



Rochester  
Public Library

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

TO: RPL Board of Trustees  
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director  
DATE: March 29, 2023  
SUBJECT: Monthly Report – March 2023

## ***Action Items***

### **Audit and Tax Services Agreement (Harrison)**

Similar to prior engagements, City Council lead a Request for Proposals process for City, School District, and Library audit services, with Library participation in proposal review. Proposals were received from the Bonadio Group, EFPR Group, Drescher & Malecki LLP, and O'Connor Davies. EFPR was recommended for services beginning with the 2022-23 fiscal year through the 2024-25 fiscal year. Compensation for Library services shall not exceed \$16,000 for FY23, \$16,600 for FY24, and \$17,200 for FY25 services. The City and Library may opt for two additional years under the agreement. Funding is allocated from annual operating budgets.

**Board Action Requested:** Approve an agreement with EFPR Group, for the services described, for an amount not to exceed \$49,800 and a term ending April 30, 2026.

### **Library Fund Balance Appropriation (Harrison)**

We are requesting an appropriation of \$300,000 from the Library Fund balance to support the Bausch & Lomb building HVAC upgrade project. Funding for project construction, which includes a heat pump and intake air unit replacements, was previously authorized totaling \$1,050,516, of which \$510,516 is coming from a NYSED construction grant. Construction bids were received for only three of four prime contracts in the fall of 2022; negotiations to secure a general contractor under City Term Contract Services led to delays in the award wherein remaining bidders could not hold the fall 2022 pricing. Anticipated spring 2023 re-bids are projected to exceed the current budget, excluding contingencies.

Timelines are a concern as this was a 2020-21 NYSED library construction application with completion requirements that necessitate moving forward with the project. City Architectural Services has requested additional funds to enable the re-bid this spring. The available Library Fund balance as of June 30, 2022, was \$1,186,329 of which \$175,000 was appropriated in the 2022-23 Budget. This additional appropriation will result in a remaining fund balance of approximately \$711,000.

**Board Action Requested:** Appropriate \$300,000 from the Library Fund balance as cash capital to support the construction costs of the Bausch & Lomb HVAC project.

### **Grant Acceptance, NYS Grant-in-Aid (Uttaro)**

Senator Jeremy Cooney has provided state funding to provide a cannabis industry business accelerator program for the Rochester area. Central's Business Insight Center (BIC) has developed a concept for this program that will continue through the end of 2023. \$25,000 will be utilized for professional tax services, speaker/program stipends, participant incentives, and access to industry reports.

**Board Action Requested:** Accept and appropriate \$25,000 in NYS grant funds for a cannabis industry business accelerator program.

**Amended Agreement, Grant-in-Aid Administration (Uttaro)**

Given the proposed program expenses for the BIC business accelerator program, as well as the project duration, the Friends and Foundation of the RPL has offered to act as a fiscal agent for the NYS Grant-in-Aid funds. We propose an amendment of our existing agreement with FFRPL as the fiscal agent for the other NYS Grant-in-Aid funds received (authorized August 2022, author speaker series), for an increase of \$25,000 for a revised not-to-exceed total of \$50,000. The term will be amended to conclude on December 31, 2023.

Board Action Requested: Approve an amended agreement with FFRPL, for the services described, for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 and a term ending December 31, 2023.

**Use License, Arnett Branch (Harrison)**

Greenlight Networks is seeking to expand residential fiber internet service to the 19th Ward. In collaboration with the City and Library, the Arnett branch was identified as an ideal location to establish a point of presence (PoP) site for the network. Greenlight will access a small portion of the Arnett Branch's utility room (in the basement of the building) to install and maintain the PoP facility, including any necessary electrical improvements. Under the use-license agreement, they shall compensate the Library for the PoP's electricity consumption as well as an annual license fee of \$2,500. Given the investment in equipment, the term of the license will be five years with the option to extend the term for an additional period of 5 years. This license requires approval by Rochester City Council, with legislation submitted for March.

Board Action Requested: Authorize a use-license agreement with Greenlight Networks LLC, for a five-year term commencing on April 1, 2023, with the option to extend the term for one additional five-year period.

**Grant Acceptance, RRLC (Smathers)**

The Rochester Regional Library Council has awarded a grant of \$2,520 to the RPL Local History and Genealogy Division to digitize and describe a postcard collection and the Clarissa Street Reunion digital collection. This work will allow the collections to be added to <https://www.nyheritage.org> for wider public access.

Board Action Requested: Accept a \$2,520 grant from the Rochester Regional Library Council to be used to hire a consultant to create item-level metadata for the Rochester Public Library Postcard collection.

**Professional Services Agreement (Smathers)**

Related to the prior item, we recommend a professional services agreement with Lisa Buda who will conduct the work necessary to fulfill the requirements of the RRLC grant. Buda will be paid at a rate of \$20/hour for a maximum of 162 hours to create item-level metadata for the RPL postcard collection and the Clarissa Street Reunion digital collection. The project is funded by grants from the Rochester Regional Library Council and the New York Archives Partnership Trust.

Board Action Requested: Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Lisa Buda in an amount not to exceed \$3,240.

**Rundel First Floor Early Closing (Uttaro)**

Hacker Hall will be used for the Bergh Society Reception on Thursday, June 1, 2023. The Lollypop Farm has provided a request for the use of the hall from 1 PM to 7:30 PM. The Bergh Society Reception is scheduled from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM. Staff will have access to retrieve materials. The Local History and Genealogy Division would remain open for normal operating hours.

Board Action Requested: Approve closing Hacker Hall at 1:00 PM on Thursday, June 1, 2023, to accommodate the Bergh Society Reception.

### **Code of Conduct Minor Revision (Uttaro)**

While the current RPL Code of Conduct policy clearly states that smoking is prohibited, we have recently had some issues with patrons claiming they did not think vaping was included in that restriction. To that end, we are requesting a modification to item 10 in the Code of Conduct from:

*Unauthorized consumption of alcoholic beverages and smoking are not allowed on library premises.*

to

*Unauthorized consumption of alcoholic beverages and **all forms of smoking** are not allowed on library premises.*

Board Action Requested: Approve modification of item 10 in the RPL Code of Conduct.

### **Acceptance of 2023 Tummonds Funds (Uttaro)**

The Friends & Foundation of RPL recently notified RPL of the Tummonds fund allocation for 2023. RPL will use these funds to purchase popular reading material in print or digital form. The 2023 allocation is \$35,561.66.

Board Action Requested: Accept the Tummonds fund allocation of \$35,561.66.

## ***Report & Discussion Items***

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

**Take It Down at RMSC** – I have been in contact with RMSC staff and we are working on planning an event for MCLS and RPL trustees in the Fall. RMSC is currently booked up for the spring and summer for this program.

**Finger Lakes Emerging Library Leaders Course** – This month has included significant time spent on developing the classes for this 12-month course. Adrienne Pettinelli from Henrietta, John Cohen from Ogden, and Ron Kirsop from the OWWL System have worked with me to finalize plans for the first two classes which will focus on personal leadership and develop the final project assignment. Students will have a choice of a presentation of their final project or the development of a written project that showcases written communication techniques. Applications are due March 17; there are currently 28 applicants for 20 seats, with several RPL staff in the mix.

### **Facility and Capital Updates**

This spring will see many activities for the RPL with multiple construction and design projects underway. Project updates are as follows:

- **Arnett Roof Restoration:** Construction of the lower roof was completed in October with lighting entry replacement in December. A capital request for the upper roof is part of the future Capital Improvement Program. Arnett's solar panel system was installed in 2011 on the upper roof and we are working with Popli Architects for an evaluation of current efficiencies, condition of the panels, and life expectancy before future roof work.
- **Charlotte Roof Replacement:** HBT Architects is working on the design of a full roof replacement given age, condition, and active leaks, with anticipated construction in fall 2023 or spring 2024 dependent on the bid/award schedule. This project was funded through a City year-end budget amendment.
- **Lincoln Branch Library renovation:** Construction is underway but is slower than anticipated due to poor general contractor performance/schedule management and delays in some materials from vendor suppliers.

We anticipate a soft opening close to Memorial Day and are working with the contractor(s) and design team to ensure priority electrical and plumbing work is complete to allow a Certificate of Occupancy, and minor finishes (some interior doors, etc.) may have temporary solutions with installations occurring after public opening.

- Rundel Masonry & Window Restoration: Bero Architecture is continuing with the final design given the ARPA funding award to enable a single-phase project; the project is expected to be bid in fall 2023 and will be a two-year construction schedule. Much of the work will be based outside with scaffolded facades, which will limit but not completely exclude staff disruptions. Interior repairs include the Shipping area which will require coordination.
- Rundel Roof Replacement: Bero Architecture is also conducting the design of the Rundel roof replacement, which will begin upon the conclusion of the Masonry & Window project given the use of the roof as a swing scaffold base. We would anticipate summer 2026 for construction but are not at the stage of schedule estimates yet.
- Bausch & Lomb HVAC: Construction will begin this spring with Pipitone and Power & Construction as primary contractors. Much of the project includes heat pump replacements which are over staff areas as well as public areas. Coordination will be key to swing space for staff that may be temporarily displaced for 1-3 days during each removal and replacement.
- Bausch & Lomb Roof Replacement: CPL Architects is working on a design that includes window repairs, flashing, and stair additions (for code) in addition to roof replacement. Coordination will be required with the BLB HVAC project for several rooftop unit replacements. This is a NYSED-funded project.
- Rundel Air Intake: LaBella Associates has begun the design of this project, with a focus on fresh air intake on the second and third floors as well as units located in the penthouse roof area in the building, which are original. As stated previously, this project, once cost estimates are better defined, will require a partial appropriation of the Library Fund balance as previously approved with the Library Capital Improvement Program submission.
- Maplewood Renovation & Expansion: HUNT Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors began to design in the fall of 2022; a public input session will be held on Monday, March 27th. The Library has ownership of the adjacent parcel (308-310 Augustine Street) and the building on the parcel has been demolished. The parcels have been combined and full site surveys are underway. We anticipate a spring 2024 bid for this project with a minimum of 12–18-month construction. City Real Estate is working with Finance and Branch Administration for temporary lease space to maintain operations in the neighborhood during construction.
- Technology updates: Convergint is working with LAS and Finance to furnish and install a new Genentec card access system at branch locations. They will also provide a new badging system and access cards, connecting to the existing network for communication for the new access panels at the RPL Branch locations. The project kickoff meeting is at the end of this month.

Social Media

February 2023	RPL Twitter	MCLS Twitter	Facebook	Facebook Calendar	Facebook Groups	Instagram	YouTube
Profile/ Page Visits	352	299	1087			105	-
New Followers/ Page Likes	0 (2,097)	3 (2,229)	25 (5,764)	-	8	41 (2,361)	21 (475)
Engagements	33	74	694		51	181	49
Check-In/ Mentions	9	14	-	-	-	6	-
Post Reach	1641	12810	14602		-	979	31742
Video/Story Views	-	-	110	-	-	132	1079

Constant Contact Newsletter

Central/RPL Newsletter (1 Sent)

- Subscribers who opened newsletter – 4,883
- Click through – 110

New subscribers – 9

OverDrive

- Total Checkouts- 78,221
- Lucky Day Checkouts- 817
- Simultaneous Use Checkouts- 8,222
- SORA Checkouts- 750
- Great Courses- 111

**Central Library Updates**

*Jennifer Smathers reporting*

**Arts/Literature, Nanci Nugent reporting**

Programs

- Celebrate Black History Month: Paint a T-shirt with an Adinkra Symbol--Artist Jennifer Jones, from Teaching Artists ROC, taught this workshop where students learned about the history and meaning of Adinkra symbols found throughout West Africa. Students then painted and printed their own Adinkras T-shirts to produce a wearable piece of art. Adinkra translates as "farewell" or "goodbye" in Asante Twi, a language spoken in Ghana by approximately 15 million people. However, they are widely used across Africa and in the diaspora. Symbols such as Adinkra were of vital importance to the exercise of royal power in the Kingdom of Asante, Ghana. Cloth such as this was originally worn by people of high status, and its symbols were used to proclaim the king's authority. These symbols also are used on important wooden objects, and brass, as two-dimensional stamped designs on cloth. Patrons very much enjoyed this class



and their comments reflected this. Some comments were, “Learning the meaning of the symbol after we had chosen it. We were able to grasp what spoke to us through the image instead of the meaning, and “chatting with others in the group.” Another patron said, “thank you for providing these classes to our community!”

- Celebrate Black History Month: STRUGGLE! The Power of Story & Art for Historical Change and Transformation Through Jacob Lawrence Storyteller. Almeta Whitis engaged the heart, and spirit, and presented visual art cornerstones found in a mural series created by Black American Master Mural Artist: Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000). His “Struggle Series” is comprised of 27 of the known 30-panel series produced between 1954-56. It presents Lawrence's little-known stories of America's founding principals' historical underpinnings, including images of Black people and immigrant contributions. He was unable to secure funding support for his original idea to create 60 murals based upon historical events to complete his vision, so he had to reduce it to 30. “The Great Migration Series,” was a WPA Artist Project, and was produced between the late thirties and early 1950s. Essential elements of Jacob Lawrence's mural series included community cohesiveness and strong family values and relationships. Recognizing and creatively maintaining communal ties with a keen observation of human interactions was the bedrock of his artistic vision. His true genius captures our emotions as we feel the power in his spare style and vibrant colors based upon his impeccable, intimate historical research.
- Poets, Scott Williams, and Doug Curry gave a reading in Kusler-Cox Auditorium as part of Central’s Celebrate Black History Month. Patrons were thoroughly impressed with both poets and their poetry was chosen for this reading centering on their African American upbringings. The readings focused on their childhoods in Baltimore and Harlem, their young adulthoods in the 1960s and 70s, and their current poetic observations on life and culture. One attendee emailed: “This was one of the most impactful readings I’ve attended. How many readings will leave people wanting to look up poems and poets referenced? ... This is the first reading that left me wanting to go back and review my 70 years— and left me asking myself questions about what my role is (was and could be) in a society that has blatantly enforced racism in so many hypocritical guises.”

### Outreach

Nanci Nugent and Corinne Clar met with Brandon Brooks, Curator of the John L. Wehle Gallery at the Genesee County Village Museum. He oversees the care and exhibition of the museum's historic clothing and soft goods collections. Brooks is working on a project to create a database of patterns from museums, libraries, and historical societies in Western New York. Clar and Nugent reviewed several rare clothing and pattern folios in the Central Library collection, such as Delineator and Godey’s Lady’s Book. Brooks will do a Zoom presentation in the spring discussing the museum and this project, “Becoming Gendered: Garment as Gender Artifact” which will explore how 19th-century Americans perceived and performed gender through clothing and fashion.

### ***Business Insight Center (BIC), Jennifer Byrnes reporting***

#### Programs

- Business First Wednesday: The Era of Antisocial Social Media with Gina Mangiamele of the Small Business Development Center.
- Cannabis Industry Meetup: Predatory Lending in Cannabis with William X. Wolfe and Bart Chacchia of Harris Beach Law Firm.

#### Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Jennifer Byrnes met with Abigail McHugh-Grifa, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Climate Solutions Accelerator to discuss how BIC can be of assistance. She also met with Montinique Kniffen, the new administrative assistant at Impellent Ventures, to give her an overview of venture capital 101. She attended a meeting for the EntreLib Entrepreneurship and Libraries Conference. They are hosting a pitch competition

for libraries, the focus of which is how your library can support local economic development, workforce development, job hunters, entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and/or small businesses. The first prize wins \$4,000. Byrnes will be pitching a cannabis business accelerator program. Lastly, she met with the team from RIT Venture Creations to discuss grant strategies for them.

- BIC hosted a business class from Robert's Wesleyan College. The whole team assisted.

#### Consulting

- The Carlson Center for Intellectual Property assisted: 5 in person, 29 by email, 0 by mail, 5 by phone, and 1 by Zoom.
- Patent Virtual Assistance Center: 0
- Carlson Center Webpage views: 29
- 3D Printer: 3
- Hours of in-depth market research: 54
- Requests Outside Greater Rochester Area: 17
- Tracy Jong appointments: 3 hours 20 minutes, 4 appointments.

#### Database Usage

- Frost & Sullivan: Page views: 23 Value: \$88,950
- IBISWorld: Page views: 63 Value: \$25,330
- InnovationQ: Logins: 7 Searches: 65
- PitchBook: Logins: 26
- Statista: Searches: 13 Downloads: 7

#### Anecdotes/Other

- We received this email from Ervin Starr, Ph.D., Professor of Strategy and Management & Social Entrepreneurship at Robert's Wesleyan:
- "Thank you again for meeting with and supporting our students in their entrepreneurship efforts. We are thankful the community has you and your team as a rich resource for our community."
- Susan Shiroma, A business librarian from the Queens Public Library, attended the Cannabis Industry MeetUp and had this to say:
- "I'm so impressed and excited for your team and community... You are amazing! Thank you and the team at Harris Beach for a fantastic presentation this evening. I found out about the meeting via the Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County's e-newsletter (see below). Rochester is one of my favorite NYS libraries."
- Byrnes was asked to be a mentor to a pitch competition team for AHA! 2023 Allegany County Startup Collegiate Competition. Teams from Alfred State, Houghton College, and Alfred University compete for \$5,000, \$2,500, or \$1,000.

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

#### Programs

- Abukar had Almeta Whitis present the program, “Stories from Black Worlds” which included songs of African origin and four moral tales from various parts of Africa. Children guessed what animal she was behaving as, told the story with her, and ran to her at the end for hugs.
- Kyle had a crochet and writing group every week. They had a small yet lively group of kids that were of a variety of ages. The kids had fun writing stories together and were very excited to share their ideas. Crocheting was interesting as Kyle is a lefty and all the crocheters were righties, but the basics were able to be put together.
- Powell had artist and Rochester Institute of Technology professor Unique Fair present a program on the intersection of art and science. Participants learned how cultures use art to communicate important scientific concepts. He split the group into two teams and gave each team a word. They had to draw an image that communicated that concept (such as poison, high winds, cold, and radioactive) in a way that would be universally understood. Then the other team had three guesses to guess the concept, and the group evaluated the effectiveness of the drawing based on several criteria.



#### Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Children's Center public services staff had two of four sessions of training from the Center for Dispute Settlement. The training has been designed to help staff identify ways to support families in crisis while supporting each other and maintaining a safe environment for all.
- Tonia Burton attended the Rochester Monroe Youth Board meeting. Tony Jordan has been named the new director. This was the first in-person meeting since pre-COVID. The group discussed reenergizing efforts to engage youth throughout the county.
- Burton joined Melanie Lewis to meet with Matt Present and Alex Winslow from Imagination Library to discuss possible collaborations. It was agreed that collaborating around marketing and sharing newsletter information are some quick ways to collaborate which would help both. Present is looking into the possibility of distributing library information at clinics and Burton and Lewis are looking into if it's possible to create a library card sign-up procedure.
- Burton and Shetora Banks met with Adam Koneman from Memorial Art Gallery. Koneman is the new Museum Educator for School Outreach at the museum. They discussed ideas for possible collaboration such as workshops at the library, offering passes for youth to visit and creating art backpacks similar to nature backpacks, if the VIP program can be reinstated.
- Powell presented library resources to two groups of pediatric residents from the University of Rochester Medical Center's Pediatric Links to the Community Program. Residents commented that they were unaware of all of the non-traditional resources the library offers and will share them with patients' families.



### Anecdotes/Other

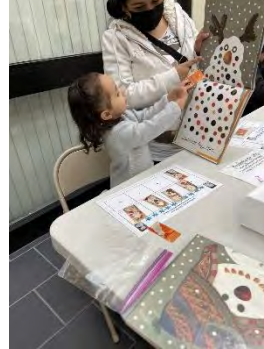
- Batavia High School students with different abilities came to visit the city and experience the library. Ms. Keller, the teacher shared that some of her students may utilize the Central Library once out of high school, so she wanted to share all that is offered. They began with finding the Secret Room and hearing about all the different services our libraries offer, then they learned about different types of libraries around the country and world. The students then had the option to order their lunch in the Foodlink Café. This is an important life skill the students practice whenever they leave school. The staff at the café were so patient and kind. They even created a sandwich off the menu for a student who couldn't find anything to their liking. After, Burton introduced them to Teen Central and imagineYOU. Jeff Bostic had different options for the students to explore. They explored the gaming, music, and photography capabilities in the lab. Each student interested was able to get a photo puzzle to take home. They had hoped to visit Rundel but there was no time. They were able to take a great photo outside and talked about coming back. It was a huge hit. Ms. Keller was not able to make it due to COVID but reported that two weeks later, students could not stop talking about the visit.
- Burton received news that she was nominated twice this year for the I Love My Librarian Award. The most touching was from a group of moms who wrote:



*Tonia Burton is one of the kindest, sweetest, most knowledgeable, most understanding, most genuine people I've ever met in my life. Tonia and I initially connected because both of our children have Down syndrome. She took the time to reach out to me before my Evie was born to tell me that everything was going to be okay and that I could reach out to her anytime. We initially met at the library pretty quickly after my Evie was born and our friendship was then cemented forever. She was so quick to share little tidbits of her life that were a huge help to me and my daughter. Tonia is forever spreading knowledge of the children's programs available, books and resources available at all of the local libraries, and helping parents and caregivers to connect with not only one another but with the resources that their families need. Tonia located and sent through intra-library-loan a social story about going to the hospital after I asked her about the lack of available stories for kids with autism on that topic. If anyone goes to her with a question she will go above and beyond to make sure you have what you need. My friends and I have formed a not-for-profit working with families with children in Early Intervention and preschool special education. Tonia has been an amazing advocate in helping us to spread the word to all of our Monroe County families when we have an event or information to share. She has sent flyers and emails and even made phone calls for us to make sure that families are getting the information they need. Tonia is always willing to go above and beyond for any of her families and gives so much of herself every day. -Danielle Salamone, Brittany Jencik, and Kimberly Dooher*

### Raising A Reader

This month Chaves and Coonelly attended the Hart Street and Ibero's friendship celebration for families. RAR staff shared library books and various literacy-based skills for families to engage with their children. RAR staff also provided some holiday theme sensory activities. We focused on the story *Snowballs* and families were able to complete activities based on the book such as sequencing and sorting of items found in the story. Children were also able to work on their fine motor skills with a color sorting tray using oversized tweezers, colored cotton balls, and a muffin tin. Another fine motor skill activity was the friendship bracelets made with chenille sticks and beads. RAR staff continues to provide support for staff in bag rotation and in story times. The last week in February did cause some disruption in our regular visits due to the winter break.



During the Ibero outreach, Chaves was able to discuss with families how the RAR program has helped them and their families. Here are a couple of those responses:

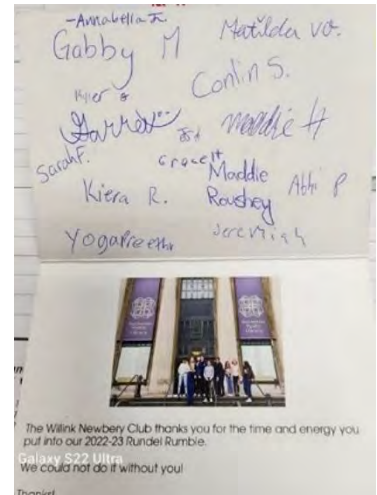
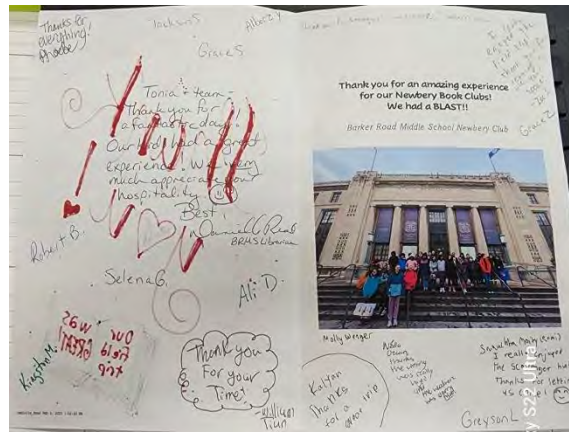
*"I love the books and so does my daughter. I feel that she has really learned a lot from being able to have different books every week. I also really appreciate the Spanish books that come home."*

PreK Parent; Translated into English

*"I love that the books are all different, they get excited when they see a new bag coming home. I have an older child who enjoys reading the books to her younger siblings."*

-Betzy PreK Parent

Thank you cards from schools that used Hacker Hall in January for their Mock Newbery Program:



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

#### Statistics

- Curbside Pickup Appointments-5
- New Borrowers-189
- RRLC Access Cards Issued-0
- Notarial Acts-152

#### Anecdotes/Other

- Chad Cunningham and Callise Wiley were working at the circulation desk when a patron who places many, many holds came in to pick up the 30 items that were waiting for him. The patron laughed and said that sometimes he feels like Rocky training on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art when he takes his books home. Cunningham, Wiley, and the patron all started humming the Rocky training song. You know the one. You're humming it now too, aren't you?
- During February patrons were able to share what they love about the library in exchange for a sweet treat. Many people appreciated the quiet, friendly atmosphere of the library. The helpful and kind staff were mentioned several times. The Children's Center, the Teen Center, Technology Center, and the Business division were singled out by patrons. One younger patron said,  
*"I love reading it's the best thing ever. Soon I'm going to write my own book. Soon I'm going to be an artist to draw the pictures. I'll write a chapter book. I love writing so I'll be writing a lot."*  
It was nice to see what excites people about the library.
- Kathy Sochia was working at the Circulation Desk when a patron in some distress came in. She was upset and wasn't wearing shoes. The patron went to sit in the link. Sochia went to the third floor to see if LROC staff were available to help the patron. They hadn't come in yet, but, when they did arrive, Sochia directed them to the patron so that they could assist her. This is an ongoing and often unspoken part of working in the library: providing patrons in need and crisis with whatever assistance we can find. The Circulation and Information staff are a constant source of inspiration for their supervisor.

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

Staffing shortages pervaded the library this month, and the Local History & Genealogy Division was no exception. Christine Ridarsky and Michelle Finn interviewed candidates to fill the vacant part-time Library Assistant position created by Leah Green's departure at the end of January. They extended an offer and hope to have Mario Castillo start in this position in March. Meanwhile, the division has relied on substitute librarian Christopher Brennan to help fill the gaps. Despite these challenges, division staff—most notably Dan Cody—has been able to pitch in to help cover shortages in the library's Technology Center and Shipping Department and will continue to provide as much support as possible to these key service areas.

The project to develop an Archive of Black History & Culture saw steady progress in February. The project was marketed through a press release and as a spotlight feature on the library's website (<https://roccitylibrary.org/archive-of-black-history-culture/>) with information about the Community Advisory Board, project goals, activities, and contact information for Project Manager Antoine McDonald and Project Assistant Mekko Mongeon. The archive's Community Advisory Board met twice this month and held the first two (one virtual, one in-person) in a series of community-centered focus group sessions designed to garner input from the public regarding the types of materials and topics documenting the experiences of Black Rochesterians that people would like to see collected and housed in the archive. This input is being gathered through a survey created by the Community Advisory Board. There are another two focus group sessions

planned for March (one virtual, one in-person), and surveys will continue to be collected through the RPL website and in the Local History & Genealogy Division. To complete the survey and contribute to this input-gathering stage of the project, visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-LnuN5gg7EiuTRMeq9uQQ3dt2HwVPVFydW37ELEuD-7Kxdw/viewform>.

Finally, the latest issue of the *Rochester History* journal, edited by Ridarsky and Emily Morry, was mailed out this month. This special double issue examines “A History of Mental Health Care in Rochester, 1826-1975” and features two articles by local health care and public health professionals who trace the history of local mental health care from the 19th-century almshouse to late-20th-century developments in psychiatric care. It is available for purchase for \$8 through the FFRPL’s Library Store. This will be the last issue produced in-house. The next issue will be the first produced in partnership with the Rochester Institute of Technology’s Department of History and RIT Press.

*Orders Fulfilled:*

	<b>February 2022</b>	<b>February 2023</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Life Records	6	86	1,333.33%
Newspaper Index	4	10	150.00%
Rochester Images	5	20	300.00%

Programs – Priority #1: Education and Engagement

- The February installment of *Mourning in the Morning*, presented in partnership with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, featured a talk by Sally Millick on “The Underground Railroad.” The program was held via Zoom; a recording is available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/i0e0D2treHE>.
- *Rochester’s Rich History* featured a talk by Lavelle Lewis on “John W. Thompson, a Black American Hero.” The program was held in person in Kusler-Cox Auditorium. A recording is available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/E4QqzSqa61g>.

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- McDonald was a featured speaker for February’s *Tuesday Topics* series sponsored by the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library. McDonald presented how the library helps to foster equity and justice with diverse cultural community representation in programs and services, including the new Archive of Black History & Culture.
- McDonald stood in for Assemblyman Demond Meeks as a guest speaker for Greece Olympia’s Black Student Union Scholars Recognition Dinner. McDonald spoke alongside the superintendent of the Greece School District and the coordinator of equity and inclusivity for the Pittsford School District.
- Fess presented “Voices from Rochester’s Past,” a talk about the special collections’ holdings of the Rochester Public Library, at the Greece Public Library as part of their new speakers series on genealogy.
- Ridarsky and Finn met with staff from Second Avenue Learning (SAL) to fine-tune the three ideas, generated at a December brainstorming session, for Augmented Reality (AR) experiences that will enhance visitor engagement and the educational value of the Rundel North Terrace. This work is being conducted under a Vision Grant from Humanities New York. Ridarsky, Finn, and the SAL team are also exploring the next steps for the project and what it will take to execute the vision for AR in this space.
- Ridarsky, Finn, and Fess met with Tamara Leigh (*Blaque/Out Magazine*), Braden Reese (ImageOut), and Steve Jarose (National Coalition Building Institute) to discuss the development of foundational documents for the *Shoulders To Stand On (STSO)* project as it transitions to its new institutional home at the library, as well as the panel the STSO team has assembled for the upcoming Rainbow Dialogues program.

- Ridarsky and Morry met with RIT history professors Tamar Carroll and Rebecca Edwards three times in February, and once with Carroll, Edwards, and their colleague Michael Brown, to discuss various matters concerning the first issue of the *Rochester History* journal that will be published by RIT Press in Spring 2023, the forthcoming journal issue to be published in Fall 2023, and the upcoming April 2023 conference, “Rochester & the Mid-Sized American City in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” which will mark this new publication partnership.
- Ridarsky was a guest on the online video podcast *The State of Greater Western New York Report* where she discussed the Monroe County bicentennial in 2022 and the role of municipal historians. The show was recorded and can be viewed at <https://stateof.greaterwesternnewyork.com/2023/02/city-historian-christine-ridarsky-explains-formation-history-of-rochester-and-upcoming-erie-canal-bicentennial/>.

Digital Projects

- The division contributes digitized content to a handful of online platforms, increasing discoverability and access to these materials. In February, there were 699 page views of division content available through *New York State Historic Newspapers* (<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/>); 1,347 page views of content available through *New York Heritage* (<https://nyheritage.org/>); and 1,628 page views of content available through the library’s *Rochester Voices* site (<http://www.rochestervoices.org/>).
- The FamilySearch volunteer scanning team digitized 94 books this month, including the last of the city and suburban directories and several yearbooks. See below for details. Once this material is available online, we will include monthly page views for it with our online materials use statistics.

*Materials scanned by FamilySearch, February 2023:*

Title	Volume	Author	Pages	Call no	Publisher and place	Publication date
Rochester Suburban Directory	2010S	R.L. Polk & Co.	638	Rr917.4788 Rr676rs	R.L. Polk & Co., Ralston, Nebraska	2010
Rochester City Directory	2010	R.L. Polk & Co.	1,062	Rr917.4788 R676r 2010	R.L. Polk & Co., Ralston, Nebraska	2010
Rochester Suburban Directory	2011E	R.L. Polk & Co.	1,316	Rr917.4788 R676re	R.L. Polk & Co., Ralston, Nebraska	2011
The Key	Jun 1931	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	72	Rqr373R676b 1931	Art Print Shop, Inc., Rochester, NY	1931
The Key	Jan 1932	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	60	Rqr373R676b 1932	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1932
The Key	Jun 1932	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	68	Rrq373R676b 1932	Art Print Shop, Rochester, NY	1932
The Key	Jan 1935	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	48	Rqr373R676b 1935	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1935
The Key	Jun 1935	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	60	Rqr373R676b 1935	Art Print Shop, Rochester, NY	1935

**RPL Board Director's Report –March 2023 (Continued)**

The Key	Jun 1936	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	70	Rqr373R676b 1936	Unknown	1936
The Key	Jun 1937	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	54	Rqr373R676b 1937	Benjamin Franklin High School	1937
The Key	Jan 1938	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	46	Rqr373R676b 1938	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1938
The Key	1940	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	84	Rrq373R676b 1940	Unknown	1940
The Key	1942	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	76	Rqr373R676b 1942	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1942
The Key	1943	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	64	Rrq373R676b 1943	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1943
The Key	1944	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	64	Rr373R676b 1944	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1944
The Key	1945	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	68	Rqr373R676b 1945	Unknown	1945
The Key	1947	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	68	Rrr373R676b 1947	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	1947
The Key	1948	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	68	Rrq373R676b 1948	Durand, Chicago, IL	1948
The Key	1949	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	98	Rrq373R676b 1949	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	1949
The Key	1950	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	84	Rrq373R676b 1950	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1950
The Key	1951	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	91	Rqr373R676b 1951	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1951
The Key	1952	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	88	Rqr373R676b 1952	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	1952
The Key	1953	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	96	Rqr373R676b 1953	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	1953
The Key	1954	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	100	Rqr373R676b 1954	Unknown	1954

**RPL Board Director's Report –March 2023 (Continued)**

The Key	1955	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	107	Rqr373R676b 1955	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1955
The Key	1956	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	96	Rqr373R676b 1956	Unknown	1956
The Key	1957	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rqr373R676b 1957	Unknown	1957
The Key	1958	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	100	Rqr373R676b 1958	Unknown	1958
The Key	1959	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1959	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1959
The Key	1960	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	108	Rqr373R676b 1960	Unknown	1960
The Key	1961	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	90	Rr373R676b 1961	Unknown	1961
The Key	1962	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rqr373R676b 1962	Unknown	1962
The Key	1964	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	158	Rqr373R676b 1964	The Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1964
The Key	1967	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	162	Rqr373R676b 1967	Unknown	1967
The Key	1969	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	128	Rr373R676b 1969	Unknown	1969
The Key	1972	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	80	Rr373R676b 1972	Unknown	1972
The Key	1973	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	128	Rr373R676b 1973	Unknown	1973
The Key	1974	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	110	Rr373R676b 1974	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1974
The Key	1975	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	116	Rr373R676b 1975	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1975
The Key	1976	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	116	Rr373R676b 1976	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1976

*RPL Board Director's Report –March 2023 (Continued)*

The Key	1977	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	112	Rr373R676b 1977	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1977
The Key	1978	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	112	Rr373R676b 1978	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1978
The Key	1980	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	112	Rr373R676b 1980	American Yearbook Co, Minneapolis, MN	1980
The Key	1982	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	152	Rr373R676b 1982	Unknown	1982
The Key	1983	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	144	Rr373R676b 1983	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1983
The Key	1985	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	119	Rr373R676b 1985	Unknown	1985
The Key	1986	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	124	Rr373R676b 1986	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1986
The Key	1987	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	132	Rr373R676b 1987	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1987
The Key	1988	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	118	Rr373R676b 1988	Unknown	1988
The Key	1991	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1991	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1991
The Key	1998	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1998	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1998
The Key	1999	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1999	Unknown	1999
The Key	2000	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	138	Rr373R676b 2000	Unknown	2000
The Key	2001	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	138	Rr373R676b 2001	Unknown	2001
The Key	1998	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1998	Jostens Yearbook, Co Minneapolis, MN	1998
The Key	1999	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676b 1999	Unknown	1999



**RPL Board Director's Report –March 2023 (Continued)**

The Key	2000	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	138	Rr373R676b 2000	Unknown	2000
The Key	2001	Benjamin Franklin High School, Rochester, NY	138	Rr373R676b 2001	Unknown	2001
The Clarion	1905Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	104	Rr373R676ea Jun 1905	Unknown	1905
The Clarion	1906Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	112	Rr373R676ea Jun 1906	Unknown	1906
The Clarion	1907Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	100	Rr373R676ea Jun 1907	Unknown	1907
The Clarion	1908Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	118	Rr 373R676ea Jun 1908	Unknown	1908
The Clarion	1906Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	184	Rr373R676ea Jan 1906	Unknown	1906
The Clarion	1909Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	104	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1909	Unknown	1909
Senior Annual	1910Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	102	Rr373R676ea Jun1910	Unknown	1910
Senior Annual	1912Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	134	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1912	East High School, Rochester, NY	1912
Senior Class Book	1913Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	72	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1913	East High School, Rochester, NY	1913
Senior Class Book	1912Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	49	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1912	East High School, Rochester, NY	1912
Senior Annual	1913Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	128	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1913	East High School, Rochester, NY	1913
Senior Annual	1914Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	140	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1914	East High School, Rochester, NY	1914
Senior Annual	1915Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	178	Rr373R676ea Jun 1915	East High School, Rochester, NY	1915
Senior Class Book	1915Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	48	Rr373R676ea Jan 1915	East High School, Rochester, NY	1915
The Senior Tower	1916Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	84	Rr373R676ea Jan 1916	East High School, Rochester, NY	1916
The Sphinx	1916Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	176	Rr373R676ea Jun 1916	East High School, Rochester, NY	1916
The Orient	1917Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	96	Rr373R676ea Jan 1917	East High School, Rochester, NY	1917
Senior Annual	1917Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	180	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1917	East High School, Rochester, NY	1917
Senior Annual	1918Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	134	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1918	East High School, Rochester, NY	1918
Spotlight	1919Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	76	Rr373R676ea Jan 1919	East High School, Rochester, NY	1919

**RPL Board Director's Report –March 2023 (Continued)**

Senior Annual	1919Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	128	Rr373R676ea Jun 1919	East High School, Rochester, NY	1919
The Colossus	1920Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	100	Rr373R676ea Jan 1920	East High School, Rochester, NY	1920
The Senior Log	1920Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	154	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1920	East High School, Rochester, NY	1920
Janua	1921Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	116	Rr373R676ea Jan 2021	East High School, Rochester, NY	1921
The Orient	1921Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	160	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1921	East High School, Rochester, NY	1921
Janua	1922Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	128	Rr373R676ea Jan 1922	East High School, Rochester, NY	1922
Janua	1923Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	144	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1923	East High School, Rochester, NY	1923
Orient	1923Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	179	Rr373R676ea Jun 1923	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1923
Janua	1924Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	176	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1924	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1924
Orient	1924Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	208	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1924	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1924
Janua	1925Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	160	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1925	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1925
Orient	1925Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	176	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1925	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1925
Janua	1926Jan	East High School Rochester, NY	160	Rqr373R676ea Jan 1926	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1926
Orient	1926Jun	East High School Rochester, NY	160	Rqr373R676ea Jun 1926	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1926
Orient	1927	East High School Rochester, NY	172	Rqr373R676ea 1927	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1927
Orient	1928	East High School Rochester, NY	180	Rqr373R676ea 1928	Du Bois Press, Rochester, NY	1928
Misc Rochester City and Sub Directory	Misc	Various pages missing on Jon Palmer project	1,134	41 directories	Polk Directories	various
Total pages	14,505			Total whole books	94	

**Social Media**

There were two new posts to the *Local History ROCs!* blog in February: “In Honor of Pioneering Black Men from Rochester’s Community: Thank You bobby johnson & Rev. John S. Walker” by McDonald, and “Old to Begin: How a Historic Hotel Became a Home” by Emily Morry. The new posts received 77 views. In addition, readers from 35 countries revisited 181 previously published posts for a total of 3,048 views in February. All posts can be read online at [www.rochistory.wordpress.com](http://www.rochistory.wordpress.com). See Anecdotes/Other (below) for exciting news about the blog this month!

### Anecdotes/Other

- The division's *Local History ROCs!* blog, and specifically three posts on it that were written by Morry, received attention from two major national websites and one local site this month: *History.com* linked to Morry's 2016 post, "The Kodak City Goes to War: Rochester's Aerial Photography School" for an article on "How Nations Have Spied from the Sky": [https://www.history.com/news/aerial-surveillance-spy-devices?cmpid=email-hist-inside-history-2023-0215-02152023&om\\_rid&~campaign=hist-inside-history-2023-0215](https://www.history.com/news/aerial-surveillance-spy-devices?cmpid=email-hist-inside-history-2023-0215-02152023&om_rid&~campaign=hist-inside-history-2023-0215).  
*AARP.org* linked to, and used photos from, Morry's 2019 series of posts about the Inner Loop for an article called "Before the Highway: Rochester, New York": <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2023/before-the-highway-rochester-martin-pedraza-david-everett.html>  
A local website on African American composer R. Nathaniel Dett linked to Morry's 2022 post on Dett, noting, "You can read a bit about his neighborhood via Emily Morry, PhD, a *fantastic* historian at the Monroe Public Library who has written an excellent blog post about Dett's life in Rochester on the website of the Library's Local History & Genealogy Division, Local History ROCs!": <https://deeperintodett.hcommons.org/2023/02/13/dett-the-rochesterian-cursory-introduction/>.

### Upcoming Events/Programs

Saturday, April 15, 1:00 – 2:30 pm, Kusler-Cox Auditorium – Rochester's Rich History – "Rochester's Jewish Landmarks: Exploring Rochester's Jewish History Through the Built Environment," by Megan Klem.

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

### Reference

During February, RMC handled 628 reference questions and 306 non-reference transactions for a total of 934.

### Circulation

In February, RMC rented 6 pieces of equipment, 240 Mi-Fi units in addition to the regular collection, for a total of 4,324 items or 31% of the Central Library's total circulation of 13,978 (before renewals from Catalog Plus, Classic Catalog, and Telephone are added).

**\*\*When adding in the RMC items that circulated at other libraries, RMC circulated 8,920 items! \*\***

### Programs/Tours/AV setups

- Our First Friday Film was "Farewell Amor"
- Black Film Festival:  
2023 is the first year of the Black Film Festival and while the audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive, the attendance figure was low. The festival was promoted heavily by FFRPL, in City Newspaper, on the library website, and on Facebook. The Graphics Department created a wonderful brochure for the event. But none of this translated into the attendance numbers we would like to have seen. Next year will be different, as we learn from our first attempts. Diane Gardner did a wonderful job pulling this festival together including input from patrons; Bob Scheffel did a wonderful job researching facts about the individual films. The audience was very appreciative of our efforts. Mayor Malik Evans opened the festival on the first day.

***Science and History, Gabe Pellegrino reporting***

Personnel

Darlene Richards, Division Manager for Science, History & Social Sciences, who had been on long-term leave, has officially retired from the library as of February 24, with 24 ½ years of service. Richards served in the Literature, Business, and Science Divisions during her career. Gabe Pellegrino continues as Science Division Manager. The Science staff continues to make schedule adjustments, work extra hours, and use substitutes until the Division is fully staffed.

Programs

- The *Got Health?* Online video series, presented by and in partnership with the Center for Community Health and Prevention at the University of Rochester Medical Center, continued with: *Eating Disorders in a Global Pandemic*.
- *NASA History: 60 Years of Discovery* was on Saturday, February 11. This was the first program in the Space Program series: Eclipse 2024 with NASA Ambassador Jim Porter. The attendees were all engaged and asked great questions

Tax Preparation

- Florence Morris has completed her work in making the 2022 Federal Internal Revenue Service (in English and Spanish) and New York State tax forms available to the public, now on display.
- The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance Taxpayer Assistance Program (TAP) has returned to the Central Library on BLB 3 to offer in-person assistance to people for them to file their tax returns. This is a welcome return after two years of being available virtually only, due to COVID. This program is held every Wednesday through April 12, 2023. Federal and State Income Taxes. more popular each week. Many thanks to Ricky Perez in Maintenance for his help in setting up the area used for this service, and many thanks to Corinne Clar and Kristin Spath in the Graphics Department for their excellent work with the flyers to help promote the NYS TAP program.

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- A teacher/library media specialist from the Warsaw Middle-High School contacted Morris with a book list of a total of forty-eight books that are in the collection of the Science, History and Social Sciences Division to have them pulled from the shelves, checked out, and ready for the teacher to be able to come into the Central Library to pick up the books. The teacher lives in Henrietta, New York, and can use her Monroe County Library card. Many thanks to Chad Cunningham and his staff in the Circulation Department for checking out all the books ahead of time so that they were all ready for the teacher. This is the third year Morris has worked with this teacher.
- Morris continued in February to work with an elderly patron who sends in book lists related to the subject of aviation. The book list in February included eight titles. For one of the titles, an Interlibrary Loan request had been submitted since this one book was older and not owned by any of the public libraries in the Monroe County Library System.
- LROC (Library Resource Outreach Center) visitors were up to about 55 this month, a high number considering several cancellations. The new counseling service/support group offered on Wednesdays is starting to pick up visitors.

Displays

Love your Library month display



Facebook Statistics: February 2023

- Gardening Club: 175 Members (3 new members)  
4 Posts, 1 Comment, 13 Reactions  
Total Engagements: 18
- Cooking Club: 152 Members  
3 Posts, 3 Comments, 21 Reactions  
Total Engagements: 27

**Technology Center, Ginger Brewer and Cynthia Dana reporting**

Programs

- Ginger Brewer has been able to collaborate with the Arnett Library to continue the computer tutor program. Brewer has been working consistently with patrons in a classroom setting to ensure they are getting the digital skills they need. Brewer's main goal is to help those who are not tech savvy to feel comfortable with operating computers, cell phones, and other devices daily.
- The Technology Center staff has been doing a wonderful job assisting patrons with their cell phone and laptop issues during the month. Staff educated on the importance of not downloading multiple cleaning apps for cell phones, keeping on top of updates, and other things to keep the device working properly. Though some issues required a little more time, the staff never turned anyone away and assured the patron was comfortable and fully understood the lessons that the staff taught them. All patrons were able to get their issues resolved.
- The Technology Center has been offering classes of various types. They have found it easier to plan their classes around patrons' needs rather than plan something ahead of time. They keep track of the more

complex questions and set a time for several patrons to come in at once and learn a new skill. This will begin in March.

- The classroom in Tech Center has been used by Rochester Works to work with patrons who are doing job searches and applications. Leroy Banks has established himself and his staff in Tech Center and has helped many get back into the workforce. This partnership is beneficial to so many.

#### Anecdotes/Other

- Ginger Brewer had the pleasure of assisting a local advocate. The woman that Brewer assisted is the mother of a young man who wandered off from school one day and then later met a tragic end. The young man was diagnosed with Autism. The mother was at the library applying to government agencies to make her organization tax-exempt. Since her son's tragedy, she has been working diligently to help those who may have been diagnosed with Autism and other conditions to become more independent in the home setting. Brewer listened to her story and then helped her locate the forms that were sent to her email to get the process going. The mother stated to Brewer,  
*"It is people like you and others at the library that make me realize that I can never stop advocating and keeping my son's legacy alive. I am so grateful for all of you."*
- There is a regular patron in the Tech Center who has been homeless consistently for the past forty years. Before Amy Shropshire began updating the resource list for our homeless patrons, she chatted with this patron extensively one evening. During the conversation, the focus was on many of the patron's recommended local food resources for the homeless, which places offered the friendliest service, and where shelter can be found in an emergency. Also discussed was the efficacy and history of various twelve-step programs. While this may be an unconventional way to communicate with patrons, Shropshire finds that speaking to patrons about their lives and sharing stories enables them to not only glean resources to pass on to other patrons, but also to discover what resources are the most in-demand and necessary, and how to streamline the process of obtaining the most necessary resources. This patron is an asset, as are many of our patrons, each with their unique experiences, connections, and skills.

#### ***Teen Central, Shetora Banks and Jeff Bostic reporting***

##### E-sports

The esports team received their Farmcraft II prizes this month. It was a skin to be used in Minecraft. The team also hosted the 585Fighterz vs AGN esports tournament. Former Teen Center regular Max was able to win his matchup very easily for AGN, while former Library employee Yusef lost his Mortal Kombat matchup. The team is starting to work on producing their first video game utilizing Unreal Engine 5, which was the first software installed on all esports computers.

##### Black History Month

After the CLL vs RPD event, the RPD agreed to be the subject of our Black History Month posters this year. Check out the results hanging on the Teen Center windows:



### Glowforge

Visitors on a school field trip were able to get picture puzzles made on the Glowforge.



### Programs

- Girls Who Code: New students joined the program this month. Faezah Jahanshiri has been running this program for a year and a half now. The Girls Who Code organization awarded our club another \$500 grant money. They've added Jahanshiri to their advisory board, and she's now connected to all Girls Who Code teachers/facilitators nationwide.
- Learn on Udemy: Patrons have registered and learned how to open a free Udemy account. They are provided information, instructions, and an overview of the certification courses Amazon offers through Udemy.
- Sewing classes: People seem to enjoy learning how to sew and socialize with each other. Per their request, 4 more seats will be available, and we will offer the class every week, starting in April.

- Black History Month Trivia: Students from School without Walls provided twenty prompts about inventors, abolitionists, entertainers, authors, etc. They divided themselves into teams and each team earned points by guessing the person the prompt was describing.
- FAFSA Fest: Janee Slade, College Access Program Director for The Rochester Education Foundation, hosted a two-day drop-in event in Teen Central. Families received assistance with FAFSA completion, scholarships, student loan counseling, scholarship assistance, and college essay writing. All these resources helped parents and students overcome college access barriers.
- Craft and Chat: Teens were able to relax and make beautiful, beaded accessories while discussing our favorite fashion houses and what employment opportunities are available outside of models and designers. There was a lot of talent and the table! This was also an awesome time to bond with our new Safe to Be Smart mentor, Lindsey Bradley.



#### Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

Banks met with Pathways to Peace officers to discuss the uptick in violence in the Dewey Ave area and how the violence displayed is performed by young people. We discussed safe spaces for those looking for support.

#### Anecdotes/Other

Jahanshiri helped one of our teens to get back to school this month. He is a bright kid with a GPA of 4.5 and less than 6 credits to graduate. He has faced a lot of adversity in his life, first living with his grandmother, then with his mom in another state until an abusive situation caused him to return to Rochester. A social worker who visits Teen Central was contacted and she responded the same day. The teenager reported back that he is very happy to be back at school. 😊

### **Community Library Updates**

**Melanie Lewis, Deputy Director reporting**

#### Anecdotes/Other

During this short month of February, The Branch Managers collaborated fervently with Personnel around the staffing shortage. Branch Administration staff were supportive and creative about providing coverage. Numerous applications were reviewed, and interviews were conducted to fill vacancies at almost every location. Vacant titles were diverse and included Library Assistants, Librarians, Security, Clerical, and Literacy Aides. Offers have been extended; we are hoping to emerge from this shortage by the Spring.

This month had many feel-good moments.

During February the Branches celebrated two milestone anniversaries:

Erin Clarke from Branch Administration celebrated her 15th anniversary with RPL. Erin began her career at the Lyell Branch, later becoming the Branch Manager at the Frederic Douglass Community Library. She currently works in Branch Administration supporting Branch Programs and initiatives.



Bonnie Evers celebrated her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Maplewood Community Library. Bonnie grew up in the neighborhood and was at the library on the day it opened. She was in fourth grade. As a high schooler, she worked as a Library Page, and she later came back as an adult to work as a Page again. We are excited and grateful that she is participating in the Maplewood redesign discussions. Her input and historical knowledge are invaluable.



The next feel-good moment is also connected to Maplewood. As I was leaving the library after a visit, I heard a voice calling "Miss, can I talk to you for a minute?" I was preparing myself for a request, possibly a complaint. The patron told me how much she loved coming to the library. She shared she used to think Maplewood was "just a place where kids come and play" but now comes regularly for help. She said:

*They greet you! And they really act like they enjoy helping! I come all the time, for everything now!*  
(Exclamation is needed, she was animated)

The Pillars of Hope are local African American and Latinx professionals who volunteer to visit Rochester City School District (RCSD) schools, share their experiences, and provide positive support to the students. The program is sponsored by the City of Rochester. For Black History Month, we planned a special field trip with the school #8 cohort to the Rochester Museum and Science Center to visit the "Take it Down" exhibit. We also participated in the educational program expertly facilitated by members of the "Take it Down" committee and RMSC staff.

In 2016, a panel featuring racial "pickaninny" artwork was removed from the Dentzel Carousel at Ontario Beach Park in Rochester, NY, after being on display for over one hundred years. This issue generated controversy in our community and activists have created an exhibit around the piece to show how pickaninny art perpetuates racism by denying the humanity of Black children.

The children learned about local and national activism and were given historical context around racist images and how they have been used throughout history. The children actively participated in rich and layered discussions around racism and how history is connected to the present. Though the subject matter was far from "feel-good," the children were engaged and excited active participants in the program which was a few hours long. There was much learning that took place for children and adults.

Director Uttaro has mentioned to RPL|MCLS entities that this program is valuable. Presently the MCLS Director's retreat will be held at the museum for this program. I also highly recommend the experience.



**Arnett Branch Library, Bruce Tehan reporting**

Programs

The most popular event was a group photo to celebrate Arnett's 100th anniversary! As the Arnett Branch Library gears up to celebrate 100 years it was felt that a photo was needed for various publications that will highlight the thing that makes the library the special place it is: the Arnett Branch Library Community members. 100 people, including Mayor Malik Evans and County Legislature President Sabrina LaMar, gathered for the photo. The event took on a festive air as patrons young and old mixed and mingled, snacked on refreshments, and entered to win several prizes. For days afterward, participants mentioned how much they enjoyed the event and looked forward to seeing the photo. It is nice that Arnett's patrons have a clear sense of proud ownership in their library and exhibit a genuine love of the branch. Photo by volunteer Margy Meath.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

Arnett staff members took part in a Complete Street Makeover meeting hosted by the library where over 100 community members of all ages met to discuss how best to transform the corner of Arnett Boulevard and Warwick Avenue. To learn more about Complete Street Make Over projects visit Complete Streets Makeover: Making Rochester streets safer for all - Reconnect Rochester

Anecdotes/Other

A recent reader profile in Patty Uttaro's blog It's All About the Reader featured Beth Larter standing in front of the Arnett Branch Library. <https://itsallaboutthebook.org/2023/02/05/reader-profile-beth-larter/>

**Charlotte Branch Library, Dennis Williams reporting**

Programs

- Fun, laughter and book recommendations flowed as the Food for Thought book discussion group met via Zoom to discuss *When the Stars Go Dark* by Paula McLain.
- Jennifer Cherelin reported the Charlotte Produce Distribution was held and over 143 families were served.
- February was Kindness Month, and Rachel Barinas and Mary Ellison are each providing a Tuesday and Thursday story time each week.
- Music with Mike & Jennifer continued, along with the ukulele program and a boondoggle program.



Anecdotes/Other

- Duff reported a father and his daughter Delia enjoyed the use of Charlotte's children's room, craft room, and the chess set on the first floor during break week from school. They spent several days reading, crafting and learning to play chess. Delila even found a challenger at the chess set in one of our volunteers.
- Dennis Williams and Duff reported ROC Made with Love once again filled the library with wonderful, hand-crafted winter items including scarves, hats, mittens, and headbands. Patrons were delighted by the generosity as they picked out items to share or keep!

**Douglass Community Library, Evanna DiSalvo reporting**

Programs

- Douglass Day Celebration: The library celebrated Frederick Douglass's birthday with cake and lemonade while showing the movies Rediscovering Frederick Douglass and The Abolitionists on the new smart screen TV recently installed in the shared space at Anna Murray-Douglass Academy School 12. (Education and Engagement)
- So You Want to Be a Writer? Part 1, The Craft of Writing: Presented by a local author (Secret Scientists of London series) Elizabeth Everett. Part two will be presented in March and plans for a repeat remote event are in the works. (Education and Engagement)



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Anna Murray Douglass Academy School 12 Winterfest: Emma Reynolds and Evanna DiSalvo attended to give away books left over from the recent book sale.
- Safe Place Training by Center for Youth: DiSalvo attended at Wheatley and has invited Brittany Schulik to present at the March staff meeting.

Anecdotes/Other

- The library's December art exhibits and the January henna program appeared on page 6 of the Feb/March issue of South Wedge online newspaper The Wedge.
- A family new to the neighborhood came in to sign their baby daughter up for a library card on Frederick Douglass's birthday. They shared their love of libraries, and their daughter had even learned to crawl at their local branch out west! Their child took her time to inspect all the books and chose a Frederick Douglass

picture book on display for the Douglass Day Celebration. Her mother thought it seemed like a sign for her to choose that book in this branch on that day.

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

Anecdotes/Other

- Lehman has been filling in at the Lyell Branch Library as acting Branch Manager.
- Lehman continued to work on scheduling interviews for positions at both Lyell (Part-Time Librarian I, Part-Time Clerk III) and Lincoln (Full-Time Librarian I, Part-Time Librarian I, Security Guard, and two Page positions).
- The Part-Time Clerk III position at Lyell has been filled and Emma Tramel will join the staff soon.
- A job offer for the Part-Time Librarian I position at Lincoln has been extended and the candidate is currently undergoing the onboarding process with the city.
- Haygood created a display at the Charlotte Branch for Black History Month.



***Lyell Branch Library, Sarah Lehman reporting***

Programs

- Natasa Prelevic designed and assembled Take & Make Activities for kids with a focus on Valentine's Day and Black History Month. They featured felt flowers, a heart bag, a foam wallet, twirling lovebugs, drawing a mask, coloring the stoplight, and simple introductions to some of the important scientists, poets, innovators, and political activists in American Black history.
- Manju Sharma helped teen patrons celebrate World Read Aloud Day by offering incentives for logging time spent reading. Many teens logged their times and submitted their paperwork for a prize.
- Several Teens enrolled in the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and helped the teen librarian make a teen area sign and brainstorm monthly programs. Sharma enjoys allowing the teens to show how important they are and how they can contribute in a meaningful way.
- Teens started to love to play chess and have quiet time to spend in the library. Sharma showed beginners how to play chess and then they learned how to get to checkmate.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

Artemis Markakis and Sharma had a Zoom meeting with Writers & Books Director of Youth Education Sally Bittner Bonn to discuss and plan the Summer Write 2023 program to be held at the Lyell Branch.

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

Programs

- Maplewood's young patrons ran for office this month. There is a president, vice president, and secretary. They created flyers and gave speeches to convince their peers that they were the perfect person to improve the library. The children also took ownership by attending a meeting with the architects and engineers of Maplewood's future library building. They shared their thoughts, ideas, and hopes for the future library. The children took the time to draw up blueprints for the new building and added things that they hope to have.
- For a special treat, the children and teens had gourmet cotton candy from Sugary Delights. It was the first time at the Maplewood Library for one child and for another child it was the first time they were ever in a library. They picked a good first day to visit!
- The anime club had a manga reading challenge. It was for all ages and the winners will be announced in March.

Anecdotes/Other

- Brian DiNitto made a house call for a patron who was housebound and had to have documents notarized before going into the hospital for a procedure. He also brought her a DMV form for renewing her driver's license. The patron was very grateful that Maplewood Community Library could accommodate her needs with a home visit.
- Three Zoom grammar class students (from Columbia, Ukraine, and Brazil) will soon complete their grammar studies with the Maplewood Community Library. They will be done with their grammar lessons but are encouraged to continue with the Conversation Class and Presentation Class through Zoom. Maplewood Community Library not only teaches the structure of language but provides opportunities to practice English through conversation, presentation, and citizenship classes.
- Mark Hafer offers story time at Head Start on Hudson Avenue monthly, and during the most recent visit, the children were very enthusiastic and gave him a huge group hug.

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

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Matthew Hoople conducted a school visit with pre-K and Kindergarten students at Francis Parker School #23.
- Mary Clare Scheg worked with the Street Medicine Team to help coordinate the placement of a homeless woman into a shelter. Monroe's social work intern is also working with the woman at the shelter.

Anecdotes

- The four-year-old class at St. Paul's Daycare was very interested in a dinosaur book, paying close attention silently for the whole book. In the end, a meteor smashed into the earth, and "That's why there aren't any more dinosaurs." Confused, one child asked, "But wait- where did all the dinosaurs go?" Without missing a beat, another four-year-old answered: "Heaven."
- Hoople went to Francis Parker School #23 to do a dinosaur-themed storytime. Terry Kenyon, the preschool teacher and Hoople's contact said it could be a very simple visit. Hoople does not do simple visits, so he borrowed an inflatable dinosaur costume from the Henrietta Public Library to charm the kids! (Picture taken thanks to Ms. Kenyon)



- A regular patron who is homeless was browsing the DVD shelf. Scheg asked him if he had any way to watch movies and he shook his head no. Scheg told him about a DVD device that can be attached to the computers to watch a movie and invited him to think about using the device. The next day this man came over to Scheg's desk with a movie in hand, and a staff member got him set up with the movie. Periodically, the man's laughter filled the back of the library. This was the first time that any of the staff had heard this man laugh and it was a wonderful sound.

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

Programs

- For the February break children enjoyed drawing anime and manga with Becky Miller. Two of the tweens came when the library opened because they were so excited about Miller's program.
- Pop-up programs are popular with children and teens. The children made a sock snowmen craft, and Alexandra Haehn also did Black History Bingo and a Black History Research Challenge with the older children.
- Divorce Webinar: Sheilah Murphy hosted a webinar featuring guest speaker Char Reeves, a retired mental health therapist who specializes in DivorceCare. The webinar considered the holiday season and different community resources available to those going through a divorce. (Priority #1: Education and Engagement – Promote learning, provide fun, and deliver creative and innovative educational experiences for our diverse populations).



Anecdotes/Other

10 of the children who participate in homework help brought in their report cards this month. All of them have gone up in their grades. They are either right on their reading level or above and most of them are at grade B or A in math. Tutor Mattie Shaw has been great at making learning fun for the children.

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

Programs

- Jacob Bigelow put up his annual Rochester Black History display featuring famous Black Rochesterians. This display drew in children, teens, and adults to discuss the people represented and learn new information. Children enjoyed looking at the pictures that Bigelow provided for each entry.
- Jasmine Santiago provided a Valentine's Day craft. The children used paper cutters to decorate their Valentine's Day cards for their friends and mothers.
- Santiago organized a Black History-themed scavenger hunt. Details of Frederick Douglass' life were scattered throughout the library for the children to find.
- Santiago provided a Creation Station craft for the children. With help from Z Griffith, the children made beaded lizards with pipe cleaner and beads.

Anecdotes/Other

- We received some wonderful materials from the Central Library for patrons to show how they love the Sully Branch Library. A five-year-old patron saw other people listing ways they love the library and she wanted to share her feeling about the library too, but she was sad that she did not yet know how to write. She asked Heeks-Heinlein for assistance in filling out her card. Here are her answers:

*We can read books*  
*We can play in that room (Storytime Room)*  
*We can have snacks in that room (Storytime Room)*  
*The grownups help us do things*  
*I love the library because I can learn how to read*



**Winton Branch Library, Kathy Wolf reporting**

Anecdotes/Other

- The Winton Branch Library has a benefactor who seems to work at Wegmans. Every so often he will deliver Wegmans bags, foam core, or other craft supplies. This month he brought a very large stack of foam core that Nancy Nevinskas used to decorate the March display window.
- Three teens from School Without Walls fulfilled their community service requirement at Winton. Two teens completed their full 75 hours at the end of February, and the third managed to complete a whopping 59 hours despite only beginning at Winton at the beginning of January! Each teen averaged 5 hours per week plus an additional 15 hours the week of their February Break.
- A volunteer for Catholic Family Services stopped in to reserve the meeting space for a class he had developed for refugees. It was his first time visiting the library, and he wasn't aware of the ESOL classes offered by the Maplewood library or the classrooms at the Central Library's Tech Center. He told Fraser, "This will help so much, I should've thought of the library first!"

