

**Rochester
Public Library**

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

**Rochester Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Kusler-Cox Auditorium, Rundel Memorial Library Building
March 26, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Agenda**

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Benjamin

II. ACTION ITEMS

- | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Minutes of February Meeting | Benjamin | page 3 |
| 2. Personnel Changes | Suro | page 7 |
| 3. Financial Reports | Hasselwander | page 9 |
| 4. Central Library Special Event Hours, Sept. 18 | Clasper | page 13 |
| 5. Central Library Special Event Hours, May 7 | Clasper | page 13 |
| 6. Acceptance of 2025 Tummonds Funds | Clasper | page 13 & 41 |
| 7. Agreement, Taylor Thomas | Clasper | page 14 |
| 8. Trustee Appointment | Karin | page 14 & 43 |

III. REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1. Liaison & Committee Reports | | |
| a. Liaison from the MCLS Board | Stockman | |
| b. Liaison from the FFRPL | Borgus | page 45 |
| 2. Staff Reports | | |
| a. Director's Report/Central Library | Clasper | page 14 & 18 |
| b. Community Libraries | Scanlon | page 30 |

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Director's Evaluation Update | Benjamin |
|---------------------------------|----------|

V. ADJOURNMENT

**Next Meeting
April 30, 2025
Central Library, Rundel Memorial Building**

**Joint MCLS & RPL Board of Trustees Meeting
Kusler-Cox Auditorium, Rundel Memorial Library Building
February 26, 2025, 9:00 a.m.**

Minutes

- MCLS Trustees Present:** Gary Brandt, Christopher Corcoran, Alinda Drury, Emily Hessney Lynch, Peter Knapp, Amy Moffitt, Suzanne Stockman (quorum present)
- MCLS Trustees Excused:** Kimberly Brown, Marjorie Shelly, Mack Smith, Erick Stephens
- RPL Trustees Present:** Donna Benjamin, Elizabeth Call, Alinda Drury, James Kraus, Sarah Murphy Abbamonte, Sharon Salluzzo, Suzanne Stockman Jeffrey Tucker (quorum present)
- RPL Trustees Excused:** Ellen Brenner, Daniel Karin
- Staff and Guests:** County Law Liaison, Keana Williams; County Administration Liaison, Molly Clifford; City Law Liaison, Johanna Brennan; FFRPL Liaison, Donna Borgus; staff members Emily Clasper, Katy Hasselwander, Debi Mansour, Ana Suro

Call to Order

Mr. Corcoran called the MCLS Board meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and confirmed a quorum was present.

Ms. Benjamin called the RPL Board meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and confirmed a quorum was present.

Public Comments

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to address the boards.

Minutes

The minutes of the MCLS January meeting were APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

The minutes of the RPL January meeting were APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

MCLS Claims

Ms. Hasselwander reviewed the financial claims with the trustees and offered to answer questions.

Mr. Brandt asked that Empire Pass utilization data be provided to the Board. After discussion, Dr. Knapp MADE A MOTION to approve the financial claims as presented. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RPL Personnel Changes

Ms. Suro called attention to the personnel changes and staffing levels for January 13, 2025–February 7, 2025, and offered to answer questions. Ms. Drury MADE A MOTION to approve the personnel changes. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RPL Financial Reports

Ms. Hasselwander reviewed the financial reports with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Mr. Kraus MADE A MOTION to approve the monthly financial reports as presented and approved by the RPL Finance Committee. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RPL FY24 Audit

Ms. Hasselwander reviewed the annual audit with the trustees.

Ms. Emily Hessney Lynch joined the meeting at 9:18 a.m.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to accept EFPR’s audit of the 2023-24 fiscal year. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bausch and Lomb Building Extended Hours (RPL Action)

Ms. Clasper reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Ms. Call MADE A MOTION to approve extended hours for the Bausch and Lomb first floor on April 23, 2025. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Grant Acceptance, Rochester Regional Library Council (RPL Action)

Ms. Clasper reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. In response to a question, she clarified that the work paid for by the grant will be a small dent in the full processing of the County Historian archives. Ms. Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to accept a Rochester Regional Library Council grant in the amount of \$3,300. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MCLS Liaison to RPL

Ms. Stockman pointed out that minutes from both January meetings were included in the joint meeting packet and offered to answer any questions.

RPL Liaison to MCLS

Ms. Drury shared that the RPL Board approved an additional \$6000 to be paid to Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) for their production of the *Rochester History Journal*. There will be additional discussions soon about the future of the Journal and eliminating the printing in favor of an online-only product. Next, she shared that BJ Scanlon will be starting soon as Deputy Director for RPL overseeing the Branches. She shared that the Patron Incident Reporting System (PITS) is a significant improvement over the prior paper-based system and the RPL staff are finding it to be much easier to navigate and are pleased with the increased communication flow. Lastly, she reminded everyone that the RPL Board needs a trustee with financial experience. If anyone has any recommendations, please share them with President Benjamin or Director Clasper.

Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC) Liaison

Dr. Knapp shared that the RRLC Board has not met since his last report.

Friends and Foundation of the RPL (FFRPL) Liaison

Ms. Borgus reported that the fundraiser honoring retired Library Director Patty Uttaro raised \$13,072, exceeding the \$10,000 goal.

Director’s Report/MCLS/Central/Branches

Ms. Clasper offered to answer question about the written report. She shared that her first couple weeks as the Library Director have gone well. Retired Director, Patty Uttaro left clear and comprehensive documentation and information—setting her up for success.

Next, she shared that she has begun her assignment of visiting all RPL Branches and MCLS member libraries. She has also been having one-on-one meetings with the Mayor and the County Executive, City and County senior managers, and other stakeholders and interested community members.

She shared that everyone she has reached out to for help—whether in the libraries, the City, or the County—have been very patient, kind, and eager to help.

Next, she reported that she has been getting many questions asking what impact the new federal administration and its many changes will have on local libraries. The short answer is that the impact is currently unknown. She is staying in contact with the State Librarian, City, and County governments and everyone is tracking the changes being made and looking for where those changes impact their constituents. As of now, there are no direct threats to libraries coming from the federal administration. A large concern is E-Rate funding. The most recent reports are that it is not being cut. E-Rate funding supports about 90% of the cost to provide internet access system-wide.

In response to a question, she shared that staff have received training on what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers come into the library. This has not happened so far, but it is something staff are concerned about, and the training was well attended.

On behalf of Ms. Smathers, she shared that today the MCLS Directors are having their annual retreat at the Rochester Museum and Science Center Planetarium. She will be going to that meeting after this meeting adjourns.

For the Central Library she reported that work is being done to fill the vacant Associate Director position and she hopes this will be filled soon.

Next, she shared that the Black-owned Business Expo held at the Central Library on February 20 was a success. In the end, seventy-five businesses signed up for the event. Many of the vendors expressed their appreciation and they did a lot of networking amongst themselves. She is hoping this will become an annual event for the library.

Lastly, she introduced Molly Clifford, the new Monroe County Administration Liaison to the MCLS Board.

Joint Executive Session

Both Boards moved into Executive Session at 9:47 a.m. to discuss specific job titles related to potential budget cuts.

Both Boards moved out of Executive Session at 10:21 a.m.

Proposed FY26 Central Library Budget (Joint Action)

Ms. Hasselwander reviewed the proposed budget and offered to answer questions. After discussion, for the MCLS Board Ms. Hessney Lynch MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed 2025-26 Central Library Budget. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

For the RPL Board Ms. Murphy Abbamonte MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed 2025-26 Central Library Budget. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Proposed FY26 Community Library Budget (RPL Action)

Ms. Hasselwander reviewed the proposed budget and offered to answer questions. After discussion, Ms. Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed 2025-26 Community Library Budget. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

RPL Other Business

None

RPL Adjournment

The RPL meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

MCLS Executive Session

The MCLS board moved into Executive Session at 10:40 a.m. to discuss the employment contract for Emily Clasper.

The MCLS board moved out of Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

Director’s Employment Contract

Ms. Drury MADE A MOTION to approve the proposed employment contract with Emily Clasper. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MCLS Other Business

None

MCLS Adjournment

The MCLS meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

*Debi Mansour on behalf of Emily Clasper, MCLS Secretary
Daniel Karin, RPL Secretary*

**ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY
PERSONNEL CHANGES
February 10, 2025, to March 7, 2025**

➤ **NEW HIRES**

Obi, Chima	Computer Communications Tech/PT/Central/LAS	02/10/2025
Scanlon, BJ	Deputy Director of Community Lib/FT/Branch Adm	03/03/2025
Webb, Cayla	Literacy Aide/PT/Lyell Branch	03/03/2025

➤ **PROMOTION**

Bieber, Alison	FROM: Clerk I/FT/Central/Finance	02/24/2025
	TO: Administrative Secretary/FT/Central/Finance	

➤ **RESIGNATIONS**

Lane, Jeremiah	Bldg Maintenance Helper/PT/Winton Branch	02/26/2025
McKnight, Prentice	Security Guard/FT/Lincoln Branch	03/05/2025
Van Ostrand, Griffin	Librarian I/PT/Lincoln Branch	03/07/2025

➤ **RETIREMENT**

Uttaro, Patricia	Library Director/FT/Central/Director's Office	02/14/2025
	47 YEARS OF SERVICE/MCLS SYSTEM (16 yrs at Central)	

➤ **DECEASED**

Mullen, Megan	Librarian I/PT/Substitute/Central/BIC	02/10/2025
	4 YEARS OF SERVICE	

STAFFING

Full-Time Positions	Central	Branches
Budgeted	80	31
Filled	78	28
Vacancies	2	3
Part-time Positions	Central	Branches
Budgeted	122	136
Filled	75	104
Vacancies	47	32

**Rochester Public Library
Financial Report – Summary
March 26, 2025, Board Meeting**

Central Financial Report, February 2025

Salary & Benefits: Salaries, wages, and overtime are within budget. As mentioned last month, the annual retirement contribution for active employees comes in slightly under budget. Retiree vacation time buyout is reflected in full-time salaries.

Equipment & Supplies: Materials purchases and other expenses are projected within budget.

Services & Charges: Two months of telephone services reflected (\$2,600).

Cash Capital: No new expenses since October. BLB elevator repair expense hits using reserved FY23 & FY24 capital funds (\$32K). Remaining funds are reserved for planned expenses (HVAC) and unknown needs with upcoming construction projects. Report only reflects FY25 funds, which remain unspent.

Community Financial Report, February 2025

Salary & Benefits: Salaries and wages are within budget.

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

Services & Charges: Two months of telephone services reflected (\$2,600). Prior year utilities chargebacks to School 12 and 33 paid out (\$22,000).

Cash Capital: Prior year rollover funds were utilized for card reader access, technology equipment, and laptop purchases. Current year expenses for outreach van expenses including small equipment and wrapping, and minor furniture purchases. Emergency elevator repair expense occurs (Monroe). Remaining funds are reserved for other planned expenses including for NE branch design services.

Central Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2024-25
Fiscal YTD (through February 28, 2025)

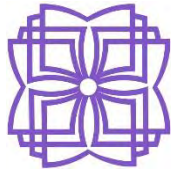
Category	Description	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Expenses FISCAL YTD	Remaining Balance	% of Budget
Salary & Benefits	Full-Time Salaries	4,943,000	4,943,000	3,153,465	1,789,535	63.8%
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	1,597,400	1,581,300	864,296	717,004	54.7%
	Overtime	17,500	17,500	14,987	2,513	85.6%
	Employee Benefits	3,310,600	3,310,600	2,312,693	997,907	69.9%
	Employee Development	27,700	30,466	22,692	7,774	74.5%
	Other	59,800	59,800	40,385	19,415	67.5%
Sub Total		9,956,000	9,942,666	6,408,518	3,534,148	64.5%
Equipment & Supplies	Materials Budget	505,000	507,214	291,478	215,736	57.5%
	Other Furnishings & Equipment	10,100	10,100	339	9,761	3.4%
	Office Supplies	56,500	59,143	27,684	31,459	46.8%
	Other Materials & Supplies	51,000	55,175	26,752	28,423	48.5%
	Sub Total	622,600	631,632	346,254	285,378	54.8%
Services & Charges	Utilities	467,500	467,500	315,751	151,749	67.5%
	Facility Maintenance	103,400	132,962	43,302	89,660	32.6%
	Professional Services/Fees	221,600	228,997	166,301	62,695	72.6%
	Chargebacks	80,700	92,628	45,368	47,259	49.0%
	Service Charges - Other Gov't	51,400	51,400	27,365	24,035	53.2%
	Telecommunications	14,200	14,950	8,203	6,747	54.9%
	Other Expenses	204,400	232,022	76,296	155,726	32.9%
	Sub Total	1,143,200	1,220,458	682,586	537,872	55.9%
TOTAL EXPENSED	11,721,800	11,794,756	7,437,358	4,357,398	63.4%	
Central Cash Capital	Facility Maintenance Allocation	94,000	94,000	0	94,000	0.0%
REVENUE RECEIPTS		11,736,100	11,736,100	1,249,419	10,486,681	
		Original Budget	Revised Budget	Central Library Support from City + Central Revenue	Outstanding Revenue	

Community Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2024-25
Fiscal YTD (through February 28, 2025)

Category	Description	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Expenses FISCAL YTD	Remaining Balance	% of Budget
Salary & Benefits	Full-Time Salaries	2,080,100	2,076,500	1,192,214	884,286	57.4%
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	2,026,400	2,013,400	1,179,412	833,988	58.6%
	Overtime	2,000	2,000	8,352	-6,352	417.6%
	Employee Development	22,900	26,610	11,699	14,911	44.0%
	Other	28,300	28,300	16,070	12,230	56.8%
Sub Total		4,159,700	4,146,810	2,407,747	1,726,833	58.1%
Equipment & Supplies						
	Materials Budget	496,600	502,973	288,098	214,875	57.3%
	Office Supplies	37,700	37,806	22,252	15,554	58.9%
	Other Materials & Supplies	34,500	35,512	16,527	18,986	46.5%
Sub Total		568,800	576,292	326,877	249,415	56.7%
Services & Charges						
	Utilities	224,500	229,993	129,782	100,211	56.4%
	Facility Maintenance	39,000	39,496	9,408	30,088	23.8%
	Professional Services/Fees	376,800	381,042	180,612	200,430	47.4%
	Chargebacks	27,300	36,982	26,187	10,795	70.8%
	Service Charges - Other Gov't	7,500	7,500	7,201	299	96.0%
	Telecommunications	21,400	22,631	11,159	11,472	49.3%
	Other Expenses	52,500	67,266	22,752	44,514	33.8%
Sub Total		749,000	784,910	387,100	397,810	49.3%
TOTAL EXPENSED		5,477,500	5,508,012	3,121,724	2,374,058	56.7%
Community Cash Capital	Computers & Equipment	10,000	10,000	583	9,417	5.8%
	Library Furnishings	12,000	12,000	2,501	9,499	20.8%
	Library Facilities	41,000	41,000	2,184	38,816	5.3%
	Library Capital Projects*	40,000				
Cash Capital Total		103,000	63,000	5,268	57,732	8.4%
REVENUE RECEIPTS		390,461	390,461	210,787	179,674	
	Original Budget		Revised Budget	Receipts FISCAL YTD	Outstanding Revenue	

* Projects administered by City DES

Trust Funds Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2024-25						
<i>Fiscal YTD (through March 7, 2025)</i>						
	Allocation	Carry-forward	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total	
Reynolds Fund - RPL	4229	\$144,857	\$70,945	\$215,802	\$106,644	49.4%
Fenevessy (Central + Branch bal)	4224	\$31,369	\$25,278	\$56,647	\$55,335	97.7%
Kenyon-Jeffries Fund	4233	\$20,191	\$10,806	\$11,997	\$8,250	68.8%
Purton Fund	4231	\$17,007	\$3,716	\$20,723	\$14,837	71.6%
Gleason Fund	4225	\$15,862				
Gleason Fund (FFRPL)	4225	\$12,183	\$15,427	\$43,472	\$14,196	32.7%
Gervickas Fund	4235	\$6,045	\$8,157	\$14,203	\$1,183	8.3%
Taylor Fund	4226	\$3,610	\$4,030	\$7,640	\$1,357	17.8%
Boland Fund	4232	\$1,541	\$1,535	\$3,076	\$572	18.6%
Carnahan Fund	4228	\$1,555	\$0	\$1,555	\$810	52.1%
Poletto Fund	4234	\$1,555	\$0	\$1,555	\$953	61.3%
Beeney Fund (FFRPL)	4227	\$4,878	\$2,829	\$7,707	\$212	2.8%
Craig Fund (FFRPL)	4236	\$2,716	\$1,209	\$3,925	\$53	1.3%
Holtzman Fund (FFRPL)	4239	\$1,560	\$1,851	\$3,411	\$789	23.1%
Lee Fund (FFRPL)	4237	\$1,475	\$2,581	\$4,056	\$92	2.3%
Vietnam Veterans Fund (FFRPL)	4238	\$688	\$2,161	\$2,849	\$25	0.9%
Tummonds Fund (FFRPL)	4241	\$88,391	\$54,141	\$142,532	\$71,526	50.2%
TOTAL		\$355,483	\$204,667	\$541,150	\$276,834	51.2%
Gift Fund Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2024-25						
<i>Fiscal YTD (through March 7, 2025)</i>						
Fund	Allocation	Transfer In	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total	
Gift Fund	4230	\$4,244	\$30,810	\$35,054	\$3,705	10.6%



Rochester
Public Library

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

TO: RPL Board of Trustees
FROM: Emily Clasper, Director
DATE: March 26, 2025
SUBJECT: Monthly Report–March 2025

Action Items

Central Library Special Event Hours, Sept. 18 (Clasper)

This September, RPL will be hosting several events tied to the Rochester Fringe Festival. One of these programs, Spooky Stories in the Stacks will take place in the Rundel Building on Thursday, September 18, 2025, between 7:30 and 9:00 p.m. This event is a reboot of a popular program offered in the past, where participants are treated to an after-hours behind the scenes tour of the Rundel Memorial Building, complete with spooky stories told by staff and local storytellers. The Rundel Memorial Building will be open only to event participants, not to the public. This event will not impact public service hours or staffing budgets.

Board Action Requested: Approve keeping the Rundel Building open until 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, 2025, to accommodate a RPL sponsored Fringe Festival special event.

Central Library Special Event Hours, May 7 (Clasper)

In February, the Board approved extended hours for the Bausch and Lomb 1st Floor on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, to accommodate a community civics workshop sponsored by the Central Library's Business Insight Center. It's Your America, an initiative of Civic Genius, is an event where community members can participate in mind-opening deliberation and have fun in the process. Due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict, the date of the workshop will need to move to May 7, 2025, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. The first floor will be open only to event participants, not for public services. This event will not impact public service hours or staffing budgets.

Board Action Requested: Approve keeping the first floor of the Bausch and Lomb Library building open until 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, to accommodate the "It's Your America" special event.

Acceptance of 2025 Tummonds Funds (Clasper)

For 2025, if conditions are met, Rochester Public Library will receive a grant from the FFRPL Tummonds Fund using a proportional allocation of available funds, based on a rolling 3-year average of the library's Total Circulation as reported in the NYS Library Annual Report for 2021-2023. This year's grant amount for Rochester Public Library is \$103,307.25.

Board Action Requested: Accept the 2025 Tummonds fund allocation of \$103,307.25.

Trustee Appointment (Karin)

The Nominating Committee recommends that Marcus Cooper fulfill the remainder of the 2025–2029 term left vacant after trustee Glenn Gardner retired at the end of 2024. Mr. Cooper is a Program Coordinator at Center for Teen Empowerment. The Nominating Committee recommends that his name be submitted to the mayor for consideration and recommendation to City Council for appointment to the RPL Board for a partial term effective immediately–December 31, 2029.

Board Action Requested: Approve the forwarding of Mr. Cooper's name to the mayor for recommendation to the City Council for appointment to the RPL Board of Trustees to the vacant term ending December 31, 2029.

Agreement, Taylor Thomas

In partnership with the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library, the Local History and Genealogy Division secured additional grant funds for the expansion of the Shoulders to Stand On LGBTQIA+ archives to incorporate the voices and experiences of people and organizations outside the white, middle-class, gay and lesbian paradigm. This includes people who identify as BIPOC, transgender, non-binary, differently abled, or other underrepresented aspects of the LGBTQIA+ experience. Using these funds, the Library will engage with Taylor Thomas as a project coordinator, who will be responsible for:

- Coordinating of 10+ member advisory committee and up to four documentation liaisons;
- managing outreach to individuals and organizations with whom the advisory committee hopes to build relationships;
- assisting with efforts to identify and preparation of archival materials to be transferred to the library and incorporated into the Shoulders to Stand On LGBTQIA+ archives; and
- assisting in the processing of the new collections transferred to the library through this project.

This agreement will be for up to 300 hours of work at a rate of \$25 per hour, with a maximum compensation of \$7,500. The term of the agreement will be through March 1, 2026.

Board Action Requested: Approve an agreement with Taylor Thomas for an amount not to exceed \$7,500 through March 1, 2026.

Report & Discussion Items

RPL Director Emily Clasper reporting

Recommended Reading

- Rochester (NY) Public Library Program Takes Teens to Washington, DC
<https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/story/Rochester-ny-Public-library-Program-Takes-Teens-Washington-DC>
- Commitment to AI Innovation: SJSU's First AI Librarian
<https://blogs.sjsu.edu/newsroom/2025/commitment-to-ai-innovation-sjsus-first-ai-librarian/>
- The American Library Association is Defending E-Rate at the Supreme Court. Here's Why that Matters.
<https://ilovelibraries.org/article/the-american-library-association-is-defending-e-rate-at-the-supreme-court-heres-why-that-matters/>

Director's Update

- Emily Clasper, Jennifer Smathers, and Alicia Gunther attended NYLA Advocacy Day, meeting with local legislators at their offices in Albany to reinforce the importance of funding libraries. A few others from Monroe County libraries joined the group as they advocated for increased construction aid, operating fund support, and legislation to support and protect libraries across the State. Smathers and Clasper also attended meetings with colleagues from the state's Public Library System Directors Organization and the New York Alliance of Library Systems to discuss issues common across all of New York's libraries. Clasper then attended the annual fundraising event for New Yorkers for Better Libraries PAC, a Political Action Committee devoted to advancing the cause of libraries across the State.
- Following the activities of NYLA's Advocacy Day, Clasper stayed an extra day in Albany to meet with the State Librarian and other Public Library System Directors to discuss the nuances of State Education Law as it pertains to Public Libraries. This proved quite the education for Clasper, who was able to ask questions about how some of the laws may or may not impact our local libraries should different scenarios arise. As a result, Clasper will be arranging an informational session with the State Librarian for our local Library Directors so they can ask specific questions about these details as they specifically apply to their libraries. Clasper is planning to attend several additional meetings at the State Library in coming months to work with other new System Directors from across the state to learn more about State requirements for Public Libraries and dig into the details in earnest.
- Clasper met with representatives from the MCLS Director's Council to discuss the group's vision for the future of MCLS services. The meeting was congenial as the library directors offered suggestions for specific services they would like to see and identified challenges they sometimes experience. Clasper enjoyed diving into the issues with the group and brainstorming viable solutions. She now has a list of action items that is sure to keep her busy as she works with the MCLS staff and library directors to reach new goals for services.



Director's Site Visits

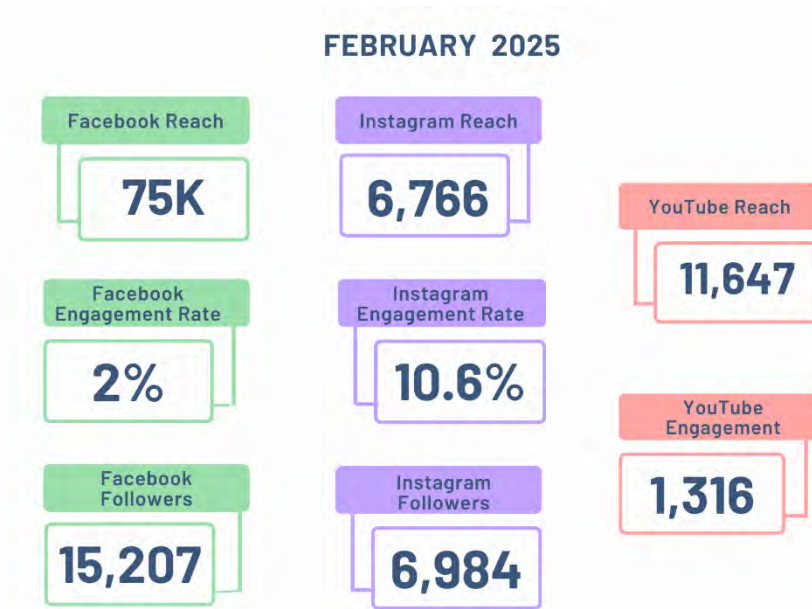
February

Charlotte Branch
Maplewood Community Library

January

Frederick Douglass Community Library
Lyell Branch
Monroe Branch

Social Media



Facility and Capital Updates

Our CIP requests are under review with the City as part of final budget process – any changes will be noted in the May Board meeting. There is much progress on both Central Library and Branch design and construction activity. Project updates are as follows:

Branch Updates

- **Arnett Solar Panel Updates:** Installation of replacement inverters is complete; the electrician will engage the provider for a software update this spring.
- **Maplewood Renovation & Expansion:** Construction is roughly 35% complete; mostly demolition and site work, as well as extensive coordination for upgraded utilities from RG&E. Staff are working with Creative Library Concepts for specific furnishing selections and with HUNT on Circulation Desk provisions. We remain on schedule for a spring 2026 reopening. This is a NYSED construction grant and Federal ARPA-funded project. You can track progress here: <https://roccitylibrary.org/maplewood-library-expansion/>
- **Douglass & Sully Lighting Upgrades:** Sully's new efficient lighting replacements will be completed this month by Wendel Engineering; Douglass is slated for a future date in May. This is a NYSED construction-funded project, reimbursed to the Rochester City School District.
- **NE Branch Library:** We are awaiting NYS funding announcements for the project, which will enable closing and groundbreaking in early fall 2025. Library leadership, City Law, and Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) are working on a Memorandum of Understanding for the buildout process and financing. We are also working on draft lease terms with the assumption of a long-term lease period. This is anticipated to come before the Board and City Council in May for lease approvals and funding appropriations (City). Edge Architecture started design in January, and we have completed several outreach meetings with the Portland Avenue Business Association and co-presented with RHA at the City's Neighborhood Leadership meeting in December. More outreach is to come in spring for direct neighbor engagement and to solicit input from library users who would be assigned this branch by address. An informational website is available for early feedback: <https://roccitylibrary.org/newbranch/>

- Sully HVAC replacements: This is a project sponsored by the Rochester City School District, with limited Library input. This work includes updates to the shared security desk with most work within the school and gym. City Recreation will not be present this summer in the building; additional coordination is underway with Branch Administration for a shutdown period for fire protection work. The time and duration of this closure is not known yet but will be submitted for future approval by the Board.
- Lincoln Roof Restoration: The City went to bid for this new application and warranty extension in December, which came in over budget. City DES and design team are now phasing the roof into two segments, with a re-bid planned for April. If awarded by June, this could still be a shoulder season (late fall 2025) construction. This is a NYSED-funded project.
- Wheatley HVAC replacements: Initially the City/Library allocated funding for a study of mechanical needs at the Monroe and Wheatley branches this year, given the phase-out of cooling refrigerant used at these buildings. However, the variability in heat and cooling at Wheatley led to an inquiry from Councilman Gruber as to status. DES is recommending replacement of two rooftop units, replacing original hot water baseboard heating and replacing oversized boilers with more efficient units. Updates to system controls are also necessary. Final quotations are not in (as replacement in-kind we will utilize Term Contracts for the work versus public bid) but LaBella engineers are supporting the quote development and evaluating pricing. Preliminary costs are \$350,000—our recommendation is to use planned Central Library heat pump cash capital that was intended for a future phase of final replacements as it is determined the status of Wheatley's mechanicals are more pressing.

Central Updates

- Bausch & Lomb HVAC: Pipitone Enterprises completed most work in October; we have a few additional heat pumps on the second floor that are being finished this month. A project to complete the remaining heat pumps (roughly 40) will be requested in the future.
- Rundel Masonry & Window Restoration: DGA Builders and their sub-contractors are fully underway and have continued parapet reconstruction through this cold winter. Barriers to Court Street terrace for staging of equipment and materials will shift to the north terrace next month as they continue work. The window restoration portion of the work will also begin in April—the west façade is the focus—and windows will be removed in phases for the restoration sub-contractor to complete repairs and replacements in their shop. Staff have been very accommodating with noise and some roof leaks, which are being tracked by DGA and the City. A small portion of financing for this project is from NYSED grants—a majority is federal ARPA dollars.
- Rundel Ventilation Upgrades: This project is currently out to bid, with a focus on fresh air intake on the second and third floors as well as units located in the penthouse roof area in the building, which are original. A reminder that this project will take the center staff elevator out of commission to accommodate ductwork. The freight elevator and north elevator will remain, as will the link staff elevator which serves all floors in Rundel. This is a NYSED-funded project.
- Rundel North Elevator: This staff elevator will be replaced by KONE, Inc. this month. This is a delay from the original schedule of spring 2024 due to difficulty sourcing equipment and order lead times. We originally expected the project to be complete by December, but we have confirmed a schedule/start date of March 17. This is a NYSED-funded project.
- Rundel Elevator Assessment & Main Elevator Replacement: LaBella and sub-consultant Gannet Fleming completed the site evaluation and are finalizing a report with cost estimates for all elevators. They have begun design drawings for replacement of the main Rundel public (brass door) elevator. This will include full mechanical replacements, cab upgrades and restoration. The bid is anticipated in June; internal coordination is required for scheduling as this will reduce public access to Kusler-Cox Auditorium for the construction period.

Central Library

Emily Clasper reporting

- As part of Black History Month celebrations, the Central Library held a Black-Owned Business Expo to showcase local businesses, provide networking opportunities for the business owners, and give library patrons a chance to sample or purchase products from these businesses. The event drew approximately 70 businesses, who were enthusiastic about the opportunity. Local media covered the event, which featured on several news broadcasts that evening, and was promoted by the [Rochester Business Journal](#). One participant offered this feedback afterward:



I'm still on cloud nine! This experience has been incredibly rewarding for me as a local artist. The staff was fantastic, and I appreciated their involvement, support, and organization. I also made some valuable connections with fellow artists. Thanks for having me! 😊

- The Anthony Mascioli Gallery hosted the exhibit *Marionettes by Rachel*, a display of beautiful handmade, painted, and costumed Marionettes created by Folk Art creator Rachel Hennelly. The exhibit has drawn many visitors who have expressed their admiration for the detail and beauty of the puppets, as well as an appreciation for their expressive nature. The exhibit will run through March 25th.



Arts & Literature, Erin Clarke reporting

Programs

- Nigel Maister presented a program based on an exhibition that he had organized entitled *Face Value: Approaches to Portraiture at UR galleries*. Maister presented an in-depth view of the historical meaning and changes of portrait photography and its development over the history of photography. Beginning with the linguistic origin of the word portrait, the lecture evolved into both a philosophical and material view into the ways and means of the photographic portrait. A lively discussion was held after on the subject by the attendees.



- Taurus Savant, a poet and activist, presented his poetry and musings on the contemporary Black Queer experience. Savant presented a diverse reading of his works with a calm, passionate presence and delivery. This program engaged fans of poetry and offered an opportunity for attendees to directly engage with the poet. The crowd braved a strong snowstorm to attend the event.
- Cocoa Rae presented an overview of Black photographers that influenced her own work, including Carrie Mae Weems, Deanna Larsen, Khadija Saye, Polly Irungo, Zanele Muholi, and Gatekeeper Adrian. These photographers show a varying view of the use of photography and the Black lens, a diverse view of portraiture, and elements of the family structure were depicted. Rae ended the program by presenting her own work through the lens of these photographers. This retrospective study introduced attendees to photographers they may not have been familiar with and encouraged them to have a conversation with the presenting photographer herself to better understand her work and the artists she admires.
- Local poets and media personalities Doug Curry and Scott Williams gave readings in Kusler-Cox Auditorium in celebration of Black History Month. Curry is a poet, spoken-word artist, and host of the blues radio show Blacks and Blues that airs in Rochester on WRUR and in Chicago on WDCB. Williams is a poet and emeritus professor of mathematics at the University at Buffalo and was recently profiled in the PBS aired documentary Journeys of Black Mathematicians. The audience was highly appreciative and engaged, both speakers giving autobiographical readings on growing up Black in a segregated and evolving America; the discussion period with the audience went an extra hour.
- St. Lawrence River Souvenirs by Donald Hyatt. Hyatt's lifelong fascination with the St. Lawrence River began as a child spending time near the 1000 Islands. Later in life, many months were spent on a bicycle touring along the St. Lawrence River and its surrounding areas. Slow, thoughtful travel while an exchange worker on farms gave Hyatt the opportunity to see much more of the river than expected. The small metallic photographic prints began as an idea based on cartes de visite: small, mounted photographs on card stock. On exhibit are photographs from this journey, leaving from Rochester to Kingston, Ontario area and 1000 Islands, then following the river as it makes its way to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and then the Northern Atlantic. Website and additional information at www.donaldjhyatt.com



Business Insight Center (BIC), Jennifer Byrnes, reporting

Programs

- Business 1st Wednesday: An entrepreneurs Business Guide for 2025. Presented by Chole Adeyemi from the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). February's topic was about the importance of planning ahead to prepare for marketing opportunities and budgeting for seasonal cycles when it comes to sales.

- Thinking Money for Kids - Pet Cents: In the game Pet Cents, children get the opportunity to “adopt” a pet. The kids learn the financial responsibilities of owning a pet, such as going to the veterinarian and the pet store. Participants are given \$150 at the start of the game, and go to different stations such as Food Store, Pet Store, Vet, and Pet School. At each station, participants had a choice on whether to dole out a little extra money to get their pet something a little nicer than the basic necessities, (e.g. a doghouse vs. a dog bed). At certain times during the game, an event card was read out, where the event determined whether you could receive money or had to spend money. Example: your dog chewed your chair; you need to spend money to reupholster it. If participants ran out of money, they could pick an “earn card” which gave them more money. Children learned that it takes money to care for a pet. They also learned about the concept of receiving change back for paying with a larger amount of money if they did not have exact change. The children were also excited because there were some unconventional pets to choose from, like a dragon, unicorn, or wolf.
- April Smith from Cannabis Workforce Initiative did a program on *Retail Opportunities and Terpolology*.



Outreach and Training

- Lily Anthony attended the Entrepreneurial Start-up Business networking event at The Photography Experience.
- Melissa Cobo is a member of the National Small Business Week (NSBW) Rochester Planning Committee being led by RocEDC. Other organization is attendance: SBDC, Venture Jobs, PathStone, Rochester Commissary, SBA, and Ibero.
- Jen Byrnes taught an introduction to intellectual property for Rochester Institute of Technology's Exploring Innovation class.

Consulting

- Hours of in-depth market research/prior art searching: N/A
- The Carlson Center for Intellectual Property assisted:
 - In person: 4
 - Email: 18
 - Mail: 0
 - Phone: 3
 - Zoom: 0
- 3D Printer: 1
- Webpage views: 29
- Requests Outside Greater Rochester Area: 7
- Referrals to Tracy Jong (Intellectual Property Attorney): 3
- Referrals to Davis Bassett (Patent Agent): 1

Database Usage Statistics

- Frost & Sullivan - Page views: Value: \$20,700
- IBISWorld - Page views: Value: \$33,680
- InnovationQ - Logins: Searches: 57
- Mintel - Sessions: Page Views: 46 Downloads: 57

- PitchBook - Logins: N/A
- Statista - Page views: 49 Downloads: 18
- Foundation Directory - Searches: 52 Views: 311

Anecdotes

- Email response –
*Thank you both for such wonderful resources. I am reading all of this now and will have some recommendations for my team.
Please let me know the next Library campaign as we would like to make a donation for all of the market research you have for (company name redacted)*
- Another happy patron reached out to Emily Clasper to make sure her positive feedback was heard.
I'm writing to provide positive feedback on the services of Melissa Cobo and Tracy Jong. As a participant in the SBDC program, I sought their assistance with trademarking for my business. Both Melissa and Tracy were extremely helpful, and I found the program's resources to be invaluable.

Wired for Opportunity Program

- The County-wide Digital Equity Initiative, Wired for Opportunity got an official logo and is making noteworthy progress towards its goals.
- Udemy access for all Monroe County residents went live in January, and received significant press coverage in February. Additional media coverage of this and the rest of the Wired for Opportunity program is expected in March.
- Digital Literacy Courses are in development and are on track for a Spring launch, and the process for ordering and installing the Solar Tables is underway.



Children's Center, Chelsea Arnold reporting

Programs

- Building Families First came for an interactive African Drumming program and D'lores Simmons and Gail Livingston of Black storytelling League of Rochester for a story program during February Break.



- Nadia Morales and Francis Harte held an Ice Cream craft, to instruct kids about Augustus Jackson, a black inventor who revolutionized the ice-cream making process. Kids enjoyed a tasty ice cream sandwich afterwards.
- Morales also collaborated with the business department to do a 'Think Money' program for kids, where players got to adopt a pretend pet and take on monetary responsibility of being a pet owner.

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Margarita Chaves was invited to read at School #33 for the annual World Read Aloud Day to the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) bilingual class. Chaves was able to join this event with other community members in Monroe County and share the wonderful events and programs that the Central Library offers.
- Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen provided training for MCLS children's librarians on enhancing storytimes to build children's math skills.
- Chelsea Arnold attended a meeting at Healthi Kids where the group discussed their survey on play in Rochester.



Raising A Reader

Raising a Reader staff, Margarita Chaves, Olivia Cutter, and Cheryl Johnson, continue to support teachers in the classroom with bag rotation and various supplies needed for the program. Cutter and Chaves worked closely with RCSD #12 Anna-Murray Douglass School to create activities for their Love Your Child Event. It provided opportunities to discuss the program with parents and general library programming occurring in the coming weeks. RAR staff have begun story times at various locations or supporting through one-on-one readings. RAR staff also gave out packets focusing on literacy skills to all locations.



Anecdotes

Morales created a Black History Month 'Icon of the Day' Calendar for the February bulletin display and put up flyers about each person. Patrons looked forward to seeing who the new person of the day would be.



Circulation/Information, Chad Cunningham reporting

Statistics

- Curbside Pickup Appointments- 2
- New Borrowers- 304
- RRLC Access Cards Issued- 6
- Notarial Acts- 90

Anecdotes

A patron came in recently to get a new card. It had been several years since she had a card, but she wanted to come now and show her support for libraries. She was genuinely concerned that libraries were not being valued as much as she thought they should be. She was happy to hear that libraries have dedicated support in Monroe County. She said that libraries are so important and necessary.

Local History & Genealogy, Shalis Worthy reporting

Programs

- Antoine McDonald organized the Black History Month program A Taste of Jamaica: A Reflection of Culture, Community and Connection. McDonald partnered with the Rochester Jamaican Organization, who provided an awesome programming experience to a crowd of over 88 attendees. The program featured a detailed history of the organization in Rochester, and an informative PowerPoint presentation about the island and culture of Jamaica.
- Staff from the Strong Museum of Play's Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play visited the Local History & Genealogy Division to tour the archives and discuss our special projects.



Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Emily Morry was interviewed about the history of the inner loop by Caspar Goldman-Nedergaard, a graduate student from the Urban Planning Department at Columbia University, who is authoring his thesis on the Inner Loop and its impact on Rochester.
- McDonald participated in the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's Panel discussion titled Archivists Documenting Black History. He discussed his work with the Archive of Black History and Culture.

Anecdotes

We received this note from an educator about our online resources:

"I just wanted to get in touch to send a quick thank-you note... I'm volunteering with a children's afterschool program, and last month the kids were working on family history research projects.. One of the kiddos, Rachael, was doing research online and she ended up on the RPL Local history & genealogy webpage (roccitylibrary.org/division/local-history-genealogy/).. It turned out to be a great find! She was able to get some excellent info and she decided that we needed to reach out and say thanks - so here we are LOL thank you!"

Reynolds Media Center, Joseph Born reporting

Reference

RMC handled 808 reference questions and 338 non-reference transactions for a total of 1146.

RMC Circulation

RMC loaned 13 pieces of equipment and 772 Mi-Fi units in addition to the regular collection, for a total of 3,822 items.

- Total circulation of RMC materials, including those that occurred at other libraries was 11,433.
- RMC materials accounted for 34% of the overall Central Library circulation (before renewals).

Programs

- RMC held a Black Film Festival showing 13 films during the month.
- February's Brown Bag Book Meeting was about *James* by Percival Everett.
- RMC performed 20 A/V set ups for programs in the Central Library.

Hoopla

Circulation

Audiobooks – 1937
Binge Pass – 51
Comics – 190
eBooks – 446
Movies/TV – 498
Music – 90
Total Circulation – 3212

Users

New users – 113
Patrons using all 7 borrows – 170 (10%)
Total users – 915

Cost

Total - \$7172.07
Per item – \$2.23

Door Count

- Mon – Fri average door count: 232 people per day
- Saturday average door count: 156 people per day

Mifi Program

- As of this writing there are 523 holds with 770 currently circulating. RMC received another 400 Mi-Fi units. They are waiting for cases to house the Mi-Fi units to add them to the collection.
- Stephanie Lane designed a MiFi Device Satisfaction Survey that was released in February. It is a six-question survey and will be available for patrons in the library through May 31. An online version of the survey is planned to reach more patrons. As of March 1, 79 completed surveys have been received with 49 of them adding comments. A few comments are:
 - *Fabulous service, I'm a senior citizen and this allows me Wi-Fi access that I would not otherwise be able to afford. Thank you so much. 5-Stars*
 - *Best staff ever!!! 5-Stars*
 - *The MiFi service makes my life and my children's better. I don't have to pay for internet (\$\$). We have access to education and entertainment resources. 5-Stars*
 - *This courtesy of the MiFi box is amazing, I'm not able to pay for spectrum services, I'm disable, can't pay without working. 5-Stars*
 - *It's an Amazing System and Easy to Use. 5-Stars*
 - *Excellent Service for those who can't afford the internet. Allows me to attend my classes online from home. Thank you for the excellent customer service. 5-Stars*

- *I always get help if there is a problem, that's Awesome. 5-Stars*

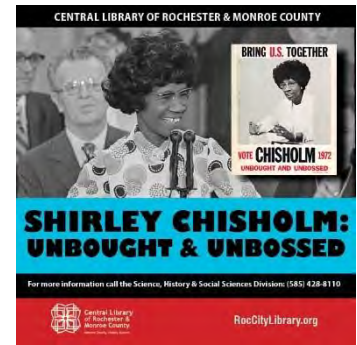
Anecdotes

A man came into the Media Center and asked if we had anything that he could take home to entertain himself. He didn't have a TV or CD player because he had been homeless and had just moved into a new apartment. He had a new library card, and I suggested that he try listening to audiobooks in the Playaway format. We gave him a set of ear buds that Playaway provided, and he was delighted. It turns out he has a wide variety of tastes in books --Stephen King, David Baldacci, and Harlan Coben, as well as history. The gentleman walked out with 7 or 8 Playaways, hoping they would last till the next time he visited the library.

Science and History, Gabe Pellegrino reporting

Programs

- Shirley Chisholm: Unbought and Unbossed, presented by Mark Sample, MCC history professor. Chisholm was the first woman of color to be elected to the House of Representatives (1968) and run in the presidential primaries (1972). Mark shared Shirley's inspirational background prior to her political career. The audience was engaged throughout Mark's presentation.
- Carlton Beckford, Admissions Specialist at MCC, presented a résumé workshop where he assisted individuals with creating résumés or updating existing ones using ChatGPT. In collaboration with Cy Shropshire and Jonathan Hammond from the Technology Center, Carlton was able to use the classroom in the Technology Center to present this class. Carlton will return to conduct the interviewing and professional photograph portions of this workshop. Renee Kendrot noted that this program was attended by a good cross-section of people of many ages and experience. This was a hands-on workshop to create a resume to be used for obtaining sustainable work. Much one-on-one coaching was done, and students have something tangible as a result.
- The New York State Taxpayer Assistance Program connects patrons with representatives from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance to assist in filling out their taxes on provided laptops, using online software. Patrons are taught how to use tax software, which they can continue to use on their own in the future or with this program. One of the patrons said that they were thrilled to come into the library to be able to file their taxes and they were going to apply for a library card. Flo Morris continues to work with the program, which will be ongoing throughout March. This is important hands-on work which will help them to file their taxes and hopefully receive refunds!



Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Social Studies teacher Zachary Clarry and eight students from the Honeoye Falls Lima Middle School visited to conduct research using primary sources for their National History Day projects. The topics included Flappers, Codebreakers, The Stock Market Crash, Martin Luther King and the March on Washington, The Annexation of Hawaii, World War II and the Atomic Bomb, and World War II Allied Powers. Kendrot collaborated with Clarry to schedule the visit and requested a list of research topics ahead of time so materials could be retrieved and ready for the students. Daniel Pines assisted with pulling materials for the

students. Kendrot assisted the students with using the NOVEL databases and other online sources to find journal articles and primary sources that pertained to their topics. Mr. Clarry and his students were pleased with the Division's efforts to assist them!



- Pellegrino continues to attend the monthly meetings of the Wilmot Cancer Center's Cancer Community Action Council (CCAC). In February, the group was visited via Zoom call by members of the Cancer Control Consortium of the New York State Department of Health to talk about its Action Teams and the outline for its statewide Comprehensive Cancer Control plan.
- Library Resource Outreach Center (LROC) visitors saw approximately 40 people in February. Some days had more than 10 or more people signing up for assistance with housing.

Displays and Exhibits

Alaikia Miller created two new displays for February: a large Black History display and a smaller one featuring books about change. Subjects covered include abolition, human rights, LGBTQIA+ allies, weathering injustice, surviving through change, and so forth. Miller selected each title for this very intriguing and evocative display. The existing winter animals and birds display, along with the travel display, has remained popular and continued through February.

Anecdotes

The Science Division participated in Tell Us Why You Love Rochester Public Library. Several patrons wrote up what they loved. Some comments were basic:

"The staff is friendly and nice," "Peace and quiet."

Others were more verbose:

"I've been coming since childhood into adulthood. They're always so helpful, resourceful, and open to suggestions!" "I like the Rochester Public Library because we can come chill and relax whenever we are Downtown or when we want." "I like the public library because it's a place I can come when I have a lot on my mind or when I just wanna Relax in the library."



Technology Center, Jay Osborne Reporting

Programs

- Cy Shropshire has been developing a series of programs based on the Senior Planet curriculum, designed to assist patrons of 60 years of age and older. Classes cover topics such as Android Essentials, Basic Internet Searching, Choosing a New Computer and Exploring AI. Attendance of these classes has been steady, and participants have given positive feedback about the sessions so far.
- Shropshire has also taken on running the Central Library's Coding Club. In this club patrons of all ages are introduced to basic computer programming and elements of robotics and 3-D printing. The broad appeal of the subject material has drawn a steady stream of new participants. The Technology Center is using some of the funds generously provided by the Lovenheim family to purchase supplies and tools to keep this and similar programs providing quality content for several years.
- Trevor Johnson has been offering a program for seniors over zoom called The Zoom Room, catering specifically to elderly and infirm patrons that may not be able to attend classes at the library but have some basic skills with their computers or mobile devices. This mode of teaching allows elderly patrons to benefit from the deep skill set of the Technology Center staff from home. Some patrons also attended in person when the weather permits. This class is scheduled weekly and has covered topics such as how to store and retrieving contact information from cloud storage databases, taking, and sending screenshots via text, updating apps from the Google Play Store, and navigating the MCLS library databases.

Anecdotes

- January was the end of Ginger Brewer's time with the Technology Center. Brewer came to the Technology Center from the Arnett Branch late in 2022, bringing many skills and abilities, not least her ability to connect with patrons of all ages. Though her abilities will be missed by the staff and users of the Technology Center, the promotion of such a high-quality professional to Branch Manager is excellent news for everyone in the system.
- During February, the Tech staff has seen an increased number of patrons needing help with their ID.ME and IRS accounts. Many patrons have forgotten the email addresses associated with their accounts, passwords, or both. The extra time that the Technology Center staff invest in every patron can be exhausting and challenging, but the commitment that the staff have for this work is clear. Even when all avenues to recover needed login information fail, our patrons are almost always gracious toward staff. After several years of more services becoming exclusively available online, staff rarely find a patron that is surprised that most critical government services require logging into secure sites and identification verification of some sort.

Working with frustrated patrons is still time-consuming and we often need “all hands-on deck” to help patron after patron for hours at a time. At these times, Jen Byrnes has lent the services of Rich Mangione from the Business Insight Center's Digital Equity program to help. Mangione's assistance has been invaluable as we navigate another busy tax season.

- One memorable moment came when Hammond assisted a patron, who had been visiting the library frequently. This patron was seeking work and struggled with applying for jobs online due to illiteracy. Hammond worked with him on his resume and guided him through the process of applying for positions. With Hammond's help, the patron secured a job at PriceRite. He later returned to the library, expressing his heartfelt gratitude. *“Thank you, Jonathan, for your time and patience,”* he said. *“I couldn't have done it without your help.”* It was a reminder of the powerful impact Hammond, and the rest of the team has on the lives of the people they work with.
- Hammond also helped a Spanish-speaking patron who was looking to apply for a job. The patron, unfamiliar with the online application process, was struggling to understand the instructions in English. Hammond stepped in to assist, translating and interpreting the application to ensure the patron could complete it accurately. Later in another visit to the library this patron expressed her thanks and said, *“Your help made it possible for me to apply for this job, and now I am able to work.”* Spanish speakers come to the Technology Center daily. Without Hammond's and Nunez's language skills, it is hard to see where some of our patrons could turn for the competent technology assistance they can access at the Central Library.
- Johnson worked one-on-one with a patron who had just lost their job. The patron visited the Tech Center, where Johnson assisted them in creating a resume and applying to Securitas. Initially, the patron felt overwhelmed and uncertain but later expressed relief and gratitude by smiling wide, saying: *“At first, I was so lost and didn't know what to do, but now I just feel some relief.”* Interestingly, the patron is a diet and fitness coach. Johnson asked for advice on weightlifting and dieting while helping the patron get his resume created and posted. This exchange reinforced the mutual benefits of community support.

Teen Central, Shetora Banks and Jeff Bostic reporting

Programs

- Comic Empowerment Lab. There were two sessions held this month. Students used their stories to make comics. Middle school students and students in the LIT program learned about visual literacy and artificial intelligence while becoming comic book superheroes. Parents who attended the LIT group session enjoyed seeing their children as heroes and exploring their made-up worlds.



- The Liberators Esports team celebrated with Mayor Evans in recognizing Victor's Mario Kart World Tournament Playoff Win. The 585Fighterz also hosted a Tekken 8 tournament this month.



- RCSD Job Shadow week was held this month. 12 RCSD students visited the lab over a three-day period to learn about music production, photography, Artificial Intelligence, and graphic design. 19 students with an interest in digital media of all types got to experience what it's like to work with people in a professional setting. They were also able to have fun creating keychains and photoshopped images.

Anecdotes

The teenage boys in the library discovered an extremely specific use for the Glowforge this month: Valentines Day Gifts. Nearly every teenage boy with a girlfriend had a picture put on a piece of wood for a Valentines Day gift. Reserve packs of wood had to be brought out from the back room.



Community Libraries

BJ Scanlon reporting

Introduction

BJ Scanlon joins the Rochester Public Library team as the new Deputy Director for Community Libraries. He comes to RPL from Monroe County Government, where he was a Senior Staff Assistant to County Executive Adam Bello; one of his duties included serving as the County's liaison to MCLS. During Scanlon's tenure in this role, he collaborated with the libraries to secure funding for MiFi units, provided communications support for the digital equity funding received through ARPA, and led the RFP process that selected MCLS to hold the new County Historian contract. In addition to working with MCLS, Scanlon's portfolio included the County's Departments of Planning and Economic Development, Parks (including the Seneca Park Zoo), and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He also oversaw Arts and Culture for the County building as well as a process that granted millions of dollars to arts and cultural organizations and events.



Before working for Monroe County, Scanlon spent a decade with the Rochester City Council, where he held a series of increasingly responsible positions, culminating in his role as Chief of Staff. He dedicated five years to working with Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) populations prior to starting his government career. He earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from SUNY Geneseo, a master's degree in public administration, and a Certificate in Non-Profit Management from SUNY Brockport. In his spare time, Scanlon helps operate the Sibley Theater in Downtown Rochester, where he occasionally teaches community classes on improvisational comedy and sketch comedy writing. For over a decade, the Central Library was his neighborhood branch, but now his home branch is the Winton Library. BJ is eager to start working with the wonderful team in Branch Administration and is incredibly grateful to Amy Discenza and Bruce Tehan for their support as he joins the team.

Branch Administration, Amy Discenza reporting

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Liliana Ruiz and Brianna Jones from the City of Rochester Office of Special Projects and Educational Initiatives met with Discenza regarding an event for Pillars of Hope Volunteers being held at the Central Library in March. Discenza will be attending this meeting to share information about the library with participants. In addition, the City of Rochester Opioid Team has arranged to use the Kusler-Cox Auditorium for joint City and County Opioid Steering Committee meetings in April, May, June, and July.
- Mobile Library Updates: Discenza coordinated with Dennis Williams and Jordan Dotson to update the Lyell Branch's webpage to reflect their new hours and hybrid service model that goes into effect in March. In February, Dennis Williams onboarded a new Children's Librarian and coordinated a second Driver Training session for Caleb Paul (Lyell), Natasa Prelevic (Lyell), Bruce Tehan (Branch Administration), and Ron Freitag (Outreach).

Anecdotes

- The Safe to Be Smart Washington D.C. Trip is *School Library Journal* famous. You can read all about it at <https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/story/Rochester-ny-Public-library-Program-Takes-Teens-Washington-DC>. Congratulations to George Carter and the Safe to Be Smart Team!
- Amy Discenza, Griffin Van Ostrand, and Cynthia Dana represented Rochester Public Library at the 2025 Lunar New Year Festival at the MCC Brighton Campus. The festival offered food and cultural activities for all ages – including a lion dance performance, karaoke competition, story time, dance showcase, martial arts demo, and bowing ceremony – and highlighted community resources and partners such as the library. Over 150 festivalgoers visited the Rochester Public Library table to talk libraries and make a keepsake button. The button maker was a hot attraction, drawing in visitors of all ages.



Arnett Branch Library, Ginger Brewer reporting

Programs

- February started with a bang with Take Your Child to the Library Day. Those who attended had a great time exploring the various activities available. They enjoyed playing Library BINGO, and participants earned stuffed animals related to several books in the library, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight*. There were also puzzles, coloring pages, games, a word hunt, and other enjoyable activities offered. The main goal of the day was to have fun while familiarizing the kids with library services.
- Arnett teens had a wonderful time crafting memory coil bracelets and they turned out beautifully. Several adults also joined in, making bracelets, and socializing with the teens.



- Teen Taste Test was a popular program where teens compared and contrasted Hershey Kisses. Not only did they get to sample sweet and rich candies, but they also enjoyed socializing and sharing their opinions on the chocolates. Participants discussed how the candy is marketed in stores, how different package sizes sell compared to others, and the overall taste. The Teen Taste Test encouraged teens to utilize their critical thinking skills. The result: More teens preferred original milk chocolate kisses to white chocolate and other varieties.
- At the end of the month, the Arnett Library welcomed Grace Browning, a local harpist, her husband, cellist Ben Krug, and flutist Hayley Grainger. Grace, Ben, and Hayley performed for both children and adults in the library. They changed costumes and entertained the audience while the sounds of their instruments filled the space with warmth and cheer as everyone sang along. All attendees enjoyed the concert, and many patrons remarked on how wonderful the music sounded.



Anecdotes/Other

A young lady approached Ginger Brewer for assistance with her cell phone. While Brewer was helping her, the young lady asked, “*Can I talk to you?*” Brewer replied that she could. The young lady shared, “*I’m facing one problem after another, and I don’t know how to handle it. Sometimes, I feel like giving up because I just don’t know what to do.*” She started to cry softly. Brewer offered words of encouragement, tissues, and information about library and community resources if needed. After their conversation, the young lady asked Brewer if she could have a hug. Brewer agreed. The young lady then expressed, “*I feel so much better. I usually keep my problems to myself, but you seem like such a nice person. I came to the library not expecting to find comfort. I’m so glad I came today because I’m leaving here ready to face my problems head-on. Thank you!*” Brewer encouraged the young lady to keep coming to the library.

Charlotte Branch Library, Cathy Kyle reporting

Programs

- This month, adults learned to create leather and beaded bracelets at the Charlotte Branch. Participants had a fun time and shared ideas and preferences for future activities.
- Story time is growing! Staff are now offering two story times per week: one for babies on Thursdays and an all-ages story time on Fridays. Participants enjoy the songs and dances that accompany each story.
- The Food for Thought book club discussed *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters. Participants met via Zoom to share their thoughts on the title and other books they’ve recently enjoyed.



Anecdotes/Other

- Staff have been in a cleaning frenzy, hoping to encourage spring to arrive sooner. They reorganized and weeded the DVD collection, created new display spaces, and tidied up the circulation desk area.
- Kyle completed her first round of one-on-one meetings with staff and received excellent suggestions on how to implement changes that could boost staff enthusiasm and give the branch a more polished look. Some of the suggestions included modifying processing procedures, relocating the DVDs to create space for the local history collection, and reorganizing the teen area.
- Library visitors have shown interest in learning about AI and enhancing their digital literacy skills. Starting in April, staff will expand technology-related programming.



Frederick Douglass Community Library, Evanna DiSalvo reporting

Programs

- During Random Acts of Kindness Week, staff made daily posts on Facebook with suggestions for performing random acts of kindness and distributed printed lists of 50 suggestions to patrons in person.
- On National Pokémon Day, the library received a special visitor—Pikachu! The event was a big hit and very well attended by kids and adults. Participants watched a Pokémon video and excitedly traded cards. Newly re-acquired access to room 138—a programming space the library shares with School No. 12—made this popular event possible. It was so well received that an additional weekday event may be added to programming along with the usual monthly Saturday event.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

Isaac Lewis visited the School Without Walls Book Club to discuss library services and engage students in conversation about Manga and Anime. The school librarian greatly appreciates his visits because those topics are admittedly not her area of expertise, and the kids love talking about them.

Anecdotes/Other

- The Frederick Douglass Community Library once again has access to room 138, a programming space they share with School No. 12, and the key cards work. It is a great relief to be able to hold afternoon and Saturday programs in the space again—and it will be well used as can be seen from the recent Pokémon event. All that remains to be done is some cosmetic issues inside the library and plans are underway to get that completed. The Alice in Wonderland graphics on the wall posed a problem with getting the wall painted

uniformly but a plan has been developed. They will be treated as “artwork” by putting a “frame” around them and painting the rest of the wall a uniform color.

- The newest art exhibit at the library is by the talented ceramicist Kai Lewis! Kai is currently an artist in residence at the Flower City Arts Center. Their artwork is both impressive and haunting.



Lincoln Branch Library, Sarah Lehman reporting

Programs

- Children enjoyed eating SweetARTS and making sweethearts to celebrate Valentine's Day. The hearts were used to decorate the Toy Library circulation desk, or the kids could take them home to give to their parents.
- Young patrons had an extra-special visit from two therapy dogs from RocDogs. Children and their caregivers were thrilled to be able to relax and see what tricks these amazing dogs could do. One of the dogs could even sneeze on command!
- Teens participated in a Valentine's Day craft, which allowed them to visualize realistic goals for the current year and reflect on their progress, measuring how far they have come or still need to go by December.
- The University of Rochester Medical Center Mobile Mammography Van visited the Lincoln Branch Library this month. It's a wonderful resource to offer the northeast community.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Griffin Van Ostrand had a frog-tastic visit at Wilson Commencement where he led a ribbiting story time and crafts.
- Sarah Lehman met with Pradip Ananda and JoAnne Jones to discuss a new Career Guidance program at RIT. They're interested in bringing classes or other job search resources to the Lincoln Branch.
- Lehman hosted the second public meeting for the Joseph Avenue ArtWalk project at the Lincoln Branch. There was some valuable information shared regarding the progression of the project and suggestions from community members.

- Lehman attended a public information session for the upcoming Complete Streets Makeover project at the corner of Avenue D and Hollenbeck Streets. The library provided program supplies and toys to keep children occupied while parents and guardians shared their input on what they would like for the project.
- Lehman attended the first meeting of the New York Alliance of Library Systems Partnership Committee (A sub-committee within the New York Library Association). The committee will be looking at ways to create resources and guides to help libraries throughout the state with their advocacy work and developing community partnerships.

Anecdotes/Other

Haygood took a group of teenagers to the Geva Theater to see the production of Nina Simone.

Lyell Branch Library, Dennis Williams reporting

Programs

- February is the perfect time to celebrate all kinds of love, including love for libraries! Teens demonstrated their devotion to the Lyell Branch by posing for a photo opportunity with a variety of silly props and completing a STEM craft.
- Action for a Better Community held two financial literacy programs for youth aged 11 to 18.
- Representatives from RG&E and the Cannabis Workforce Initiative shared information with library visitors this month.
- The University of Rochester Mobile Mammography Van visited this month to provide free breast cancer screenings.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Artemis Markakis led technology training sessions for seniors at the Charles Settlement House.
- Manju Sharma met with a Community Foundation for Rochester Women's Giving Circle representative about a grant opportunity for teen girls.
- Caleb Paul completed CORLEO driver training through the City of Rochester and is cleared to operate RPL GO!



Anecdotes/Other

- Staff created a Black History Month display in the Children's section.
- Sharma helped a teen complete her community service hours by supporting library programming.
- Paul helped a patron complete their housing recertification application.

Maplewood Community Library, Johanna Buran reporting

Programs

- Running programs without sufficient space remains a challenge, but staff planned several activities for February. Young patrons crafted bags for Valentine's Day. By completing their homework and checking in with staff, youth earned valentines that they could then distribute to their friends, filling their handmade bags. Initially, the concept was lost on Maplewood's youngest patrons, who wanted to keep the valentines they earned for themselves. However, over time, everyone came to understand that giving a gift would result in receiving one in return.
- A coloring contest drew 17 participants, setting a new branch record.

Anecdotes/Other

- Two of Maplewood's youngest patrons have brought a lot of laughter to the library this month. One young man started adding "my love" to the end of his sentences. A staff member helped him log onto a computer, and he responded, "Thank you, my love." Another young patron, weary of navigating life at two feet tall, requested to be picked up so she could see what was happening in the library. Each time, she was disappointed to learn that "nothing is happening up here."
- Staff assisted a woman who had created her resume on a "free" resume website, only to realize that she needed to pay to print or send it. They helped her take a screenshot of her work and then guided her in using Microsoft Word to complete her resume.
- Staff worked with a 75-year-old patron to complete the onboarding for her new job.
- One of Maplewood's literacy aides facilitated communication in Arabic and English, helping a librarian to connect a patron from Syria with Arabic-language driving instructional videos. Later that day, the librarian helped a patron from Afghanistan register for her road test.

Monroe Branch Library, Mary Clare Scheg reporting

Programs

- Romance was in the air at Monroe. Theresa Filo created an enticing display that encouraged teen patrons to go on a blind date with a book.
- Staff circulated romance-themed movie bags this month, which included two films, a bag of microwave popcorn, and a surprise—this was a hit with patrons.
- Filo's Dungeons and Dragons Club has a loyal and enthusiastic following; the group met twice this month.
- Kassady Lewis led two story time programs for three- to five-year-olds.
- Monroe's Adult Book Club discussed *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles.



Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Monroe staff brought the branch's PlayStation 4 over to the Center for Youth for a teen gaming program.
- Lewis led a story time for the Pre-K class at Francis Parker School No. 23.

Anecdotes/Other

A Digital Literacy Volunteer visited Monroe twice in February to assist patrons with resumes, basic computer skills, online job searching, and more.

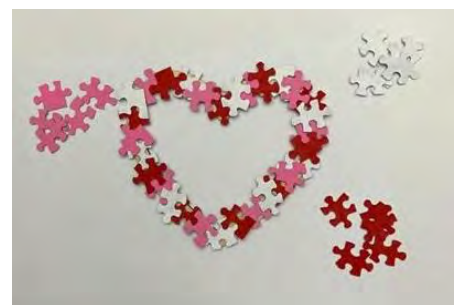
Phillis Wheatley Community Library, Lori Frankunas reporting

Programs

- To kick off Black History Month, youth received small puzzles featuring famous African Americans to assemble. Once the puzzles were complete, participants used their phones or library computers to research the individual depicted and answer several questions about them.
- Kathryn Rebholz hosted a LEGO Camp for teens during February break. Each participant received a mid-sized LEGO set, which had been donated to the library. Throughout the week, participants assembled their LEGO sets with Rebholz's support. By the end of the week, all participants were able to take their LEGO sets home.
- Mayukwa Kashiwa led an African drumming program for Wheatley youth. Everyone enjoyed playing drums and shakers while dancing. Each child had the chance to start a drumming pattern, which the rest of the group then followed. Participants also learned new songs to sing while drumming and dancing.
- Suzanne Kolodziej from the George Eastman Museum provided bulbs for young patrons to plant. Each child received a bag that included a plant along with planting instructions and information about the plant. The plants will stay in the library for the children to tend until they can be planted outside in the community garden in the spring.
- February's adult take-and-make project featured a heart wreath made from puzzle pieces, celebrating Valentine's Day. Each kit included a metal wreath base, puzzle pieces, paint, and twine. One patron returned and requested more kits!

Community Outreach/Meetings/Training

- Lori Frankunas met with Alison Meyers, Executive Director of Writers & Books, and Tyler Barton, Artistic Director, to discuss potential collaboration. They talked about adult writing workshops for the spring and fall.
- Frankunas met with Katie Hardin, Director of Sew Green Rochester, to discuss collaborations. Wheatley will partner with Sew Green to host a Mom's Making Repairs workshop—single moms will register for three classes focused on repairing items. At the end of the third session, the moms will keep the sewing machine they used. Sew Green will also donate sewing machines and fiber craft kits for the library to lend to patrons.



Anecdotes/Other

- Wheatley patrons have expressed their gratitude for the assistance provided by Andrew Rogers, a social work intern. Andrew has made a significant impact in this community by helping patrons secure jobs and access the services they need.
- An older adult, who mentioned she didn't have much access to computer help, asked for assistance typing up a report for her church. The staff showed her how to access Word to create the document and assisted her throughout the process, adjusting spacing, size, and font, as well as formatting the document. In the end, the patron was pleased with her report and was also proud of herself for persevering.

Sully Branch Library, Maria Heeks-Heinlein reporting

Programs

- Foodlink presented two healthy cooking classes this month. Participants learned to make a delicious and savory vegetarian chili and a meatless dirty rice. Attendees in both sessions enjoyed the classes.
- George Carter hosted Glow-in-the-Dark Black History Month Bingo. This program is a fan favorite and a popular annual tradition.
- Carter organized a Safe to Be Smart trip to the movies to see Captain America. There was so much interest that Carter needed to charter a bus to transport participating youth and families. Thank you to the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library for supporting Safe to Be Smart programming.
- Jacob Bigelow hosted animator Dennis Woodyard, who worked on classic children's cartoons like Gargoyles and Thundercats. Mr. Woodyard shared knowledge and experiences from his long and storied career. Participants also enjoyed a free screening of an episode of Gargoyles that Mr. Woodyard produced and directed.
- Bigelow also organized a crafting session where participants learned to create homemade nightlights using Ping-Pong balls and tea candles.



Community Outreach/Meeting/Training

- Carter and Chloe Hoecker represented the Sully Branch at a Black History Month event at John Williams School No. 5.
- Maria Heeks-Heinlein hosted the monthly security meeting for the Ryan Center campus at Sully. Although a representative from School No. 33 could not attend, staff

from the R-Center and City Security were present. The group discussed the upcoming construction work scheduled to take place in the rec center this summer and fall.

- Debi Mansour attended Sully's staff meeting to share best practices about Gimlet.

Anecdotes/Other

- A teen that Bigelow has talked to and mentored for years made him a fidget toy, ferrofluid in oil, to display on his desk.
- A community member visited the library to meet with a volunteer from Literacy Rochester. Staff informed her about the cooking classes offered at the branch this month, and she was thrilled to learn the library provides this type of programming.

Winton Branch Library, Kathy Wolf reporting

Programs

During February's meeting of the Winton Comic Club, participants discussed *Weirdo*, a story about a boy who is bullied because of his nerdy interests but learns to overcome these challenges through friendship, confidence, and embracing creative outlets. The tweens celebrated their own nerdy passions by creating comics and designing stickers for the RPL sticker contest. One such comic, *The Soggy Adventures of Best Guy*, featured the Comic Club's newest mascot, a sword-wielding frog named Best Guy. Best Guy faced off against Worst Toad in this comic, defending himself against Worst Toad's worst blast and ultimately claiming victory.



Anecdotes/Other

- The Rochester Public Library's slogan, "More Than You Think," highlights the digital resources, exciting programs, unique items for loan, and special services that our modern library system provides. Nevertheless, there are times when answering old-school reference questions is what really makes the staff proud. A local mechanic needed a repair manual for a 1986 Nissan Maxima. Staff were able to place a hold on a copy for him. A visitor from a neighborhood group home couldn't recall the name of that movie where a science teacher has one day to save the world from alien invaders. Who else but the library could inform him that it's *The Tomorrow War*? For the woman who called to ask about the time of the Ash Wednesday service—since she only receives a recorded message when contacting her church—it's at 6:30 a.m. "More Than You Think," indeed!
- A customer called 45 minutes before closing time to inquire about printing fees. Unphased by the cost, they asked if it was possible to print 100 copies of a three-page obituary featuring color photographs. The customer confirmed the branch's email address, said they'd email the document and promised to call right back. The patron informed staff that they were on their way and asked if they could get a head start printing it, as they needed the copies before the funeral that began at 5:30. The staff went the extra mile and stapled each document for them.



Friends & Foundation *of the* Rochester Public Library

115 South Avenue ~ Rochester, NY 14604 ~ 585.428.8325

FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* Grant Acceptance Letter for:

**Rochester Public Library
115 South Ave.
Rochester, NY 14604**

March 20, 2025

For 2025, if conditions are met, **Rochester Public Library** will receive a grant from the FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* using a proportional allocation of available funds, based on a **rolling 3-year average of the library's Total Circulation as reported in the NYS Library Annual Report** for 2021-2023.

In addition, **Rochester Public Library** and its Board of Directors must certify by signing this document below that it is a **tax supported public library or association library**, and that is eligible to receive FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* grants by meeting the following conditions:

- A. **Any FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* grants we receive will be used only as a SUPPLEMENT to our typical materials budget**, and we understand future annual grants may be reduced or even eliminated if our library reduces its annual books/materials budget in anticipation of a grant.
- B. We will only purchase the following types of approved **supplemental** reading materials loaned to the public with FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* grants:
 - 1) **printed books, 2) electronic books (or their equivalent) and 3) audio books (in any media).**

We also agree our selection of printed/electronic/audio books purchased with these funds will follow these principles:

- 1) They should serve the largest segment of the general population as possible;
 - 2) They should be chosen in a wide variety of subject areas, formats and types/genres;
 - 3) Book selection will be the responsibility of professional librarians at each Eligible Library (including professional staff who may not hold an MLS / MLIS degree);
 - 4) All books must be written in the English language;
 - 5) FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* grants will NOT be used to purchase reference books, magazine subscriptions or other reading materials that are not circulated. Regarding electronic/audio books, we agree to not use funds for experimental or developmental purposes, but only for technologies that are widely accepted/publicly available.
- C. **Our library will establish a separate and exclusive FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* record, tracking annually each grant received and all expenditures made from the Fund**, in order to provide an annual report to the FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* Committee.
 - D. The FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* is a confidential fund of the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library. **FFRPL is the granting organization for ongoing accounting purposes, for internal library discussion, and for general public reference.** The Fund itself SHALL NOT be mentioned by name to the general public, nor referenced in press releases to the media (including newsletters, newspapers, magazines, radio, television or the internet), and no bookplates may be placed in books purchased with Fund monies. However, reference to FFRPL is allowed.

These conditions must be met each year to remain eligible to receive an FFRPL *Tummonds Fund* grant. Please sign the following page to acknowledge Rochester Public Library's acceptance of the grant funds and agreement to abide by the conditions above. This year's grant amount for Rochester Public Library is \$103,307.25.

Rochester Public Library agrees to accept a grant in the amount of \$103,307.25 and abide by the conditions of the FFRPL *Tummonds Fund*.

Donna P. Benjamin, Board President, Rochester Public Library

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Emily Clasper, Director, Rochester Public Library

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please sign and return a copy of this grant acceptance agreement to:

Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library
115 South Ave.
Rochester, NY 14604

Marcus Cooper

[linkedin.com/in/marcus-cooper-9479533b/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marcus-cooper-9479533b/)

SUMMARY

Career versatility with a background in staff management, event coordination and project management.

EDUCATION

SUNY College At Old Westbury

English Language Studies

United Way - Africa American Leadership Program

Class of 2024

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Program Coordinator

Center for Teen Empowerment, Inc.

September 2021 - Present

Program modality & implementation

- Collaborative partnering for youth enrichment and career/school pathways
- Project management

Assistant Manager

Euphoria Wellness - Rizzo LLC, Las Vegas, NV

January 2020 - June 2021

Assistant Manager

Park Ave Bike Shop

June 2014 - November 2019

Co-Founder

Let's Be Friends Party

- Event planning and promotions

- Project management
- Operating in Rochester, NY and Las Vegas, NV

Tutor & Youth Mentor

Boys & Girls Club of Rochester, NY
October 2014 - May 2015 (7 months)

Co-Director of Cyclopedia

Boys & Girls Club of Rochester, NY
August 2012 - July 2014 (1 year 11 months)

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Founded the Let's Be Friends of Teen Empowerment annual fundraiser.
- Member of Rochester Skatepark Committee, carrying out fundraising initiatives and community outreach for the downtown Rochester, NY skatepark.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.—undergraduate inductee of Mu Omicron chapter, member of the Rochester Alumni chapter.

FFRPL Report to RPL Board – March 2025

As of February 28, the statement balance of our primary investment account is \$14,242,337.68 and the balance of our account for the Tummonds Fund is \$17,216,553.69. The balance of the Working Capital Account is \$720,612.51.

The average yield for the working capital account is 4.79%. The average yield for the M&T sweep is 4.56%

Exploring a change from current desktop database to an all-in-one, cloud-based, digital fundraising and donor relationship management platform. Current contract expires in July.

Recent FY25 FFRPL expenditures for RPL:

- \$31,973 Children's literacy programs (including \$25,625 for books to give away)
- \$5,200 ImagineYOU Media Lab comic book creation program for youth

Completed transition for all FFRPL funding requests from RPL to be completed through portal online. RPL Finance reviews each to be sure that the library uses its budget first before it comes to FFRPL.

The required annual reports from the 2024 recipient libraries for **FFRPL Library Grants for Circulating Materials** were received. The 2025 agreements were distributed and are being returned at a steady pace.

In 2024, FFRPL library grants for circulating materials totaled \$747,169 to 62 eligible libraries in the Monroe County, OWWL, and Nioga library systems. A total of **31,733 supplemental books** were purchased and circulated due to this funding. Specifically, 18,480 print books, 9,039 e-books, and 4,214 audiobooks were purchased.

An allocation of **\$844,161.19** will be distributed this year!

The Monroe County Library System will receive \$623,309.11, with the Rochester Public Library receiving \$103,307.25.

FFRPL is announcing the 2025 opening for applications from Rochester regional libraries for **Harold Hacker Grants for the Advancement of Libraries** with a deadline of May 1, 2025. We are partnering with Rochester Regional Library Council again this year for outreach and review. The potential total funding available this year is \$10,000.

Borgus met with Emily Clasper and Katy Hasselwander to begin preliminary discussion of FFRPL/RPL Memorandum of Understanding and Bookstore Agreement for FY2025-2026.

Borgus met with BJ Scanlon, incoming Deputy Director of Branch Administration, and Bruce Tehan, incoming Area Coordinator of Branch Administration, to provide FFRPL orientation and discuss future opportunities for working together to benefit the city neighborhood branches.

Borgus will be coordinating financial review meetings with Alesco Advisors for the FFRPL Board Finance & Investment Committee and the Tummonds Fund Committee this spring.

Borgus, Lusignan, and Weidman attended online Library's Legal Aid Society training, "I.C.E. Encounters in the Library"

Special Project:

FFRPL was honored to be involved in the celebration of the **retirement of Patty Uttaro, Director of RPL/MCLS.**

At Patty's request, donations made in her honor have been designated to the **Harold Hacker Fund for the Advancement of Libraries.** Harold Hacker was instrumental in creating the Monroe County Library System and he founded the OWWL Library System. He was Director of MCLS and the Rochester Public Library for 24 years. He also founded the Rochester Regional Library Council. Both Harold Hacker and Patty Uttaro devoted their careers to expanding the scope and availability of library services.

Patty chose this Fund because it supports **innovative projects/programs at member libraries** of the Rochester Regional Library Council and throughout the MCLS and OWWL systems, as well as **professional development for staff** working in those member libraries.

\$ 13,272 has been donated to date.

Thank you for your consideration in honoring Patty Uttaro with a gift in support of the continued advancement of our regional libraries!

Annual Campaign:

The FY24 Annual Campaign has generated a total of \$274,039 from 1,537 gifts as of February 28 (both restricted and unrestricted).

The Advancement Committee met on January 29 to review the spring annual campaign letter and plans for #Library Giving Day on April 1. The Library Giving Day fundraising event will benefit the RPL-Go! Mobile library as it expands its reach in the community.

The spring letter with its six variations and brochures for BSI's Spring program were delivered to homes around March 10, 2025. (6,964 letters plus 7,904 brochures were mailed – if a donor made a gift between October and January, only the brochure was mailed). Planned giving messaging was included in the brochure and on the gift slips to efficiently utilize resources.

Postcards to donors that we have not heard from this fiscal year are in the process of being designed. They should be printed and posted by the end of April.

Database Management:

Generated datafiles from the Exceed database, manipulated data for use by the mailhouse and coded all records for spring annual campaign mailing. Reviewed feedback from the mailhouse based on NCOA information and updated database, deceased listing, and potential duplicate entries. Entered all RocTheDay gifts into the database.

Investigated database duplicates and out of state lapsed donors for opportunities to condense the database in anticipation of transition from Exceed Premier (10-year-old system).

Grants/Major and/or Restricted Gifts:

Submitted application for \$10,000 Maximus Community Choice Grant.

Submitted letter of intent to Davenport Hatch Foundation to see if Festival to Go (part of Rochester Children's Book Festival) which brings authors and free books to RCSD classrooms could be considered for funding. (FFRPL is RCBF's fiscal agent).

Planned Giving:

Received \$58,620.83 from the estate of James R. Boehler. In previous gifts from James Boehler's estate, we received a collection of CDs, DVDs, and videos, \$2,000 to be used for subscriptions to the Buffalo news, and \$5,000 unrestricted.

Received \$5,000 unrestricted planned gift from John S. Pearsall.

Notified of bequest of Leonard Messineo. Borgus spoke with nieces who are named executors to coordinate a smooth distribution. Executors shared that they are just beginning probate, and that the distribution of funds may be expected late 2025, early 2026. They indicated that it is a "sizeable donation, 20% of the estate". They shared a touching anecdote that the only "receipts" that they found in Len's home were slips from checking out books from the library. He kept track of every book that he read that way.

Borgus assisted M.W. document a planned gift to FFRPL with a current value of \$350,000. FFRPL is the sole named beneficiary.

Borgus is assisting B.H. with updating the documentation of his increased planned gift. B.H. is also a current annual campaign donor who has set up monthly recurring gifts. His gifts have increased from \$250 per month to \$750 per month.

Book Sales (On-site and Online):

The net income from on-site and online book sales as of the end of February is \$12,651.

The Season's Readings Sale continued into January as a bag sale to help eliminate the backlog of books, CDs, and DVD inventory. The total sale proceeds for December and January were \$2,093 which includes \$712 collected through the circulation desk.

Future planned book sales for FY25 are a Spring Sale: April 7-12 (National Library Week) and a Summer Sale - June 23-27.

Community Outreach:

1/16/25 FFRPL donated 2 boxes of art magazines to Encompass Resources for Learning.

2/24/25, FFRPL provided 3 Boxes of books to Strong Ties, an agency of Strong Health.

3/6/25 FFRPL provided another 3 Boxes of books to Strong Ties

A large display cabinet was offered to the library from an outside donor. Borgus found a home for the cabinet in imagineYOU where comic books created by youth will be displayed.

Logistical Update: FFRPL has vacated the LINK in the Bausch & Lomb Library Building except for a small staging area to store carts of books prior to scheduled book sales.

Between 2022 and 2025 FFRPL has vacated 50% of previous book sales space at the library's request for library staff and patron needs. The store space has been reduced from 984 sq. ft. to 425 sq. ft. (57% reduction). FFRPL has also returned 2,304 sq. ft. of storage and sorting space back to the library. The RPL/FFRPL MOU and Bookstore Agreement for fiscal year 2025-2026 has been adjusted to reflect expectations. Anticipated net revenue has been reduced from \$35,000 to \$25,000.

Volunteers: Total volunteer hours for this fiscal year as of February 28th are 1,545

Programming & Marketing:

Continued to support Central's Program Team

- Continued to promote RPL and FFRPL sponsored **online Author Talks**
- Continued to help support Library and FFRPL-supported programs (i.e. Black History Month).
- Continued to report FFRPL program stats for Library reports.

Continued to support Central's Exhibits Team

- Helped plan, present and promote exhibits: Marionettes (on view 12/7/25 – 3/25/25); Fairy Houses (on view 4/3/25 – 6/27/25); Art of the Book & Paper 2025 (call for entries; due May 16).

Library and FFRPL-supported program-related Marketing

- Continued to support **RPL's Marketing Team**
- Promoted hiring of new MCLS/RPL Director Emily Clasper
- Helped promote Central Library's "Best Library" Award from *City Newspaper*.
- Cross promoted Library programs and resources across divisions supported by FFRPL (examples: Harold Hacker grant projects; Empire State Passes; MCLS purchase of the *lote4kids* (Languages Other Than English) subscription; *Shoulders to Stand On* Project Coordinator announcement; *Safe to Be Smart* publicity generated from D.C. trip).
- Shared post from Monroe County Executive Adam Bello celebrating Patty Uttaro on her retirement.
- Promoted WXXI interview with retiring MCLS/RPL Director **Patty Uttaro**, newly appointed MCLS/RPL Director **Emily Clasper**, Henrietta Public Library Director **Adrienne Pettinelli**, and library trustee, social

media consultant, and Professor **Emily Hessney Lynch** on WXXI's "Connections with Evan Dawson." Listen to WXXI's broadcast: **Amidst book bans and new technologies, pondering the future of libraries**

- Promoted the Library's first-ever **ROC Black-owned Business Expo**
- Promoted holidays/observances, including Publicized Library closings; national holidays/observances.
- Promoted the extended Season's Readings sale and Clearance/Liquidation sale, Spring book sale
- Borgus and Lusignan attended the ribbon cutting at Lyell Branch Library for RPL Go!
Lusignan promoted the new mobile library via social media, e-newsletters, web site, BSI brochures.

General Fundraising: campaigns and events

- Integrated marketing messaging for the Annual Campaign theme into digital newsletters, FB, web site, email signatures, and event announcements. Advancement marketing this quarter included year-end giving benefits and the online fundraiser for Patty Uttaro's retirement.

FFRPL LEGACY PROGRAMS

Tuesday Topics 2025

Lusignan designed the ***Tuesday Topics*** series to honor retiring MCLS/RPL Director Patty Uttaro with a roster of programs of her choosing, under the theme "A Few of the Director's Favorite Things."

The series successfully leveraged FFRPL's platform to highlight library programs/resources; connect patrons, donors, and staff; and provide content for in person and online participants. We have been strategically using the opportunities that the programming and content provided.

Patty launched the series with a talk on the *Art of the Book & Paper* exhibit Jan. 7

- 15 people attended in person; 32 viewed the livestream in the first 30 days.
- At Patty's request, we worked w/Exhibits Team and Maintenance to have display in KGA of AOTB&P artwork that had been donated to/purchased by the Library.
- In addition to library patrons, Patty was happy to see Don Allis, Former MCLS Board President; David Creek, retired Assistant Director of RPL; AOTB&P artist and judge Rachael Gootnick; Dick Hamilton, former FFRPL Board President; Ichin Zinn, FFRPL Board member; Dan Karin, RPL Board member and longtime FFRPL volunteer pricer; and Karen (Ren) vanMeenen, former Writers & Books "Rochester Reads" manager (longtime partner of FFRPL and Central library).

Lusignan worked with Library staff to include the link to Patty's presentation as part of the current AOTB&P "Call for Entries," <https://roccitylibrary.org/artofthebook/> (see screenshot).

Watch MCLS/RPL Director Patty Uttaro's talk about Central Library's signature juried "Art of the Book & Paper" exhibit.

Patty's presentation was part of FFRPL's Tuesday Topics series, which showcased some of her favorite things. She retired in February 2025.

[Patty Uttaro's talk on AOTB&P for Tuesday Topics 2025](https://roccitylibrary.org/artofthebook/)

Tonia Burton gave a presentation on Early Literacy Jan. 14

- 12 people attended in person; 22 viewed the livestream in the first 30 days.
- Lusignan’s FB post of Shy (a 14-year parent participant of RAR) – including a link to Tonia’s talk – has garnered 1,300+ views to date.
- *Raising a Reader National* picked up the story at the end of January and commented on our page/tagging us.



Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library
 Published by Susan Lusignan
 January 14 at 3:12 PM · 🌐

Meet Shyniesha (Shy), who has participated in the [Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County NY](#)’s “Raising A Reader” program for 14 years!

Shy attended Tonia Burton’s “Tuesday Topics” presentation today, to serve as an advocate for the Library’s Early Literacy programs.
 Here’s the link to Tonia’s talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuovMe79GBM>

Shy says her four children have all benefited from “Raising a Reader” and she wanted to help other parents learn about the program.

Thanks to the FFRPL grantors and individual donors who support these kinds of important, impactful Library initiatives.

Raising a Reader National
 6h · 🌐

What an amazing story of Raising a Reader in action! Thanks for being such a great partner Tonia Burton, [Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library](#), [Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County NY](#)

“Shy says her four children have all benefited from “Raising a Reader” and she wanted to help other parents learn about the program.”

Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuovMe79GBM>



Jen Byrnes talked about the county-wide digital equity project January 21

- 12 people attended in person; 25 viewed the livestream in the first 30 days.
- We connected Jen to Jackie Smith, Monroe County Legislator, District 2 and at her request, gave Jackie the link to Jen’s talk.

Shalis Worthy gave an overview of the Local History & Genealogy Division January 28.

- 24 people attended in person; 6 viewed the livestream in the first 30 days.
- Several patrons indicated their interest in learning more/participating in LH&G programming.



Our **Spring Books Sandwiched In** series runs **March 18 through May 6**. We feature popular, acclaimed and important book titles along with a diverse roster of expert reviewers. *Thank you to all BSI Committee members who helped plan this roster!*

View/download the [Spring BSI brochure](#).

March 18 – *James* by Percival Everett. *James* is a brilliant reimagining of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, told from the enslaved Jim’s perspective. **Presenter:** Dr. Cassandra Scherr, Assistant Professor of English at St. John Fisher University. [REGISTER](#)

March 25 – *Challenger: A True Story of Heroism and Disaster on the Edge of Space* by Adam Higginbotham. Based on extensive new archival research and original reporting, *Challenger* provides a definitive account of the 1986 space shuttle disaster. **Presenter:** Jim Bader, Director of the RMSC Strasenburgh Planetarium. [REGISTER](#)

April 1 – *Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions* by John Grisham and Jim McCloskey. Bestselling novelist John Grisham’s real-life passion for justice led to his work with Jim McCloskey of Centurion Ministries, the first organization dedicated to exonerating innocent people who have been wrongly convicted. **Presenter:** Jon Getz, an attorney; certified federal court mediator; and past director of the Innocence and Justice Project at University of Buffalo School of Law. [REGISTER](#)

April 8 – *There’s Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension* by Hanif Abdurraqib. Abdurraqib’s offers personal storytelling and a historical exploration of excellence. **Presenter:** Jacob Scott, Chief Operating Officer for the Rochester City School District and a mentor to student-athletes. [REGISTER](#)

April 15 – *Hip Hop is History* by Questlove. In this landmark book, Questlove – six-time Grammy Award-winning musician, Academy Award-winning filmmaker, drummer, DJ, producer, director, and *NYT* bestselling author – offers a perceptive, personal reflection on the first 50 years of hip-hop. **Presenter:** Jose DaCosta, Founder of Exodus To Jazz Productions, which produced 75 area jazz concerts featuring world-renowned musicians. [REGISTER](#)

April 22 – *Briefly Perfectly Human: Making an Authentic Life by Getting Real About the End* by Alua Arthur. A transformative memoir from America’s most visible death doula.

Presenter: Emily Hessney Lynch, social media consultant, writer, professor, library trustee, book club organizer, and mother who believes that we should all talk about death more often. [REGISTER](#)

April 29 – *I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition* by Lucy Sante. Sante’s memoir of late-in-life gender transition “is moving for many reasons, but primarily for its observations about aging and vanity.” —*NYT*. **Presenter:** Comedic autobiographical transgender storyteller Penny Sterling. [REGISTER](#)

May 6 –*The Backyard Bird Chronicles* by Amy Tan. A gorgeous, witty account of birding and nature, written and illustrated by the bestselling author. **Presenter:** Pamela Reed Sanchez, President and CEO of the Seneca Park Zoo Society. [REGISTER](#)

BSI marketing

- Approx. 8,000 brochures were sent to patrons and donors as part of our annual campaign mailing (due in homes March 10).
- Additional hard copies are distributed throughout the library.
- The list of reviews, along with links to register, are posted on [FFRPL's web page](#).
- The series is promoted on the library's printed and [electronic calendars](#), and listed on select community event calendars as well.
- We’ve asked for the 8 reviews to be added to the City of Rochester event calendar.
- We are running a series of digital ads with *City Newspaper’s* Friday e-newsletters (reach: 8,000 subscribers), the week prior to each review.
- Other marketing includes social media (FB cover photo and post), home page feature (linked to landing page) and e-newsletters to our 3,500 subscribers (as well as inclusion in occasional Library-generated e-newsletters).
- Links were sent to the committee members and all presenters, encouraging them to help promote the series as well.

Sokol High School Literary Contest

The Committee met Monday, Feb. 17 via Zoom to review all student entries. Thank you to all who participated! We sent all entries selected as Finalists to the judges the following day. Winning entries were identified by the judges the first week in March and students were notified.

The Sokol Reception and Awards Ceremony will be **Thursday, April 24, 4pm-5:30pm in KGA. Please join us!**

Marketing:

- flyers sent to YA Librarians and MCLS list
- listed on LibCal
- (primary graphic/text) posted to FB, tagged all schools that had students participate in the last several years (2,300 views!)
- Featured FB cover photo for several months
- Graphic/link featured on FFRPL homepage
- Included in 4 Constant contact e-blasts

- We had 36 Sokol entries total: 16 poems; 17 prose pieces; 2 performances. We received approx. 60 total last year; pre-Covid totals were around 100 annually. Lusignan will be reassessing ways to improve communications with schools and expand the list of schools that promote the contest.

Facebook (highlights)

Post on School Library Journal’s Feb. 21st article (StBs DC trip) has had 543 views to date.

Post on Willie Campbell impact story has had 683 views to date. (See above for ‘viral’ post from *Tuesday Topics*).

Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library
 Published by Susan Lusignan
 · February 21 at 1:40 PM · 🌐

School Library Journal just posted a wonderful article today, about the **Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County NY** “Safe to Be Smart” youth trip to DC this past Summer!
<https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/.../Rochester-ny...>

The “Safe to Be Smart” trip to D.C. was funded by Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library (FFRPL) through generous support from donors, the Konar Foundation, and Reynolds Library.



SCHOOLLIBRARYJOURNAL.COM
Rochester (NY) Public Library Program Takes Teens to Washington, DC
 Thanks to a remarkable effort by a public library, 20 New York teens had an unforgettable trip ...

[See insights and ads](#) [Boost](#)

Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library
 Published by Susan Lusignan
 · December 27, 2024 at 7:00 PM · 🌐

“By the grace of God I walked through the doors of the Library. Now I’m seeing light. Now I’m seeing a whole different picture.” — Willie Campbell

Read Willie’s story <https://ffrpl.libraryweb.org/.../Willie-Campbells-impact...>

As 2024 draws to a close, we reflect on patrons like Willie whose lives have been changed because of the Library.

And a special shout-out to the staff from the John Overheim Center for Technology and Innovation at the **Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County NY** for empowering Willie to live his best life!

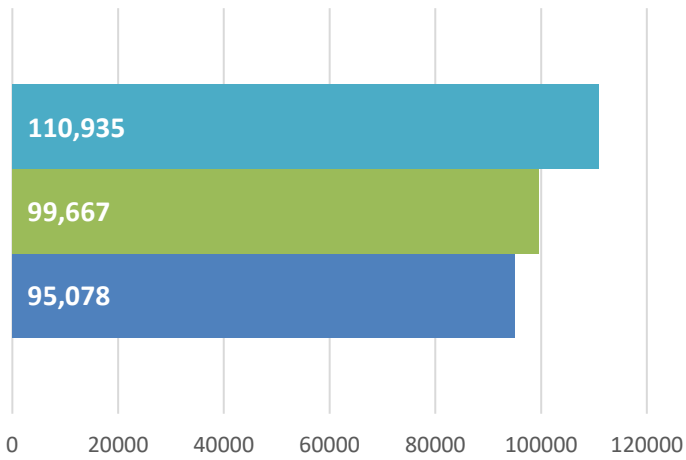
Thank you to all of our Board members, volunteers, donors, and community partners -- as well as to the Library Boards, administration and staff -- for helping FFRPL maximize the Library’s community impact.



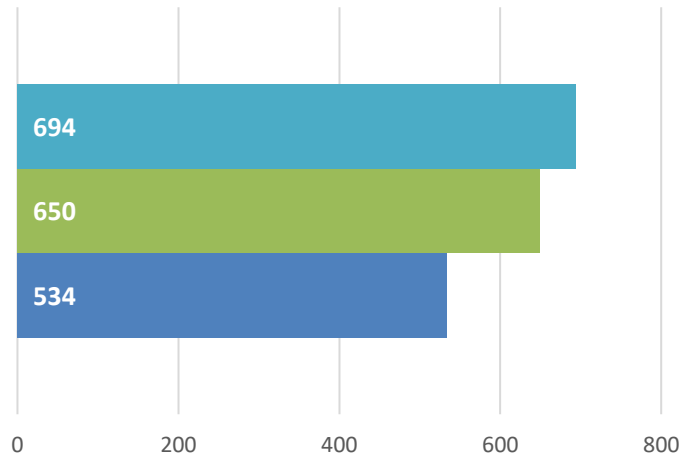
RPL Central Statistics YTD
Jan–Feb



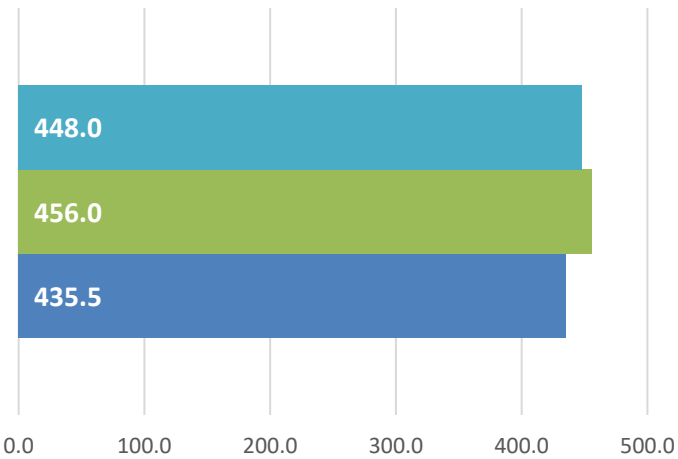
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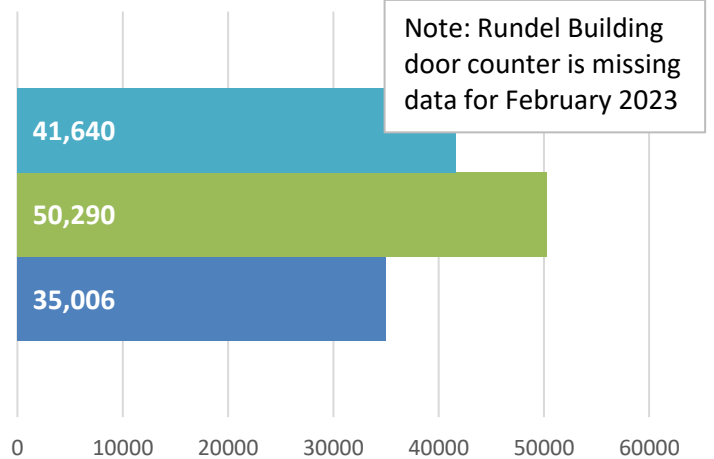
LIBRARY CARDS



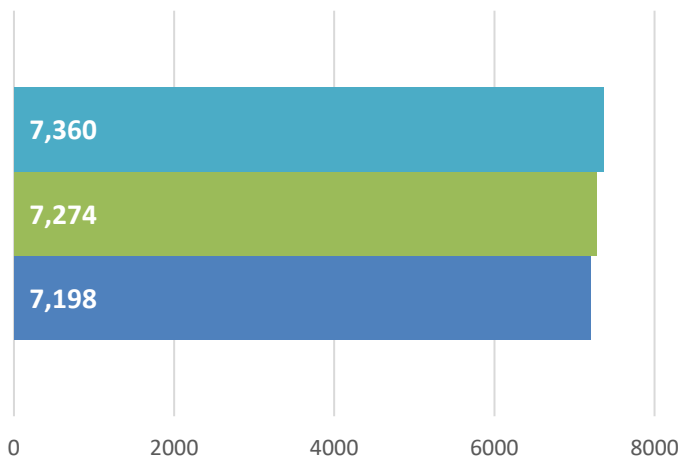
SERVICE HOURS



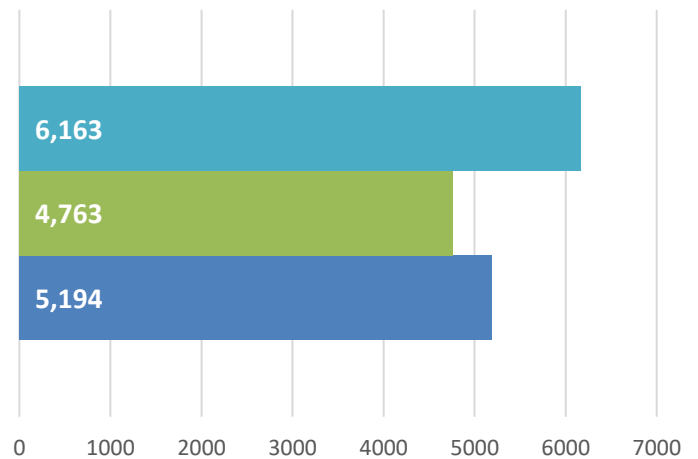
VISITS



REFERENCE QUESTIONS



NON-REFERENCE

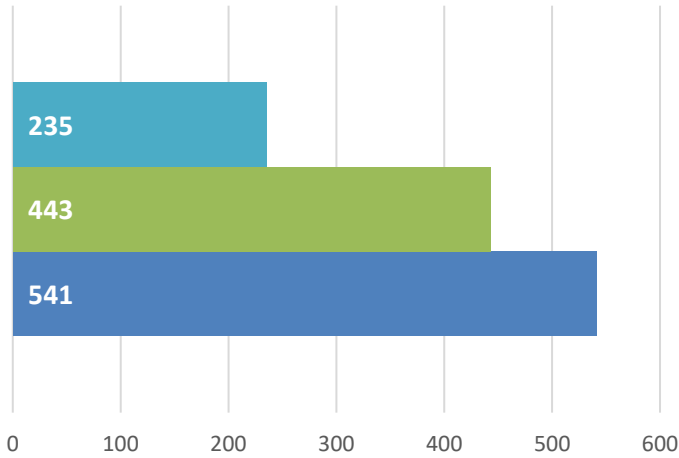


RPL Central Statistics YTD

Jan–Feb



NOTARY



DEFINITIONS

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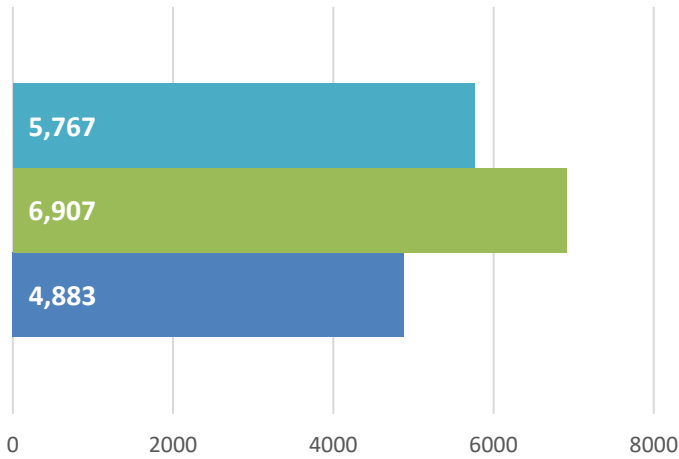
Computer Hours: Hours patrons used the public PCs.

WiFi Uses: Number of log-ins to the public WiFi.

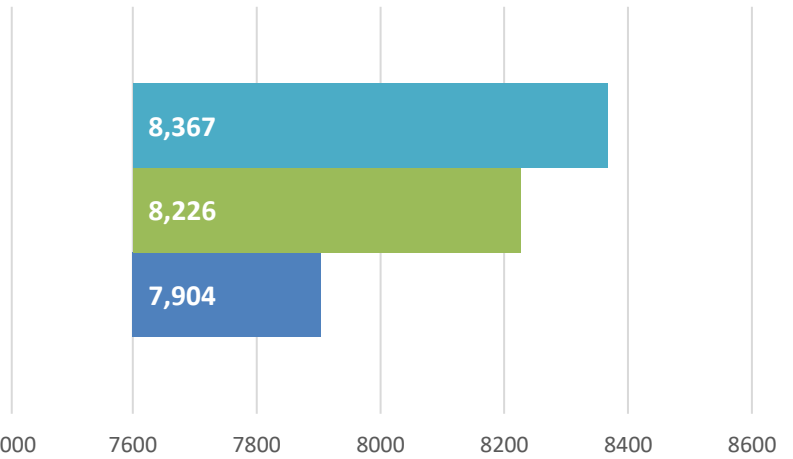
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Program Attendance: Attendance at Group Programs. Excludes staff and presenters.

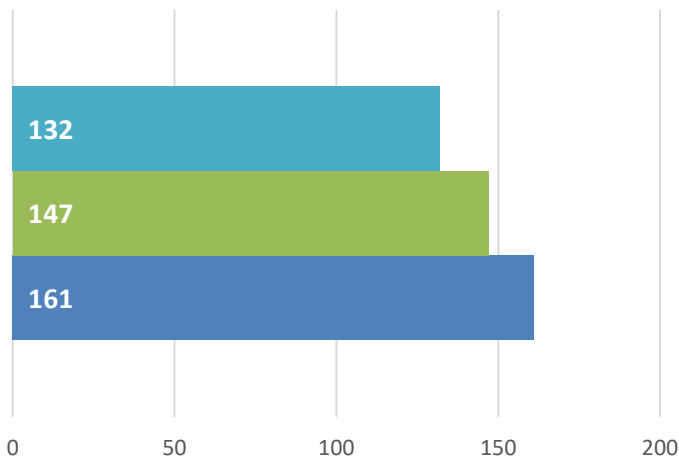
COMPUTER HOURS



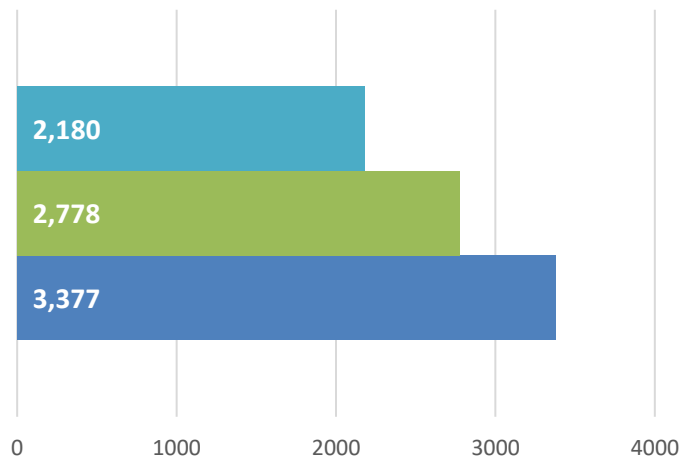
WIFI USES



GROUP PROGRAMS



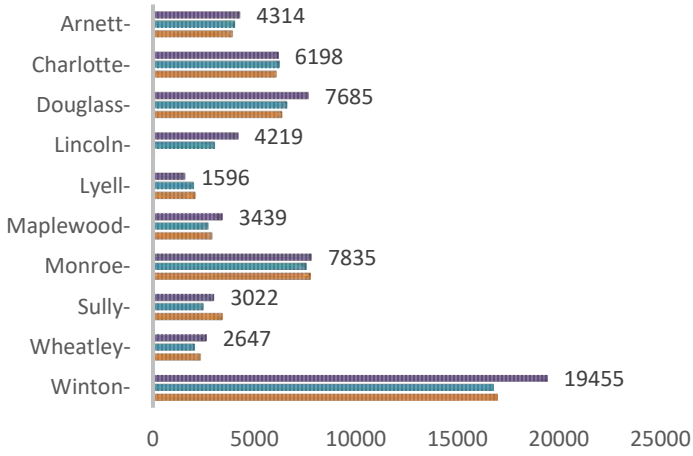
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



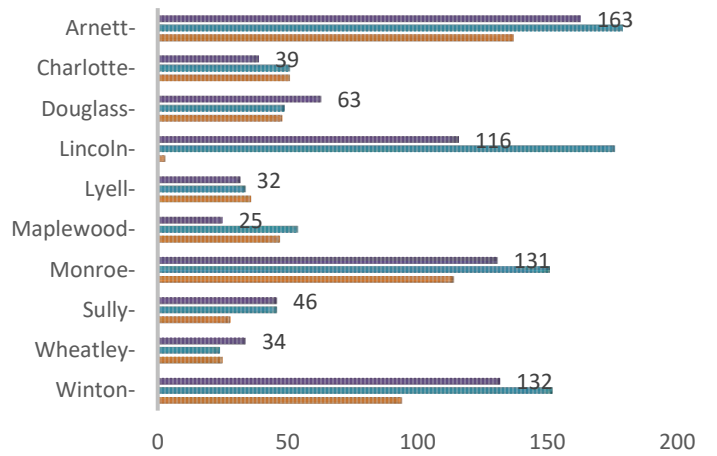
RPL Branch Statistics YTD
Jan-Feb

2025 2024 2023

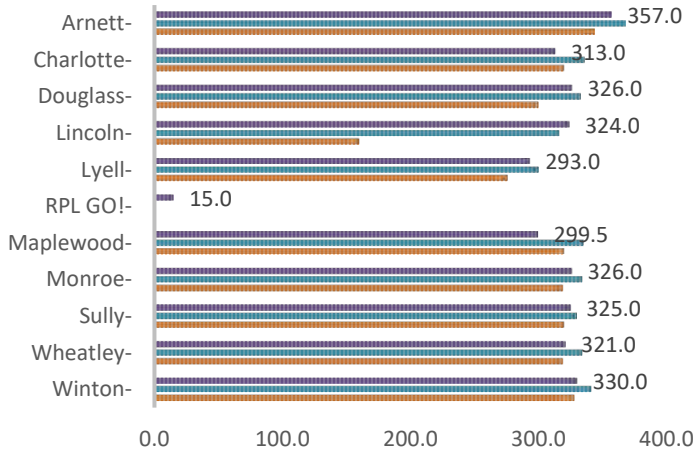
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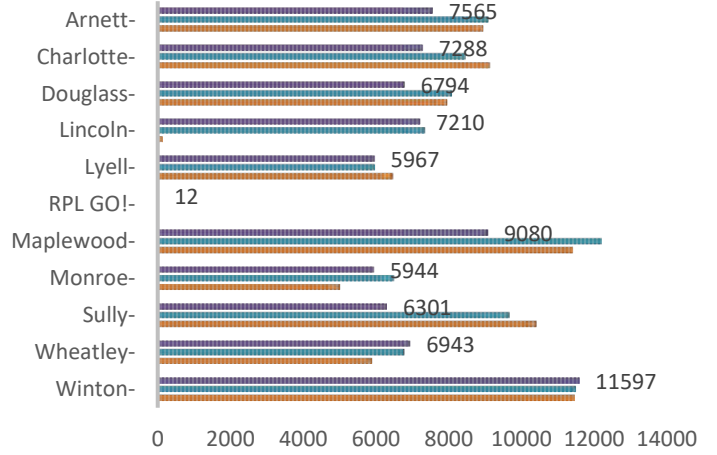
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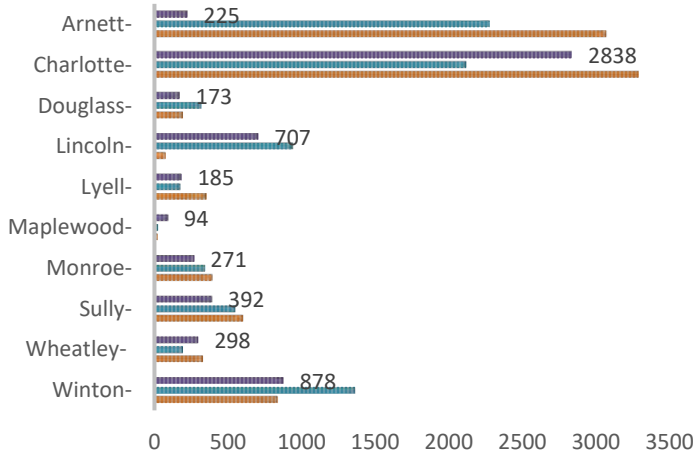
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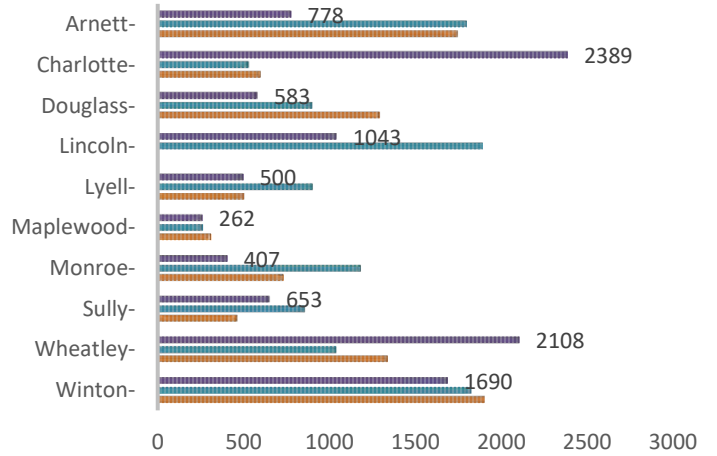
VISITS



REFERENCE QUESTIONS



NON-REFERENCE



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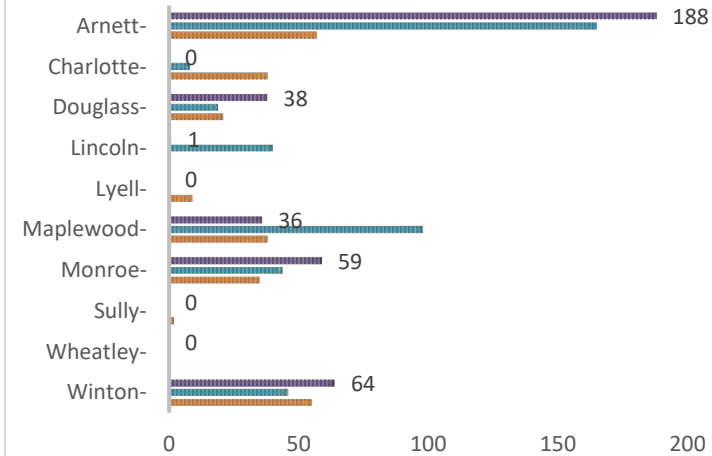
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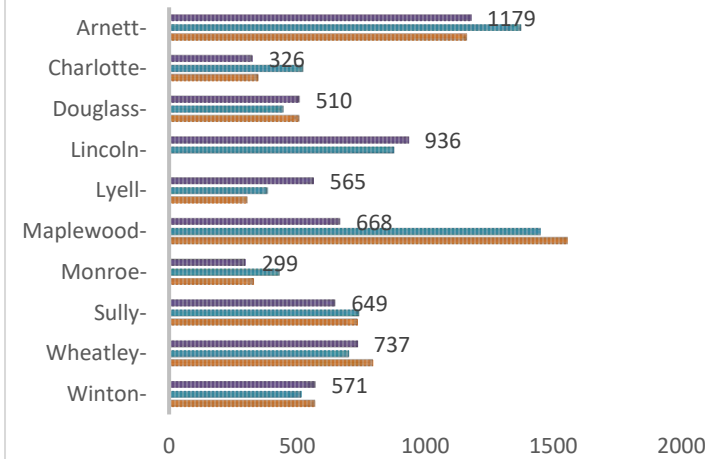
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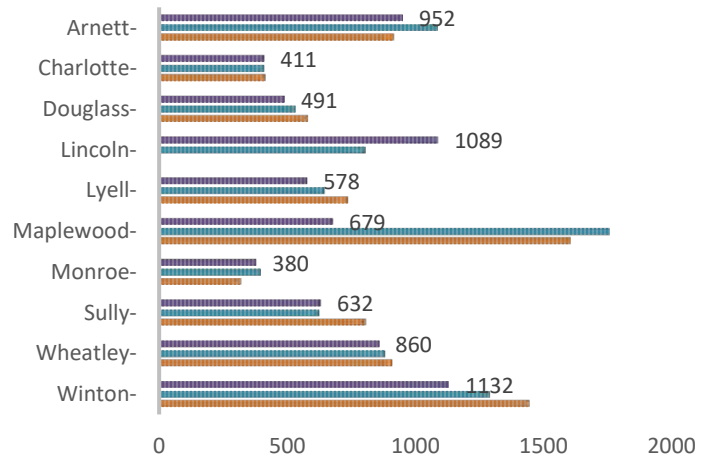
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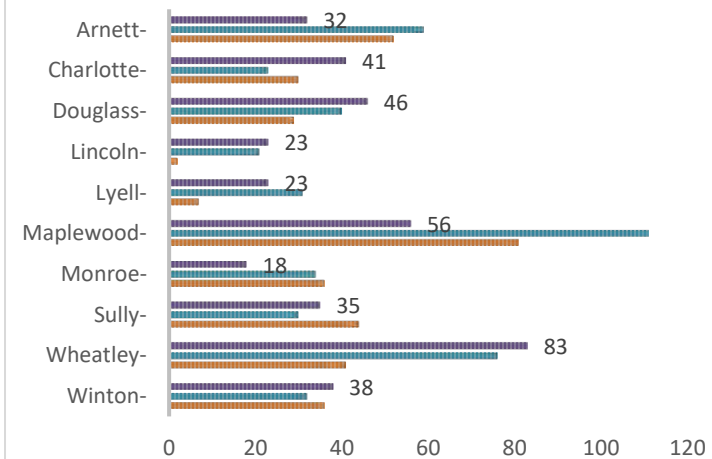
COMPUTER HOURS



WIFI SESSIONS



GROUP PROGRAMS



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

