

Rochester
Public Library

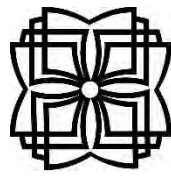
More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

**Rochester Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Board Room, Rundel Memorial Library Building
August 23, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Agenda**

- | | | |
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| I. PUBLIC COMMENTS | Gardner | |
| II. ACTION ITEMS | | |
| 1. Minutes of Prior Meeting | Gardner | page 3 |
| 2. Personnel Changes | Suro | page 9 |
| 3. Financial Reports | Harrison | page 11 |
| 4. Allocation of 2022-2023 Annual Campaign Proceeds | Harrison | page 15 |
| 5. NYSED Grant Approval | Harrison | page 15 |
| 6. DASNY Grant Acceptance | Harrison | page 16 |
| 7. RRLC Grant Acceptance | Harrison | page 16 |
| 8. Additional Hours for Monroe Branch | Lewis | page 16 |
| 9. Tutoring Agreement, TASC | Lewis | page 16 |
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| III. REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS | | |
| 1. Liaison & Committee Reports | | |
| a. Liaison to the MCLS Board | Uttaro | |
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| 2. Staff Reports | | |
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| IV. OTHER BUSINESS | | |
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**Next Meeting:
September 27, 2023
Central Library, Rundel Memorial Building, 3rd floor, Board Room,**



Rochester Public Library

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

**Meeting of the RPL Board of Trustees
Central Library, Kusler-Cox Auditorium
June 28, 2023
Minutes**

RPL Trustees Present: Katherine Baynes, Donna Benjamin, Ellen Brenner, Alinda Drury, Glenn Gardner, Richard Hamilton, Daniel Karin, Erick Stephens (quorum present)

RPL Trustees Excused: James Kraus, Marilyn O'Connor, Sharon Salluzzo

Staff and Guests: City Council Liaison, Mitch Gruber; City Legal Dept. Liaison, Johanna Brennan; FFRPL Executive Director, Donna Borgus; staff members, Brie Harrison, Melanie Lewis, Debi Mansour, Jennifer Smathers, Ana Suro, Patty Uttaro

Call to Order

Mr. Hamilton called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and confirmed a quorum was present.

Public Comments

No members of the public were present who wished to address the board.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Karin MADE A MOTION to approve the May 24, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Personnel Changes

Ms. Suro called attention to the personnel changes and staffing levels for the period May 9, 2023–June 9, 2023. Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve the personnel changes. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Reports

Ms. Harrison reviewed the financial reports with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Mr. Hamilton pointed out a possible calculation error in the written document. Ms. Harrison will review and send out a corrected document. Ms. Brenner MADE A MOTION to approve the monthly financial reports as presented and approved by the RPL Finance Committee. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

FY2022-23 Budget Amendment

Ms. Uttaro reviewed the item with trustees which included a \$150,000 appropriation from Rochester City Council to fund new MiFi devices for the 2023-24 FY. Ms. Drury MADE A MOTION to amend the 2022-23 Library budget by \$150,000 to continue public MiFi loaning as described in the 2023-24 fiscal year. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Library Store Agreement

Ms. Harrison reviewed the item with the trustees. There are no changes from previous years. Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to renew the Library Store Agreement with the Friends and Foundation of RPL for the fiscal year 2023-24. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Library Trust Fund Allocation for FY24

Ms. Harrison reviewed the item with the trustees. Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve Library Trust Fund distributions for the fiscal year 2023-24. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

County Historian Evaluation Services

Ms. Smathers reviewed the item with the trustees. Ms. Baynes MADE A MOTION to approve a professional services agreement with HistorySmiths for an amount not to exceed \$29,000 for the terms described. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Replacement Advisory Board Member for Archive of Black History & Culture

Ms. Smathers reviewed the item with the trustees. Ms. Baynes MADE A MOTION to appoint Lavelle Lewis to fill the vacancy on the RPL Board’s Community Advisory Board for the library’s Archive of Black History and Culture. His term will go through January 31, 2024. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Proposed Central Library Capital Improvement Budget for 2022-23

Ms. Harrison reviewed the item with the trustees. Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve the 2023-24 Central Library Facilities Capital Budget. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Annual Operating Agreements

Ms. Harrison reviewed the agreements with the trustees noting no significant changes from prior agreements. Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed annual operating agreements through June 30, 2024, as presented:

- CampbellNet Solutions not to exceed \$3000
- Tri-Delta Resources not to exceed \$3,000
- Wicked Squid Studios not to exceed \$8,000

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Social Media Policy

Ms. Uttaro reviewed the item with the trustees. She noted that Trustees Drury and Salluzzo, and Ms. Brennan had all reviewed the policy.

Mr. Stephens joined the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed social media policy. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Liaison to the Monroe County Library System Board

Ms. Uttaro shared that the MCLS board has only minutes and financial claims to approve at their last meeting. They are transitioning to a new president and Mr. Corcoran replaces Ms. Stockman as of July 1. They are also working on the Director’s succession planning with RPL Board President Hamilton.

Friends and Foundation of Rochester Public Library (FFRPL)

Ms. Borgus reported that FFRPL has fulfilled every funding request submitted to them for FY23. They paid out \$545,000 on behalf of the library and have agreed to cover another \$45,000 in funding requests for various projects. In addition, they will be paying approximately \$100,000 to the library after the close of this year's annual campaign. This totals almost \$700,000 of supplemental support.

Ms. Borgus shared that the nonprofit sector experienced decreases in metrics like the number of donors giving, the amount raised, retention rates, and reactivation rates in 2022 per the Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP). FFRPL is seeing these trends hold true in the 23FY results. Despite these trends occurring, the results are still overwhelmingly positive with most FFRPL metrics above pre-COVID numbers.

A plan for approaching the 2023-24 annual campaign is drafted. It includes a more formal plan and commitment from the FFRPL board regarding stewardship thank-you calls. For the first time, a QR code will be included on the remit slip.

FFRPL created a fundraising page for the Central Library Liberators eSports Team. The team was founded in 2022 as part of the city's anti-violence initiative and has since become a Twitch affiliate, meaning they can make money by streaming their gameplay. Through their work with the page, the students are learning about fundraising and community involvement.

FFRPL funded an Eagle Project at Charlotte Branch Library to paint and provide new shelving for a space that holds storage, meetings, and crafts.

Ms. Borgus listed several major restricted gifts that have come in and then described the winners of the Harold Hacker Grant for the Advancement of Libraries.

FFRPL is working with the Local Chapter 20 of the Vietnam Veterans of America to widen the restriction on the library's use of the Vietnam Veterans Fund they established many years ago.

The summer book sale began June 23 and will conclude on the 30th taking advantage of people downtown for the Jazz Festival. Over \$600 in sales has been yielded so far.

FFRPL received a copy of the first Rochester Public Library Annual Report 1912 in pristine condition from the Friends of the San Diego Central Library. The copy was given to Local History.

Director's Report

Ms. Uttaro offered to answer questions about the written report. She reported that a librarian at Central is looking to develop a spice library.

Next, she reported that there seems to be an issue with the transition of the publishing of the Rochester History Journal to RIT. There may be an issue with the production of the digital version and Ms. Uttaro will update everyone once she has more information.

The city is working with the Bloomberg Foundation on a new data dashboard for sharing data from various departments in a single dashboard. This led to the resurrection of the data-sharing agreement with the Rochester City School District (RCSD) from 2018. The purpose is to share data between the city Recreation Department, the Libraries, and the RCSD to determine if the work done in the city departments correlates to

improved school outcomes. With Bloomberg working on this 2-year project, she is hopeful we will get useful data.

Central Library

Ms. Smathers offered to answer questions about the written report. She then shared that the retirement of Patron Services Manager, Cynthia Dana after over 40 years of service is a substantial change for the Central Library staff members.

The other momentous change is the transition to being fully fine-free at RPL. Many staff members are working on that implementation for a July 1, effective date. Social media communications will be going out very soon with the announcement.

Ms. Uttaro added that she is in the middle of the hiring process for a new Central Library Associate Director. Once that person is in place, Ms. Smathers' direct reports will significantly decrease in number.

Community Libraries

Ms. Lewis offered to answer questions about the written report. She reported that despite inclement weather, the Arnett Branch 100-year Anniversary Kick-off event was well attended.

Next, she reported that progress is being made on the selection of a vehicle to be used as a bookmobile. Ms. Harrison added that third- and fourth-year students from different design disciplines at Rochester Institute of Technology will be coming together to create several design options for the van.

Ms. Lewis then reminded trustees that a Community Input Meeting for the Maplewood Community Library renovations project is this evening. And the Frederick Douglass Community Library will be Douglass Week with a Family Day event on Saturday, July 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Next, she reported that Area Coordinator, Joan Lee, and Youth Services Coordinator, Derrick Coley are retiring.

Lastly, she reported that the Lincoln Branch may be ready for patrons on July 17, the previous report from her was July 4.

Other Business

Mr. Hamilton thanked trustees for completing the surveys he had previously distributed. He noted that there was significant interest in the Board doing more work with local and state political advocacy.

Next, Mr. Hamilton announced his committee and liaison appointments as follows:

Donna Benjamin to the Nominating Committee,
Alinda Drury to the Personnel Committee,
Erick Stephens to the Facilities Committee,
James Kraus as the liaison to the FFRPL Board, and
He will be the liaison to the MCLS Board.

He then asked for volunteers for an ad-hoc Bylaws committee. Katie Baynes and Alinda Drury volunteered.

He reported that he is working with Suzanne Stockman as the president of the MCLS Board and will soon be working with Chris Corcoran who will start as the new president in July.

Next, Mr. Hamilton asked for feedback on implementing term limits for the Board. Ms. Baynes stated her support for implementing term limits. Mr. Karin suggested that two 5-year terms would be a reasonable limit. Ms. Uttaro added that the MCLS Board added term limits to their bylaws and RPL Board should consider that while reviewing their bylaws.

The trustees and Ms. Uttaro then had a brief discussion about the lobbying efforts of NYLA and different observations and options for strengthening the relationship between libraries and local and state governments.

Adjournment

Ms. Benjamin MADE A MOTION to adjourn. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, and the meeting adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

Submitted by Donna Benjamin, Secretary

**ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY
PERSONNEL CHANGES
June 12, 2023, to August 14, 2023**

➤ **NEW HIRES**

Clasper, Emily	Associate Library Director/FT/Central/CLA	08/14/2023
Mangione, Richard	Clerk III/Typing/PT/Central/Circulation	07/03/2023
Mendez, Jose	Literacy Aide/PT/Sully Branch	07/31/2023

➤ **PROMOTIONS**

Clarke, Erin	FROM: Librarian II/FT/Branch Administration	07/01/2023
	TO: Acting Library Area Coord/Branch Administration	
Cobo, Melissa	FROM: Business Support Spec/Temp/Central/BIC	07/01/2023
	TO: Business Support/Spec/FT/Central/BIC	
Covell, Benjamin	FROM: Library Page/PT/Maplewood Branch	07/03/2023
	TO: Librarian I/PT/Maplewood Branch	
Fraser, Mary	FROM: Librarian I/PT/Winton Branch	07/01/2023
	TO: Librarian I/FT/Winton Branch	
Gunther, Alicia	FROM: Librarian I/FT/MCLS Office	07/01/2023
	TO: Marketing Librarian/FT/MCLS Office	
Jackson, Shareka	FROM: Associate Accountant/FT/Central/Finance	07/01/2023
	TO: Principal Staff Assistant/FT/Central/Finance	
Mercado, Benigno	FROM: Security Guard/PT/Central/Security Division	07/01/2023
	TO: Security Guard-Bil/FT/Central/Security Division	
Nunez, Pedro	FROM: Tech Services Spec-Bil/Temp/Central/Tech Ctr	07/01/2023
	TO: Tech Services Spec-Bil/FT/Central/Tech Ctr	
Payne, Debbie	FROM: Cleaner/FT/Central/Facilities	07/01/2023
	TO: Library Custodian/FT/Central/Facilities	
Steele, Falisa	FROM: Cleaner/FT/Central/Facilities	07/01/2023
	TO: Library Custodian/FT/Central/Facilities	
Wallance, Jordan	FROM: Clerk Typist/PT/Central/Local History	06/19/2023
	TO: Library Assistant/FT/Central/Tech Center	

➤ **RETIREMENTS**

Coley, Derrick	Youth Services Coordinator/FT/Central/STBS	07/30/2023
	21 Years of Service	
Dana, Cynthia	Public Services Manager/FT/Central Library Adm.	06/30/2023
	47 Years of Service	
Lee, Joan	Library Area Coordinator/FT/Branch Administration	07/05/2023
	23 Years of Service	
Royce, Mary	Library Webmaster & App Specialist/FT/LAS	06/30/2023
	45 Years of Service	

Personnel Changes
June 12, 2023, to August 14, 2023
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➤ **RESIGNATION**

Borus, Audrey	Librarian I/PT/Sub/Central/Children’s Center	06/21/2023
Bradley, Lindsey	Youth Services Assistant/PT/Central/Teen Center	06/30/2023
Coonelly, Taylor	Library Assistant/PT/Central/Children’s Center	07/28/2023
Feldman, Lillian	Library Page/PT/Monroe Branch	07/27/2023
Liberto, Reilly	Clerk Typist/PT/Winton Branch	08/12/2023

STAFFING
June 12, 2023 to August 14, 2023

Full-Time Positions	Central	Branches
Budgeted	78	26
Filled	75	25
Vacancies	3	1
Part-time Positions	Central	Branches
Budgeted	118	135
Filled	73	106
Vacancies	45	29

**Rochester Public Library
Financial Report Summary
August 2023**

Central Financial Report, July 2023

Salary & Benefits: Salaries, wages, and overtime are not fully represented until the fiscal year end close (posts to correct time period with payrolls). The annual retirement lump contribution will occur in January.

Equipment & Supplies: Materials purchases include some carry-forward encumbrances that will be adjusted with the fiscal year close; other expenses are projected within budget.

Services & Charges: Utility charges are not yet posted. Professional services include expenses that will be posted to the prior fiscal year after close.

Cash Capital: Funds are reserved for planned expenses (HVAC) and unknown needs with upcoming construction projects.

reminder – the time between fiscal year-end and City hard close makes Trust Funds unavailable for spending

Community Financial Report, July 2023

Salary & Benefits: Salaries, wages, and overtime are not fully represented until the fiscal year end close (posts to correct time period with payrolls).

Equipment & Supplies: Materials purchases and supplies are under budget.

Services & Charges: Utility charges are partially posted.

Cash Capital: Funds are reserved for planned expenses including some exterior painting and site work.

Central Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2023-24
July

Category	Description	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Expenses FISCAL YTD	Remaining Balance	% of Budget	
Salary & Benefits	Full-Time Salaries	4,765,600	4,765,600	176,569	4,589,031	3.7%	
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	1,518,200	1,518,200	43,587	1,474,613	2.9%	
	Overtime	15,000	15,000	604	14,396	4.0%	
	Employee Benefits	3,201,300	3,201,300	118,227	3,083,073	3.7%	
	Employee Development	21,000	21,000	0	21,000	0.0%	
	Other	118,400	118,400	971	117,429	0.8%	
	Sub Total	9,639,500	9,639,500	339,958	9,299,542	3.5%	
	Equipment & Supplies	Materials Budget	504,800	504,800	35,631	469,169	7.1%
		Other Furnishings & Equipment	8,500	8,500	277	8,223	3.3%
		Office Supplies	52,100	52,100	0	52,100	0.0%
Other Materials & Supplies		50,500	50,500	203	50,297	0.4%	
Sub Total		615,900	615,900	36,111	579,789	5.9%	
Services & Charges		Utilities	464,600	464,600	0	464,600	0.0%
	Facility Maintenance	121,900	121,900	2,363	119,537	1.9%	
	Professional Services/Fees	266,140	266,140	93,888	172,252	35.3%	
	Chargebacks	80,100	80,100	4,233	75,867	5.3%	
	Service Charges - Other Gov't	51,400	51,400	11,905	39,495	23.2%	
	Telecommunications	16,700	16,700	889	15,811	5.3%	
	Other Expenses	210,200	210,200	3,041	207,159	1.4%	
	Sub Total	1,211,040	1,211,040	116,320	1,094,720	9.6%	
	TOTAL EXPENSED	11,466,440	11,466,440	492,388	10,974,052	4.3%	
	Central Cash Capital		92,000	139,890	0	139,890	0.0%
REVENUE RECEIPTS		11,237,000	8,015,133	3,221,867			

Original Budget Revised Budget Outstanding Revenue

Community Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2023-24
July

Category	Description	Expenses FISCAL			Remaining Balance	% of Budget
		Original Budget	Revised Budget	YTD		
Salary & Benefits						
	Full-Time Salaries	1,095,500	1,095,500	37,597	1,057,903	3.4%
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	2,296,600	2,296,600	68,381	2,228,219	3.0%
	Overtime	1,170,900	1,170,900	38,600	1,132,300	3.3%
	Employee Development	22,900	22,900	80	22,820	0.3%
	Other	2,307,700	2,307,700	65,792	2,241,908	2.9%
	Sub Total	6,893,600	6,893,600	210,450	6,683,150	3.1%
Equipment & Supplies						
	Materials Budget	109,700	109,700	3,286	106,414	3.0%
	Office Supplies	37,700	37,700	0	37,700	0.0%
	Other Materials & Supplies	491,500	491,500	13,971	477,529	2.8%
	Sub Total	638,900	638,900	17,257	621,643	2.7%
Services & Charges						
	Utilities	222,000	222,000	8,251	213,749	3.7%
	Facility Maintenance	21,500	21,500	154	21,346	0.7%
	Professional Services/Fees	404,600	404,600	348	404,252	0.1%
	Chargebacks	36,900	36,900	1,686	35,214	4.6%
	Telecommunications	13,100	13,100	889	12,211	6.8%
	Other Expenses	47,300	47,300	100	47,200	0.2%
	Sub Total	745,400	745,400	11,429	733,971	1.5%
TOTAL EXPENSED		8,277,900	8,277,900	239,136	8,038,764	2.9%
Community Cash Capital	Computers & Equipment	10,000	77,672	0	77,672	0.0%
	Library Furnishings	22,000	44,000	0	44,000	0.0%
	Library Facilities	54,000	146,449	0	146,449	0.0%
	Library Capital Projects*	576,000				
	Cash Capital Total	662,000	268,121	0	268,121	0.0%
REVENUE RECEIPTS		560,461	560,461	246,135	314,326	
					<i>Outstanding</i>	
		<i>Original Budget</i>	<i>Revised Budget</i>	<i>Receipts FISCAL YTD</i>	<i>Revenue</i>	

* Projects administered by City DES

Trust Funds Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2023-24

Fiscal YTD (through July 31, 2023)

	Allocation	Carry-forward	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total
Reynolds Fund - RPL	\$143,734	\$968	\$144,702		0.0%
Fenevessy (Central + Branch bal)	\$30,006	\$8,448	\$38,454		0.0%
Kenyon-Jeffries Fund	\$19,863	\$6,633	\$26,496		0.0%
Purton Fund	\$16,714	\$0	\$16,714		0.0%
Gleason Fund	\$15,590				
Gleason Fund (FFRPL)	\$12,144	\$28,125	\$55,859		0.0%
Gervickas Fund	\$5,942	\$6,391	\$12,333		0.0%
Taylor Fund	\$3,548	\$3,351	\$6,899		0.0%
Boland Fund	\$1,514	\$443	\$1,957		0.0%
Carnahan Fund	\$1,529	\$799	\$2,328		0.0%
Poletto Fund	\$1,529	\$2,233	\$3,762		0.0%
Beeney Fund (FFRPL)	\$4,839	\$60	\$4,899		0.0%
Craig Fund (FFRPL)	\$2,708	\$738	\$3,446		0.0%
Holtzman Fund (FFRPL)	\$1,551	\$474	\$2,025		0.0%
Lee Fund (FFRPL)	\$1,477	\$1,694	\$3,171		0.0%
Vietnam Veterans Fund (FFRPL)	\$698	\$1,390	\$2,088		0.0%
Tummonds Fund (FFRPL)	\$35,562	\$20,956	\$56,518		0.0%
TOTAL	\$298,948	\$82,704	\$381,652	\$0	0.0%

Gift Fund Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2022-23

Fiscal YTD (through July 31, 2023)

Fund	Allocation	Transfer In	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total
Gift Fund	\$10,252		\$10,252	\$5,608	54.7%



TO: RPL Board of Trustees
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director
DATE: August 23, 2023
SUBJECT: Monthly Report – August 2023

Action Items

Allocation of 2022-2023 Annual Campaign Proceeds (Harrison)

\$291,099.99 was raised through the annual campaign from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Based on the RPL’s joint fundraising agreement with the Friends and Foundation of RPL, the proceeds of the annual campaign are to be divided evenly between the FFRPL and RPL, less any donor-restricted gifts, which translate to the following recommended allocation:

Distribution of net proceeds:

Rochester Public Library for books, materials, and programs	\$ 100,000.00
The Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library	\$ 100,000.00
Campaign Direct Costs	\$ 51,234.50

Restricted gifts and additional library allocation:

Donor Restricted funds for Library use	\$ 29,726.00
Restricted gifts to endowment funds	\$ 3,895.00
Gifts designated for special projects	\$ 6,244.49

<u>Total</u>	<u>\$ 291,099.99</u>
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Board Action Requested: Approve the proposed 2022–2023 annual campaign earnings allocation as described.

NYSED Grant Approval (Harrison)

The RPL will submit one grant application as part of the annual NYSED Library Construction grant process, as follows:

Charlotte Branch Roof Replacement: The project includes the demolition of existing roof systems on all roof areas of the library (two main levels and two smaller entry roofs). The existing roof systems are approximately 27 years old; there are leaking roof elements, particularly at the main level roof drains. Roof drain replacement will be included at these locations with minor asbestos abatement required at the roof system. The roof system would provide code minimum R-30 insulation, new flashings, and a 30-year warranty. The project also includes the removal of wood infill panels at the main entry and replacement with a glass mullion pattern to mimic the window directly above the main door, restoring the original arch.

The estimated cost for the project is \$342,380 and we are requesting a 50% NYSED construction award with up to \$171,190 in project cash capital as the match. Design is underway with MRB Group and construction is anticipated in spring 2024.

Board Action Requested: Approve grant application and acceptance of funds up to \$171,190 from the NYSED Division of Library Development for the construction projects described.

DASNY Grant Acceptance (Harrison)

We are approved for \$100,000 from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) State and Municipal Program to purchase and retrofit an outreach vehicle. Funding was solicited through Senator Jeremy Cooney in support of a Mobile Outreach service to be based out of the Lyell Branch. City Fleet is supporting the bid for a Dodge Ram ProMaster van (in progress). The Rochester Institute of Technology's College of Art & Design (RIT) will provide students with a fall 2023 project to assist in designing retrofits of the van for mobile services. RPL staff and RIT will collaborate on the best solutions to provide in-van access, mobile cart and display shelving, and rapid loading of supplies with build specifications to bid by late 2023. The RPL anticipates mobile services to begin in spring 2024.

Mobile services will include supporting senior care and adult day supervision sites; increased resources to support the school program at the Monroe County Jail; and participation with programs serving adults on probation and participants in the Rochester Correctional Facility Work Release Program. Where possible the van will attend community events (festivals, public markets, etc.) to increase exposure and awareness of library services. Children's mobile services will include story times at daycare centers with no transportation access to a library; partnering with City departments on community events; and delivering free library materials to community locations.

Board Action Requested: Accept DASNY funds of \$100,000 to purchase and retrofit an outreach vehicle.

RRLC Grant Acceptance (Harrison)

The RPL was awarded \$2,150 from the Harold Hacker Fund to update equipment purchases for the RPL/MCLS Mobile Learning Lab. Funds will supplement laptop replacements for the labs which are used by RPL and MCLS member libraries for digital literacy, workforce development, youth computer skills, and other specific programs.

Board Action Requested: Accept RRLC funds of \$2,150 for equipment purchases for the RPL/MCLS Mobile Learning Lab.

Additional Hours for Monroe Branch (Lewis)

The Monroe Branch wants to hold a Community Open House on Sunday, October 15, from 1:00-4:00 PM. Activities will include a fall book sale, new card sign-up, musical performance, trivia game (history of Monroe) scavenger hunt, art reception, book sale, hourly drawing for prizes, seasonal activities in the children's room, face painting and henna, and refreshments.

Board Action Requested: Approve 3 additional open hours for Monroe Branch on Sunday, October 15, 2023.

Tutoring Agreement, TASC (Lewis)

The RPL recommends continuation of Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) tutoring and after-school tutoring with current instructor Melissa Parrish. Ms. Parrish will provide virtual and in-person tutoring at the Maplewood Community Library.

The weekly schedule for classroom tutoring is established by Branch Administration, the Branch Manager, and the instructor. Ms. Parrish will be paid at a rate of \$29 per hour for a maximum of 173 hours, not to exceed \$5,017. Funding is allocated from the FY23 Branch operating budget.

The services required of the Consultant pursuant to this Agreement shall commence on August 24, 2023, and shall terminate on June 30, 2024.

Board Action Requested: Approve an agreement with Melissa Parrish, for Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) tutoring, for an amount not to exceed \$5,017 through June 30, 2024.

Tutoring Agreement, K-12 After-school Tutoring (Lewis)

The RPL recommends continuation of K-12 after-school tutoring with current instructor Lisa Singletary. Ms. Singletary will provide in-person tutoring at the Wheatley Community Library.

The weekly schedule for classroom tutoring is established by Branch Administration, the Branch Manager, and the instructor. Ms. Singletary will be paid at a rate of \$29 per hour for a maximum of 173 hours, not to exceed \$5,017. Funding is allocated from the FY23 Branch operating budget.

The services required of the Consultant pursuant to this Agreement shall commence on August 24, 2023, and shall terminate on June 30, 2024.

Board Action Requested: Approve an agreement with Lisa Singletary, for K-12 after-school tutoring, for an amount not to exceed \$5,017 through June 30, 2024.

Report & Discussion Items

RPL Director Patricia Uttaro reporting

Capital Projects Manager/Finance Manager Shift – Despite best efforts, Brie Harrison and Shareka Jackson were not able to hire a Senior Accountant, which has delayed the shift of responsibilities between the two of them. We have created a new title, Library Finance Specialist, which will go before the August Civil Service Commission. If approved, recruitment will begin in September for a provisional hire. Once we have that person in place, Brie will shift to fully focus on capital projects and Shareka will take on Finance Manager responsibilities. Thanks are due to both Brie and Shareka for their flexibility while we work this out.

Capital Updates – Brie Harrison, Melanie Lewis, and Sarah Lehman worked diligently to address all the final details in the Lincoln renovation project, ultimately leading to a soft opening on August 7. The final week prior to opening was particularly challenging as things like door opener buttons disappeared and some floor drains flooded during one of July's torrential downpours. Kudos to the Facilities staff, especially Frank Russo and Mike Miller, and LAS staffer Jim Whittemore for their efforts to install everything and, after the flood, get everything dried out. Whittemore was instrumental in getting Lincoln ready to go with PC installations and troubleshooting phone lines, confirming Crown Castle connections, and volunteering to install the new SenSource door counter (technically August activity) so Lehman could start tracking patrons asap versus waiting for a local installer to schedule. The Lincoln staff delivered stellar work in getting everything ready for opening.

Harrison also hosted a second public input session for Maplewood, which was held at Aquinas in June. Attendance was sparse, so the next session will likely be virtual. We received a letter from the President of the Maplewood Neighborhood Association which provided some excellent input and feedback on some of the architectural elements proposed, specifically the Dewey Avenue entrance. We are still looking for a suitable temporary site to relocate services and collections during construction. Harrison and Lewis will keep the board updated on the Maplewood progress as we move into Fall.

Harrison has also been working with the City and engineers to start the Rundel air handling project. One of the three staff elevators will be decommissioned, and the elevator shaft used to house the ductwork which will improve the fresh air intake on the 2nd and 3rd floors of Rundel. This is complicated, however, by the fact the 3rd staff elevator has been inoperable since May. It is old enough that parts can no longer be easily sourced. Harrison is working with the City and the contractor to find a way to solve this issue without delaying the air handling project.

Raising a Reader – In April, RPL Trustee Benjamin asked for a full report on the Raising a Reader program to help the Board better understand the impact, the cost, and the details of the program. Children’s Consultant Tonia Burton has provided an informative report which is being sent along with this board packet. Please take the time in August & September to read it. Burton will be invited to the September board meeting to answer questions. This budget year is the final year of the 3-year gift supporting the Raising a Reader FT Early Learning Specialist. This report will help make the case for adding the position to our budget permanently.

Fines Elimination – This project went live on July 1, with daily fines eliminated and existing fines (not lost items or manual fines) wiped from patron records. The data collected monthly tracks new library cards, circulation, number of lost items, and number of collection agency turnovers. The latter two data points won’t be relevant for a couple of months, but the first-month results for new library cards and circulation have been promising compared to June numbers. We see an increase of more than 400 in new library cards issued, suggesting people are coming back, and we see a slight increase in circulation. Anecdotal evidence is universally positive, although some Branch Managers are reporting that many people are still unaware of the shift. We are working now on improved advertising.

Social Media

June/July 2023	RPL Twitter	MCLS Twitter	Facebook	Facebook Groups	Instagram	YouTube
Profile/ Page Visits	510	338	2038	-	260	-
New Followers/ Page Likes	11 (2,117)	2 (2,237)	63 (5,764)	59	89 (2,530)	35 (552)
Engagements	219	152	2225	94	416	216
Check-In/ Mentions	29	22	-	-	17	-
Post Reach	8591	5906	18953	-	5454	6611
Video/Story Views	-	-	3138	-	2393	6611

Constant Contact Newsletter

Central / RPL Newsletter (2 Sent)

- Subscribers who opened newsletter – 4,850/4,958
- Click through – 186/107

New subscribers – 19

OverDrive

- Total Checkouts- 82,893/89,296
- Lucky Day Checkouts- 742/757
- Simultaneous Use Checkouts- 8,172/9,095
- SORA Checkouts- 709/261
- Great Courses- 97/113

Central Library Updates

Jennifer Smathers reporting

Arts/Literature, Robert Scheffel reporting

Programs

- A Vanishing New York. In July, Arts Division welcomed photographer and author John Lazzaro who spoke about his book *A Vanishing New York*. Lazzaro spoke of his interests in history, photography and how these interests led to the eventual publication of his book. Lazzaro divided the program into regions of New York State and the various backgrounds of the sites he explored photographically. Lazzaro brought the history of places into his photographic works, describing the past and the current situations that exist due to these abandoned and vanishing locations in various parts of New York—leaving the audience to reflect on the current state of structures that surround us. Lazzaro ended the program with questions and inquiries from the attendees. The program has been recorded and posted to the Rochester Public Library Youtube page.
- Museum-Quality Storage for Photographs and Memorabilia. Kate Jacus from Photocurator and Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services presented a program on ‘Museum-Quality Storage for Photographs and Memorabilia.’ Jacus began the program with the steps that guide planning for storing and managing a collection of photographs or important items. Jacus touched on the science behind what makes items archival or not and how to get each type of item into a storage environment conducive to long-term storage for generations to come. Jacus described how each type of object and material has its plan of action. Attendees had many questions about the process and had a lively conversation throughout the program. Jacus gave out additional resources for materials and helped advise on managing collections. The attendees had various perspectives of their reasons for interest in the program, from personal collections and managing family collections to reaching out to the public to help with having a



guide to the subject. This was a useful, applicable program on a subject matter that everyone deals with how to take care of what they care about long term.

Business Insight Center (BIC), Jennifer Byrnes, reporting

Meetings

Byrnes met with an editor from Rowan Littlefield to discuss publishing a book about cannabis for librarians. She met with David Serrano of the Cannabis Workforce Initiative to discuss possibly having a CWI Fellow housed at the library 2-3 times per week. She met with Vision Financial Group to discuss financial programming. Byrnes and Melissa Cobo met with Anthony Manning of REDCO to discuss how they can be better partners. Lastly, Byrnes and Cobo met with Yasmin Mattox, the relatively new director of the iZone, a part of the University of Rochester libraries. iZone is a creative problem-solving space and a program and community; iZone is designed to empower students to explore and imagine ideas for social, cultural, community, and economic impact. They were asked to present to their new cohort of students in the fall.

Outreach

Byrnes and Kate Meddaugh presented to the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) monthly meeting at Oak Hill Country Club. Byrnes was the keynote speaker and a panelist at a small business program for the Parma Public Library. She discussed small business startups. Other panelists were local business owners.

Training

Cobo participated in the following trainings: Public Library Services for Strong Communities: Results from PLA's 2022 Survey – Public Library Association, State of Cannabis Business Organization, Structuring and Set Up - Harris Beach PLLC, Innovation Through Law: The Importance of Early-Stage IP, Regulatory and Market Research – Syracuse Innovation Law Center.

Consulting

- The Carlson Center for Intellectual Property assisted: 2 in person, 25 by email, 0 by mail, three by phone, and two by Zoom.
- Carlson Center Webpage views: 28
- 3D Printer: 8
- Hours of in-depth market research / prior art searching: 45
- Requests Outside Greater Rochester Area: 15

Database Usage Statistics

- Frost & Sullivan: Downloads: 20 Value: \$63,500
- IBISWorld: Page views: 93 Value: \$34,700
- InnovationQ: Logins: 11 Searches: 182
- PitchBook: Logins: 34
- Statista: Searches: 3,903 Downloads: 694

Anecdotes

After more than 20 years of service, Kate Meddaugh, manager of the Carlson Center for Intellectual Property, will leave RPL to move to Tennessee. Because of her efforts, the Carlson Center is a public library's top-performing Patent and Trademark Resource Center. She will be greatly missed.

Children's Center, Tonia Burton reporting

Programs

- All Together Now, the 2023 Summer Reading Program began at the end of June. This summer's theme encourages working, creating, reading, and playing together. To entice early registration for the reading game, children can choose to enter a drawing for four tickets to Seabreeze. As children read and attend programs, they earn raffle tickets that can be used to win four tickets to the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Strong Museum of Play, Seneca Park Zoo, or a Red Wings game. Other choices are a bundle of books or a family game night bundle.
- Throughout the summer, we invited patrons to draw and color a quilt square for our Community Quilt that Miranda Hazen will sew together and display in the Children's Center this fall. In the meantime, the squares are pinned up on a board in our Middle Ground for all to see.
- Taylor Connelly began our Exploration playtimes in the Secret Room with different themed toys and scavenger hunts for each weekly event. Children have explored bubbles, chalk, and nature. In the second week, dinosaurs took over the Secret Room.
- Our first visiting artist program for the summer was the energetic *BenAnna Band*. They filled KGA with music so fun that you couldn't help but get up and dance. They passed out scarves, shakers and had bubbles filling the room. The performers are trained music therapists and use different techniques to encourage the kids



to make cross-body movements; this is important for kids because it helps develop strong motor skills, which aid in balance and improve reading and writing skills when children get to school.

- Circus For All Show amazed children and parents alike. Ben Berry shared his amazing talent while teaching us the importance of reading, practicing, and making mistakes. This comment was sent to Burton after the Circus For All Show-
“I just wanted to tell you how much our children enjoyed the show on Monday! The circus guy was so interactive and fun! He taught the children how to communicate and work together to attain a goal, and they succeeded, which was the highlight! When he performed, he made mistakes and laughed them off, showing our children that it was fine not to be perfect! He mostly made our children laugh, which was so fun to see! Thanks again, Friends and Foundation of the library!”

Joi DiGennaro McMurtry, Friendship Children's Center.

- In July, Coonelly also hosted a series of STEAM job discovery programs called World of Work. Participants learned what it takes to become animators, video game designers, and chemists. In August, participants will learn about architecture with Kelly Jahn, the architect for the Secret Room. The final session will be at Innovative Field, learning about jobs in the sports field with the Red Wings.



- Miranda Hazen continued the Make It Together series of programs with Chalk the Walk for Pride on the Rundel Terrace and some big collaborative builds with LEGO. Then we built a big Recycled Robot named Book Bot Square Pants.



- The RPO Instrument Petting Zoo made a return! Musicians discussed their instruments and let kids have a hands-on experience with all the different instruments in the orchestra.
- The Ganondagan State Site visited and showed families how to make cornhusk dolls. When children began to ask questions about why the doll had no face, the presenter discussed the importance of the No Face doll with a story. She showed families how to make dolls with corn husks, scissors, and thread. Some kids took their dolls and played with them in the Children's Center, right with some of the cars, tracks, and other toys we have.
-



- Borinquen Dance Theater Company visited the library for two performances that highlighted the culture of Puerto Rico, specifically the Indigenous and African influences on the island culture. They closed the program by teaching the kids how to dance the Plena.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Tonia Burton participated in a Parents Helping Parents Playdate at Miracle Field in Webster. Parents Helping Parents is hosting events for children with special needs who require early intervention services. However, because of the lack of providers and long waiting lists, they cannot get services such as music therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech therapy. Therapists volunteer their time to be on hand to answer parents' questions and give ideas for activities families can do at home while waiting for services. Currently, the wait for assistance could be over a year.
- Burton attended the *Right To Read* screening at The Little. This documentary shares the stories of an NAACP activist, a teacher, and two families fighting to provide children with the ability to read, which indicates life-long success. A panel of local experts shared what was happening locally and answered questions from the audience. The panel comprised a researcher from the University of Rochester, an education professor from Saint John Fisher, a literacy coordinator from Geneva School District, and a parent advocate. This is part of a larger community focus on the importance of early literacy. See the "Call To Action" link in the "Recommended Reading" section.
- Some staff in the Rochester City School District will be trained in LETRS. LETRS is a professional learning course for reading, spelling, and related language skills instructors. It provides educators with in-depth knowledge and tools that they can use with any reading program. In Penfield, the school district changed to

using science-based literacy instruction, and Geneva is also changing to science-based literacy. One of the panel members is a parent who started using the library when her children participated in Raising A Reader and told the audience several times that the library is a place people should be taking their children.

Outreach

Burton attended the Annual Play in Nature Event at Maplewood Park. The City Department of Recreation and Human Services hosts this event. Several other community partners shared activities and services, encouraging families to play outside in nature. Burton checked out materials using a brand-new Mi-Fi from the Reynolds Media Center. One young patron was very excited to be able to check out a Nature Backpack at the park.



Circulation/Information, Chad Cunningham reporting

Statistics

Curbside Pickup Appointments-13

New Borrowers-334

RRLC Access Cards Issued-17

Notarial Acts-381

Anecdotes/Other

- A patron started coming to the library in June. She loves our library and all we offer, but she has one problem: she can't climb the stairs and does not like riding alone in an elevator. Circulation and Information staff have been riding up in the elevator with her. She's very happy that we help her with this issue, and we enjoy taking a short trip with a friendly person.
- A gentleman recently moved to Rochester from Texas. He is unhoused by choice and has been working with various Circulation staff to get information on different shelter and food options. He has fascinating stories about his life and has become quite a presence at the Circulation desk in Rundel.
- A couple recently moved to Rochester from Idaho. They had planned on getting library cards and came on a beautiful day. They were very impressed with the Rundel building. They told Cunningham that the last election they voted in in Idaho was an election for Library Board trustees. They asked about Libby, and Cunningham explained their options. They left feeling very excited about the Monroe County Library System.
- The big news this month was, of course, the Rochester Public Library going fine free. Patrons were incredibly happy to hear the news. One patron said that the library going fine-free was a blessing and that we made his day.
- A patron approached the Circulation Desk to pay for some book sale items she wanted. She and Cunningham discussed how she loves coming to book sales to get children's books to help teach her English as a Second Language students. She also worked as a storyteller and was at the library to get help rewriting her business plan. She spent the afternoon enjoying all the library has to offer.

- A patron who had experienced a series of devastating life events was referred to Cunningham. She had fines on her account from the Brighton library and didn't know what to do. Cunningham told her to let him reach out to Brighton and see what could be done. Cunningham talked to the Brighton circulation supervisor and explained the situation. She cleared the fines off the account, and Cunningham informed the patron. It's always cool to see Monroe County Library System libraries work together to make things easier for our patrons.
- Cunningham and Kathy Sochia notarized paperwork for patrons chosen for the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program.
- Rich Mangione, Eve Brewer, and Sochia had a fun moment at the circulation desk. A patron had left a card in a book that advertised a phone number you could call to listen to a poem. They called the number and did indeed have a poem read to them! Add that to the "Fun Stuff Found in Returned Items" list! If you want to call, the number is 585-546-2531.

Local History & Genealogy, Christine L. Ridarsky reporting

This summer saw the unexpected departure of the FamilySearch team that was assigned to digitize materials in the division. Due to a family emergency, David and Dorothy Warren left their post in early June. FamilySearch intends to assign another team to the project, although we do not yet know the timing for this replacement. The digitization project is on hold until the replacement team arrives.

Division staff continues to plan for the physical relocation of records of the Monroe County Historian's Office from St. John Fisher University to the second floor of the Rundel building. Brandon Fess, who is overseeing this move, invested 7.25 hours in June and 5.5 hours in July. The move is expected to take place in mid-August. The library's Facilities staff has been assisting to prepare the space where the records will be kept, and the Shipping department assisted with a test move in early July. Since the division became the official provider of Monroe County Historian services in May, it has fielded twelve reference inquiries in that capacity: three in May, eight in June, and one in July. Gerry Smith, the consultant who was hired to advise the library, the City, and the County on the best path forward for managing regional historical services, began his work in July and expects to submit his recommendations in October.

Orders Fulfilled:

	June 2022	June 2023	Increase
Life Records	6	55	817%
Newspaper Index	0	10	Unable to calculate
Rochester Images	2	9	350%

First-year summary of fee-free service:

	Total Requests FY22	Total Requests FY23	Increase
Life Records	75	741	888%
Newspaper Index	37	155	319%
Rochester Images	64	286	347%

The end of Fiscal Year 2023 on June 30 marked the completion of a full year of fee-free service for Life Records, Newspaper Index, and Rochester Images orders. As this chart shows, patron use of these services increased exponentially after fees were eliminated, suggesting the library has successfully removed a financial barrier to access. The Local History & Genealogy Division will continue to track requests for this service; however, annual comparisons will no longer appear in the division’s monthly reports unless requested by the library Board or Management.

Programs – Priority #1: Education and Engagement

- The June installment of Rochester’s Rich History featured a presentation on “Juneteenth: Origins, History, and Celebrations” by Shirley Strothers and Eunice White. This program was held in person in the Kusler-Cox Auditorium.
- In July, Emily Morry hosted a walking tour on the theme “Douglass, Anthony & Beyond: Activism and Social Justice in Rochester.” Turnout was impressive and the feedback received from participants was enthusiastic. This was the third of five monthly tours the division has scheduled for this summer. Unfortunately, the tour planned for June on the theme “Multicultural Rochester” was canceled due to rain.

Exhibitions – Priority #1: Education and Engagement

- Hope Christansen created two table displays in the division this summer. The June display, *Celebrating Pride – LGBTQ+ Month in Rochester*, featured a selection of items from the Local History & Genealogy collections, including photographs, books, pamphlets, a t-shirt from the Gay Alliance, and information about the history of Pride Month and the Shoulders to Stand On archives project, which the library inherited from Evelyn Bailey and the Out Alliance in summer 2022.
- The July display, *Celebrating Our Beautiful Cemeteries in Western New York*, featured photos, books and periodicals, pamphlets, walking tour brochures, and a bibliography of resources from the division’s collection to encourage education about and appreciation for our local cemeteries, including the Rapids Cemetery, for which division staff recently secured a historical marker from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- In June, Christine Ridarsky and Emily Morry participated in the dedication ceremonies for two historical markers that the Office of the City Historian secured through the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. One marker is located at the Rapids Cemetery in the 19th Ward; the other is in front of the former headquarters of Martha Matilda Harper's beauty empire on East Main Street. Ridarsky also represented the Office of Monroe County History at a marker in Durand-Eastman Park. The Legends & Lore marker, also funded by the Pomeroy Foundation, highlights the myth of the White Lady who haunts the shores of Lake Ontario searching for her lost daughter.
- Morry gave a walking tour, "Beyond Flour and Flowers: Industry in Rochester," to an enthusiastic group of adults from Temple Sinai in June. The group was very pleased with the tour and in appreciation, donated money to the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library.
- In June, Fess and Antoine McDonald presented on the Rochester Public Library's special collections to staff and patrons at the Henrietta Public Library. Fess spoke about the holdings currently available in the Local History & Genealogy Division, and McDonald spoke about efforts to establish a new Archive of Black History & Culture as part of the Documenting, Preserving & Improving Access to Black History Collections project. Fess gave a second presentation on the library's special collections for patrons at the Pittsford Community Library in July.
- Ridarsky was appointed to the Advisory Council for a University of Rochester Medical Center research project that is examining the history of racism and race relations at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and Strong Memorial Hospital from its establishment through the 1980s. She participated in an introductory meeting in June.
- Ridarsky continued to represent the City on the Rochester Museum & Science Center's Collections Committee and attended a meeting in June. The focus was on the then-upcoming repatriation of human remains and funerary objects to the Oneida Nation and the museum's other efforts to comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
- McDonald attended the annual conference of the American Library Association (ALA) in Chicago in June. He attended sessions, networked with colleagues and former classmates, and learned about the latest trends in the field of librarianship. McDonald reported that his biggest take-away was a deep sense of connectedness with his fellow librarians and feeling a sense of community in realizing how librarians from across the country are facing similar challenges, seeking similar solutions, utilizing similar technologies, and speaking a similar language.
- At the end of the ALA conference, McDonald participated in a daylong symposium hosted by Community Webs, a web archiving project that seeks to advance historical institutions' ability to document local history through digital archives. McDonald was invited to attend the symposium due to his previous participation in the Community Webs project and his role as project manager for the library's emerging Archive of Black History & Culture. At the symposium, McDonald learned more about ArchiveIt, one of Community Webs' primary resources, as well as other tools that the project will soon roll out. McDonald appreciated the opportunity to connect with, learn from, and share experiences with professionals doing similar work.
- In July, McDonald attended the Youth Tech Academy Summer Enrichment Program where he presented to a sizable group of campers about the Rochester Public Library, the Local History & Genealogy Division, and the job functions of a librarian. McDonald shared concepts such as archiving and preservation along with some local historical resources (Howard Cole's directory of Black businesses) and present (*In This Moment*

chapbooks, produced by the Visual Studies Workshop). The youth were highly engaged and asked many questions. McDonald also collected Community Needs and Desires surveys for the Archive of Black History & Culture from several of the young people at this event.

Special Collections

Fess accessioned five new collections this summer, including sets of the newspaper *Moore's Rural New Yorker* from the years 1862 and 1865 that are in excellent condition. Fess also created two new finding aids: one for the James W. Phelps Collection (letters and ephemera passed down by the descendants of Rochesterian Ida S. [Orwen] Phelps) and the other for the Iris Bassett Scrapbook (created by Ms. Bassett to commemorate her time at West High School, 1909–1912). These finding aids will be automatically added to the 300+ finding aids for the library's special collections that are now available through the Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative website (<https://www.empireadc.org/search/repositories/nr>).

Archive of Black History & Culture

Work to develop an Archive of Black History & Culture progressed steadily through June and July. The Community Advisory Board finished reviewing the Black Resources Database developed by the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC) that identifies existing collections held by local institutions. McDonald shared the Board's feedback with RRLC. The Community Advisory Board also finalized and voted to adopt mission and vision statements for the archive, which McDonald will submit to the RPL Board of Trustees for final approval. The Advisory Board continued to collect Community Needs and Desires surveys that are being used to inform the development of the archive, including collection scope and a multi-year strategic plan. Project consultant Mekko Mongeon will summarize the information collected in the surveys in a final report on the community's expectations for the project. Finally, the Advisory Board developed a Documentation Survey that will be used to gather information from organizations and individuals that its members have identified as potential community records holders (above and beyond the collections identified by RRLC).

Digital Projects

- Two major metadata projects reached milestones in June. With heavy lifting from contractor Lisa Buda, Fess was able to finish creating metadata for the digital images generated through the library's partnership with Clarissa Street Legacy and Teen Empowerment. Once reviewed and approved by Teen Empowerment, the images will be mounted online on New York Heritage. The second project advanced by Buda involves creating item-level metadata for the thousands of images in the Rochester Postcard Collection. As previously reported, the way metadata for this collection was originally grouped by theme meant it was unable to be uploaded to *New York Heritage* with the rest of the collections from the library's Rochester Images collections. A Collections and Access Grant from the Rochester Regional Library Council has allowed the library to contract with Buda to complete this work with the end goal being to add the postcard collection to *New York Heritage* by the end of 2023.
- The division continues to contribute digitized content to a handful of online platforms, increasing discoverability and access to these materials. There were 640 page views of Local History & Genealogy Division content available through *New York State Historic Newspapers* (<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/>) in June and 599 in July. There were 728 page views of content on *New York Heritage* (<https://nyheritage.org/>) in June (July numbers for *New York Heritage* were not available at the time of this

report). There were 1,476 page views of content available through the library's *Rochester Voices* site (<http://www.rochestervoices.org/>) in June and 1,401 in July.

- As noted above, the FamilySearch volunteer scanning team left their assignment at the Rochester Public Library in early June due to a family emergency. In the 10 days they were here, they digitized a total of 34 yearbooks. See below for details. Digital products from this project are becoming available through the FamilySearch site (<https://www.familysearch.org/en/>). In May, 119 items from the Rochester Public Library were added to the FamilySearch site, with 49 views of RPL content on the site that month. There were two items added and eight views in June. (Note: The FamilySearch reports on materials uploaded and number of views come out a couple of weeks after the division's monthly report is due. July's numbers will be included in the next report.)

Materials scanned by FamilySearch, June 2023:

Title	Author	Quantity	Dates
The Lair	Wilson Magnet High School	10	1999-2010
Quakers	Benjamin Franklin High School	1	2013
Vanguard Collegiate	Vanguard Collegiate High School	1	2013
Voca-Scope	Vocational High School	3	1939, 1941, 1942
Surveyor	Washington High School	3	1937, 1938, 1940
Monarch	Rush-Henrietta High School	16	1987-2011 <i>passim</i>

Social Media

There were two new posts to the *Local History ROCs!* blog in June and two in July. These included the two-part "William Morgan and the Anti-Masonic Agitation," by Christopher Brennan and "Chasin' the Past Pt. 6: Lost Jazz Clubs of Rochester" and "Yes, Chef! Fun Finds in our Menu Collection" by Morry. The new posts received 122 views in June and 67 views in July. Also in July, an online article titled "2023's Best Cities for Hot Dog Lovers" published on LawnLove.com linked to Morry's previous post "The Missing Link: The Origins and Evolution of the White Hot," helping the post to garner 1,396 new views that month! The article can be read online at <https://lawnlove.com/blog/best-cities-hot-dog-lovers/>. All blog posts can be read online at www.rochistory.wordpress.com.

Anecdotes/Other

- In June, Fess assisted Robert Pierce from the Inter-Library Loan Office in digitally imaging microfilm containing 185 –1856 issues of the *Rail Road Advocate* newspaper for a patron of the Riga library. The *Rail Road Advocate* is a rare and difficult-to-obtain serial; Pierce had gone to great lengths to obtain the microfilm from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln library. Unfortunately, after obtaining the film, Pierce found out the patron was unable to come downtown to use it. Pierce enlisted Fess's help in using the automated scanning features of the division's ScanPro microfilm scanners to digitize the issues needed. Riga's director messaged both Fess and Pierce the following day to report:

"I can't thank you enough for scanning the Railroad Advocate for my patron. I couldn't wait to see him this morning to give him the great news. Mr. Stewart is very, very appreciative of the efforts you went through to do this. You both went over and beyond and made his day."

Reynolds Media Center, Joseph Born reporting

Reference

RMC handled 1627 reference questions and 602 non-reference transactions for 2229 transactions in June and July.

Circulation

RMC rented 17 pieces of equipment and 551 Mi-Fi units in addition to the regular collection

Programs/Tours/AV setups

Our First Friday Film in June was “Buena Vista Social Club. In July, it was “Avatar.”

The See It First film was “The Man From Toronto.”

RMC sponsored 3 Jazz Combos during June and five days of “Jazz Starts Here” noontime performances during the International Jazz Festival week. Hundreds of people have attended these concerts.

Brown Bag Book Discussion was:

Liberte by Kaitlyn

Greenidge and *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks.

Winners by Frederick Backman

RMC sponsored 3 “Music in the Garden” programs during July:

Jamaric

The Fiddle Witch

Pastor

RMC performed 15 A/V setups for programs in Central Library.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

Mary Haag of RMC sponsored a “Barbie” gift basket raffle. The winner was selected 7/31. The winner, Kelly, exclaimed to Mary, “I’ve never done anything before” and was very happy! Mary plans on doing another to coincide with the DVD release of the movie.

Anecdotes/Other

Thanks to funding provided by the City of Rochester, RMC is processing and preparing 400 new Mi-Fi units for circulation. The new units will start circulating on July 5th. RMC processed 280 of the new Mi-Fi collection and started circulating them on 7/5. We circulated 361 Mi-Fi units during July. We are still waiting for more cases to finish processing and circulating the 120 units.



Science and History, Gabe Pellegrino reporting

Programs

- *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 June's program: *Stay Healthy & Safe while Enjoying the Great Outdoors!* , which reached nearly 300 views. The series is promoted through the Library's Facebook page by creating an event for each month's presentation and sharing the video once it has aired live. This series is presented from September through June; it will resume in the fall.
- Jim Porter, NASA Ambassador, presented James Webb Space Telescope. Jim talked about the history of the James Webb Telescope and shared images that had been sent to NASA from this telescope. Renee Kendrot promoted this program with printed flyers/posters distributed to Central Library and the City Branch Libraries through online community calendars, the library's social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), and email blasts. There were 45 people in attendance, and everyone was engaged during the author's presentation, and people asked several great questions after Jim's presentation! This program was recorded and posted to the Rochester Public Library's YouTube Channel.

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- LROC (Library Resource Outreach Center) visitors were at about 60 for each June and July, continuing its high numbers despite occasional cancellations. The Division has also observed many instances where representatives from Person-Centered Housing Options, our Tuesday LROC group, have been making individual appointments with people at the library. This indicates that the need is higher than what can be provided during the regular LROC schedule. The other LROC partners, MCCollaborative and Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY), have also seen many people. The health insurance navigator from LawNY was also here for her once-monthly visit and spent several hours with clients.
- In June and July, Pellegrino attended the monthly meeting of the Community Cancer Action Council, which also breaks up into subgroups regarding community-driven cancer research: video production and youth education. The Council is part of the library's partnership with Wilmot Cancer Center. Through the work of these subgroups, a video was created at Strong Memorial Hospital regarding clinical trials for lung cancer targeted to underrepresented groups. The video has now been edited and is ready for use. All team members were allowed to view the video, which will be presented in various forms, then marketed, possibly in edited forms, to such places as hospital waiting rooms, clinics, and so forth. With the video's completion, Pellegrino will continue with the Community-Driven Cancer Research subgroup in the youth education area.

Grants

Lily Anthony assisted patrons with grants in substance abuse, financial counseling, cemeteries, mental health, and human rights.

Displays

Renee Kendrot created a book display about gardening, which included books about gardening indoors and gardening with pots. Alaikia Miller created a "Read with Pride" display for June and July and a display on "Wildfires and the Climate." Pellegrino created a summer barbecuing/grilling display. The space/eclipse display continues throughout the year as we prepare for the 2024 solar eclipse.

Facebook Statistics: June/July 2023

Gardening Club: 183 Members (6 New Members)

9 Posts, 6 Comments, 14 Reactions

Total Engagements: 29

Cooking Club: 157 Members (4 New Members)

8 Posts, 2 Comments, 14 Reactions

Total Engagements: 24

Technology Center, Jay Osborne reporting

Programming

- Ginger Brewer has seen much success in June and July with her Computer Tutor program at the Central Library. The numbers have remained remarkably constant since she started these classes several months ago.
- The Tabletop Gaming Group program growth plateaued from the highs of May. The gaming groups condensed to two groups on Saturday afternoons in June and condensed further into one group over the summer. The group will continue to meet most weeks of the summer though a break is likely later in August.

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- The Technology Center's classroom is routinely in use by our partner organizations. Technology Center staff and our partners in this space offer resume workshops, computer literacy classes, and job search assistance. Rochester Works and Digital Literacy use the space and assist many patrons weekly.
- Staff assisted with the long-anticipated Guaranteed Basic Income application period. Digital Literacy Volunteers made an extra effort to provide additional staff to support our patrons. Their help was instrumental in maintaining a more regular workflow despite the increased demand for assistance. Staff helped dozens of patrons navigate the site and recorded a remarkable 43 instances that a line-by-line readout of the entire application was needed. Many of these patrons were visually impaired or so computer-phobic that they did not trust themselves to navigate the website.

Teen Central, Shetora Banks reporting

Programs

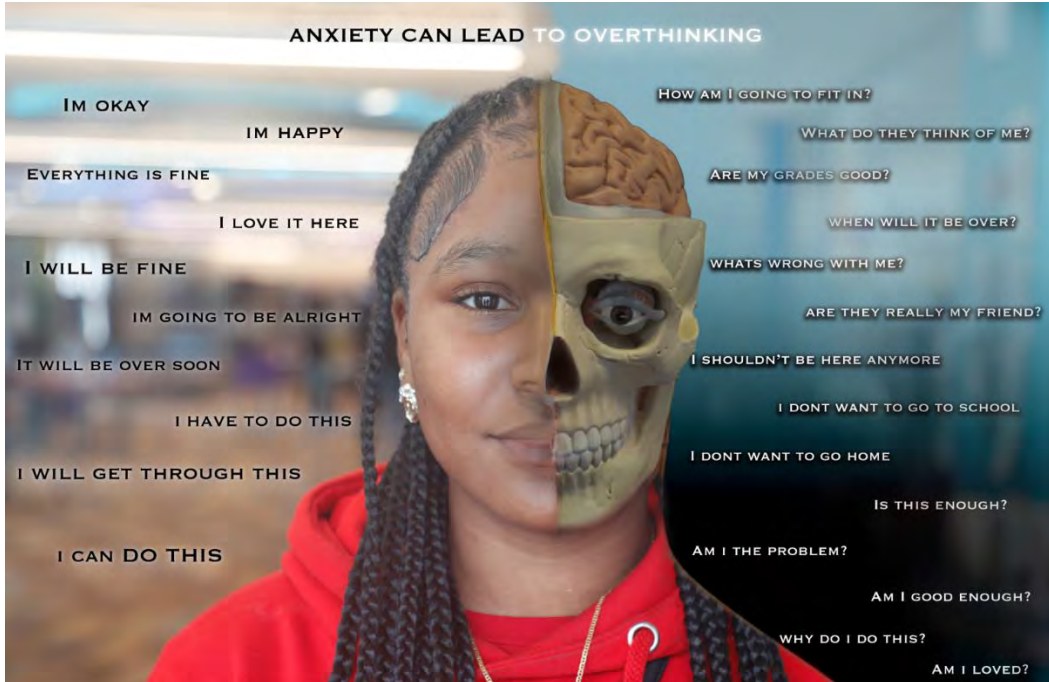
- Youth Summer Camp Visits: Teen Central has been a summer destination for many youth camps that have used our space for learning and a cool destination on a hot day. Each camp enjoys our staff and space and learns new information about what Central Library can offer them. They love to experience job simulations with our Virtual reality Oculus system. Acting as a mechanic is the most popular chosen profession.



- Youth Tech Career Development: Teen Central hosted The Youth Tech program, which spent the day learning how to create resumes and websites. They visited our space for the day to conduct workshops and learn digital media techniques. This was their second visit to the library, and we expect to see them using our space in the future.
- ABC Aimm/Epic youth work program: The Action for a Better Community program is being hosted by Teen Central this summer. This six-week program hires youth to create thought-provoking social content through play and video. The teens earn a stipend for their participation, and for many, it's their first employment opportunity. The Teen Central staff has worked hard to accommodate all the teens' needs, which included various digital media skills, creative writing, and real-world employment experience. We have offered our mentoring experience to help the teens reach their goals.
This year they picked the topic of mental health to highlight. Here are some of their posters:







You can check out their behind-the-scenes website here:

<https://express.adobe.com/page/dEK1x2ew1Q0KX/>

- Climate Robot Rangers: Students assembled and tested climate sensing devices with Arduino kits. They have learned to measure CO2, Temperature, Humidity, and Particulate Matter and conducted experiments to identify climate change indicators. They are also learning to collect useful climate data and visualize the results to gain helpful insights. We use many resources provided by NASA and local organizations to discuss the effects of deforestation and climate change in contributing to socio-economic disparities in communities.

<https://nar.headwaterseconomics.org/3600063000/explore/map>



Community Library Updates

Melanie Lewis reporting

Staff Retirements - Two retirements became official: Derrick Coley, Youth Services Coordinator, and Joan Lee, Area Coordinator. Joan began her career as a part-time Children's Librarian at the Lincoln Branch and later managed Lincoln and Sully, subsequently became a Quadrant Leader, and finished her career as Branch Libraries Area Coordinator. Derrick founded the Safe to be Smart Program over twenty years at the Arnett Branch. The program currently has locations at the Arnett, Lincoln, Maplewood, Sully, and Wheatley branches. Both insisted on exiting quietly and we honored their requests.

In July the branch libraries were key players in the City of Rochester's Guaranteed Basic Income program. The branches received support from Literacy Volunteers of Rochester, all hands were on deck.

With RPL support, over 16,000 applications were received from city residents.

The Branches hosted a student intern, a Junior from Nazareth College. She was referred by Nancy Johns-Price from the Mayor's Office. The student is a young woman of color, considering a career in Library Science. She spent time at Maplewood, Wheatley, Lyell, and Arnett for a variety of experiences. Her exit interview will be scheduled soon.

July 1 came, and the fine elimination program was rolled out. Library card registration has increased; June's total registration was 270, with July's numbers at 415. With marketing and promotion, we should continue with this trend.

Lincoln staff finally returned to the building. Sarah Lehman and her team have performed exceptionally well during this time. Sarah has shown to be an expert project manager and proficient in architecture and design planning. Other staff were extremely helpful at alternate branches and Central. Managers at these locations were so impressed with the staff's talent, they expressed a desire to retain members. All staff have chosen to return to Lincoln. During the closure, Vera Haygood completed the City's Leadership program, and Vicky Velasquez acted as the anchor for the satellite site. There have been many setbacks, challenges, and pivots for this group. They have all proven to be gracefully adaptable and dedicated.

Arnett Branch Library, Bruce Tehan reporting

Programs

- There were numerous wildly popular programs, and the biggest was a Complete Street Makeover featuring Reconnect Rochester, the Arnett Block Association, His Branches Inc., the Arnett Cafe, Southwest Rochester Rotary, the 19th Ward Community Association, a local scout troop, John Walton Spencer School No. 16, the Rochester Police Department, library staff and volunteers, the Community Design Center of Rochester, Common Ground Health, and many more awesome neighbors and friends. This event made the corner of Arnett Blvd. and Warwick Ave. safer, prettier, and more enjoyable. It was a delightful and festive day of community volunteerism, camaraderie, and joy.
- Arnett experienced its most successful summer reading programs for children, teens, and adults since 2019 (prior to COVID.) One of the most popular events in July was Austin Steward Day facilitated by the Community Justice Initiative. At this festive event, the historic Rochester civil rights hero and businessperson Austin Steward was honored, as were present-day local African American businesspersons. Arnett's Austin Steward book spine mural panel was prominently featured during the ceremony. Several organizations including the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library purchased copies of Steward's autobiography to be given to the attendees. A news article about the event can be found at



this link: [https://www.rochesterfirst.com/rochester/abolitionist-austin-steward-celebrated-in-rochester/#:~:text=\(WROC\)%20E2%80%94%20Celebrating%20the%20abolitionist,by%20more%20than%2020%20years.](https://www.rochesterfirst.com/rochester/abolitionist-austin-steward-celebrated-in-rochester/#:~:text=(WROC)%20E2%80%94%20Celebrating%20the%20abolitionist,by%20more%20than%2020%20years.)

Community Outreach/Meetings

- Arnett was very busy doing outreach and participated in a 19th Ward parade and festival and several trips to a local farmers market. Books By Bike was used at several of these events.
- Arnett attended all Westside Farmers Market days during July. The newest *In This Moment* chap books proved to be very popular giveaway items the day Branch Admin Librarian April McCloud represented Arnett at the market. A description of the books can be found here: <https://www.vsw.org/publications/vsw-press/in-this-moment-2-revolution-reckoning-reparation/#:~:text=The%20In%20This%20Moment%20chapbook,a%20series%20of%2010%20chapbooks>



Anecdotes/Other

- Unfortunately the branch's parking lot is being used as what can best be described as a stolen car looting station. Car thieves have been in and out of the parking lot driving dangerously, threatening staff and patrons, rummaging through stolen cars, leaving stolen debris on library property, and damaging a staff member's car. Concerned for pedestrian safety, the Rochester Public Library and the City of Rochester closed the branch on June 23 while discussing a strategy to deal with these issues. Once in place, the barriers seemed to resolve the issue.



- Teens have been slow to return to the library post-COVID, but the Teen Taste Test brought them in! The teens tested different varieties of chocolate sandwich cookies during this month's Taste Test. We compared Wegmans cookies to Oreo cookies, regular to thin to double stuffed, and gluten free to wheat flour-based cookies. There was a lot of discussion about which ones they preferred (or not), and overall there were two clear winners. Teens who liked the cream filling liked the Oreo brand double stuffed cookies the best, and those who did not like the filling preferred the Oreo Thins the best. However, all the teens were surprised to learn that all the cookies are vegan—there is no dairy in the “cream” filling. This led to a conversation about ingredients, “What are we actually eating?” and we found that four of the five kinds of cookies have ingredients that are almost identical. The gluten-free cookies differed the most because of the alternative flours and binding ingredients that are used to get a similar texture. We also talked about the price point of each cookie: which package was the most expensive vs. which was the most expensive per ounce of cookies. Overall, the teens really enjoyed being food critics comparing a familiar food item and talking about it in ways they do not usually consider.

Charlotte Branch Library, Dennis Williams reporting

Programs

- Four tremendously dedicated Produce Distribution volunteers and food donations from Flower City Pickers at the Rochester Public Market, Bageland, and Panera fed a total of 65 families!
- The 2023 Youth Summer Reading Program started with a bang! There was a marked increase in program participants during the first week and a half since the program began, and there may be as many youths signed up to participate already as there were all last summer.
- There are also new and exciting participating raffle prizes, including Seabreeze tickets, which are sure to draw increased interest amongst program participants.
- Karen Duff reported Charlotte had 57 entries for the Adult Summer Reading Program drawing and four happy winners of gift cards.



Anecdotes/Other

- Courtney Zapata assisted patrons with computer needs such as resetting passwords and navigating the internet, including helping a patron and her mother over two days with securing her email account, changing passwords, setting up two-factor authentication, and educating her on internet security.
- Zapata created an LGBTQ+ display for Pride Month.

Douglass Branch Library, Evanna DiSalvo reporting

Programs

- Happy Pirates – Putting the “Douglass Family Campus” into action! This program was held in the gym at the Douglass R-center allowing for greater participation than is possible in library space. The children enjoyed singing and moving with the Happy Pirates. Adults in attendance were pleased to recognize many of the original Happy Pirates songs from years ago. (Sustainability & Resource)
- Community Flea Market was a big success. Several of the vendors and numerous shoppers requested that the event be repeated. (Stewardship & Curation)
- Patrons planted seed-infused hearts to get the library's wildflower garden started.

Outreach/Meetings

Emma Reynolds attended the New York State Library Assistants (NYSLAA) Conference at the State University of New York at Oneonta. She had a good experience and appreciated the opportunity to network and will give the staff a full report at the next team meeting.

Anecdotes/Other

- The library was paid a visit by 100 educators from southern California who were on a “[Footsteps to Freedom](#)” Underground Railroad study bus tour. Frederick Douglass’s great-great-great-grandson Kenneth B. Morris Jr. was also on the bus. Mr. Morris visited with staff and presented the library with a signed copy of the new Douglass Family edition of Frederick Douglass’s autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. He told staff this was the first library to receive a copy, and there will be three more tours coming through Rochester this summer in two-week intervals.
- When Evanna DiSalvo went to Equal Grounds Coffee to get a gift card to use for an Adult Summer Reading prize the barista made a special point to thank her for everything the library does. They shared that they had been homeless the year before and found the library to be a special place where they felt welcome and never judged. They said they were very appreciative of receiving help and acceptance in a non-religious public space.



Lincoln Branch Library, Sarah Lehman reporting

Programs

There were no programs held at the Lincoln Branch Library in June & July due to continued renovations and construction. Staff produced programs and activities at R-Centers and other branches during July.

Anecdotes/Other

- Lincoln Staff returned to the building in mid-June and worked hard to get materials processed, books unpacked, and shelves filled with materials. All the hard work paid off with a soft opening at the end of July. Everyone is thrilled to be back!
- After many years of working with the Wilson Commencement Program, Lincoln staff are delighted to continue the tradition of summer outreach. There are 3 visits planned to the site. The first visit, the book *A Couch for Llama* by Leah Gilbert was read with a group of children. After a wonderful discussion on the book, the children drew and colored a couch with Llamas, families, and other elements from the story. This will be part of a recurring visit through the end of summer camp.
- Lehman is excited to announce that the mural design for the Lincoln Branch was selected as one of the projects to be funded as part of the 'My Rochester' project through the City of Rochester. Lehman met with several of the coordinators for the project, which is anticipated to be completed by December 2023.

Lyell Branch Library, Cathy Kyle reporting

Programs

- Manju Sharma made activity packets with manga drawing and coloring pages. Bored teens spent some time at the library to color and grab an activity packet for home.
- On Father's Day Sharma invited teens to make a paracord key chain or bracelet in their dad's favorite colors.
- Cathy Kyle and Artemis Markakis worked together on a weekly adult book discussion group based around the book *Balance is Bullsh*t*, and the book group, while small, is very enthusiastic and full of discussion. We discuss the four pillars of wellness: physical, community, mental, and financial. Natasa Prelevic designed and assembled Juneteenth-themed Take & Make Activities for Kids & Littles for the month of June. Children also had the chance to choose to create their own craft at the library table or at home.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Lyell staff attended social media training presented by Alicia Gunther.
- Staff continue to work with the Lyell Otis Community Association to make the garden behind the library a beautiful place.
- Staff were trained on Narcan and received two Narcan receptacles, one inside near the bathroom and one outside in the back near the parking lot.
- Catherine Kyle and Sharma both took Notary training as there is a big request for Notary services at Lyell.

Anecdotes/Other

- A patron came in to send a fax and he saw our large sign that said we were fine free. He was delighted and said that he would be coming back to check the library out more often.
- A fellow librarian at the Chili Library created our new mascot, Carlyle Lyell.



Maplewood Community Library, Johanna Buran reporting

Programs

- The highlight of June was the summer kickoff party with drums, music, and dancing. The children and teens had shaved Hawaiian ice. The three winners of the manga reading contest were announced at the summer reading kickoff party. The first-place winner of the contest read 36 volumes of manga.
- At the end of the school year a small graduation ceremony was held for Maplewood's patrons that are now invited to be on the teen side. Some of them were very excited to now be considered teens.
- The Maplewood Library started serving lunch and snacks in June from Foodlink and will continue until the children and teens go back to school in September.



- The big event in July was slime. After last year's slime shortage, the staff thought they were prepared to have a glorious slime day. Unfortunately, there still wasn't enough slime or containers for everyone. There will be a make-up slime day in August so that the people that did not participate get a chance to make slime.

Anecdotes/Other

- A woman from the Maplewood neighborhood brought in two of her neighbors, women from Cuba, to learn about English language instruction. The neighbor was a refugee from Cambodia in the 1970s and understood how hard it was to learn English in a new country.
- A local social worker reached out for help with English instruction for a recently arrived unaccompanied minor from Guatemala. The 17-year-old girl arrived in Rochester in June, too late to enroll in school. Brian DiNitto is in communication with the girl's foster parent and arranged tutoring two times a week.
- DiNitto met one of his Zoom English students at the Pittsford Community Library. The student is from Mongolia, works full-time as a dance instructor, and does not drive but lives within walking distance of the Pittsford Community Library. The student will continue with English instruction through Zoom on Tuesdays with the resources of the Monroe County Library System to aid in his instruction.
- One of the Maplewood Library's volunteers worked with a Spanish-speaking woman to set up her resume and apply for a job with the Rochester City School District. The entire process took over an hour, but the volunteer's energy never flagged, and the application was completed with the patron.
- A patron from Haiti who is studying English here at Maplewood, used his French-speaking skills to explain to a new immigrant from the Congo about the classes we offer here at the Maplewood Community Library.

Monroe Branch Library, Mary Clare Scheg reporting

Programs

- Theresa Filo set up an origami unicorn bookmark take and make.
- The first live and in-person "Wheel of Poultry" was a huge hit! 14 people came to try the trivia game.
- Annette's Seed Library was a huge hit this year. The library received 1413 seed packets this year. A total of 1186 seed packets were taken by patrons. People that took seed packets were able to put their names in a drawing for prizes. There were 149 people that participated in this drawing. The library gave out 5 prize bags to the lucky winners. The library is keeping out the remainder of the seed packets since people are still coming in to get them.

Anecdotes

- A Naloxone Box was installed on the outside fence in front of the library. This will allow access during times when the Branch is closed.
- Willow (two years old) is still developing her vocabulary and has never been heard uttering a two-syllable word. Hoople encouraged her by repeating "say Matthew. Ma-Thew" and Willow looked at Hoople and said "Maffew." Willow then said, "Bear", so Hoople handed her a stuffed bear. Willow then said "More", so Hoople continued to hand Willow bears until she held all the bears. Willow managed to *hold* the bears but was unable to take a single step after acquiring them.



Phillis Wheatley Community Library, Lori Frankunas reporting

Programs

Alexandra Haehn and Michele Saccente collaborated on an ice cream social for the Mix and Mingle this month. The children and teens enjoyed picking their ice cream and toppings. This Mix and Mingle was in celebration of all finishing a year of school. Joan Lee stopped by and helped. *Priority #1 Education and Engagement-Promote learning, provide fun and deliver creative and innovative educational experiences for our diverse populations.*



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Sheilah Murphy visited the Episcopal SeniorLife Home on Mt. Hope Avenue to host a book discussion on *Nora Webster* by Colm Tóibín. The book club gained two official new members, and the book was well received with some mixed criticism.
- Murphy attended the *Finger Lakes Emerging Leaders* training.

Anecdotes/Other

A frequent patron, originally from Sierra Leone, came in and sang the library's praises for all the help Phillis Wheatley Library assisted him with over the past few months. He has been filling out online immigration forms to bring his family to the States. The staff at Wheatley have been with him all the way and are excited he is in the final stages. Hopefully, his family will be able to join him soon!

Sully Branch Library, Maria Heeks-Heinlein reporting

Programs

- There was an exciting visit from Doug Rougeux in June.. The children and adults in attendance enjoyed his bubble show, and many participants said their favorite part was when a bubble was placed around one of the participants!
- We promote literacy programs for all ages. The Adult Summer Reading program was popular with some of our patrons, especially the three individuals awarded participation prizes. We would like to thank the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library for supporting this program.

Community Outreach/Meeting/Training

- Sully was invited to the Southeast Neighborhood Service Center's outreach event. Maria Heeks-Heinlein brought the MCLS Books by Bike and was able to share summer reading and library service information with the attendees. Since the event was just outside the library, George Carter and Ariana Jackson brought some young patrons outside to participate. The highlight of this event was the Netsins ice cream truck. Many thanks to the Southeast Neighborhood Service Center for inviting us to participate in this fantastic outreach event. Many thanks also to the MCLS Shipping department for delivering the book bike.



Anecdotes/Other

- A teen who had not been to the library in some time came up to Bigelow and told him that she still had the glow-in-the-dark skeleton he had made on an old 3D printer for her almost five years ago. She thanked him again for the item and they talked a little about what had changed over the years.
- In July, the Center for Youth Program Manager for the Ryan R Center, Lonnie Patterson, collaborated with Sully Branch Safe to Be Smart to inform the CFY (Center for Youth) School Based program members of the newly formed partnership at four Rochester R Centers. The presentation involved CFY Program Manager Lonnie Patterson and Child Family Therapist Angela Moore describing how a Child Family Therapist and Social Learning Specialist will be assigned to 4 different R Centers in the Rochester community. The R Center staff we introduced to the guests gave descriptions of the daily operations held at the R Centers. Safe to Be Smart staff George Carter, and the teens presented how the adolescents were using Virtual Reality to learn and be educated on such vocational skills as Automotive Repair, Engineering, and Electrical installation. The collaborative effort provided by the three organizations having 32 attendees was informative and successful.
- STBS and the Center for Youth collaborated on creating a restorative circle with 14 STBS teens. Our restorative circle is an approach to correcting harm done within a community. The teen participants in the restorative circle are encouraged to be open and honest about their perspectives regarding a conflict or other issues. Also, how they have been harmed and believe somebody may harm teens or staff, including ways to resolve the problem by learning positive behavioral response tools to use if issues seem to arrive again. In addition, some examples of topics that school communities have approached in circles include resolving conflict among other students, library staff, teachers, and family members.



Winton Branch Library, Kathy Wolf reporting

Programs

- Family Story Time started off with a bang! The first storytime of the season was rainbow-themed, so Emily Smith and the children talked about all the colors they could find in the world around them. It was a great time and Smith hopes it continues to be so throughout the summer.
- The Children's section of the library became an art studio when Mary Fraser taught children how to create wax-resist leaf paintings. A girl visiting from China came to the program with her grandmother and the Rochester pen-pal she had just met in person for the first time. There were also children spending their first morning of day camp together at the library. Creativity, some science, and new friends combined to make for a fun morning.

Anecdotes/Other

- The great Winton Library honeybee rescue had staff abuzz with excitement! When the honeybees living in our Catalpa tree started feeling overcrowded, they came out and formed a peaceful swarm as they looked for a new home. Patrons were worried to see so many bees buzzing close to their cars. Lola, a member of the Harvard Beekeeper Club, happened to be visiting the library wearing her club sweatshirt. Wolf enlisted her to help clear the area. Lola got the Winton staff in contact with beekeeper Lisa Barker, who came to the

library, talked about how amazing and beneficial honeybees are, and safely put the bees into a new hive. It was a great day for saving the bees!

- One of the Rhyme Time caregivers asked on a Wednesday to put an item on hold for pickup before her big trip to Seattle that Sunday. Wolf placed a hold on it but realized that it would take a miracle for it to get here before she left. The miracle appeared in the form of Florence Morris and Lily Anthony from the Science Division. Wolf called the Science Division, where the book was located, and explained the situation to Morris. Morris retrieved the item, and a plan was formed that she would drive across the county to drop the item in Winton's book drop after work that evening. Enter Anthony, who was already planning to be in the neighborhood that evening, and offered to drop it off. The library's teamwork left the patron very satisfied.
- Someone posted a wonderful note on the Next Door app, *"Shout out to the Winton Branch Library that serves this area. Great staff and of course great resources and books."* Other people responded to the post with hearty agreement.
- Emily Smith met a patron who had come to the United States by way of Turkey. He could not speak any English and was so new to Rochester that he didn't know where to go; through a translator app, he told Smith that the library felt like a safe place because it's full of books, and he's always enjoyed reading. He said he needed assistance finding a job and getting his work papers sorted. Smith spoke to Brian DiNitto, the New American Librarian at Maplewood, where Smith was able to get the forms and classes that would be of use to the patron. Smith sent the patron along with the address of the Maplewood library, and some additional resources that would be of use to him. He was very happy as he accepted the information and said his goodbyes to Smith. It made Smith happy to think of all the services that exist inside the Rochester Public Library System, and how different libraries can come together to aid and assist patrons. She hopes this patron is doing well and hopes to see him in the library again soon, hopefully with lots of books in hand.

FFRPL Report to MCLS and RPL Boards – August 2023

Annual Campaign:

The fall Annual Campaign letter will be in homes around September 5th.

FFRPL is grateful for your support! Please give generously and early.

FFRPL will participate in ROC the Day again this year. The date is November 28. We thank many of you who participated in the “Board Challenge” that we added two years ago as an opportunity for all 4 boards to participate. We will be offering a “Board Challenge” again this year and we will be seeking board member participation. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support!

Special Projects:

FFRPL has been providing supplemental support to Arnett Branch Library for its 100-year anniversary celebration, such as the printing of a keepsake historical booklet.

We will be providing a fundraiser to support the purchase of new toys and games for Arnett’s community outreach efforts.

BOOKSALES: (ON-SITE AND ONLINE)

Planned book sale dates for FY24:

Fall Sale - October 23-27

Season’s Readings Sale - December 4-15

Spring Sale - April 8-13

Summer Sale - June 17-22

15 partner contracts have been signed and returned: Chili, East Rochester, Gates, Greece, Henrietta, Irondequoit, Macedon, Medina, Mendon, MCC, Parma, Rush, Seymour, Strong, and Woodward.

Community Outreach:

FFRPL contributed many young adult and children’s books to the Horizons at Harley Camp. This camp benefits approximately 138 city school students in grades K through 8.

We also donated children’s multicultural books to the Cameron Community Ministries benefitting the youth in the NW quadrant.

Sustainable Shelves:

FFRPL has **recycled 7,899** books the Baker & Taylor Sustainable Shelves Program since July 2022 (shipped **517 boxes**; submitted **96 lists** for Central) yielding **\$1,621 of usable credit** and keeping books out of the landfill. As a routine procedure, books are reviewed by FFRPL staff and volunteers for online and bookstore sale purposes first.

FFRPL received only 4 days notification that the Baker & Taylor Sustainable Shelves Program would no longer support the recycling of books beyond those they select for their use (with continuing credit to RPL). This change went into effect August 7, 2023.

In response to this notification, additional efforts are being made to manage this abrupt change. Once we have cycled the books for sale, including a sale at 50 cents per book or \$1 to fill your bag, they will be offered for free for two weeks in front of the store, and partnerships with area Little Free Libraries will ideally expand. We are investigating alternative recycling options.

Programming: Events, Exhibits:

FFRPL is planning a **reception for the FFRPL, RPL, MCLS, and Reynolds Boards on Wednesday, September 20th** from 6-7:30 pm in the Kate Gleason Auditorium and adjacent Dorris Carlson Reading Garden. This event will provide additional knowledge and networking to trustees to act as ambassadors for FFRPL and the Library. **Please refer to the emailed invitation sent to each trustee and [register here](#).**

Calendar of Fall *Books Sandwiched In* events – see program at your seat or [view/download the brochure here](#).

The Library's annual juried *Art of the Book* exhibit will be **on view** beginning **September 18** in the Anthony Mascioli Gallery in Harold Hacker Hall. This year was the biggest to date: 192 entries, from 99 artists, representing 27 U.S. States and 10 Countries (including the U.S.). Save the date for the **reception** to be held on **Wednesday, October 18, 2023**.

FFRPL Grants to MCLS, Pioneer, and Nioga System Libraries

Grant usage reports are due to FFRPL by February 15, 2024, from eligible individual libraries within the MCLS, Pioneer, and Nioga library systems who received FFRPL grant funds for the purchase of supplemental circulating materials in March 2023. Eligible MCLS libraries received \$207,652 of support. We look forward to hearing how the funds are being utilized.



Raising A Reader

PROGRAM REPORT
PREPARED BY TONIA BURTON

JULY 2023

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Executive Summary

Raising A Reader (RAR) is an important early literacy program that elevates family and community engagement and teaches skills that prepare children for school and form the foundation of all learning throughout life. This report was prepared to review the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. The RAR program meets the Rochester Public Library strategic plan priorities to strengthen community education and engagement while providing access to materials that meet the needs of our diverse community. It has helped us expand our partnerships and elevated the community's view of the RPL by providing a needed and valued service to the community and providing RPL with positive social capital throughout the early learning community. We have been recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for the early literacy expertise we offer. Our proven record of offering authentic family engagement through the RAR program has garnered the respect of:

- New York Association for the Education of Young Children.
- The New York State Council on Child and Family Services.
- RAR National has 289 affiliates throughout the country and has recognized our program as a Best Practices Affiliate.

There are many early literacy projects and programs available locally, but RAR is a national evidence based turnkey program that works with the other community projects while elevating family engagement. Their branding and support give us access to specialized training and bilingual materials that our library vendors don't offer. There is no affiliate fee or cost for training, using their marketing tools, or logo. RAR materials are the highest set of circulating materials in the system and it is the most cost-effective way to deliver early literacy and family engagement.

The accomplishments that have resulted are numerous and not just for children but the library as well. It has changed how we interact with our community and pulled staff into spaces where we can meet people where they are at. It provides an immediate introduction to the service providers (childcare staff) who parents already trust. In many instances this is the only introduction to the library that childcare staff and families have.

Background & Program Description

Raising A Reader rotates red bags filled with award-winning books into children's homes on a weekly basis. A child is exposed to approximately 100 multicultural books per year in the average program. Local implementers are trained in interactive "read-aloud" techniques that stimulate early brain development and language acquisition. They in turn train parents and caregivers. The training helps parents and caregivers, even those with limited English proficiency or low literacy skills, learn how to engage their child by sharing a book. Through the program, library staff builds relationships with childcare staff and families through offering family engagement activities at each site. Families are also connected to their library through invitations to special events held in the branches and at Central Library. At the culmination of the program, children receive a blue library bag to keep and continue the

practice of borrowing books and “book cuddling.” When the blue bags visit the Central Library, staff make a big deal to welcome the family and make sure they have everything they need to enjoy their library experience.

The program is evidence-based and helps caring adults set their children up for success by creating shared reading routines, fostering social-emotional learning, facilitating healthy family relationships and learning skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

Raising a Reader is built on decades of early childhood development research, using scientifically grounded, evidence-based approaches focused on four main goals:

- Promoting and strengthening family engagement.
- Fostering healthy brain development.
- Developing and enhancing early literacy and language skills.
- Developing, promoting, and fostering internal reading motivation.

Thirty-nine independent evaluations¹ have found that RAR create a positive, measurable impact, significantly improving family reading behavior, parent-child bonding, and kindergarten readiness.

Studies of individual families show that what the family does is more important to student success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades. At the same time, we know that even interested parents face barriers to becoming involved or staying involved in their child’s education and when working with childcare sites to introduce RAR to families, it is important to provide coaching and strategies that meet families’ diverse needs. Such barriers include:

- Time. Families have multiple demands on their time-- balancing work, siblings, and other family commitments.
- Uncertainty about what to do. A lack of confidence in their own ability to help or lack of awareness about the importance of their role in their child’s education.
- Cultural barriers. The families of the children being educated in America’s schools today are extremely diverse, may not speak the dominant language or come from countries where parental expectations differ.
- Values. Families also have different views on schools, teaching, and their own role in their children’s education which may result from culture, educational attainment, educational experiences, or other value-shaping reasons.
- Lack of a supportive environment. Poverty, homelessness, and isolation leave parents to face the difficult task of raising their children alone.

¹ [2020_RaREvalCompendium_Vfinal.pdf \(raisingareader.org\)](#)

Program History

The Rochester Public Library Raising A Reader program launched in 2012 as a result of the Children's Services Consultant's search for a way to serve families outside of traditional library services to help families overcome the barriers they face so they have the proper tools to help their children have successful academic careers. After looking at best practices in other systems and in the childcare community, Raising A Reader came through as a possible solution. The program had components that would help serve families outside of the library, build community collaboration, give families a variety of supports, and help RPL strengthen community collaborations while helping families get their children ready for kindergarten.

With funding from the FFRPL, we began to offer RAR as a pilot program in 2012. The first collaboration was with ABC Home Visiting Program to serve 29 families. The Children's Services Consultant, with the help of a contract staffer, created bags and offered family engagement workshops at Central Library. The ABC Home Visiting Program had door-to-door transportation for families so there were no transportation barriers. In the following years, laws regarding the transportation of babies and toddlers changed and because door to door transportation was no longer available, ABC gave bus passes to families and offered cabs, when necessary.

In 2014 we secured a \$30,000 grant from the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation which helped us to increase the sites we serve by purchasing more materials and hire a part-time library assistant. The program gained recognition throughout the city and was a part of the inaugural Flower City AmeriCorps project in 2015. This gave RAR ten full-time members to assist with the program. The members had a range of experiences and education from in the process of completing their high school equivalency to the completion of a college degree. The members were recruited from the neighborhoods with the highest concentration of poverty, and all the members had experienced some type of trauma in their life. Many were still living in difficult situations.

The project creators believed the members would be able to work full-time and be productive volunteers. That was the case for a number of our members, but many did not have reliable arrangements for their children's childcare, transportation, and other situations that arose. Anytime a childcare site makes arrangements for a visit, it is essential that library staff are on time and prepared, so when a member could not arrive it was up to the library staff to fill in. As the project went on, the members were able to create more stable living environments for themselves which had a positive impact on services.

In 2016, it was evident that branch staff would be instrumental in expanding the program and supporting the sites. At this time, Rochester's Child awarded RAR the first Robert Hursch Quality Matters grant of \$10,000 and NW Rotary donated \$2500. These funds were used to

bring in staff from the National Raising A Reader office to train all RPL children's services staff and AmeriCorps staff on the program and to purchasing materials for site expansion.

Once branch staff were trained and three positions were made full-time to serve RAR, some staff had assisted with story times, bag rotation, and family engagement events. Over the years this has changed depending on staffing levels in each branch and the ability for the children's services staff to be out of the building. During the 2022-2023 school year we have asked for assistance with our large sites and when RAR staff needed help for large programs or during times of illness. It has been an unreliable effort because of the lack of branch staff who can leave the building.

Due to the difficulty of finding AmeriCorps members who were able to serve in the capacity needed, we did depart from the project in 2019 when it became apparent there would not be additional support needed by the members in the areas of mental health, financial literacy, and life planning. RAR has had one part - time position that has had amazing and effective staff, but since it is part - time, the staff change every year to year and a half. That makes it difficult for us to get beyond staff training because by the time someone has the program and library procedures understood and can implement on their own, they leave for full - time opportunities. Trying to build trust with families and community partners is extremely difficult when staff continually rotate.

To date, we have had seven part-time people in the position, and we are about to hire the eighth. We did have one person who stayed for four years. Her husband is a doctor, and they were just starting a family, so she did not need to work full- time. Others have left for full - time work at either a branch, town library, or school library.

Through a generous donor, we were able to hire a full - time Early Literacy Specialist (ELS) in 2021. We now have one full-time and one part - time staff person. With the ever-changing childcare staff, having one consistent and reliable person engaging with sites has helped to strengthen partnerships and now that she has been here for a couple of years, the Children's Services Consultant is able to better focus on other aspects of children's services. The ELS worked as a teacher and has been able to help navigate changes in site protocol and pivot services quickly when classes closed due to COVID or staffing shortages. The ELS was able to develop online workshops almost instantaneously so that we could share early literacy strategies with families and created kits for families to pick up at the sites that were used with the online sessions. Since RAR is the sole focus of the ELS, she has the time to contemplate what changes need to be made and make them swiftly. Having a full-time person in the role gives flexibility of scheduling because they do not have another job schedule to interfere with RAR activities. A flexible schedule allows us to say "YES" to our partners and be available when needed. In the past, part-time staff members have had other jobs in the afternoon, leaving the

program short-handed during those times. It was great to have someone to do story time at the sites, but family engagement is the critical piece.

Summertime is another area that has benefited from having a full-time ESL. Up until we had a full-time person and the pandemic subsided, we did not offer RAR services in the summer. One of RPL's partners SummerLEAP, has helped us reach families during the pandemic by delivering books to the families they were already serving. Now that the programs are back to the childcare sites, we are offering RAR services at three of the SummerLEAP sites and we will be providing Summer Learning backpacks for all the students served in the program. (SummerLEAP is a summertime academic intervention for kids in Early Pre-K (EPK) and Universal Pre-K (UPK).) A full-time ESL allows for comprehensive program development, relationship building, and a consistent presence in the early childhood community.

Program Operation

The year-to-year and day-to-day operation of the RAR program is scalable to fit the needs of each childcare site, funding, and staffing. The program year has always begun in August and ended in June. This year, we did add a summer session using funding from the Konar Foundation. The first step is sending out program applications to childcare sites we have worked with and, when staffing allows, any that have expressed interest. The program is free to all sites, but we do ask that they commit to two things. The first is that all teachers and paraprofessional staff attend a training from library staff on the program and implementation. The second is hosting at least three family engagement events throughout the year. The first one must be before red bags begin checking out. We review each application to look at the number of children in each class and site, as well as the languages spoken in the home, and then we consider how program implementation has gone in previous years.

It is important that there is frequent and timely communication between the sites and library staff and that family events are offered so we can provide parents/guardians with early literacy information. Communication is key to successful event planning and important for last minute changes due to illness or staffing. One of the most important traits we look for is teacher buy-in. When teachers are not invested in helping us by making sure parents return bags, share information, or collaborate on events, then the RAR program is not as effective as it could be. We have had teachers at both ends of the spectrum and we know from experience that without the teachers' desire to be partners, the program is not as fruitful as it could be.

Once we decide on the sites we can serve, we begin ordering books to be sure we have a rich selection of multicultural and bilingual books. As an affiliate of Raising A Reader, we purchase all materials from them, so everything comes with RAR labels. They work with publishers to find high-quality bilingual books in ten different languages: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, French, Japanese, Nepali, Portuguese, Spanish, Somali, and Vietnamese.

At this point, the red bags are created by looking at the makeup of each individual class. Each bag will have four books. Depending on the languages spoken in the home, there may be one bilingual book, one wordless, one board book, and one school-age book. We include a school-age picture book so siblings can enjoy the books, too. A tag is created with a bag number and the titles of the books in the bag. The tag is attached to the bag. The information on the tag is put into an inventory Excel spreadsheet. Each classroom will receive totes with the bags and the inventory sheet. There is a second inventory sheet that has barcodes for each bag taped on it so staff can check in and check out the bags weekly. This is how the library gets circulation stats for the program. We do not circulate the bags during school breaks.

Library staff visit every site and go over the RAR Program Maintenance training. This training also includes training that is curated for each individual site depending on their staffing needs. Training has been given on early brain development, how to select age-appropriate books, finding new favorite books, etc. Once staff are trained, the MCLS Shipping team delivers the totes to each site. This is done for efficiency because of the weight of each tote and the number of totes that get delivered.

Once totes arrive, RAR staff visit every classroom and begin the rotation of bags for teachers to model it for them for the first 4 – 6 weeks. The students take home one red bag for one week and then return the next week on the designated red bag day. For example, Ibero red bag day is Friday. Every Friday students take home a new bag. On the following Thursday, the bags are returned. The contents of each bag is checked and the bags rotate to the next student the following day.

To rotate the bags, a pocket chart is used. Each student has a card with their name on it and their card is put into the pocket with the number of the bag they are taking home. The next week, each student returns their bag and gets their name card moved to the next number in the chart and they take home the corresponding bag. For example:

This week Destiny has bag #4. Her name tag is in the pocket marked #4. Next week she returns it and gets bag #5. If she forgets to return bag #4, she can get a bag after #4 is returned. There are exceptions, if a family has been displaced for any reason or they lost a bag, then a new bag is given, and the library is notified that they need a replacement bag. We do not exclude any student from the program as long as the adults are doing their best to return the bags. It is up to the classroom teacher to decide.

To work with the adults, we do family engagement events where we share information on brain development. We instruct adults on how a skill ties into school readiness, then we model a skill, have an activity for the adults and children to practice the skill, and then provide a take home extension activity. The first family event is usually during an open house when families are learning about expectations and opportunities for the school year. We introduce ourselves to

the parents/guardians and tell them where we are from and about the RAR program. We stress that there are no fees and that we are there to support their child's literacy development. We then have a skill to model. Last year, we wanted to model Asking Good Questions, so we set up a Story Walk. Each page had suggested questions and then at the end, families were given an activity bag to take home and create their own leaf story. Other skills we focus on throughout the year are:

- Making Connections (how do the books, songs, experience relate to each other and to your own life; "The book had a pigeon who wanted to drive the bus, do you remember when we rode the bus?")
- How to do a Picture Walk, which is helpful for so many things but mostly, it's a way that parents who may not feel confident reading aloud can share a story with their children by reading the picture.
- Expanding on answers/asking open ended questions

In May and June, we start collecting the bags from sites and help parents fill out a year end survey. The year ends in June when staff attend as many *End of the Year* ceremonies as possible to give the students a Blue Bag to keep. The bags have information about summer programs, library cards, and other library services. In recent years we have also been able to give children entering kindergarten RAR Super Summer Learning Adventure Bags. These bags were created during the pandemic to get books in the homes of families along with learning activities. In 2020, we ordered the bags but because of COVID, it was not possible to get the bags distributed on our own. We partnered with SummerLEAP to get the bags delivered to families. Their staff were making visits to the homes of students enrolled in their program and had the capacity to deliver the bag for us.

It was a great solution for us and worked out great for the families and SummerLeap. Now that the library is back to pre-pandemic programming, we do not have the staff time to distribute, so we are partnering with SummerLeap again to distribute the bags. A grant from the Konar Foundation supports this effort along with providing transportation costs for the sites to visit the library.

Challenges

From the start of the program, a lack of staffing has limited what the library can offer. Throughout the history of the program, to make the program work and meet its intended results, we have to have the right staff. That is an ongoing issue that continues to limit program growth. Staffing within the library is not the only staffing challenge. Staffing at the sites is problematic, too. During the pandemic, childcare sites faced insurmountable challenges. While it is getting a little better, there are still things that happen that do affect our services and we do not have any control over these situations. Many sites have closed; others had to endure

constant staffing challenges on top of the uncertainty of the pandemic. Staff became quickly frustrated with their working situation and low wages and began looking for work in other areas. This has had a huge effect on our work.

Sites that were considered to have the best practices have had such a drastic change in staffing. At one site, new leadership was put into place, and they did not have a collaborative view of our partnership. It was recently reported that the leadership has again been let go so there is hope for the new school year. Other sites received serious violations because of a lack of staff from the Office of Children and Family Services that they were afraid to let library staff into classrooms for fear of more violations. Staffing at childcare sites is outside of our scope of responsibility, we can offer support in the way of training staff and getting them excited about sharing books with their students. We can support them with our presence on a regular basis and help implement the RAR program to reduce their stress, which helps them feel seen and valued as a community partner.

Another challenge is program evaluation. We can survey families each year, but we do not have a way to track children once they get into school to see if children who participated in RAR are more ready for school or what their third-grade reading level is compared to children who did not receive the program.

RAR National offers a pre/post survey template that we can use but it is very extensive. For the last two years we have utilized Project Outcome because it is a lot faster and easier to get parents to complete. Unfortunately, the data is not as rich. We will be exploring other options in the coming year. Having the city school district working with us to share information would give us the information to show the impact of RAR.

RAR By the Numbers

RAR has served 3,626 children to date. In 2019 we had the largest increase. At that time, we had a new staff person who was very eager to increase numbers and also had the full-time staff from branches assisting. Unfortunately, she left in early 2020 for a full-time position. The pandemic further hindered growth.

In the 2022 – 2023 school year, we served 743 children across eight sites. This includes the summer pilot program at which is serving 115 students at Rochester Child First Network and Generations at Clinton Square. As of July 17, 2023; there have been 780 red bags circulating for a total of 30,456 from 2022 - 2023.

The full-time Early Literacy Specialist spent two hundred and seventy hours at sites. The part-time library assistant had two hundred and twenty-seven hours at sites, while the rest is from Mark Hafer (10 hours) at Maplewood and Kim Whittimore (15 hours) when she was at Sully.

Each bag takes thirty minutes to prepare, or 390 hours of prep time. That includes the time to select books, make labels, create inventory sheets, enter barcodes into CARL, and arrange for bags to be cleaned at the end of the year. This was done by the full-time ESL. She also coordinated tote delivery and set up story time and bag rotation visits with other RPL staff. In past years the Children's Center clerk has assisted with this but the clerk position was unfilled after the former clerk left for full-time employment with the county.

There were six different activity kits created for the sites. A total of 305 hours went into the research, development, creation, and production to produce the 2009 kits distributed, and another sixty hours for translating the materials.

*See appendix for breakdown on staff time and number of sites served.

Funding

The cost of books, red bags, and supplies directly related to the bag rotation is \$30,000 per year and is covered in the branch administration budget. The expenses were put under Branch Administration during Mayor Warren's term. She was a strong supporter of early literacy and believed in the mission of the RAR program. This was also the same time that branch staff positions were funded to change from part-time to full-time, so they could support RAR, and we could expand the program.

The additional cost of the program is supported through a combination of private funders and grants through the FFRPL. This covers items that are cannot be put under the regular operating budget and for items we cannot get from contract vendors. It covers the cost of family engagement activities, books for the blue bags, food, transportation for families to visit the library and program supplies. This is not a fixed cost; we aim to get \$5000 in support each year. We adjust the number of books we give out and what we offer for activities based on the support we have. In addition to private donations, we have grants from Rochester's Child, Northwest Rotary, Daisy Marquis Jones, and Konar Foundation.

Currently, a private donor is providing the cost for a full-time Early Literacy Specialist for three years with the understanding that at the end of that time, the library would fully fund the position. It would be my recommendation that in the next fiscal year, that position be split between branches and Central since the position does serve both Central Library Children's Center and Raising A Reader.

Impact

In June, The Little premiered the documentary *Right To Read*². After the film, there was a panel of experts in brain development, education, health, and a parent advocate. The experts in science and education talked about research and pedagogy but the parent talked about what Rochester resources that parents should take advantage of. The first thing she said was the library and she talked about how Raising A Reader got her into the library where she discovered so many services. The parent was a RAR participant at least eight years ago and she still remembers the program and its benefits.

The best story that will always inspire me to move beyond the RAR challenges is the time a mom brought her daughter to Central Library with the blue bag. The Children's Services Consultant and library assistant made a big deal of her making the time to visit the library and so on. On the spot they decided mom should get the RAR Parent of the Month award and presented her with a certificate and some books to take home. Mom cried and told them that nobody had ever told her she did something right before. There are many stories that illustrate the impact. At the end of each year, we ask our partners how the year went and what they would like us to know. Here are some quotes from this year-

Greg Hassett, Assistant Education Manager, Action for a Better Community, Inc. *"Action for a Better Community's Early Head Start Home Based program has been using Raising A Reader through the Central Library for over 10 years as a way of promoting parents' reading with their children and further developing that parent/child bond. Raising a Reader has put age-appropriate books into homes where there may have been none. Raising a Reader parent trainings have shown parents the importance of early literacy and its effects on child development. The EHS Home Based assessment scores in Book Knowledge, Language and Literacy have increased over the years, with children participating in Raising A Reader outscoring children in their age group who did not. I personally feel any program that builds bridges between parents and children, between children and books, between literacy and the community should be celebrated and expanded."*

Kate Bonno, Education Specialist of Action for A Better Community Head Start Heart Street commented: *"The children and teaching staff looked forward to the Raising a Reader visits. Many of the parents reported that it led them to read 3 with their children more often than in the past. We are looking forward to being a part of Raising a Reader in the 2023- 2024 school year, as well."*

² [The Right to Read \(therighttoreadfilm.org\)](http://therighttoreadfilm.org)

Ida Perez, Ibero Childcare Center Director; sent a letter which is attached along with other letters from community partners to illustrate the support the program has from other community providers. *

Parents were also given a chance to tell us what they liked most about the program on the Project Outcome Survey that was conducted in the spring of 2023. Here are a few comments:

What did you like most about this program or service?

What it teaches & expanding her learning skills.

We had different books to read weekly.

my son called it his homework and he loved sharing with his older sisters.

The activities that keep the kids engaged.

That they always make sure to do their best to help families.

I like that the program gives parents activities to complete at home.

It showed me how to be a better mom to my kids.

*See appendix for additional letters of support from community partners.

Throughout the years families have visited our libraries because of the connections made through RAR and the childcare sites themselves have brought their classes in the summer so they can be exposed to rich literacy programming. This summer we have seen a rise in RAR sites visiting the library over the last few years fueled by the ability to cover the transportation cost for the sites. By August, we have had eight visits from childcare sites.

Sustainability

Raising A Reader is a time-intensive program that requires intentional planning and follow-through that is best done with staff who are dedicated, flexible, and capable. Having at least one full-time and one part staff whose main duties are the coordination of the program with participation from other children’s staff is essential.

With the understanding that budgets change from year to year, this is a program that can be maintained and scaled up or down depending on resources. At the current staffing and funding level, RPL can serve up to 800 children. At this juncture, what needs to be decided is how big of a role RPL wants to play in the early learning community. If we cut this service, then it has to be decided that it is okay to trust early literacy education to the providers who have continued to fail students for years, to lose the community connections we have built, and lose the marketing opportunities we have by being inside buildings with teachers, staff, students, and families. Not to mention, it would also mean losing the circulation and program numbers as well as the social capital we have gained.

Summary

There are several factors to consider as we plan for the future of the program within RPL. The program requires significant time to prepare material materials for rotation, staff training at sites, activity preparation and delivery, and week-to-week program maintenance. Having a full-time staff person with the proper background who is bilingual has made a huge difference with freeing up the Children's Consultant time so she can focus on other duties serving member libraries, forging community connections, training childcare providers and library staff, researching best practices for children's services, and other tasks. It has also helped with creating materials in Spanish. We have had books in Spanish since we started the program but having activities translated into Spanish speaks volumes to families and helps strengthen relationships which allows vulnerable people to authentically engage and learn alongside their children. Building those bonds takes time and staff who are present and consistent. To continue offering a program of this magnitude requires full-time staff with part-time staff in addition to materials. Materials alone change nothing. Staff with expertise in early literacy who can get adults to open and explore books with their children, that is when change happens.

Over the span of eleven years, we have served 3,626 children at twenty-three sites and provided expanded relationships within each site. In 2022 – 2023 the red bags generated over 30,000 circulations. This year we added three new sites and re-established our partnership with Rochester Child First Network bringing RAR to 743 children and their families. The program distributed six different literacy-based activity kits that encourage parent and child bonding and literacy exploration, a total of 2009 kits were distributed among families. This school year RPL provided 460 hours of storytime and 638 hours of direct contact.

Challenges of late have been extraordinary staffing and resource constraints post-covid for childcare and the inability of RCSD to partner in a way that would benefit program reporting. There are sites that are undergoing review at the federal level, others with several violations from the NYS Office of Child & Family Services, and open positions for teachers and aides across the board. These are not insurmountable challenges. Once the school district agrees to sharing data, we can then create reports that will illustrate the impact of the Raising A Reader Program on a child's readiness for kindergarten and possibly where they are when they reach third grade, which is an important predictor for success later in life.³ RPL should continue to support and offer resources and family engagement to provide families with rich and meaningful early childhood experiences. Abandoning this program at this time would only cause further harm to the early childhood systems in the city.

³ [Reading by Third Grade - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://www.aecf.org/reading-by-third-grade)

Appendix A

2023 Project Outcome Survey Results



REPORT INFORMATION

Topic: Early Childhood Literacy
 Program: RPL Raising A Reader @Ibero
 Date Range: None

ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY WORK

Rochester Public Library conducted follow-up surveys to program participants to collect data and insights about how their early childhood literacy services and programs are supporting community needs. Rochester Public Library surveyed patrons using the Project Outcome Early Childhood Literacy Follow-Up Survey, which measures patron-reported outcomes after a period of time has passed. A total of **30** survey responses were collected.

Results

A total of **30** survey responses were collected. Parents and caregivers surveyed reported that, as a result of participating in the program or service:

- They learned new ways to do the following with their child(ren): READ (**N/A**), WRITE (**N/A**), SING (**83%**), PLAY (**N/A**), TALK (**N/A**), OTHER (**N/A**)
- 100%** used what they learned to do something new or different with their child(ren)
- 81%** used additional library resources
- 100%** spend more time doing what they learned with their child(ren)
- 100%** have a better understanding of the value of doing the activity(ies) they learned with their child(ren)

The full results of the survey(s) are shown below. *(Note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%)*



SCORING: ■ No ■ Yes

Selected Criteria Average	Early Childhood Literacy Topic Averages					
	Library	Library	Peer	State/Province	National	Total
Applied Knowledge	100%	100%	93%	0%	0%	0%
Change in Behavior	100%	100%	98%	0%	0%	0%
Applied Awareness of Library Resources	81%	73%	93%	0%	0%	0%
Perceived Value	100%	100%	96%	0%	0%	0%

Survey topic averages represent all data under the survey topic and type and are based on the library location (e.g. United States, Canada). Selected criteria average represents data under any additional criteria applied to the report, such as date range, program or survey name.



Appendix B
RAR Sites Served 2012 – Present

Site	2012/ 2013	2013 /2014	2014 /2015	2015 /2016	2016 /2017	2017 /2018	2018 /2019	2019 /2020	2020 /2021	2021 /2022	2022/ 2023	2023 Sum mer	
ABC Head Start Home Visiti	29	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	0	30		
Peter Castle Family Resourc	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	31	0	0	0		Closed
Hillside Southwest Family P	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	32		0	0		Closed
Lisa's Family Daycare	0	0	8	8	0	0	0						Site was not servign target population, moved to regular outreach
Ora's Place Inc.	0	0	15	15	15	0	0						Site was not invested in the program
A Mother's Love Learn & Pla	0	0	15	15	15	15							Site changed ages served, does not serve target ages
Rochester Childfirst Networ	0	0	0	30	0	0							Too difficult to schedule parent events
Rochester Childfirst Networ	0	0	0	0	20	30	30	0	0	0	30	30	Restarting in summer 2023
RCSD Pathways/Young Moti	0	0	0	30	30	0							Program discontinued by RCSD
School #53 Montessori	0	0	0	0	54	75							Poor communciation, teacehrs looking for classroom library and someone to teach, did not circ bags home
Cameron Community Minis	0	0	0	0	20	0							Too difficult to schedule parent events, Better fit for Lyell Library Outreach
Volunteers of America - Chi	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	274	144	34	250		Staffing issues due to COVID
Ibero Headstart	0	0	0	0	0	38	34	36	36	106	109		
Early Headstart - Hart St.	0	0	0	0	60	60	60	72	0	72	64		Staffing issues due to COVID
Early Headstart - Joseph Av	0	0	0	0	31	39	40	32	0	24	0		Staffing issues due to COVID
Early Headstart - North St.	0	0	0	0	24	24	24	24	0	24	0		Staffing issues due to COVID
School #57	0	0	0	0	0	65	70	184	0	0	0		Closed
School #10								18	0	0	0		Library staff changed
School #2								16	0	0	0		Library staff changed
RCN City Center								36	50	0	0		Closed
Maplewood YMCA										20	0		NEW in 2021; closed in une 2022
Generations-Highland											97		
Generations-Clinton Square											85	85	
Freindship Children's Center											78		
Yearly Total	29	30	128	188	359	456	368	785	260	280	743	115	
Families to date												3626	
*During COVID Summer Leap helpf us get books into homes.													
** Due to the pandemic family engagement was not possible.													

Appendix C
2022-2023 Breakdown Staff-Time For Activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Early Literacy Specialist Hours</i>	<i>Total FT & PT Hours *</i>
Bag Production	250	365 hours
Activity Production	250	305 hours
Site Visits for bag rotation	56	112 hours
Training for site staff	10	30 hours
Site visits for storytime	270	496 hours
Translating materials	60	60 hours
Total Staff Time	896 hours	1368 hours

*This includes the time of the Early Literacy Specialist, Children’s Services Consultant, Part-Time Library Assistant, and Librarians from Maplewood, Douglass, and Sully (under previous children’s librarian).

Appendix D
Community Partner Letters of Support

July 18, 2023

Board of Directors

Larry Frye
Head of School,
The Harley School

Conger Gabel
Board Chair
GRSLA

Mary-Jo Gabel
Member-at-Large

Lisa E. Hiley
Assistant Professor
Nazareth College of
Rochester

Ken Motsenbocker
Ret. CFO
The Harley School
Board Treasurer

Luis A. Perez
CEO, GRSLA

Brittany Rumph
Co-Founder, Innova
Girls Academy

Ranita Williams
Teacher, Rochester City
School District
Program Graduate

Ms. Tonia Burton
Children's Services Consultant
Monroe County Library System
115 South Ave.
Rochester, NY 14604

Re: Letter of Support / Raising-A-Reader

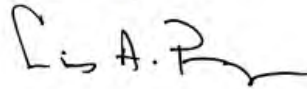
Dear Tonia,

The Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association (GRSLA) is happy to support the Central Library's Raising-A-Reader project, and we're especially in alignment with the meaningful, constructive, and family-focused engagement it provides, especially after our summer session ends.

For many years, Children's Services staff have partnered together with us on a wide range of summer initiatives projects to support summer learning. The Raising-A-Reader distribution is by far the one most highly regarded by parents because it provides families of modest and meager means supplies and books between the time our program ends and the beginning of school. In our annual Family Satisfaction Survey families report it keeps their children building skills for school success while lessening the economic burden of keeping their children engaged just when they are beginning to purchase school supplies for the following academic year.

As a community partner, we enthusiastically support the Raising-A-Reader program and the benefits it provides to families and students alike.

With abundant gratitude,



Luis A. Perez
President and CEO
GRSLA / summerLEAP





IBERO
AMERICAN ACTION LEAGUE, INC.

817 East Main Street Rochester, NY 14605-2722

July 7th, 2023
Monroe County
Public Library
Re: Community Services

Hi Tonia,

I hope the summer finds you well and I'm sure very busy. I wanted to share our appreciation for the services provided during this past 2022-2023 school year.

Raising a Reader again was well received by our families. Parents shared how much they enjoyed receiving books on a weekly basis to share with their children at home. The addition of Margarita and her services to the classroom staff and parents was also very well received. As the director, I noticed how much more engage staff were with reading and using books as a focus in their classroom, which in turn increased the children's cognitive knowledge, language development and social skills. I know this was possible with Margarita's assistance and classrooms demonstrations of songs, games, and extended activities.

I also noticed how parents looked forward to seeing Margarita during our parent events. They were engaged with questions, book suggestions and exploring other interest that that library could offer. Margarita also joined our parent Facebook page and was able to offer activities to those parents who were not able to attend our events. She also shared activities done in the classrooms so that parents could follow up and reenforce with their child at home. I will be remiss if I did not mention the fact that Margarita was able to communicate with staff and families in Spanish. I feel that was the cherry on top!

I look forward to another successful partnership with the library. I know staff and families are also looking forward to it.

Sincerely your community partner,

Ida Pérez- Director
Ibero Children & Family Stability Services
Ibero Early Childhood Services



Phone (585) 256-8900
Fax (585) 442-0683

E-mail: information@iaal.org
Website: www.iaal.org



New York Association for the Education of Young Children

August 1, 2023

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in support to the local Raising a Reader (RAR) Program in Monroe County. The New York Association for the Education for Young Children (NYAEYC) is a professional membership organization that supports early childhood educators and promotes excellence in early care and learning programs. With our approximately 3,000 members we advocate for policies, programs and supports to ensure all young children and their families are engaged in rich, meaningful and developmentally appropriate early learning experiences. In Monroe County, Raising a Reader has been a consistent support in helping early childhood educators in creating valuable learning connections with families, and encouraging and expanding their family engagement efforts.

In the current climate of uncertainty, Raising a Reader has remained a constant for families; enabling them to bring culturally sensitive and relevant books and stories into their children's lives. Many families are faced with barriers such as access to resources, time, and uncertainty of how to support their child after the pandemic and the loss of learning that took place during program closures, social-distancing, and quarantine. Raising a Reader allows families to explore the books at their own pace in the home setting where they often feel the most comfortable. Books are chosen to support developmental milestones as well as language preference of the family.

Early care and learning programs in Monroe County value the partnership they have with the library and the Raising a Reader Program. With directors and teachers navigating a decline in staff and attendance at center wide events, this literacy program provides a piece that cannot be offered by the center alone. Staff share that this collaboration with the library staff is consistent and supportive. The exchange of bags and workflow is seamless and requires very little effort from the center staff.

Also, our local NYAEYC leadership team collaborates with the library for many of their events. Although they do not specially participate in the Raising a Reader efforts, they are familiar with the connection and success it has within the community. Tonia Burton, shares the information with educators and leaders that attend community wide events and is an overall asset to local planning committees and event planning.

The loss of this program would have a significant impact on the early educators, we represent, and the children and families they serve. We hope it will be continued and look forward to future collaborations in support rich early learning experiences.

Sincerely,

Kristen Kerr
NYAEYC Executive Director

Rachel Ziellinski
NYAEYC Member Leader

(518) 867-3517 • Fax: (518) 867-3520 • NYAEYC.org
230 Washington Ave. Extension • Albany, NY 12203

Appendix E
Photographic Representation



Figure 1 Red bag that students take home



Figure 3 AmeriCorps Members Steve & Tasha with classroom totes



Figure 2: 2016 Mother's Day Photo Shoot



Figure 4 RAR Family Visiting Central

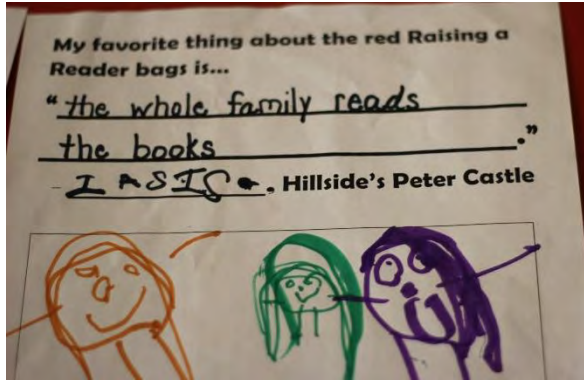


Figure 6 Participant comment



Figure 9 Asking Good Questions Storywalk



Figure 7 Proud Dad



Figure 10 At Home Literacy Kit Sample



Figure 8 Staff Skills Training

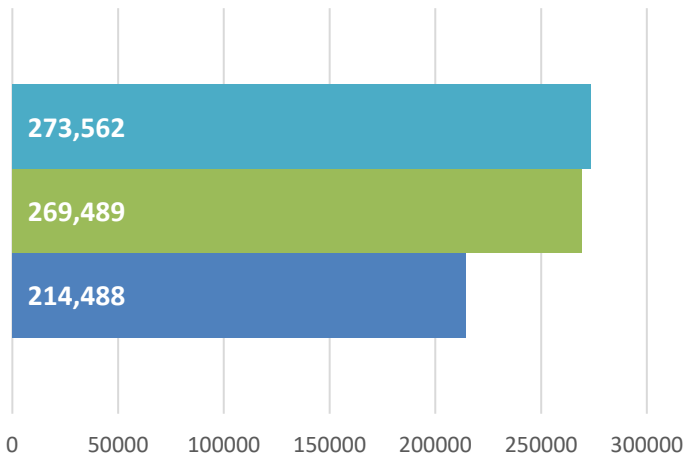


Figure 11 Sample of Summer Bag for home

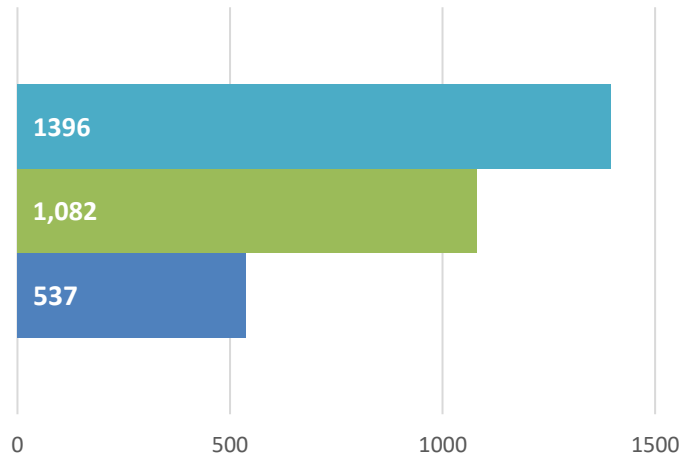
RPL Central Statistics YTD
Jan-Jun



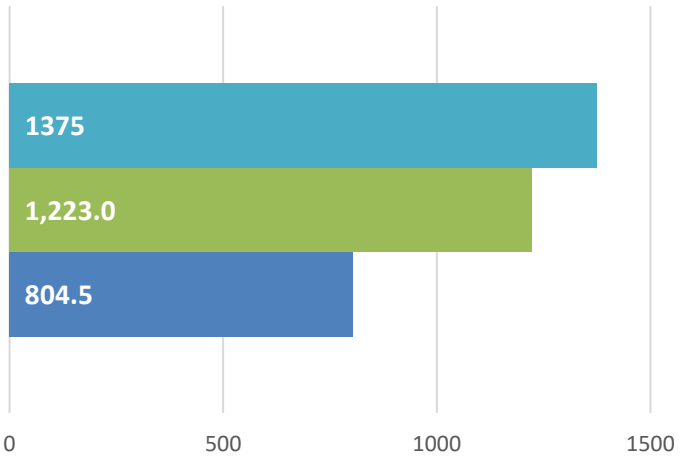
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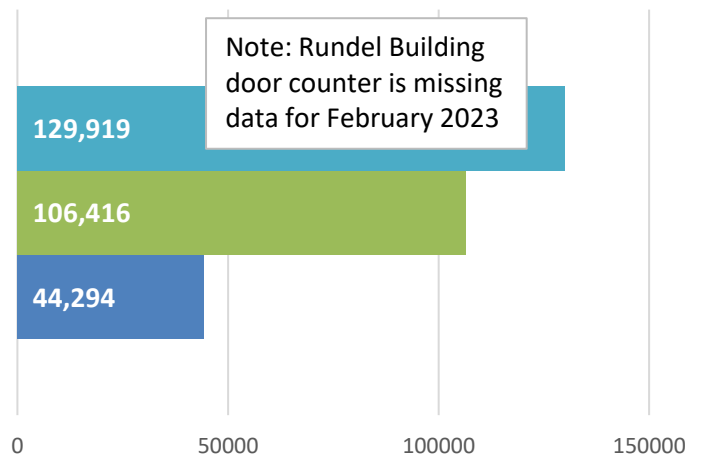
LIBRARY CARDS



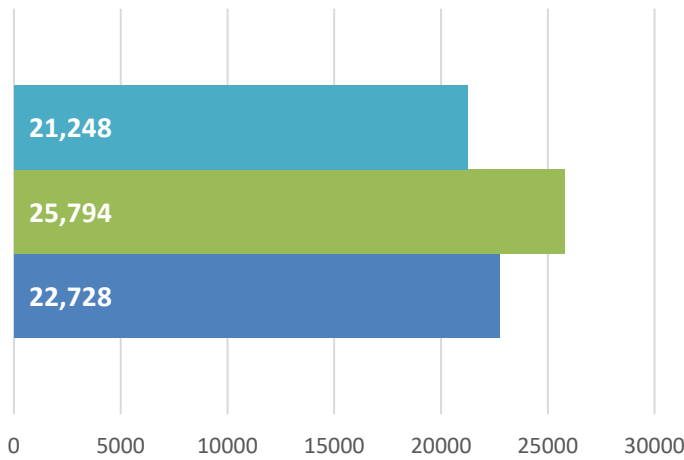
SERVICE HOURS



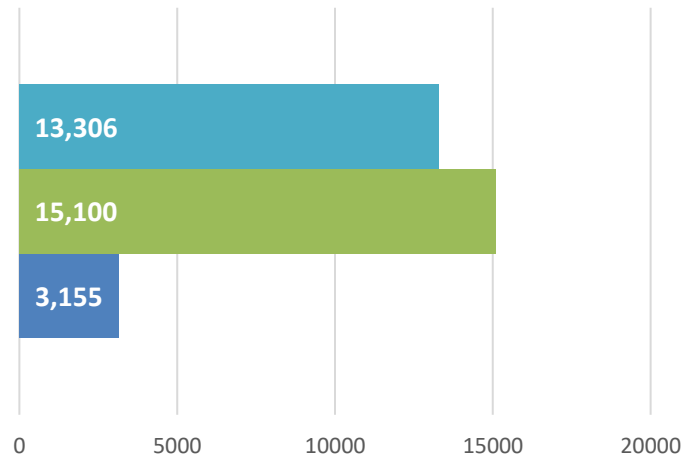
VISITS



REFERENCE QUESTIONS



NON-REFERENCE

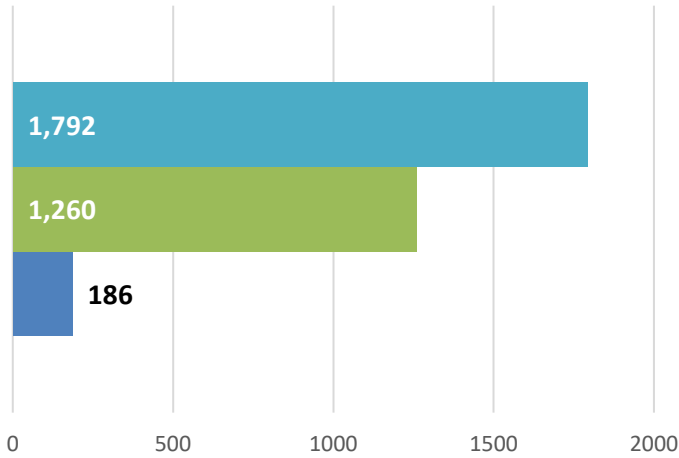


RPL Central Statistics YTD

Jan-Jun



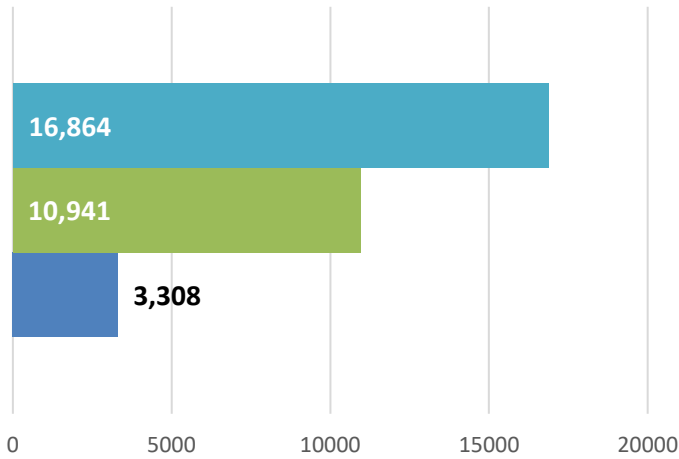
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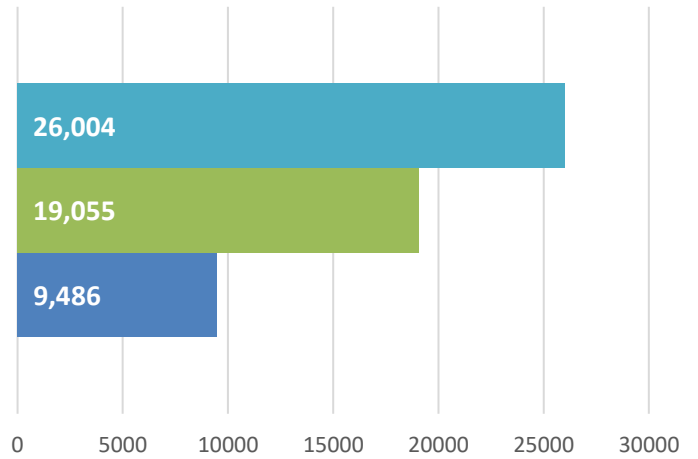
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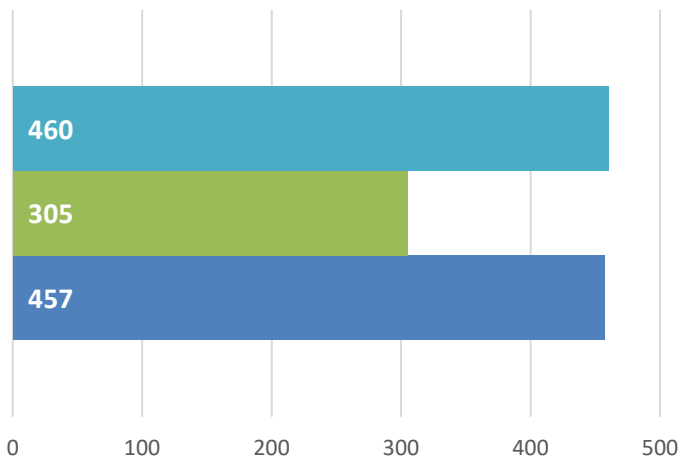
COMPUTER HOURS



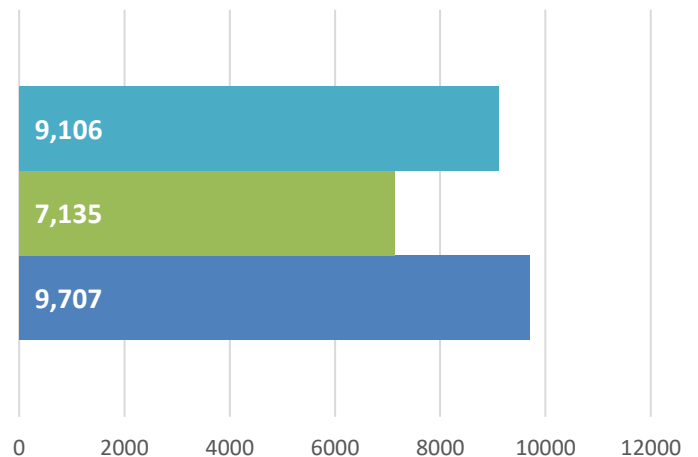
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GROUP PROGRAMS



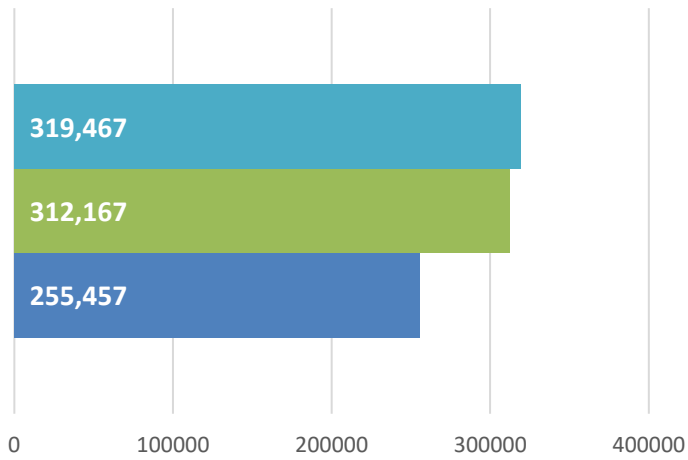
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



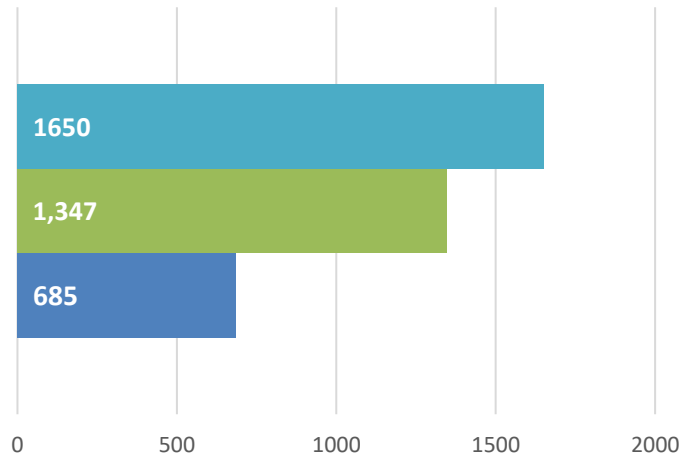
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Jan--Jul



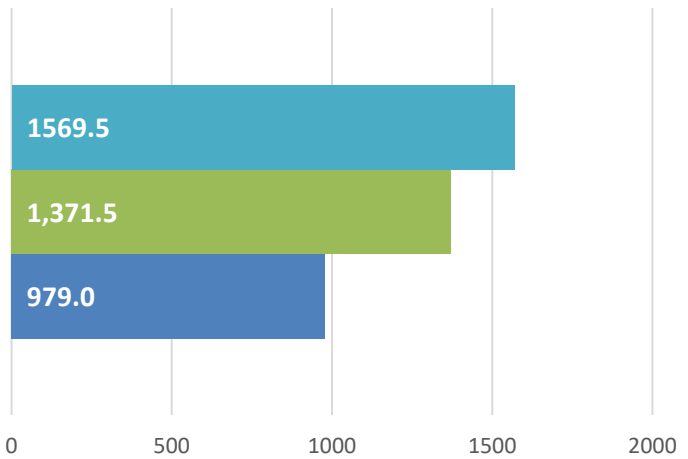
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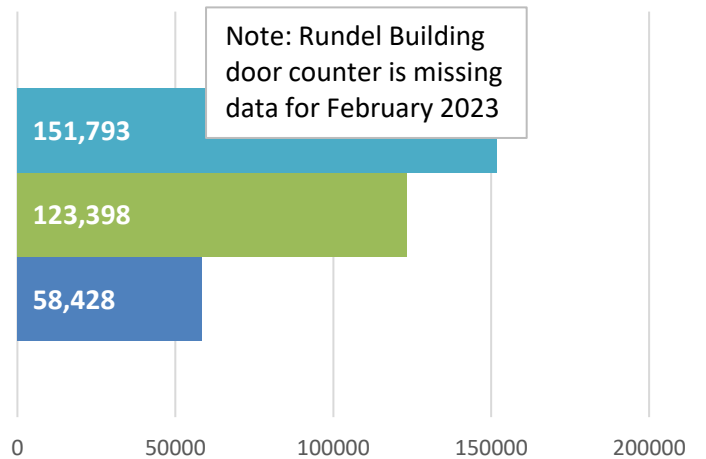
LIBRARY CARDS



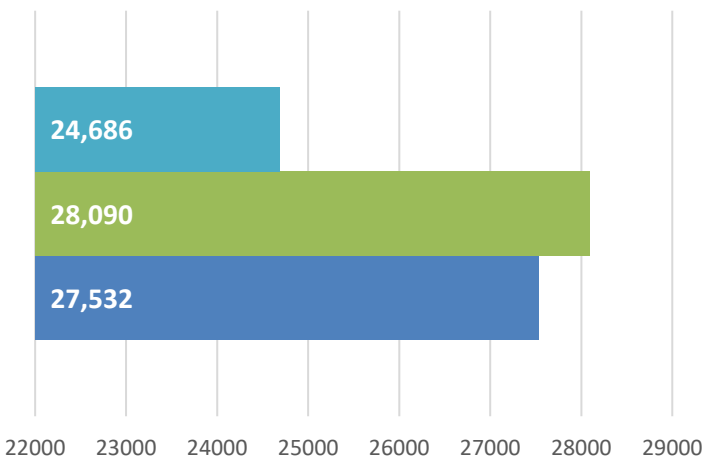
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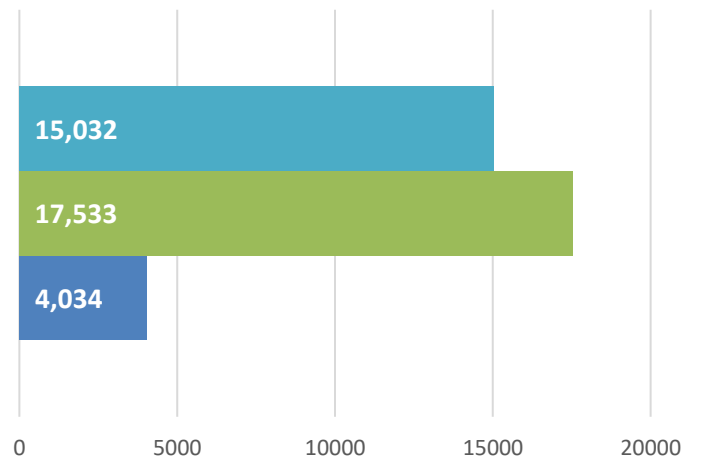
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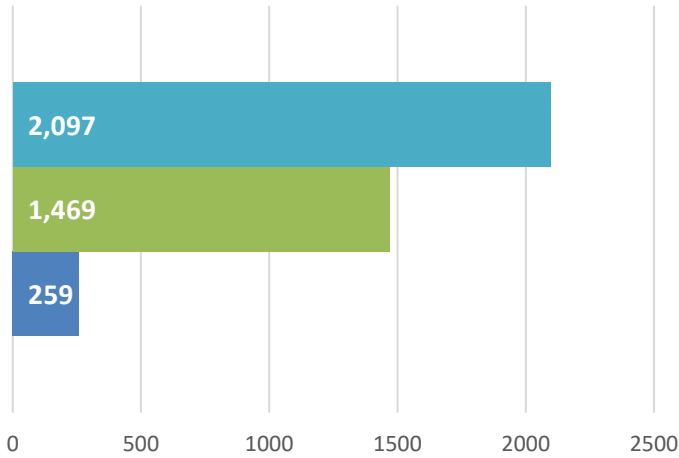


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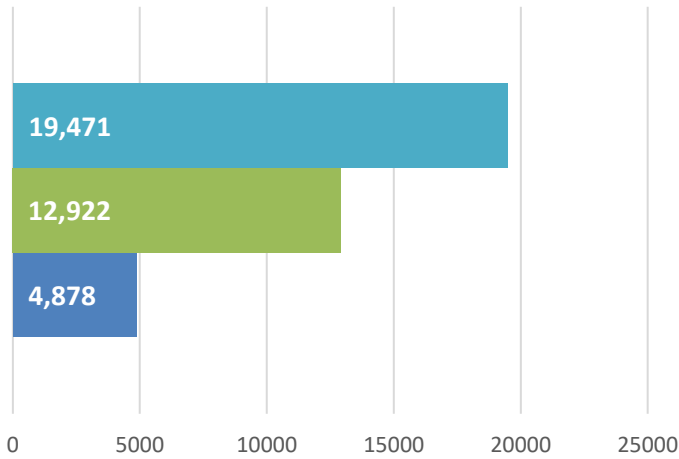
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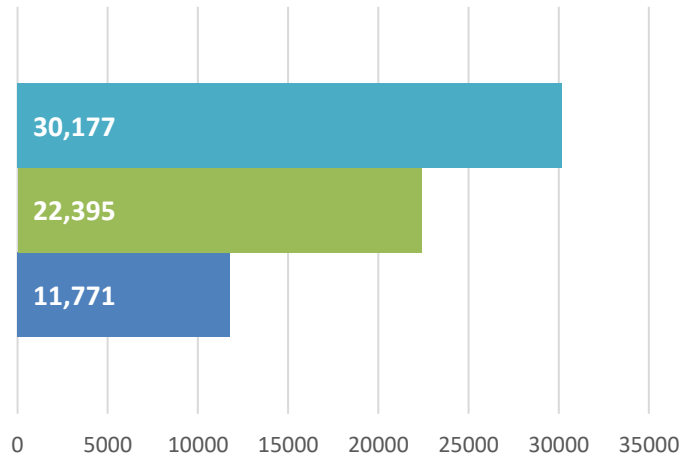
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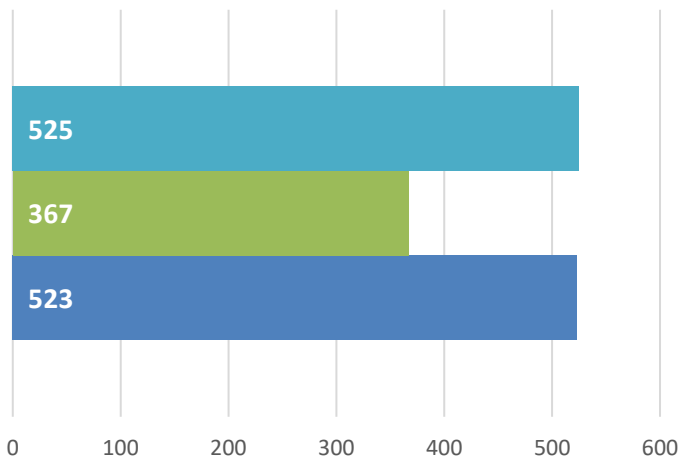
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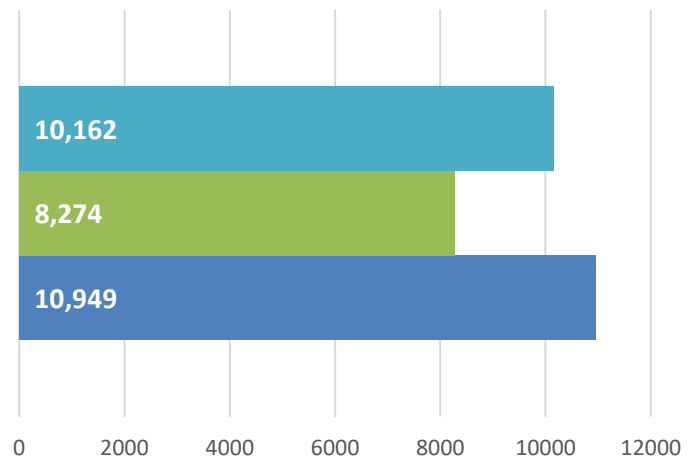
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GROUP PROGRAMS



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

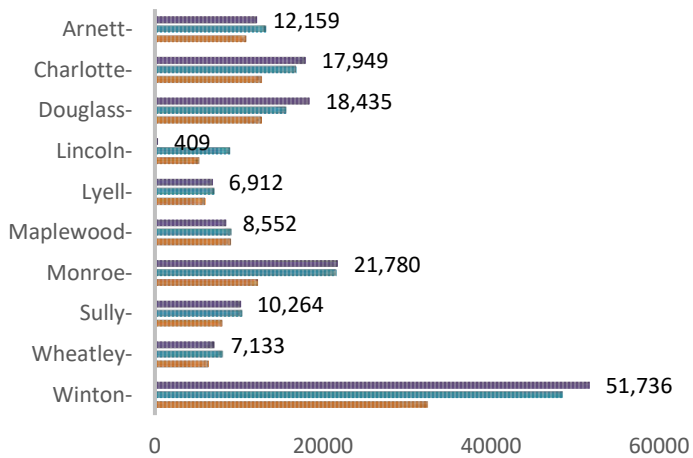


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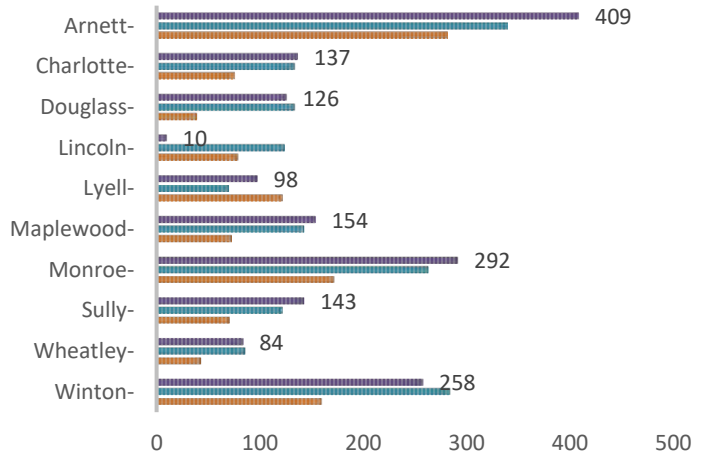
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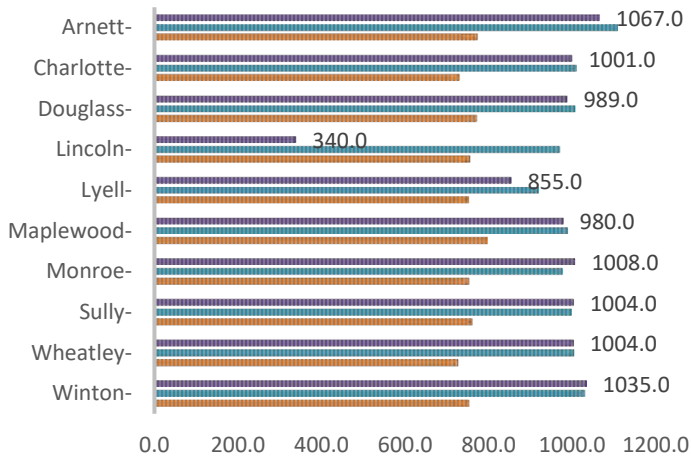
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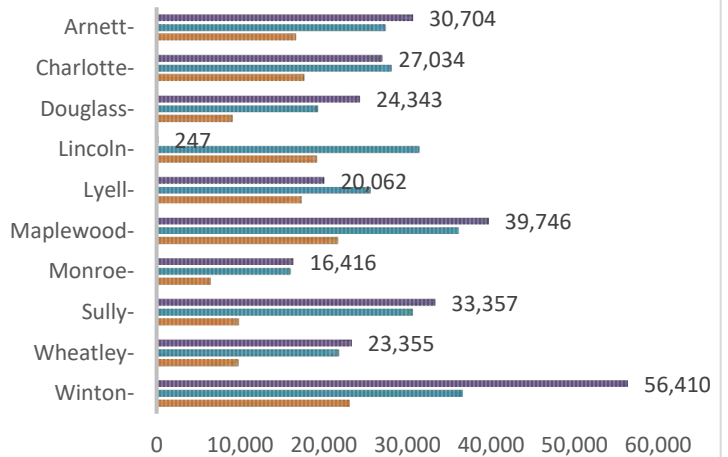
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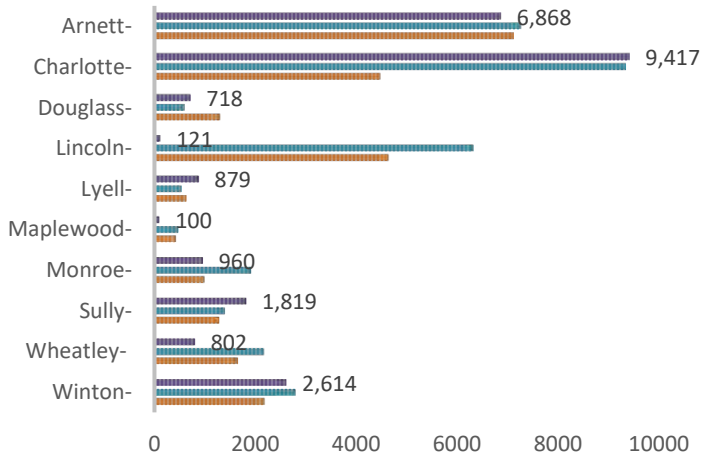
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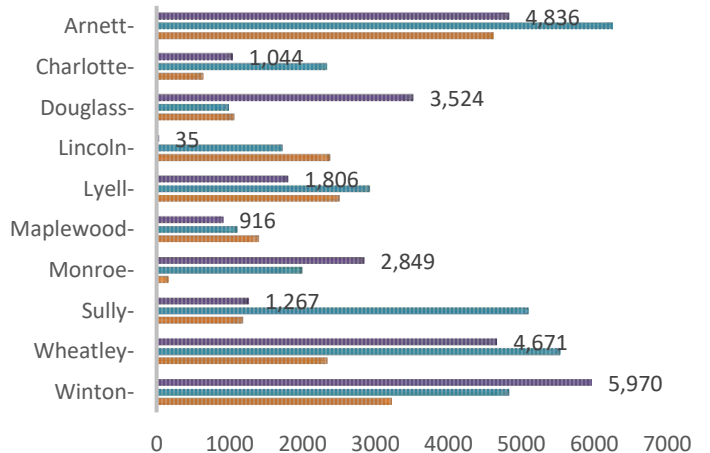
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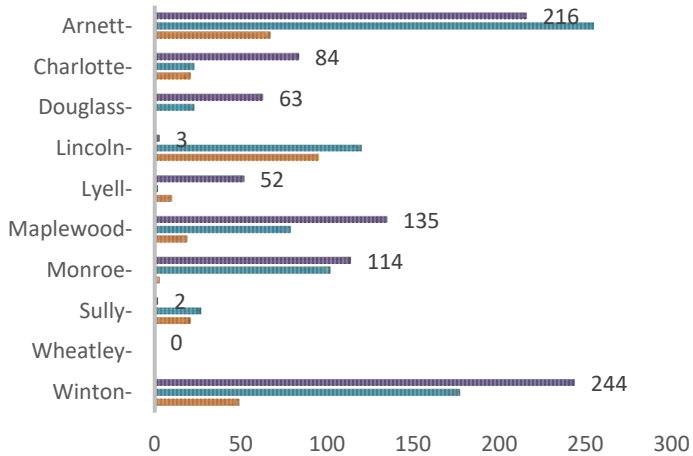


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Jan--Jun



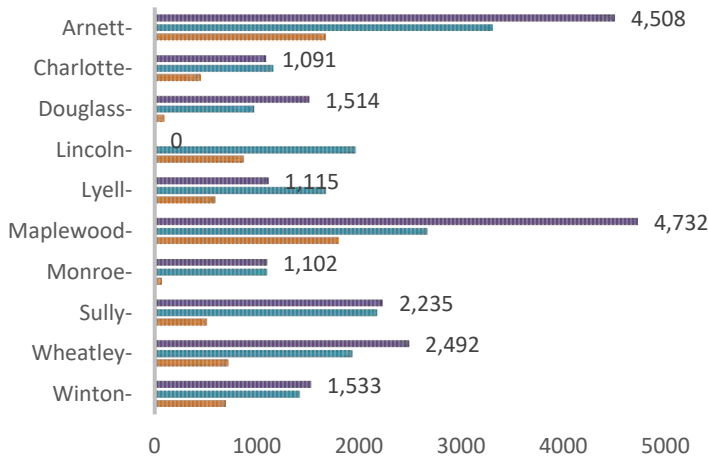
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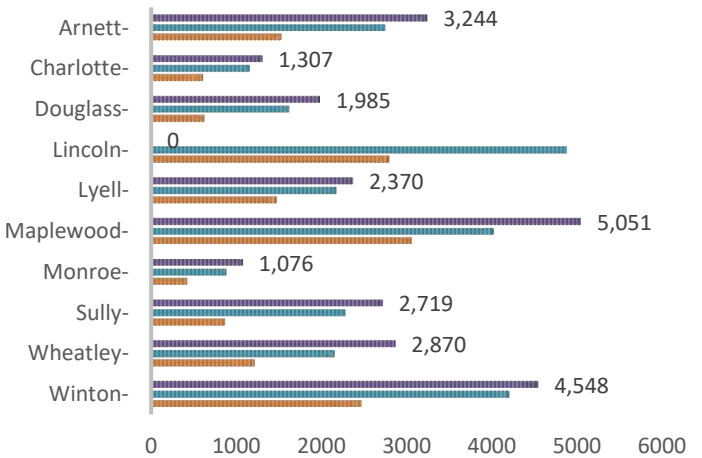
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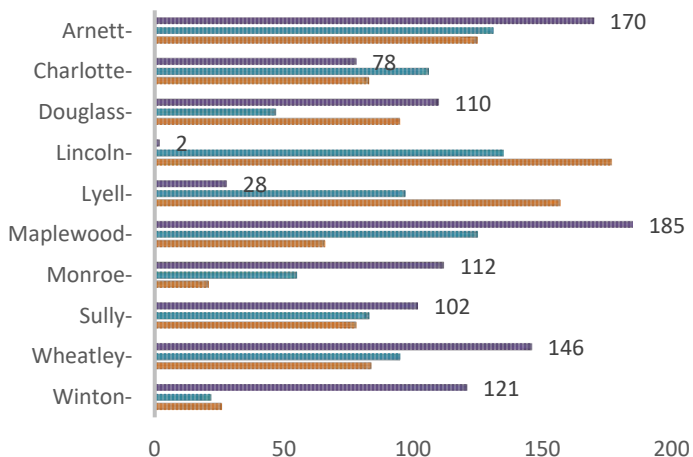
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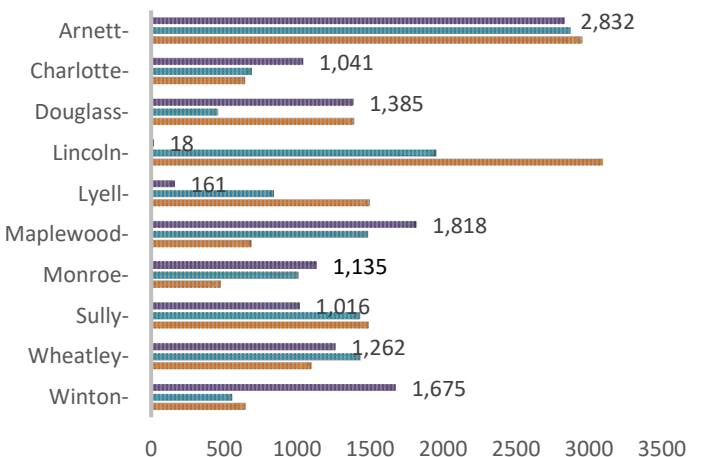
WIFI SESSIONS



GROUP PROGRAMS



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



RPL Branch Statistics YTD

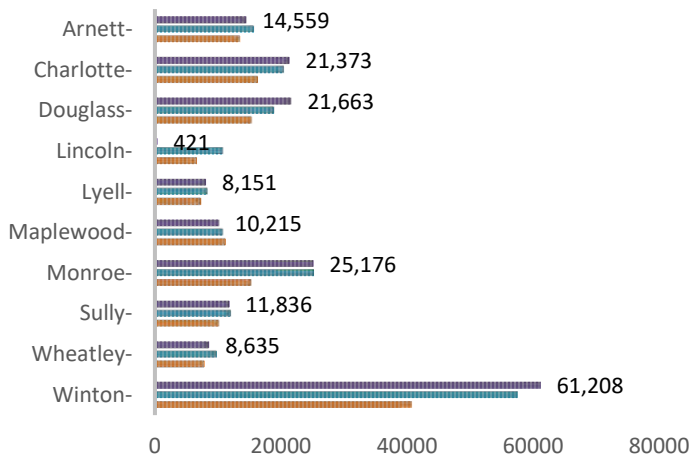
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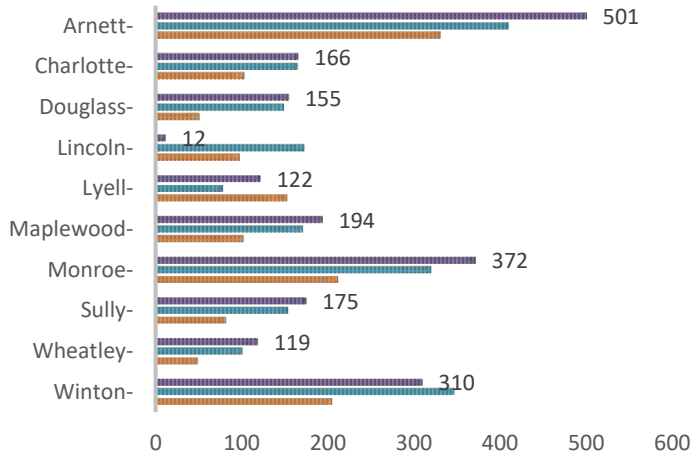
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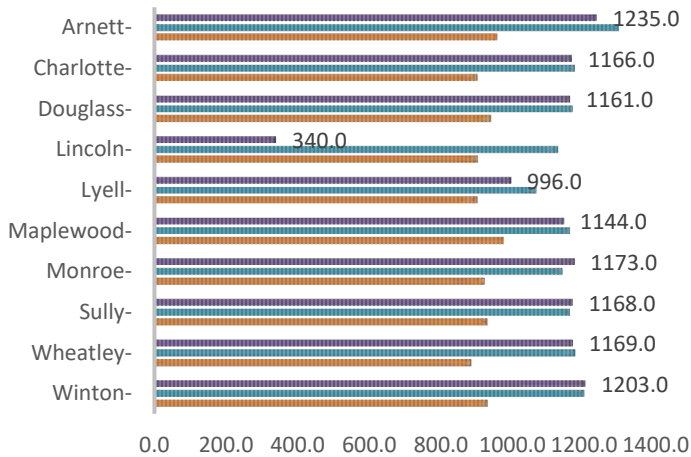
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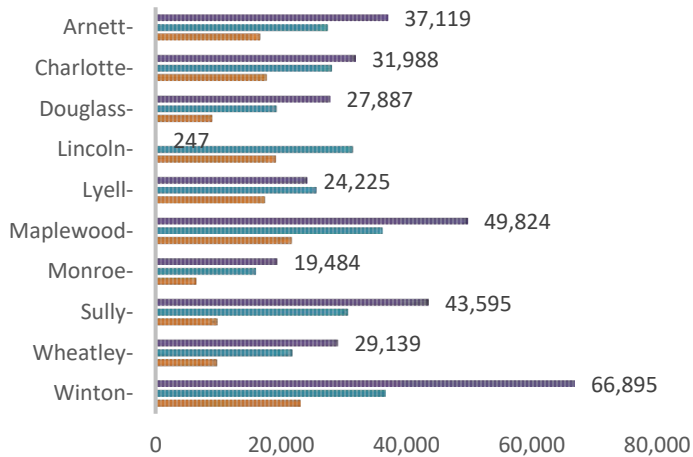
LIBRARY CARDS



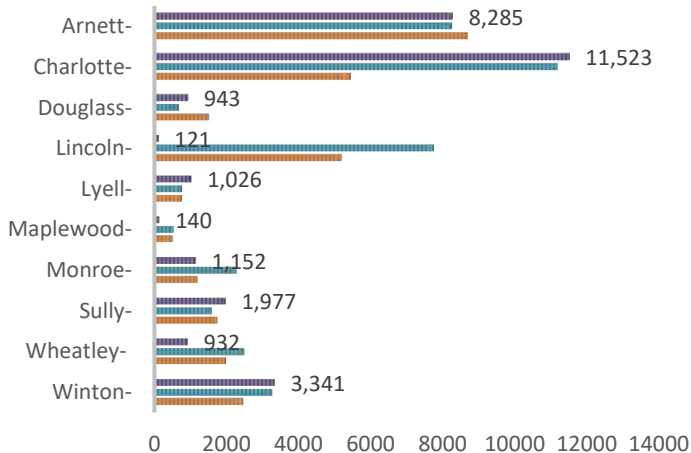
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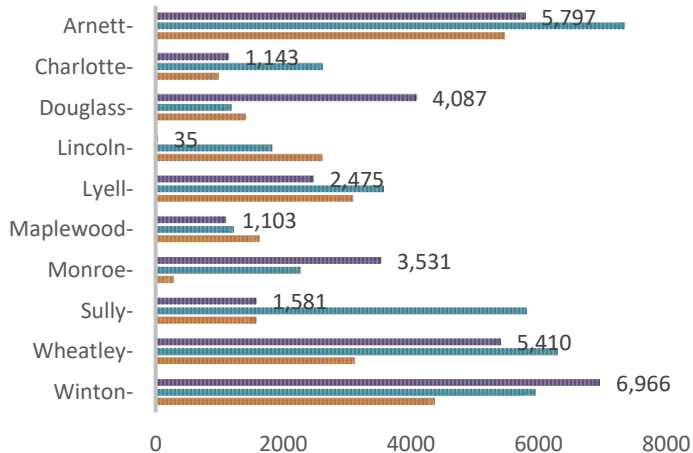
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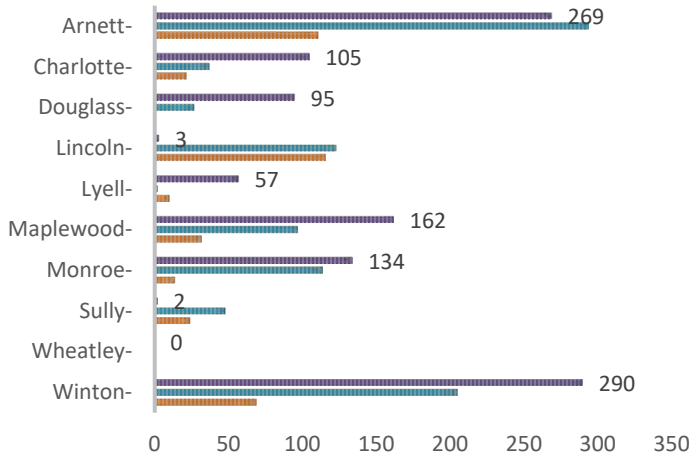
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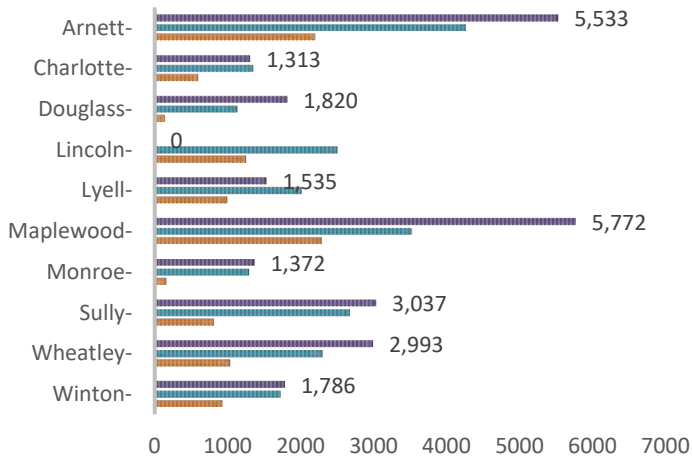
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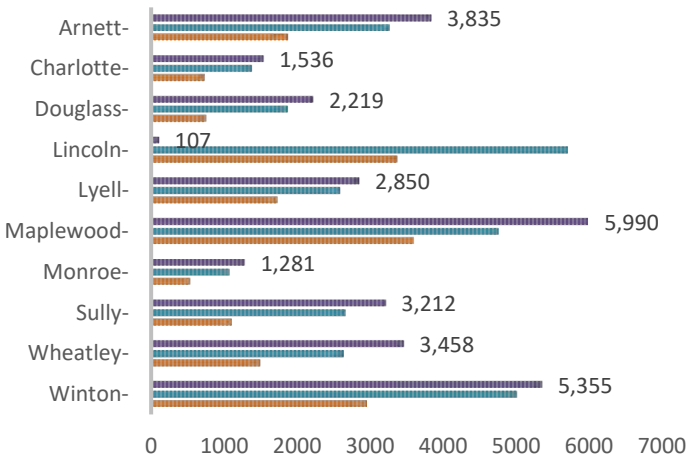
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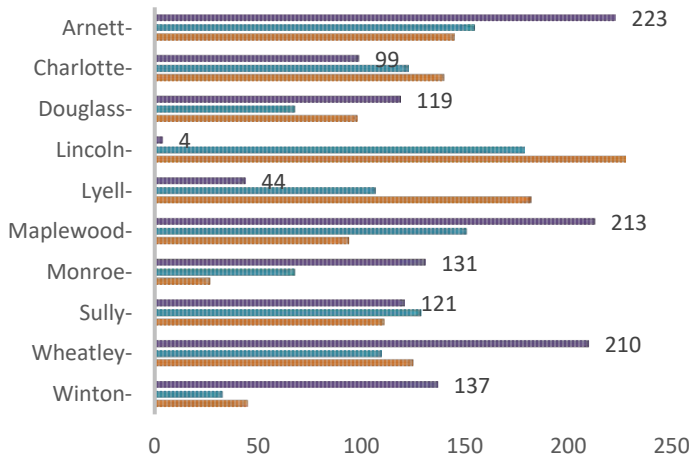
COMPUTER HOURS



WIFI SESSIONS



GROUP PROGRAMS



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

