

September

An Invited Community Feels at Home in Their Library

I designed and ordered “I got my first library card today!” stickers in English and Spanish to give out when kids get their first cards, as well as some in English and Spanish for kids who come to storytime at the Oasis (to make them feel special but also to raise awareness that storytime is happening at the Oasis!).



~ Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

Despite the rain, the Hispanic Heritage Celebration in Central Park was a great success. The event featured a pet contest, where Alexis and her pet June, dressed in a Quinceañera costume, captivated the crowd. Alma Andina closed the day with an energetic performance that delighted attendees. A highlight of the day was the parade of flags and a new Northfield Mexican folkloric group, performing for the first time, showcasing cultural pride and creativity. This performance echoed the efforts of a group of Guatemalan mothers who, a few years ago, formed the first Guatemalan folkloric dance group in Northfield—and in Minnesota. This year marked their third performance.

Community Feedback:

Claudia Gonzalez-George: "It was wonderful to see so many people coming together to celebrate our culture!"

Barbara Eastman Altstaetter: "Great celebration in Central Park."

Teacher Amanda Schrader: "I invited all my classes, and it was WONDERFUL! So appreciate all you do."

~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager

We had a wonderful time hosting a watch party for Natalie's appearance on KSTP! It's been so great to share the news of our Best Small Library in America honorable mention on social media—our community has really shown up to celebrate us. ~Alexis Kreft, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian



I enjoyed participating in my first Hispanic Heritage Celebration this year! I visited with several attendees on the Bookmobile and made two library cards for college students. Then I interacted with folks over at the community engagement area for the Library Vision Plan. ~Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager

An Included Community Is Seen, Heard, and Engaged by Their Library

The Youth Services team spent a lot of time in September discussing dramatic play (what many people refer to as pretend play) and how introducing a variety of scenarios for young people to explore themselves, with their peers, and with adults would create new literacy opportunities. We are working to unveil a farm theme in our newly named “Let’s Imagine/Imaginemos” space in the children’s area. We are using existing furniture, recycled and upcycled materials, the sewing machine from the STEAM collection, and lots of imagination to create interactive elements such as corn to pick off the stalk, a “tractor” to ride in the fields, and more. Bilingual signs will guide folks to weigh produce, practice vocabulary words, and experience print within the environment, prompting questions and conversations. We hope to be able to invite the community to join us on our farm in the middle of October. ~Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager

Had a very well attended poetry reading for Minnesota Poets Florence Dacey, Deborah Keenan, and Joyce Sutphen.

Finally got the Bridge & Division topographical poetry project edited, printed, and delivered. Soon we will start handing out the contributor copies. ~ Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian

Francisco and I participated in the Multilingual Learner Event at Northfield Schools in September, where we promoted the library’s Spanish programs, tutoring services, STEAM kits, and materials. The event celebrated 16 students who exited the EL program, highlighting the importance of these educational milestones.

The Conversation Tables (Spanish and English) continue to be a popular service, engaging bilingual community members by offering opportunities to practice and improve their language skills.

I also completed virtual training on ¡Canta Conmigo!! I learned ten new songs for Bilingual Storytime, which will be integrated into future bilingual programs.



Claudia Garcia and I were invited by the Consulate of Mexico in Saint Paul to the celebration of the 214th anniversary of Mexico's independence, which took place on Friday, September 13th. It was a meaningful celebration. ~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager



Our Hispanic Heritage Celebration was a smashing success! For the first time, the Outreach Team was in

charge of planning and executing the event—everyone did a fantastic job! Francisco and I were tasked with coordinating the 42 registered non-food vendors and community partners. We were pleased that all attended and offered positive feedback on the event. Other highlights were our second annual Parade of Flags, a barnburner set by Alma Andina, and (for me) the Festive Pet Contest. The Unofficial Library Bunny June won first prize! 😊 ~Alexus Kref, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian



An Empowered Community Is Equipped for the Changing World

Had a great session on AI and Election media presented by some St. Olaf Librarians. Looking forward to our next Election Literacy program on October 28. ~ Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian

David and Rafael resumed teaching digital literacy classes in Spanish, and we added an additional session focused on basic computer skills due to community demand. David also hosted a successful bilingual 3D printing workshop with six participants. This STEAM-based program allowed attendees to explore emerging technology and gain confidence in learning new skills. ~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager

In addition to working on the play experience, the Youth Services team also spent some time looking ahead to 2025. We will be focusing on connection in 2025. Whether to other community members, across generations, among staff and patrons, between library resources and patrons, we will be evaluating programs and services with connection in mind, and use that lens to frame new opportunities. ~ Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager

A Connected Community Has Access to the Resources They Need

Our tutoring program is now underway, with three tutors who started on Saturday, September 28, assisting students in need. This service, promoted through recent outreach events.

Steve shared positive feedback from his senior home visits with Karin, *noting the enthusiasm from seniors during their outreach visits*. These visits help older adults stay connected to library resources, ensuring they have access to the materials and programs they need. ~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager

Francisco, Angelica, and I went three different outreach events at both colleges over the past month. Altogether, we signed 165 students up for library cards and shared information on library resources to over 225 students, parents, faculty, and staff. Both Oles and Carls were by and large thrilled to sign up for library cards, especially when they saw the super cute designs up for grabs. ~Alexus Kref, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian

One of our most popular Youth collections is our Graphic Novels. After a busy summer circulating as fast as we could reshelve them, I spent time in September ensuring our computer records reflect the books on our shelves, and that the books on the shelves were in good condition. I ended up finding many items that needed to be mended or replaced. Fresh copies will be arriving and put out on the shelves in time for the fall school break. ~*Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager*

The Oasis children's collection has been fully weeded, after stats have shown that circulation isn't the primary way the collection is being used. I recommended more browseable ("flip through" and "not intending to finish")—like 5-minute Story collections that feature popular characters and activity books (like *Where's Waldo?*) and Amy has purchased some to start. I'm adding more passive activities over there, like a bilingual "How Tall Are You?" measuring display. I have three storytimes (two family and one "spooky") scheduled at the Oasis, and a drop-in board games program for MEA.

Our first delivery of TELL kits is set for October 8 and will serve four providers. I've gotten a few quotes from those that have used the service for inclusion in a press release that I hope to see run in the *Northfield News*, with a call to action to other providers to contact me if they're interested in receiving TELL service in the future.

Our first Catch a Chapter Home School Read-Aloud was on 9/27. Five people attended, and I want to work to boost that number—BUT one good sign of success was that attendees checked out every book I read from and recommended.

Weekly Evening Storytimes are making it possible to connect and play with families whose schedules our morning storytimes do not serve. We've received lots of gratitude and excitement about them from the public (which isn't always reflected in our attendance!), and I've sent posters to ECFE, Northfield Nursery, and other pre-K communities in hopes of making this offering as visible as possible to families that are only free in the evenings.

The refreshed Social Emotional Learning book list is out and gives grownups the resources to choose picture books that best address their child's direct needs on popular topics like navigating feelings, making friends, getting along, and accepting oneself and others. The new list details what specifically the recommended books offer (actionable tips, questions to get kids talking, etc). I'm working with Youth Services Student Worker Sophia to update the other lists in Canva. ~ *Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian*

An Informed Community Understands What Their Library Offers and Has the Opportunity to Shape the Library with Feedback

Francisco and Steve attended the Truck and Tractor Event, which attracted 180 visitors. This unique audience led to more books being checked out than expected.

Alexus and I participated in the Carleton College Resource Fair for the Class of 2028 on Tuesday, September 10, during Move-In Day. We connected with about 50 participants and issued 22 new library cards.

Francisco and Alexis also tabled at St. Olaf College for their Back-to-School event on September 24, reaching 44 attendees and issuing 18 library cards. ~*Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager*

Emily and I had a fabulous time at this year's Book Blast! Over 200 kids got free ice cream and free books, and we got to the chance to chat with many families about library resources and events. The Blast is a great partner, and we look forward to making this annual event. ~*Alexus Kreft, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian*

We recently learned that SELCO is looking to hire a Youth Services Consultant in 2025. I was unable to attend a virtual meeting where they were planning to discuss what member libraries might be looking for in terms of support from that position. I reached out afterwards to ask if there would be any other opportunities to share feedback, and Carol Jackson and I had a virtual meeting to talk about what NPL Youth staff would like to see from SELCO. Carol asked many great questions and I am hopeful that much of the feedback from us and other member libraries will be incorporated in the job description and directives for the position.

I will be attending the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) Virtual Conference on October 3 & 4. CLEL is passionately committed to strengthening children's literacy through library services and community advocacy, and has been working hard to provide professional development around early literacy for years. I look forward to reporting on what I learned! ~Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager

I set up a tour of ECFE with Ellen Haefner so we could freshly connect over what both organizations offer and how we can complement each other, promote each other, and possibly collaborate. ~ Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

October

Our outreach efforts for October focused on civic education, cultural celebrations, and extended library services. ~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager



An Empowered Community Is Equipped for the Changing World

This October, we empowered community members through educational and rights-based programming. Our Know Your Rights event with the ACLU MN, conducted in Spanish, provided immigrants with vital information on constitutional rights. Additionally, our Voting Education session, led by Karla Esqueda of ACLU MN, offered bilingual

guidance on voter registration and participation, equipping attendees with essential knowledge for civic engagement. ~Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager

Francisco, Steve, and I had a wonderful time attending the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services conference in Indianapolis. We got to view state-of-the-art bookmobiles and bookbikes, learn from outreach staff at libraries across the country, and understand the greater world of library outreach. Highlights for me were a session on doing outreach to the restaurant and bar industry, a driven discussion on serving non-English-language speakers, and getting to ride brand new bookbikes around the parking lot!





~Alexus Kreft, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian

I was able to attend part of the MN Library Association conference this month. This kind of professional development opportunity helps me continue to learn and stay current with trends in the field which I can apply to my collections work, which in turn impacts what our library offers to the community. I attended a useful session on the new MN legislation around book banning to learn how it will impact our policies/procedures going forward as well as staff requirements in the event of any challenge. I also attended a helpful session given by school media specialists on organizing by genre and got some good ideas for how to approach similar large-scale collection projects in our library. I was able to visit Rochester public library for the first time while in town for the conference and got a lot of ideas about display, weeding, and furniture arrangements for future space improvements. *~Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Collection Development Librarian*

October 3-4 I attended the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) virtual conference. It was inspiring and very informative! I attended one session about Williamsburg Regional Library of Virginia's *Cena con Cuentos* program (Dinner with Stories). In addition to details about how they structure and advertise their program to Spanish speakers in their community, the presenter shared several resources for books, songs, and rhymes that I can pass along to our bilingual storytime presenters. The next session I attended was about a program called *Math and Me* that is designed to provide early numeracy experiences for 3–6-year-olds and their grownups. The presenter, an elementary math specialist, also spoke about the connection between early math skills and early literacy skills. CLEL is known for their CLEL Bell Awards, which considers how well books for children exemplify the five early literacy practices: sing, talk, read, write, and play. These books either model or support caregiver engagement with children through one of the five practices, making them excellent candidates for sharing in storytimes, recommending kids and grownups, and ensuring we incorporate in our collection development. The closing keynote speaker, Flavia Zuniga-West, spoke about the necessity of centering BIPOC narratives in children's art and literature to celebrate joy and create a sense of belonging.

The opening speaker on the second day, Vera Ahiyya, built on Zuniga-West's talk by offering some strategies for selecting and interacting with children around texts that center BIPOC experiences. She suggested identifying heart connections (text to self), idea connections (text to something news), and life connections (text connects to other books, the world, or other experiences) to build cultural compassion, acceptance, and respect. The first session on this way was about how one librarian built and maintains an extensive library of story time kits for staff of her county library system to use. The second session I attended addressed how to make storytime more inclusive and accessible for all children and their grownups to attend. After an enjoyable drag queen storytime, the conference closed

out with the announcement of Las Campanitas de Plata (Silver Bells) from the CLEL Bells en Español committee. Silver Bells are a list of 25 Spanish language books published within the previous 15 years, and still in print in 2023, that the Spanish CLEL Bell Awards Selection Committee consider to be excellent representations of the Bell Awards Selection Criteria.

October 24-25, I attended the Minnesota Library Association conference in Rochester. Mychal Threats, a recently practicing librarian turned full-time library advocate, kicked off the conference with an honest, uplifting, validating, and encouraging conversation with State Librarian Tami Lee. I learned about custom GPTs and generative AI, discussed what data libraries collect, what we don't collect, and how we use the data we collect to demonstrate the value of library services. I attended a session with tips for introverts to intentionally focus outward to build connection. The last session of the first day was an invitation to introspection and empowerment from President Elect of the American Library Association and fellow Midwesterner, Sam Helmick.

On Friday, the first session I attended discussed the READ Act and public libraries. I gained a lot of practically applicable knowledge about identifying, selecting, and marketing decodable books to parents and teachers. After that, I went to a session about storytime planning and evaluation. Unfortunately, the session largely focused on tools for planning that are either beyond the scope of our need or are already in use by NPL staff, and the information on evaluation and assessment was rushed for time. I attended a session on how fellow SELCO library, Albert Lea, increased awareness and attendance at programs. Finally, I attended a panel discussion of SELCO library directors about creating community connections to round out my conference experience. I volunteered to be a room monitor at several of the sessions I attended. ~ *Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager*

Had a great session on Finding Trustworthy sources presented in partnership with the St. Olaf, Carleton, and the League of Women Voters. ~ *Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian*

An Informed Community Understands What Their Library Offers and Has the Opportunity to Shape the Library with Feedback

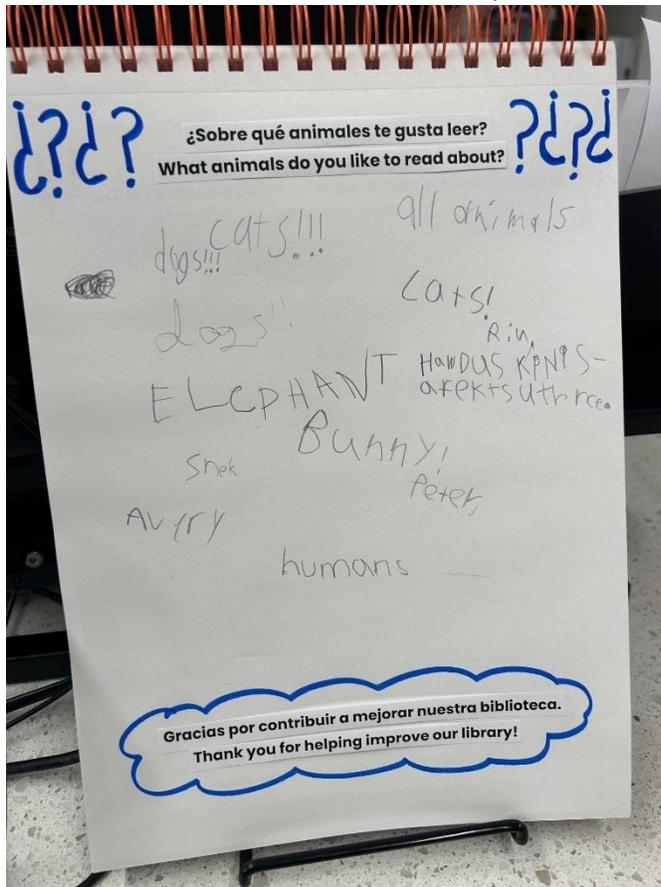
We continued updating our outreach scheduling and online page, making it easier for the community to stay informed and request outreach services. During our Día de los Muertos Family Celebration, an event that brought families together for crafts, face painting, and cultural storytelling, Carleton students provided Spanish-language instructions for a more immersive experience. Sophia, our youth services student worker, led a needle-felting activity, enthusiastically engaging with the children. ~ *Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager*



Francisco and I are representing the library as clients of the St. Olaf Marketing course Organizational Storytelling. We're working with students to develop marketing content to promote our digital resources to a college student and young adult audience. It's been great to see students find out about and get excited by the free resources they can access from campus, and we're looking forward to seeing their final products.

I've begun working with Pilar, our Outreach and Marketing Assistant student worker, on analyzing our social media strategy. She will create monthly reports going forward highlighting our most popular posts, events, and stories. Hopefully, these will create digestible bits of information for other staff members to better understand how our social media works. I know it'll give me a greater idea of the impact of our social media efforts. ~ *Alexus Kreft, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian*

We have continued to seek feedback from young library patrons and their grownups with our question notebook at the children's desk. Recent questions have been:



Which tv, movie, book, or video game characters do you like to read about?

Sobre qué personajes de televisión, películas, libros o videojuegos te gusta leer?

Descending The Dragon Masters
The rise of the red
Patsy Hermione Granger
and the cats of silver
taco Green +
the gratish cat in the Big city
mi hajo shoe zelda
Anna/Bueman
ive (Horses)
Bri Antha hb Speerex
reene

Thank you for helping improve our library!
Gracias por contribuir a mejorar nuestra biblioteca.

¿Sobre qué deportes te gusta leer?
What sports do you like to read about?

rugby Horseback riding
football football
horse Backriding Gymnastics
Gymnastics
Gymnastics basketball

Gracias por contribuir a mejorar nuestra biblioteca.
Thank you for helping improve our library!

~ Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager

With Tyler's help, I solicited poetry title suggestions and collection feedback at October's open mic poetry night. We received several recommendations both at the event and afterward by email. As a result, I purchased all the suggested titles and selected individual works by all suggested poets to add.

I added themed fiction and nonfiction displays and am rotating them every 2 weeks. I am coordinating with Alexis on themes so we complement (not duplicate) each other's work. Our Carleton student worker, Linda, has helped immensely in putting the displays together and maintaining them. The themed displays have helped market some older books in the collection and are a way to tie the collection to timely library programs (NaNoWriMo/WriterFest, currently). I am using 5x7 signs on the new books shelving to point to related titles in the upstairs displays as a way to make connections to the stacks.

I worked with Alexis to show off our newly arrived holiday books (and the addition of holiday stickers to adult fiction spine labels) in an Instagram post. Stickers will be added to new holiday books going forward to help patrons find these titles on the shelf. We may add the stickers retroactively to older items as a student or intern project in the future. ~ Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Collection Development Librarian

An Included Community Is Seen, Heard, and Engaged by Their Library

Through SELCO Community Reads grant we were able to print 380 copies of a book of poems that were gathered through former Poet Laureate, Roby Hardy's, topographical poetry project. The title of the collection is Bridge & Division. The copies of the book will be donated to the FFOL and then sold for \$10 to fund future poetry programming at the library ~ Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian

In response to patron requests, I continue to increase our purchasing of mystery fiction and have added books from several authors/series that were not previously held (including refreshed copies of Tony Hillerman early series books, classic Agatha Christie, and Carolyn Haines) as well as prioritizing diverse titles and well reviewed debuts.

In response to patron request, I have been adding urban fiction titles over the last couple of months and will continue to build this collection going forward. Once we have a sizeable collection I will add spine labels to highlight these on the shelf as well.

After a patron told me they look at the new CD Books area to get ideas for what to listen to on Libby/hoopla, I added a passive display in the CD Books area showing current bestsellers in fiction and nonfiction. I am updating it every month to showcase current hot titles we own (physical and digital). ~ Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Collection Development Librarian

This month, I was interviewed by HealthFinders as part of their monthly HealthCheck virtual conversation, which offered a supportive platform for wellness discussions. Additionally, I joined Library Director Natalie Draper and intern Naidine Villa at the MLA Annual Conference, where we presented "The Future is Diverse: Working Together to Create Pathways to the Profession." Our presentation highlighted the LSTA grant supporting our summer internship program. ~ Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager

TAB elected a new leadership board in October!

Cat brought storytime and the fruit and vegetable piano to the Riverwalk Market on October 5, where many community members were able to play with fun technology and enjoy an engaging storytime.

This year we again brought the bookmobile to Way Park for their annual Pumpkinfest, where over 100 community members enjoyed a spooky Halloween storytime before beginning the rest of their pumpkinfest activities. ~ *Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian*

A Connected Community Has Access to the Resources They Need

Hosted my first Film Club program where we discussed *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*. This program highlights our free streaming video platform, *Kanopy*.

The Hotspot lending program was restarted thanks to continued funding, through the end of the year, by the ALA. ~ *Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian*

We strengthened connections through targeted outreach events and locations. Karin's visits to Benedictine Living, Cannon Valley Drive, and Three Links Apartments reached 15 older adults and resulted in 28 checkouts. Francisco and Cat represented the library at Pumpkinfest, engaging 120 attendees with storytime on the bookmobile and facilitating 25 checkouts. Cat also conducted a storytime at the Riverwalk Fair as part of the Power of Produce program, expanding literacy resources for young families. Additionally, we began preparing publicity for our upcoming bookmobile visits to City Hall in Dundas, scheduled for November, December, and January, as part of our efforts to reach our neighbors in Rice County. ~ *Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager*

Our entire crew of Passport Agents enjoyed a day-long training right here at the library led by the U.S. State Department, on October 4th. We refreshed our knowledge of passport acceptance procedures alongside other agents from across southern Minnesota and are now re-certified for another year. ~ *Alexus Kreft, Outreach & Adult Programming Librarian*

I spent a lot of time this month ordering children's materials to prepare for wrapping up the budget. I also began working on updating and refreshing the very popular Book Pack collection. Based off feedback from Em and Cat, I'm adding "Book Pack Junior" kits, which will feature age-appropriate materials for younger children than the Book Packs traditional have. ~ *Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager*

Cat and Tyler brought the bookmobile to Arcadia Charter School in October. The school recently implemented a new silent sustained reading program and are looking for an increase in reading materials for their students. The youth services department continues to work with Arcadia leadership to find more ways to support this initiative. ~ *Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian*

An Invited Community Feels at Home in Their Library

"Let's have a friendship today!" I heard a young child say to an older one, when each had been playing solo in the dramatic play area for a while. It was a reminder that one of the library's most valuable services is bringing people together to build relationships and connect with others in their community, as well as with us. Weekly Evening Storytime has really taken off, with attendance in the 20s, partly due to this, I think. After storytime, the grownups spend another half hour or so chatting while their kids play. In my seven years here, we have never seen so many families at once in the children's area in the evenings. It's been more like two families per evening, each visiting at different times. Now, on storytime nights, the area is as bustling as it is after weekday morning storytimes. The adults have as much fun as the kids—because they're spending time making new connections and socializing when they likely would simply have been at home before. Such community-building opportunities are a resource people of all ages need, as much as information and access to technology. ~ *Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian*

When we scheduled two events—a Spooky Storytime and a Drop-in Board Games and Puzzles time—at the Oasis during MEA, we weren't sure if they would attract families waiting for social services at the NCRC. I was delighted to learn that they do—nearly 100% of attendees were those waiting for food shelf and other appointments, and attendance was robust (23 storytime, 40 board games). I went out to the lobby to invite people, and, while some came right away, others came because they could hear how much fun we were having. Two people got library cards, and families checked out books—some had not previously been aware that they could. It was exhilarating and deeply meaningful to serve so many people I'd never seen before at library events. We want people to feel at home, included, invited, and (ideally) as engaged by the library in the Oasis as they do at the Washington St. location. Events like these facilitate that. Imagine: we're bringing *creative placemaking* to what was previously just a *hallway*! I've gotten permission to try some unadvertised storytimes during the Oasis's busier hours (I already do two a month at 10:00am there to serve Head Start and whoever else might come)—we'll see if something similar happens on days that are NOT during school breaks like MEA. ~ *Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian*

Our Día de los Muertos Community Altar, open from October 28 to November 2, provided a meaningful space for honoring loved ones. Community members contributed personal ofrendas, fostering a shared experience of remembrance and celebration in the library. This tradition allowed people to connect with each other through a welcoming and inclusive practice. ~ *Angelica Linder- Outreach Manager*

Youth Services launched Let's Imagine/Imaginemos with a farm theme on Friday, October 18, to coincide with the fall school break. The creativity showed by Cat, Em, and Sophia (our YS Carleton student worker) has been thoroughly enjoyed by many youngsters and their grownups. We are learning a lot about the quality of materials needed to program that space with minimal maintenance. I am already looking forward to unveiling a new theme in the weeks to come. Steve created an excellent graphic that we will be incorporating into the printed elements and environment in the future as well. ~ *Amy Commers, Youth Services Manager*

A recent post on the Northfield Happenings facebook page featured a concerned parent seeking information about where to find good friends for their child. Several parents chimed in to say that the recently started Teen Tuesdays and TAB are both places that are welcoming and inclusive and where this person's child might be able to make good friends. ~ *Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian*

The library, in partnership with Northfield Poet Laureate Russel Boyington, launched a poetry theater workshop that culminated in a night of spooky poetry performances. Library staff have been looking for ways to bring poetry programming to teens and kids for many years and are excited to partner with the new poet laureate to make more events like this happen. ~ *Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian*