



115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

TO: RPL Board of Trustees  
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director  
DATE: March 24, 2021  
SUBJECT: Monthly Report – March 2021

## **Action Items**

### **Request for Extension on Holds Fee Elimination (Uttaro)**

At the November 2019 meeting, the RPL Board voted to approve the elimination of holds fees at all RPL locations and gave the RPL Director and Finance Director the authority to implement the change within 18 months. The original action item was:

#### *Holds Fee Elimination (Uttaro)*

*Elimination of fines and fees has been a method used by RPL to remove barriers to service. The elimination of fines on materials for children and teens has resulted in increased circulation of those materials. Now, we are asking that Board consider eliminating the \$.25 holds fee, which will broaden access to materials throughout the system for City library users. In FY2018-19, RPL filled 52,681 holds – 40,115 in branches and 12,566 at Central. If the \$.25 holds fee was collected for each of these holds, RPL realized \$13,171 in revenue. Many of those holds fees were likely waived, depending on the situation. Other MCLS libraries that have eliminated holds fees have experienced increases in circulation as people begin to take advantage of the full scope of the system's collections. The holds fee was originally implemented in the early 2000's to increase revenue during difficult budget years. The result was the creation of a two-tiered service model in which people who could pay for holds were able to access more materials while people who could not pay were left with limited resources. This action seeks to eliminate the two tiers of service and open up access to the full scope of county collections to city library users.*

*Board Action Requested: Approval of eliminating the holds fee for Rochester Public Library users.*

The vote, as documented in the board meeting minutes was:

#### *Hold Fees Elimination*

*Ms. Uttaro explained that hold fees were introduced by the Monroe County Library System almost 20 years ago to help member libraries address increased cost-shares. Over the past 5 years, many of the member libraries have reduced or eliminated hold fees. The changes resulted in some increase in transfers handled by the Shipping Department, however, the turnaround time of 24-48 hours has remained the same. Ms. Uttaro asserted that the hold fees have created a two-tiered service model in which people who can pay for holds can access more materials while people who cannot pay are left with limited resources. This action seeks to eliminate the two tiers of service and open access to the full scope of county collections to city library users. Further, Ms. Uttaro noted that an implementation date has not been included in this action item as she would like to consult with Ms. Harrison to further analyze the impact of this change and decide between a January or June 2020 start date. A MOTION WAS MADE BY Mr. Wolf AND SECONDED BY Mr. Hamilton to approve the elimination of the hold fees for Rochester Public Library users at the discretion of the Director with implementation to occur within the next 18 months. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. Mr. Gardner was not present for*

*the vote.*

This change has not yet been implemented, primarily due to the pandemic during which libraries were closed, services were limited, and revenue has declined significantly. 2021 is projected to be a year of “building back better” and we would like the opportunity to include the holds fee elimination in the larger plan that will try to address lost revenue, identify other revenue streams, and navigate the potentially difficult road to recovery. At this time, we request that the board action from November 2019 be extended to allow for implementation of the holds fee elimination within the next 18 months. While the target date will be July 2022 to coincide with budget planning, an earlier implementation will be pursued if funding becomes available.

Board Action Requested: Approve extending the implementation of holds fee elimination to July 2022 or earlier, given available funding opportunities.

### **National 1 Cent Day at Lyell (Lewis)**

Staff at the Lyell Branch would like to participate in National 1 Cent Day by offering a fine forgiveness program. Patrons would pay 1 cent for each fine on their account. Only fines on Lyell materials would be eligible and lost items are excluded. This would take place for one day on April 1.

Board Action Requested: Approval of Lyell participation in National 1 Cent Day to reduce existing Lyell fines to 1 cent on April 1.

## ***Report Items***

### ***RPL Director Patricia Uttaro reporting***

#### **Facility and capital updates**

Brie Harrison reports that this spring will see many activities for the RPL with multiple construction and design projects underway. Several project updates are as follows:

- Rundel Terrace Reconstruction: After a winter pause, construction started back up this month, with Chevo Studios (art installations) continuing offsite at their Colorado location. Library staff are attending bi-weekly construction meetings to review schedules and work scope for the project duration, given complexity of this project. Granite has been ordered and April will start to see the final shape of the north terrace begin. We will share current images of the art in progress at the Board meeting. Construction will continue through the summer and early fall.
- Lincoln Branch Library design: Edge Architecture has been working with library staff on changes to the exterior and interior of the facility, with a focus on safety, increased street visibility and better interior spaces. Due to reductions in NYSED library construction grants, the project has been separated into two phases; the exterior façade and signage, entry, restrooms and circulation in phase one; and relocation of adult, children's and teen areas with a family restroom and improved connection to the Toy Library in phase 2. We anticipate phase one construction in late fall 2021.
- Rundel Masonry: This full exterior building assessment has been underway by Bero Architecture since spring 2020. Industrial rope access techniques were used to investigate the masonry conditions and perform a hands-on and close visual survey down the building elevations. Condition assessment findings were compiled into a written report in August 2020. Additional investigations were conducted of masonry covered columns and beams showing potential moisture related damage within the library in January 2021. A design scope and estimate were prepared for the first-priority work on the west façade (river side) for the

limestone masonry repairs and replacement at the upper-parapet wall. Final design for this first phase is beginning with anticipated bid in fall 2021 and construction starting spring 2022. This work will likely include an extensive scaffolding system to support repair activity.

- **BLB HVAC:** This project was funded in the current year with \$500,000 in debt and \$473,000 in NYSED construction grant funds. A Request for Proposals for design is under development with City Architectural Services. The project will replace the rooftop make up air unit with increased cooling capacity, upgrade system controls and replace as many heat pumps as the budget allows. We will also use City term contracts to replace restroom and mechanical room exhaust fans. These items will address all priority recommendations from a 2019 study.
- **Technology updates:** The FY22 round of Federal E-rate program includes new proposal solicitation for wireless access points and new batteries for the MCLS' Uninterrupted Power Supply system. Member libraries could opt to participate in the wireless access point bid, and all RPL locations have done so. Replacement of the access points, of which the current are six years old, will occur in summer 2021.

### **Digital Equity Work**

RMAPI & Roc the Future and the State Education Department have developed a focus on digital equity and the need for improvement to support students and all NYS residents who do not have access to affordable internet, equipment, support, and training.

Roc the Future held a series of Digital Equity briefings in January and February that explored digital equity issues in Rochester through four areas: infrastructure, policy & access, device distribution & sustainability, digital literacy skills, and technical support. I participated in a panel discussion with Literacy Rochester where we discussed the digital literacy training and support provided in libraries. Roc the Future is now assembling smaller working groups on these topics. Brie Harrison will participate in the infrastructure, access & policy group, and I will continue to work on digital literacy. Roc the Future is attempting to gather all the different agencies working on this topic locally.

With the anticipated influx of federal aid for broadband, the City's Smart Cities team is exploring a partnership with Silicon Harlem <https://www.siliconharlem.com/#about-us> that would address many digital equity issues in Rochester. Adam Traub and Brenda LaCrosse will both participate on the City team that works on this project.

In the last year, we have seen the critical need for students and adults to have reliable and affordable internet access and equipment. The demand for MiFi devices is unabated, but we discovered early in the program that we could not sustain the level of service that is needed. The library lending model does not work for MiFi's – people need access all the time, not just for 3 weeks.

It is difficult to predict what the 2020-2021 pandemic has done to students and their learning, but it is likely the disparities between those who had access to consistent, reliable internet, equipment and support for home learning and those who did not will be felt in the education field for a very long time.

### **NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council**

This council has continued to meet virtually and is working on a new strategic plan that includes support for parents, educators, and children. I have elected to work within the strategic planning subgroup focusing on communication with parents throughout New York State. My role is determining how public and school libraries can assist the Council with disseminating information and activities that will help parents of young children navigate the complex process of educating their children. The Council recently released a new set of Learning Guidelines for New York State. I am happy to share my copy with anyone who would like to see it. I will be

sharing this with Children's Consultant Tonia Burton and Deputy Director Melanie Lewis to discuss how we can incorporate these guidelines into library programming and collection development.

Social Media

<b>February 2021</b>	<b>RPL Twitter</b>	<b>MCLS Twitter</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Facebook Calendar</b>	<b>Facebook Groups</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>YouTube</b>
<b>Profile/ Page Visits</b>	625	403	917	55	1	24	-
<b>New Followers/ Page Likes</b>	17(1981)	12(2196)	197(4865)	-	32(709)	20(1843)	12(219)
<b>Engagements</b>	104	62	6989	86	270	361	39
<b>Check In/ Mentions</b>	43	30	-	-	-	3	-
<b>Post Reach</b>	10,100	5,948	60,332	879	-	6,572	16,738
<b>Video/Story Views</b>	-	-	738	-	-	0	1,095
<b>Saves/ Actions on Page</b>	-	-	1	-	-	14	-

***Central Library Updates***

***Associate Director Adam Traub reporting***

***Patron Services Manager, Cynthia Dana reporting***

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Upon notice of the Hawkeye site and the library's role in registering patrons, staff across divisions worked to set up a vaccine information table. Staff helped patrons at this table, which contained flyers regarding the site, eligibility requirements, and a list of FAQs regarding the vaccine itself. Patrons were invited to go downstairs to the Tech Center for assistance signing up. Flo Morris successfully helped a patron set up an appointment and shared her experience with other staff so they would know what to expect upon reaching the site. Tech Center staff assisted many patrons; all in all, it was a good team effort.

### **Arts/Literature, Nanci Nugent reporting**

#### Programs

- Patrons participated in another creative class with Jardin Terrariums, titled “Creating Valentine Terrariums.” Kathleen Rullo always is a favorite of our patrons due to her friendly and patient demeanor. In this class, patrons created pink and red sand terrariums for Valentine’s Day enhanced with a green succulent. These classes provide fun and deliver an educational experience for our patrons by teaching them about the care of succulents.
- “Charles Ethan Porter: Artist and Community” was the third lecture in our African American Artist Series, taught by Cynthia Hawkins, Ph.D. Hawkins is the Gallery Director and Curator at SUNY Geneseo’s Bertha V.B. Lederer Gallery. She discussed African American artist Charles Ethan Porter who specialized in lush still life oil paintings, some landscapes, and the figure. During the “long 19th century,” he was among the few African American artists working in New York City and Hartford, and the first African American to study at the National Academy of Design in New York City. This presentation discussed his life, his painting, and his Hartford Connecticut community.
- The fourth lecture in our Black History Month Celebration was “Dox Thrash: From Tenant Farmer’s Son to Artist at the Pennsylvania Federal Art Project,” also taught by Cynthia Hawkins. Thrash (1893-1965) was born in Griffin Georgia. He left home at 15 to study art at the one place he knew African American students were accepted, the Art Institute of Chicago. Hawkins taught students about his art that focused on African American life. As the first African American hired by the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project in Philadelphia, he also became a member of Philadelphia’s historic Pyramid Club. Hawkins spoke about his work as a draftsman, printmaker, and painter of African American life and as the co-inventor of the Carborundum printmaking process.
- *Rochester Writes* programs continue to attract a diverse group of people and to create positive connections between students that contribute to a strong and supportive writing community. One student evaluation commenter wrote:  
*"We are living in a prolonged time nationally and globally of heavy hearts from the corona virus pandemic, political division, racial injustice, etc. However, a couple of hours writing, sharing and hearing others' stories that revealed their humanity was an experience of hope and a lighter heart. Thank you."*



### **Business Insight Center, Jennifer Byrnes reporting**

#### Statistics

- The Carlson Center for Intellectual Property assisted: 1 in person, 16 by email, 1 by mail, 6 by phone.
- 3D Printer: 4 for 1 client
- Hours of in-depth market research: 17
- Tracy Jong usage: 3 appointments; 2.5 hours total

#### Database Use

- Frost & Sullivan: Downloads 29; Value \$109,300
- IBISWorld: Page Views 71; Value \$29,240
- InnovationQ: Logins 28; Searches 32

## **RPL Board Director's Report– March 2021 (Continued)**

- MarketLine: Downloads 12; Value \$9,525
- PitchBook: Logins 5
- ValueLine: Logins 182; Searches 4,428; Downloads 1,654

### Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- Jennifer Byrnes was the guest speaker for Explorations in Innovation, a class offered by the Rochester Institute of Technology's School of Independent Study.
- She also attended the Young Adult Reentry Partnership Program meeting with Pathstone and met with Zach Sarkis of HempLab to discuss a potential partnership.
- Byrnes and Kate Meddaugh met with the students in SimonVision, a free consulting service provided by the Simon School.

### Anecdotes/Other

Professional Hours with Tracy Jong Law Firm have begun, and patrons of the Carlson Center have had nothing but good things to say:

*Tracy was very helpful with copyright and trademark counsel when we met with the RIT School of Independent Study student I was coaching. Tracy listened, and provided timely feedback about the legal aspects and priority of coverage. She also provided insight into costs. Tracy was very easy to understand and she was open to questions and concerns. This was extremely helpful for my student as she launches her card game and novel based on a Victorian steam punk world that she has created. Tracy's legal service is a great addition to the Business Insight Center at the Central Library, and I have mentioned her expertise to other RIT Innovation Coaches. Thanks again. –Pamela Spiteri*

## **Children's Center, Tonia Burton reporting**

### Programs

Librarian Katie Powell and Krystal Osei from Girl Scouts of Western New York held two virtual scout meetings. Participants completed a new badge called "Racism and Hate Have No Place Here" and did various activities related to Black History Month.

### Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- Tonia Burton, Children's Services Consultant hosted the MCLS Children's Services Meeting. Burton also attended monthly meetings for Roc the Future Language and Literacy group, Early Childhood Development Initiative, Raising A Reader, ABC Head Start Policy Council, Monroe BOCES 2 School Library Council and Rochester City School District School Library Council.
- Katie Powell met virtually with three groups of pediatric residents from the Pediatric Links to the Community program to discuss library services for children and families. Powell also spoke with an occupational therapy class at Nazareth College about literacy skills videos they will be creating for our Facebook page. The students will also work with Burton to create activities for the Raising A Reader Spring Take Home Bags. They will create movement activities that help children with skills needed for school readiness.
- Burton participated in a Language and Literacy special work group on Talking is Teaching: Talk- Sing- Read campaign. The goal is to have the campaign, which is already used by New York State Council on Children and Families, utilized throughout the county by libraries, early education providers, pediatricians, museums, and businesses serving young children. There have been billboards and posters in some grocery store in the City of Rochester which were paid for by the NYS Council on Children and Families.

- Burton began working with the local chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). It is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for children birth through age 8 by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. NAEYC celebrates April as the Month of the Young Child. The theme for this year is kindness. MCLS will support the month in several ways:
  - through sharing Community Readers Story times on the Children's Center Kids Club Facebook Group and through interested member libraries
  - providing an activity calendar that will be shared with April activity kits
  - producing social media posts throughout the month
- Burton received a request from Sojourner Home at Wilson Commencement Park for materials & activities to support their clients. Sojourner Home provides permanent supportive housing for women and families whose lives have been impacted by homelessness, domestic violence, chronic poverty, family instability, mental health issues, and substance use disorders. Burton delivered activity bags for the children being served. In March, Burton will team up with Jasmine Santiago from the RPL Lincoln Branch to provide a virtual bi-lingual Spanish and English story time and activity extensions.

#### Raising A Reader

- The Rochester City School District Preschool Parent Program invited Burton to attend a Parent Power virtual program. She shared the status of Raising A Reader, other library resources and explained how families can access electronic content. Adult-Family Educator Bonita Williams requested another session based on early literacy strategies. Burton will offer a short series in April that will cover the foundations for early literacy.
- Childcare Centers are starting to reopen slowly. RPL will provide At Home Storytime Bags to sites and offer virtual story times and support in any way needed. Currently sites are happy to receive the bags and plan to offer RAR next fall.

#### ***Circulation/Information, Chad Cunningham reporting***

##### Statistics

- Curbside Pickup Appointments – 172
- New Borrowers – 83
- Notarial Acts – 16

##### Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Chad Cunningham and Kathy Sochia attended a meeting hosted by the Rochester Regional Library Council regarding Access Cards. Access Cards allow members of the public access to local academic libraries. Due to all academic libraries being closed to the public, the program has been put on hold until fall at the earliest. RRLC will be testing a digital version of the Access Card. Cunningham volunteered to be part of the test.

##### Anecdotes/Other

- Cunningham assisted a patron who is under quarantine for Covid-19. She was concerned about returning her Mi-Fi unit and having another one available for use. Cunningham extended her loan on the Mi-Fi and placed a hold on another unit.
- With the library reopening to the public, the number of Curbside Pickup appointments dropped dramatically. Multiple patrons expressed their happiness at being able to browse the collections again. Some patrons still choose to use Curbside Pickup and are pleased to have the option.



**Local History & Genealogy Division, Christine L. Ridarsky reporting**

Patrons eagerly returned to the Local History & Genealogy Division when it re-opened for in-person service by appointment on February 15; during the last two weeks of the month, 12 appointments were held. Staff members Antoine McDonald and Emily Morry joined Brandon Fess and Jordan Wallance in working their full schedules in the office, with Christine Ridarsky and Michelle Finn maintaining a hybrid home/office schedule and Hope Christansen, Dan Cody, and Barb Koehler continuing to telework from home. The team remained in close contact through weekly reports, a virtual staff meeting, and regular communication via email, phone, and Zoom.

Division staff continued planning for establishment of an archive of Black history and culture. As part of those efforts, the team formally launched the Clarissa Street Photo Digitization Project in partnership the Clarissa Street Reunion Committee and Teen Empowerment. Members of the Clarissa Street Reunion Archive Committee are working with elders who lived or did business on Clarissa Street to identify photographs of the old neighborhood before urban renewal. The project is supported by funds raised by the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library during ROC the Day 2020. Chris Bermudez, a 10th grader at James Monroe High School, will digitize the photographs using scanning equipment in the Local History & Genealogy Division at the Central Library. Jaylen Wims, a Pittsford Sutherland High School 10th grader through the Urban-Suburban program, and University of Rochester Public History intern Sakhile Ntshangase will then work with the elders to record information (metadata) about each image. Shanterra Randle-Mitchum, a James Monroe High School teacher and summer program coordinator for Teen Empowerment, will supervise the student workers and manage the materials and data as project manager. Fess developed a procedural guide on the digitizing of and metadata creation for these materials and spent two days training the project staff and interns. The images will be preserved by the Local History & Genealogy Division and will become part of a planned archive of Black history and culture. They will also be used in Teen Empowerment and Clarissa Street Reunion Committee's planned 2022 exhibit on the history of Clarissa Street and other public projects.

Programs

- The division presented the Fourth Annual Anthony Mascioli Rainbow Dialogues in partnership with the Out Alliance and with support from the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library. The educationally focused, half-day virtual event featured a keynote address by former Rochester mayor William A. Johnson and a panel discussion on inequality and local efforts to overcome it (via Zoom).
- The popular Mourning in the Morning series, presented in partnership with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, featured Dennis Carr's talk, "A Nation of Joiners: Ritual, Regalia, and the History of Fraternalism in America" (via Zoom). This educational presentation looked at the vital role fraternal societies played in the social and cultural fabric of 19th-century Rochester. The program is available to view online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhRyUx0k0qw&list=PLzEBIzX1XFJLebwaUF-QZ\\_xJAtgdz\\_HN&index=19&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhRyUx0k0qw&list=PLzEBIzX1XFJLebwaUF-QZ_xJAtgdz_HN&index=19&t=1s).

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- Barb Koehler presented "Genealogy 101" for residents of the Leisure Care senior living facility in Greece, NY (via Zoom). She introduced the group to three main types of genealogical records and demonstrated how to find and use specific documents to answer family history research questions. Afterward, several residents expressed interest in working one-on-one with Koehler to uncover their own family stories.
- Michelle Finn and Emily Morry reprised their presentation "Rochester's Black History through the Eyes of the Dinkle Family," with Karen Dinkle Bunton and Jerry Bunton, for the Greece Public Library and Greece Historical Society. Originally part of the Tuesday Topics series presented by the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library, the presentation features Finn, Morry, and the Buntons discussing the creation of



the *Everyday People* exhibition that is on display in the Local History & Genealogy Division, followed by a live question-and-answer session with attendees (via Zoom). The program was recorded and is available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA-tPcqluSc&feature=youtu.be>.

- Finn began a 10-week supervisor leadership development and skills training course, “LeadOn: From Engaged Employee to Effective Leader,” sponsored by the City of Rochester. Facilitated by staff from the City’s training office and consultants from The Jackman Group LLC, classes run twice a week, three-hours each session, until April 15 (via Zoom).
- Ridarsky participated as a panelist in a workshop on Documenting COVID-19 presented by the Museum Association of New York.
- Finn met (via phone) with Andy Dufford and Will Seal of Chevo Studios, the firm that is creating the artwork for the Rundel Building’s North Terrace project. The artists were seeking input on the design for the Gateway sculpture that will stand on the corner of Broad Street and South Avenue. Finn offered feedback on their plan and suggested additional historical references they could incorporate.
- Ridarsky attended a planning meeting for the Monroe County Bicentennial hosted by County Historian Carolyn Vacca. During the meeting Ridarsky suggested that the county adopt the proposed Rochester Black Storytelling Project, which will use the TheirStory digital platform to record and provide public access to oral history interviews with African American elders and activists, as a bicentennial project. At the county’s request, Ridarsky applied for \$2,000 in funding to the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency (COMIDA).
- Ridarsky continued to represent the City and the library on the History Subcommittee of the Spiritus Christi Anti-Racism Committee’s Civil Rights Heritage Site planning committee and participated in two meetings of that group in March.
- Ridarsky met with Janey Braga of the New York Archives Partnership Trust (APT) to discuss an invitation for the library to become a partner in APT’s application for a grant from the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program. If funded, the grant would provide support for identifying and digitizing archival materials documenting Rochester and Monroe County’s African American history and to hire educators to write curriculum that used the resources to teach about Black history.
- Ridarsky attended the first meeting of the Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport Renaming Committee as the City and the library’s representative. The committee, which was appointed by the Monroe County Legislature in November, is tasked with developing a plan for interpretive, educational, and artistic elements in the airport to inform travelers about Douglass’s legacy. Ridarsky will co-chair the education subcommittee with Kathryn Murano-Santos of the Rochester Museum & Science Center.
- McDonald continues to represent the library on the ROC the Foundation planning committee and met with that group once this month (via Webex). This project, sponsored by M&T Bank, focuses on career interest and job placement for multicultural high school juniors and seniors. McDonald has been tasked with creating an intake questionnaire to assess those youth who are interested in participating.
- Ridarsky and Koehler met three times (via Zoom) with Marion French of WXXI to plan for a jointly sponsored March 11 panel discussion on African American genealogy connected to the *Finding Your Roots* PBS series.
- Fess attended the second New York Heritage Bits & Bytes series program, sponsored by the Empire State Library Network and New York Heritage (via Zoom). In this program, Cynthia Van Ness of the Buffalo History Museum discussed the origins of the Buffalo KKK membership list in her institution’s collection and how it came to be digitized and made available through New York Heritage. Such examples serve to inform the Local History & Genealogy Division’s approach to adding its own collections to the site.

### Special Collections

Fess and Wallance completed the project, started in January, to inventory and rehouse the division’s extensive map collection. Fess continued to process materials for the pamphlet file and completed finding aids for the

Opera Theatre of Rochester records, the Kathie Meredith papers (newspaper photographs and articles written by a local journalist during her 40-year career), the Bentley Family photographs (the Bentley family included several notable Rochester lawyers and businessmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries), and the Edwin Rumball papers (from the minister of the First Unitarian Church between 1909 and 1915).

#### Social Media

The [www.rochistory.wordpress.com](http://www.rochistory.wordpress.com) blog entries posted this month were “500 Norton Street, Pt. 3: The Baltimore Years” by Dan Cody and “So Far Away: The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Rochester” by Emily Morry, who also edits the blog. In addition to these posts, readers revisited 124 previously published posts this month, two of which garnered over 100 views each. “Man without a Birthday: The Life of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), Part 1” had 171 views and ““A Good Guy?": The Life and Death of Salvatore ‘Sammy G’ Gingello,” had 112 views.

#### ***Reynolds Media Center, Joseph Born reporting***

#### Statistics

- During the month of February, RMC handled 452 reference questions and 181 non-reference transactions for a total of 663. RMC's door count for the three weeks open in February averaged 89 patrons a day.
- In February, RMC loaned 5 pieces of equipment, 131 Mi-Fi units in addition to the regular collection, for a grand total of 2,166 items or 40% of the Central Library's total circulation (before renewals from Catalog Plus, Classic Catalog and Telephone are added). When adding in the RMC items that circulated at other libraries, we circulated 16,084 items.

#### Database Use

##### Hoopla

- Circulation
  - Movies/TV – 506
  - Audiobooks – 764
  - Music – 63
  - eBooks – 310
  - Comics – 198
  - Total – 1,841
- New Users – 47

#### ***Science and History, Darlene Richards reporting***

#### Programs

- Renee Kendrot and Alaikia Miller cohosted a cooking demonstration program- “Homemade with Philomina Emeka-Iheukwu.” The program was demonstrated by Philomina and presented by Hannah Davis, folklorist and faculty member of Rochester Institute of Technology School of Individualized Instruction. Philomina prepared two Nigerian recipes of pottage and chicken stew. The filming and actual cooking was done in the kitchen at the public market. The series continues next month with the “DiGrazia Family.” (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education & Engagement)

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Pellegrino met with Daniel Lopez, a first-year medical student focusing on psychology, looking to receive his Distinction in Community Health. Lopez will be working on a project using the old Human Services Directory to create an up-to-date index/directory/etc. of mental health services available in the greater Rochester area. At this point, he is analyzing what was covered in the old Directory and comparing it with what can be found at 211.lifeline.org. Lopez will see how his work can become a complement to that website, and make information more accessible to people who may not know where to start in seeking service. This project may expand in scope over several years as Lopez continues his studies and his Community Health Improvement Course work (CHIC).

Anecdotes/Other

- Christine Ridarsky forwarded a request from the secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Camp #6 of the Rochester Area Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War; they inquired whether the library would be interested in a donation of a book on the topic of Union soldiers and if we could recommend some titles. Richards put together a selection of books on the topic and emailed the organization a list of suggestions to consider.
- A teacher from Warsaw High School who had worked with Steven Nash in the past contacted Darlene Richards directly for a list of about forty books that needed to be pulled for a research project that his college-credit, global history students will be starting the first of March. Due to COVID, he was unable to obtain any of the material from his school libraries. Florence Morris pulled the requested materials and coordinated with Circulation and the teacher so that the books could be picked up.

***Technology Center, Jay Osborne reporting***

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

The classes that the Technology Center staff have been taking are beginning to bear fruit. When Jeanne Slocombe joined the Technology Center, she had spent most of her career as a reference librarian, not focused on technology. In the last month she completed the first phase of her work on a PowerPoint presentation. The intent of the presentation is to help patrons create resumes that are compliant with the Application Tracking Systems software. The time she has invested in learning how to use Microsoft Office products is paying dividends in raising the overall competency of the Technology Center Staff.

Anecdotes/Other

- The Tech Center staff are very excited to welcome Pedro Nunez to the team. Pedro comes to us from the Security team where he has proved himself to be calm and reliable. In his previous employment, Pedro worked in tech support for Verizon customers and ATT customers and eventually led various teams in call centers. He also spent time in Columbia training bilingual tech support personnel for Sutherland Global Services. Pedro's skills are exactly what we need here to help meet the needs of the core of the users of the Technology Center. The fact he combines these skills with native fluency in Spanish makes it possible for us consider new ways to serve the Spanish language community of Rochester.
- This month a patron came in who needed to put a resume and cover letter together. He had very limited skills and expressed the need for assistance from staff. He was not an absolute beginner with the computer, so staff were able to help him get started with his project from a safe distance. It took him two sessions at the Tech Center to complete his work, but in the end, he was very happy and took pride in completing the task himself. This is the kind of access to critical resources (technology and capable staff) that the community has come to rely on, and it has probably never been more essential to people's lives.

### ***Teen Central, Shetora Banks reporting***

#### Programs

Shetora Banks and Jeff Bostic were part of the planning committee for the screening of *Black Men in White Coats* and the panel discussion that followed. Banks hosted the Zoom panel discussion that included local physicians and other medical professionals. Bostic took photographs of black medical professionals and transformed them into “Superheroes.” The photos were put on display in the library and copies were gifted to the doctors. Bostic made the photos into a video as the intro and outro to the panel discussion. The video is here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ChxGykJOS0s3WABLwZKxeGHTCzmS9vA6/view?usp=sharing>

### ***Branch Library Updates***

#### ***Deputy Director Melanie Lewis reporting***

#### Transition to new position

I spent February contacting Outreach patrons and examining and reviewing procedures with Outreach staff. I participated in the following transitional activities:

#### Branch Administration

Met weekly with:

Joan Lee, Area Coordinator and Pat Connor, Community Services Librarian II

#### RPL Meetings Attended

RPL All Staff Meeting

RPL Senior MGM Meetings

RPL|MCLS Joint Board Meeting

RPL Equity Team Meeting

#### New Deputy Director Orientation Sessions

Tonia Burton, MCLS Children's Consultant

Brie Harrison: RPL Finance Director

### ***Branch Administration, Joan Lee reporting***

#### Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- Lee met with Brittany Rumph, ROC City Learning POD, to discuss continuity of program. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)
- Lee met with Delia Smith of the Rochester Works a Summer Youth Employment Program. She finalized plans to place student workers in the library. The trained workers will work at five branch sites this summer. The workers will be assigned as Literacy aides; their duties will include reading to children, craft kits and gaming activities, and assisting with the Foodlink's daily summer meals program.

#### Anecdotes/Other

- The re-opening of eight branches got off to slow start due to the inclement weather, by month's end staff was excited to welcome patrons with displays, hot chocolate, and warm smiles. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority:

Stewardship and Curation: Provide access to an evolving variety of collections, programs, services and technologies based on community needs)

- In collaboration with Department of Recreations, five library branches assisted patrons with Vaccine registration and appointments.

**Arnett Branch Library, Bruce Tehan reporting**

Programs

- The online mural book talks project led by Nancy Cholewa continues to be a success. The project now includes book talks by several of our staff members, the Monroe County Sherriff, one of the library's frequent teen visitors, and a spokesperson for the Ganondagan Museum. Each talk showcases a subject featured on the murals which adorn the inside and outside walls of our building. Sherriff Baxter kindly discussed the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes for us: [LIBRARY.mp4 - Google Drive](#). Arnett staff will continue to invite other library and non-library personnel to help make videos celebrating the murals and books for this project. The videos are being posted to the Arnett Facebook page. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education & Engagement.)
- Ginger Brewer-Bennett has resumed Notary Public services. Brewer-Bennett also arranged for library staff to pass out Black History themed bookmarks and boxes of Valentine candy to welcome folk back to the library. They were cheerily received by Arnett patrons.

Anecdotes/Other

Cholewa reports that, "It has been wonderful to re-open our doors to our patrons. There is so much love for the Arnett Library in the 19th Ward and vice versa, and it is such a necessary asset to the community. It is gratifying to hear people express their gratitude and pleasure at having the library resources available to them once again."

**Charlotte Branch Public Library, Dennis Williams reporting**

Programs

- Karen Duff and Maureen Whalen, former Charlotte branch supervisor, continue to facilitate the Food for Thought Book Discussion Group. The selection for February was *If the Creek Don't Rise* by Leah Weiss. This is the 24<sup>th</sup> year for the book discussion group. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)
- Kimberly Whitemore reports that the Charlotte Branch Geocache has been in place since April 28, 2016 and has a current total of 159 "finds". Since the beginning of 2021, geocachers have posted comments like: "Quick find on the way home from some XC skiing. Cache in great shape. Thanks!" "Thanks for the quick grab." "Out today with DB after his recent knee replacement. We both had a hole in our calendar to fill and so we made it around to a few easy ones that he didn't have to leave the car for. He already had this one but was gracious and let me play catch up. SL/TFTC (Signed Log/Thanks For The Cache)"

Anecdotes/Other

- The Charlotte Branch staff is thrilled to welcome patrons into the building for browsing and utilization of available services. Curbside service continues to be offered however, patrons often opt to come in to pick up items and browse. They are so excited to know this is an option!

- Like most older libraries, Charlotte has thousands of older pictures in various formats. Dennis Williams has started to take some of the more captivating images, clean them up in Photoshop and digitize them for a wonderful new marketing ploy that's certain to draw interest. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Stewardship and Curation)



***Frederick Douglass Community Library, Erin Clarke reporting***

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Erin Clarke and Ngo hosted a manga training for members of Teen Central. The training provided an overview of what manga is, discussed vocabulary to know, age ratings, genres and example titles, publishers, review sites, and where to order.

Anecdotes/Other

- The Douglass Branch received a very generous donation from a family who stopped by and called to tell branch staff how happy they are to have access to our materials and services.
- Emily Kleykamp and Frederick Griffin have been working hard to convert nearly the entire DVD collection so the cases can be on the main floor of the library. We hope this will make access and browsing much easier for patrons and allow for social distancing for patrons and staff. Douglass team members have been working hard to re-organize the floor plan and materials flow to improve patron experiences.
- Douglass Library was reviewed for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center database, which was created and is maintained by students at the State University of New York at Cortland. In the summary for Douglass, it was determined that “The Frederick Douglass Library is a supportive and inclusive place to learn for children and adults. The entrances, parking, and bathrooms, as well as reception area and tables are appropriate for wheelchair use. The library works with the Rochester City School District and Recreation Center attached to the building to support the community. The staff is sensitive to disability awareness and welcoming to all those who enter.” The library’s listing can be found at: [Frederick Douglass Community Library | Inclusive Rec Database](#)

***Lincoln Branch Library and Toy Library, Sarah Lehman reporting***

Programs

- Matt Seidel added a second chess club meeting specifically for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School.
- Tashara Martinez created a Valentine's Day themed Take-and-Make craft for February.
- The children's services team is planning a St. Patrick's Day themed craft for March (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Seidel and Martinez met with the new director of the Pirate Toy Fund to discuss ways in which we can collaborate in the future.

Anecdotes/Other

Last winter a patron dropped off new coats to donate for children. Santiago was able to give two of these coats to young patrons who visited the library.

***Lyell Branch Library, Shamika Fusco reporting***

Programs

- During the month of February, Lyell branch continued to provide materials for take and make crafts. Families were given popsicle sticks and embellishment to make and decorate a small gift box for their loved one.
- Families could also pick-up supplies to paint and embellish a mask for Black History Month and Mardi Gras. A mask, sequins and tulle were provided for families to express their creativity.
- Themed activity packets continue to be very popular. Each packet typically includes a themed coloring page, cross word puzzle, word search, maze, and word scramble. Patrons could also see various books/information displayed about Black History Month. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)



Anecdotes/Other

Lyell Branch staff continues to assist patrons who are trying to file taxes, apply for unemployment benefits, and apply for jobs. Patrons have expressed appreciation for being able to come into Lyell to utilize resources such as fax/copy machine/prints and computer access. Food and school supplies are being offered as well. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainability and Resources)

***Maplewood Community Library, Johanna Buran reporting***

Programs

The Zoom English class and citizenship class continue to be the most popular of the programs that Maplewood offers. The students are from these countries: Japan, Argentina, Yemen, Mexico, Syria, South Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Dominican Republic, Myanmar, and Turkey. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)



Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Mark Hafer met with a coordinator from the Agape Haven of Abundance. Agape Haven of Abundance recently opened a site less than a mile down the road from the library. The organization's goal is to provide help to the community through meals, education, and financial support. They provide similar services as the Maplewood Library; helping English language learners, feeding people, and helping students learn to read. For now, the Maplewood Library will partner with the Agape Haven of Abundance to deliver free books to children. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainability and Resources)

Anecdotes

There have been many happy library users since Maplewood reopened. One of Maplewood's consistent patrons wanted to bring the staff something to eat but instead he gave a donation. This was unexpected and much appreciated.

***Monroe Branch Library, Mary Clare Scheg reporting***

Programs

- The Branch has received a generous donation in memory of Annette Zweifler to help fund our annual seed bank. Due to COVID-19, it is difficult to get donated seed packets. This donation will allow the Branch to continue to give out seed packets this spring. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Stewardship and Curation)
- Rebecca Hudson provided the February Take-and-Make Craft, which was a superhero valentine. This was popular with our patrons.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- Cherrin Arnold belongs to a "Buy Nothing" group on Facebook. Items are offered and requested, with no money ever changing hands. Arnold was able to offer, due to the generosity of the library, several discarded board books to a woman who counsels teenage mothers. This donation was very much appreciated. The Branch will continue to do this as requested.
- The weekly meals given to Andy Carey continue to be a success. In addition to the meals, the Branch has given Andy other needed items such as shavers, toothpaste/toothbrushes, hats, socks, masks, can openers, scarves, and gloves. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainability and Resources)

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

The Phillis Wheatley Library opened for patrons on February 15, 2021. Patrons are thrilled that they can come into the library to use computers and pick out items. The library worked with volunteers from the city to help sign up patrons from our zip code for the COVID-19 vaccine. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainability and Resources)

Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

Tonia Burton asked Lori Frankunas to help Dr. Amy Shema, professor at SUNY Brockport, to identify J/YA books with diverse families for a presentation at Rochester Area Literacy Council's Live Local Literacy Conference.

Frankunas was able to provide her with over 50 books from the collection. Dr. Shema said she was pleased with the selection and very grateful for the help.

#### Anecdotes/Other

- Patron Elizabeth Mercado contacted the library to ask that her hold at Wheatley be sent to a town library. Because library hours had changed, she was not able to pick up her hold due to her work schedule. Since staff is in the building at 9am, Mercado was told to come by and ring the bell at the back door because staff wanted to get her book to her as soon as possible. She said, "This is awesome and one of the reasons I love the city libraries".
- Patron Mrs. Owens was nervous about coming back to the library and said she was very happy with the helpful information that Alexandra Haehn gave her. She said the detailed explanation of procedures the library has in place to keep patrons safe made her feel comfortable and safe.

#### ***Sully Branch Library, Maria Heeks-Heinlein reporting***

#### Programs

- Jennifer Nesbitt and Khajari Marshall-Hosier have been assembling Take and Make craft kits for families to bring home. This has been a hit! This month families were provided materials for a fun paper plate fish craft that parents have enjoyed taking home for their children to work on. Sully staff also provided a Valentine themed heart Take and Make bag. Staff is happy to continue providing these literacy craft kits to our young patrons. One patron came back to the library to tell staff members that she and her children had a great time making the fish craft. She said that it was fun and relaxing, and they took some of the new craft kits that had been put out. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)
- Sully staff members have been creating book reviews for the branch Facebook page. A program that has grown from this is our Sully Show and Tell program. Staff sign on to a zoom meeting and share a quick review of something they have recently read or watched. We hope to continue this program when the age of COVID-19 is over. During February's edition of the Show and Tell program staff shared information about Raising a Reader Bags. After the video was posted to Facebook, a parent came into the library to check out items for her children; one of the items was a Raising a Reader bag. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Stewardship and Curation)

#### Community Outreach/Meetings/Trainings

- The Sully Library was able to resume a weekly book cart of items at the Thomas Ryan Community Center. One week a few origami books were placed on the cart with some origami paper to support the library's origami contest. Staff from the community center stopped in the library a few times to request additional origami paper, because visitors to the R-Center were working on some of the projects in the books.
- Connected Communities asked for a Black History Month book list of items at the Sully Branch. They shared this information on their Instagram page. In addition, they asked for a few other Instagram stories for items at the Sully Branch. Jacob Bigelow, Nesbitt, and Maria Heeks-Heinlein worked on this request. Several stories sent were posted to the Connected Communities Instagram page during the week of February 15.

### Anecdotes/Other

- One young patron, who was a “regular” in library before the pandemic, moved to the other side of the city during this past year. He found out what day we were going to open to the public and took to the trip to this side of the city to visit us on our first day open. He said that he wanted to come to the library and say hello to us all because coming into Sully “is little bit like coming home.”
- While welcoming patrons back into the library, staff heard many heartwarming comments when people entered the building. Some of these comments were: “We missed you”, “I am so glad you’re back”, “We missed you so much. We did not realize how much we took the library for granted.”, and “This feels like a homecoming” (This patron was not the same patron mentioned in the story above).
- One patron shared one of Sully’s Facebook posts to her own page. Our post was letting people know we were open for in person visits. The patron’s comment on the shared post was “Praise the Lord!!! Finally!!!”



### **Winton Branch Library, Kathy Wolf reporting**

#### Programs

- About two years ago, Baker and Taylor sent the library a large cardboard cutout of Elmo that was set up in the Children’s Room and was very cute. With our new, bright, and happy room, Elmo no longer had a place, so we decided to get rid of him. No one wanted to recycle him, and we thought of a great idea: to raffle him off. We put Elmo in the window and created entry forms that we put on the curbside pickup table along with a bin for completed forms. In just over one week there were 15 entries – and one very happy child! (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainability and Resources)
- Winton staff tied the first take and make program to our first Zoom Children’s Program: “Meet a Monster ... and an author and an illustrator.” The take and make was a kit that contained everything needed to create a Paper Bag Monster Puppet. Participants were encouraged to post a picture of their monster puppet on our Facebook Page to win a prize. We had a taker on this offer, young Elijah who made a very cute monster! The Zoom program went exceedingly well. Pat Pittman ran the Zoom Room and was able to spotlight the performer while he was singing his book and the illustrator while she was talking about her part in the creation of the book. This turned out to be an interactive program; kids were singing along and dancing to the refrain, “Shake a little bit, shake a little bit, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake. I wondered -- had I made a big mistake.” When the illustrator led her part of the program, the kids created their own monsters on a worksheet that had been pre-distributed. At the end of the program, there was a rousing refrain with the kids shaking their creations. Everyone had a lot of fun! (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Education and Engagement)
- Pittman has started a more active campaign for teen literacy and participation in the library. Pittman launched a grab and go book bundle program capitalizing on the popularity of the video game “Among Us!” These bundles draw on different genres and literacy levels to encourage diversity and understand thematic/narrative styles through an age-appropriate critical lens. Pittman launched the program in February, it will continue through March.
- The Adult online book discussion continues to remain steady. Every month Pat Finnerty has a dedicated group of twelve who discuss the month’s chosen book. This month’s read was *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. Of the twelve on the call, ten people loved the book and two did not,



which always makes for a lively discussion! A favorite comment was, “We should all strive to be more like Raymond in our daily lives.” Words very relevant during the Pandemic.

#### Anecdotes/Other

- The Winton Branch Library finally opened to the public on February 22! Among the first people to visit us were Autumn Rhoda and her dad Michael. They are on a quest to visit each library in Monroe County in the year 2021. These people are regular customers of the Central Library's Children's Center, The Winton Branch Library, and the Brighton Memorial Library. They are well on their way to collecting the set: they have already visited eight libraries this year.
- Pittman has taken the lead to manage Winton's social media accounts effectively and efficiently throughout February, measuring the metrics over the span of a year. On the whole, Pittman has helped promote a trend of community engagement and awareness month over month. The posts on Instagram and Facebook have delivered on three major tenets: education, enjoyment, and engagement. The manner of consistent and targeted posting has yielded a positive response from patrons within and outside the community.
- Pittman began changing the décor of the Teen Space to make it feel less like a pass-through area and more like an environment geared toward teen ownership. The challenge the Teen Space faces in the library layout centers on its centrality, rather than an enclave for teen use. By dressing up the space with teen-centric materials, Pittman hopes to invite teens to engage with the space and generate more interaction with a teen-friendly atmosphere. (RPL Strategic Plan Priority: Stewardship and Curation)

### ***Selected Meetings & Outputs***

#### ***RPL Director Patricia Uttaro reporting***

***February 20, 2021 – March 12, 2021***

#### Standing Meetings

City Senior Management Team (weekly)

RPL-MCLS Management Team (weekly)

Adam Traub, Melanie Lewis, Brie Harrison, Ana Suro, Tonia Burton, Christine Ridarsky – one-to-one meetings (monthly)

FFRPL Executive Director Ned Davis (monthly)

Monroe County Chief of Staff, Amy Grower (monthly)

RPL 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 Deputy Mayor James Smith (monthly)

#### Other Meetings

MCLS Board President Marjorie Shelly

RPL Board President Donna Benjamin

City Investment Priorities Team

City of Rochester Vaccine Team staff (several meetings)

REJI Conference (2 full day sessions)

Urban Libraries Council Director calls (weekly)

RPL Deputy Director Melanie Lewis

MCLS Board President Shelly & County Attorney Don Crumb

**RPL Board Director's Report– March 2021 (Continued)**

Central Supervisors meeting

Roy Allen regarding arts project at Rundel

NYS Digital Equity Summit (full day)

City Budget Office staff

MCLS REJI Team

Foodlink representative Mitch Gruber & Brie Harrison regarding Central cafe

Email Activity

February 2020

<b>Name</b>	<b>Send Actions</b>	<b>Receive Actions</b>	<b>Read Actions</b>
Uttaro, Patricia	489	3459	4961
Traub, Adam	385	1506	3677
Harrison, Brie	328	1980	2375
Suro, Ana	515	2273	2594