft activity and had popcorn and juice for a snack.
• Monroe held its 4th Monroe Reads to End Racism program on November 2. I helped with planning and presenting this program. We had a good turn-out, and everyone was very engaged and participatory. Our discussion was based upon Ibram X. Kendi’s book entitled, “How to be an Antiracist.” We had 13 people attend this lively discussion. Tierra Vu, one of our Clerk’s, joined Nancy Kraus and Melissa Hopkins in leading this discussion. Vu has been involved in leading the other workshops as well. Besides offering snacks, we had a drawing for Dr. Kendi’s books.
• On December 9, Dave McGrath returned for a second appearance at Monroe. He plays a mix of Americana and singer/songwriter music, spanning several decades. Twelve people enjoyed this concert.
• We had 52 people place an ornament on our Christmas tree this year. Our patrons, of all ages, like to pick an ornament and then find the perfect place to hang it on the tree.
Outreach
I was invited to the Senior Lunch Group at ABVI on Nov. 13. I decided to do some storytelling based upon three Folktales. After they finished their lunch, I proceeded to tell them these stories. This was the first time I had done storytelling for an adult group. They were very engaged and really enjoyed the stories. After I finished, we had a short Q&A session around the room. There were 22 people that attended this luncheon. I also discussed the possibility of some of them reconnecting with the library. The Director of Advocacy & Consumer Affairs will let me know if anyone has questions.

Anecdotes/Other
Grant, who grew up visiting the children’s room, is doing an Eagle Scout Project for the Monroe Branch. For this project, he will be building us a new shelf for our free books and magazines. Right now, we are using an old book truck for this purpose. This will be a positive improvement for the library. Grant, now a senior in high school, was active in our reader’s theater group and our summer reading programs. It is a pleasure to work with him on this project.

Sully Branch, Marie Heeks-Heinlien reporting

Programs
• We’ve had a fun month in the Children’s area doing some creative activities. The kids have enjoyed coloring this month. We have been providing them with extra supplies to color pictures and are hanging up their new masterpieces on our bulletin boards. We’ve been going through our crayon and colored pencil supplies quickly this fall! We also welcomed new Literacy Aide Jamie Clark this month and she has been engaging the kids in gaming programs which they love. We’ve also been challenging them with spelling words to access our computers instead of a basic numerical password.

• Another successful Gingerbread House Day is in the books! Thanks to the generous donations we receive every year for this program, we were able to host a festive and fun program out in the hallway of the Rec Center. Kids had a great time building their houses and the families that came also enjoyed this Sully tradition. We had enough leftover supplies to provide another program for some after school kids who missed out on the first session.

• Pre-K Story Times have been going great this fall. Nesbitt has one session where there are two classes combined, and this month the two teachers were having a bad morning with a few of the kids. After a Story Time session that included lots of music, singing, dancing, interactive books and egg shakers, both the students and their teachers left the library much happier than when they arrived. It’s a great feeling to provide a learning opportunity for kids that helps them to be their best selves.

• At long last we’ve kicked off our weekly (and sometimes more) Dungeons and Dragons club with Jacob Bigelow (Mr. Jacob) acting as the Dungeon Master for his teens. D&D is an excellent role-playing game that uses math, strategy, imagination and teamwork to create a living story that the players shape and create via their actions. Membership in the club is extremely diverse and promotes an environment of cooperation and teamwork.
We've been holding regular game nights on Thursdays in the Story Time Room to provide a safe and positive gaming environment. Teens have consistently displayed good sportsmanship while in the library, something that we are all very proud of.

Early in the month we held a serious discussion on race with Mr. Carter after viewing the Netflix adaptation of the award-winning play *American Son*. It was a meaningful conversation held that spoke of the intricacies of race and policing in modern day America.

Anecdotes

- I was talking to a few of our young patrons about things they are grateful for, and one of children said they were “thankful for their library card”, because they could “borrow video games with it”.
- After the November Book club meeting, a regular participant said she is glad she joined. She said that she is reading books she would not usually pick out on her own, but she is really enjoying being able to explore different types of books.
- Sully is starting to circulate sewing machines. We have two Singer machines that are processed and ready to circulate. Two Brother Machines will be processed and ready to circulate in January. We have received a lot of interest in the machines, and we look forward to monitoring their circulations.

**Phillis Wheatley Community Library, Lori Frankunas reporting**

**Programs**

- Making Fairy Doors turned out to be a very creative project. The girls decorated their doors with all kinds of sparkles and beads. They made rainbow doors, and doors with patterns. Some made a couple and then glued them together so they could have a fairy room.
- Our new chairs in the children’s room are the favorite for all. It’s nice to see them reading and relaxing in them. This is Abaas’s favorite spot to read.
- For a special Christmas project, we made glass snow globe candle holders with the teens. They had fun figuring out what to put inside and how is was going to be a snow globe without any water. They came out beautifully and many of the teens said they would give theirs as a gift.
- A teen told me how grateful she was to be able to participate in the arts and crafts projects at the library. She said she couldn’t afford gifts for people and that she would be using the crafts she makes at the library to give away.
- Tin ornament making workshop was provided by Genesee Country Mobile Museum. Patrons were given the history of Tin Ornament making and provided with Tin to make their own Holiday Ornament.
Anecdotes/Other

- An older man came into the library. He had some documents that were sent to his email, but he did not know how to print them out. He told us that he came to the library because the people there were the smartest people on the earth. He was very happy that we were able to help him, and he would be back if he needed additional assistance.
- We have a group of generational care givers who meet every other Tuesday at the library. They were looking for an organization who would donate books to them. We had just finished our book sale, so we let them go through what was left. They were very grateful to be able to get books to give to the children they look after. “This is a Godsend” and “you are angels” were some of the comments staff received. They usually are caregivers for grand and great grandchildren and don’t have the time or money to find books.

Branch Staff Day

There was an amazing amount of work that got done on our closed day. Clerks worked diligently to clear off their processing carts. The arts and crafts area of the AV room was cleaned out and organized. Storage areas in the staff area were cleaned out and organized as well. It was a blessing to have this uninterrupted time to be able to finish projects that we had been working on piecemeal.

Winton Branch, Kathy Wolf reporting

Programs

- Every December we have our annual Holiday Party, with members from both the Monday evening and Friday afternoon book clubs. Everyone brings a treat and we discuss our favorite books from the year. In addition, Pat Finnerty prepares a PowerPoint presentation in which she presents possible titles for next year’s book discussion groups. The members then have a sheet in which they can vote on the titles they would like to read in 2020. The participants enjoyed hearing about these books and the chance to vote on what they would like to read. After Finnerty has compiled the entries, she sends out a list of the books chosen for 2020.
- Cooking programs continue to be extremely popular at the Winton branch. On Monday, November 18, we had 23 people attend “Quick and Easy Appetizers” with Ann Brogham. She demonstrated five appetizers and attendees were able to sample each appetizer. The selections included: Easy Bruschetta, Chicken-Mango and Blue Cheese Tortillas, Shrimp and Avocado Phyllo Cups, Fruit Salsa with Cinnamon Chips, and Fruit Cups with Yogurt and Berries. After the class, people asked when the next cooking class would be!

Community Outreach/Meetings

Andrew Paris, 5th/6th grade Special Education teacher at School #15 on Hillside Drive came in one evening and wanted to set up a class visit. He hoped that a librarian could come to his class weekly to bring an assortment of material for his kids. We negotiated a deal whereby he would email me a list of subjects that his kids are interested in, we would pull books and put them on the hold shelf for him to come and pick up to take to his class. I would come and do a presentation about library access and materials and perform a short story
program. This program happened on Thursday, November 21, and kids, teachers, and librarian thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

**Selected Meetings & Outputs**

*Patricia Uttaro, RPL Director reporting*

**November 16 – January 17**

**Standing Meetings**
- City Senior Management Team (weekly)
- RPL-MCLS Management Team (weekly)
- Brie Harrison, Ana Suro, Tonia Burton, Christine Ridarsky – one-to-one meetings (monthly)
- Adam Traub, Tolley Reeves (biweekly)
- FFRPL Executive Director Ned Davis (monthly)
- Monroe County Assistant County Executive, Michael Molinari (monthly)
- Central Library All-Staff Meeting (monthly)
- MCLS System Services and Operations Committee (monthly)
- New York State Library – Division of Library Development conference call (monthly)
- Public Library System Directors’ Organization (PULISDO) conference call (monthly)
- City Dept. of Environmental Services Commissioner, Norm Jones (bimonthly)
- Racial Equity & Justice Initiative Team (monthly)

**Other Meetings**
- Carol Desch, Division of Library Development
- Workforce Planning Team, City of Rochester
- RIT Computer Student presentation for community program locator website development
- State of Our Children event (presenter & facilitator)
- MCLS Advocacy Team
- WNYLRC conference call
- MCLS Trustee & Director Symposium
- City Budget Director, Library MOE meeting
- REJI Leadership meeting, CCSI
- Smart City Team meeting, City of Rochester
- County Legislature meeting, budget hearing
- Highlands at Pittsford (presentation)
- Freed Maxick Audit Review
- Deputy Mayor James Smith, Maplewood building project
- Penfield Library Trustee Orientation
- Cash Handling Audit Review, Central Library
- ROC-SPIN conference planning meeting (2)
- Jennifer Sertl, BIC Consultant
- Valley Manor (presentation)
- Alesco Investment Advisors
- RIT Design Students Hyperspace presentation for Central Secret Room
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