

Director's report

Submitted by Natalie Draper, Director of Library Services

- Update on sales tax ballot issue: Not great news! The committee ultimately pulled all municipalities' requests from the tax bill. We hope to try again in 2028.
- Update on community facility grant: We are busily preparing communications, collections, and staff for upcoming updates to the children's department. The Friends of the Library are generously supporting additional furnishings that are not eligible for this grant through their fall fundraising efforts. We are excited to open the new and improved space before the end of the year.
- Other updates: Angelica and I will be on a panel with St. Paul Public Library Deputy Director, Rebecca Ryan, at the Library Journal Public Library Safety Summit, speaking on the topic of "**Building Community & Preparing for Immigration Challenges**". The Summit is in Cleveland, Ohio on July 16th-17th. View the full program here: <https://www.libraryjournal.com/event/Public-Library-Safety-Summit-2026#program> I will be presenting a similar topic in a webinar for Library Journal in August.
- We are deep into budget season. Detailed budget updates are included under a separate agenda item.
- Our Friends-funded summer internship continued this year, and we are delighted to have Nicholas Livingston on the team. Nicholas has served as a library page and on the teen advisory board and has experience as a bookseller at Content. He is a TORCH alum at NHS, and he will attend college in the fall. We also have Carleton summer fellows on the team helping out in various roles with all departments: Jess, Alonna, Claire, Jackie, Adria are doing a great job.
- The worm races celebrated the 10th anniversary this year and I got to race (and win!) for the first time. My worm, Shai Holud, beat the Mayor's by a nose. Do worms have noses? This is a delightful partnership with the fine folks at Ziggy's and KYMN broadcasted live this year to help us celebrate. By All Means Graphics provided the targets. A true community event.

Staff reports

Leadership Team

Submitted by Katlin Heidgerken-Greene- Collection Development Librarian

*An **invited community** feels at home in their library.*

Compiled current collection size data and projections for adult collections to help inform our design process for the master plan.

*A **connected community** has access to the resources they need.*

Guided Carleton student Joey in creating “staff highlight” profiles for monthly Shelf Life newsletter. The article featuring Karin’s interview was most clicked for the June issue. More staff highlight articles will be shared over the coming months.

Working with Carleton summer intern Jackie on weeding, displays and other collection-focused projects.

*An **included community** is seen, heard, and engaged by their library.*

Selected Spanish language ebooks and e-audiobooks for SELCO Overdrive Committee to consider adding using RLTA funds. The committee chose to purchase all suggested titles.

Added new Large Print collections to the Library Oasis and the Bookmobile this spring to meet growing demand for this format.

Submitted by Tyler Gardner—Emerging Technology Librarian

*An **empowered community** is a community that is equipped for a changing world.*

Carleton student work Jackie Faust started in June. We have been working together to simultaneously clean up content on our website and make it more accessible as we go along. This includes making sure everything on our website can be navigated with ONLY a images on our website.

*A **connected community** is a community with access to needed resources for all.*

Our ALA Community Connect Grant funding has run its course. We have decided to maintain a set of 5 Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout. We are in the process of getting new SIM cards for each device so they can begin to circulate again.

Submitted by Laurie Kodet, Library Services Manager

Staff

Jess Knachel and Alonna Hannibal have joined our team for the summer as Shelving & Circulation Assistants. They are helping with shelving while also supporting a variety of circulation and collection projects. We are thrilled to have them on our team and appreciate the contributions they are already making.

Passports

Total # Execution	Total \$ Execution Fees	Total # Photos	Total \$ Photos	Total Fees	Total \$	
73	2555	75	1125	\$34.50	\$3,714.50	May
73	2555	102	1530	\$27.00	\$4,112.00	June

State Park Passes

Our park passes were checked out 14 times in May and 13 times in June. This continues to be a wonderful program, providing Minnesotans with free access to explore and enjoy our beautiful state parks.

Outreach Services

May-June 2026

Submitted by Angelica Linder, Karin Bartlett, Steve Maus, Francisco Murillo, Alexis Kreft

Photos at the end

*An **invited community** is a community that feels at home in their library.*

The Outreach team connected with community members through a variety of outreach events, Bookmobile visits, and summer programming.

Francisco shared that one of May's highlights was Pumpers at the Park, where the Bookmobile welcomed more than 200 visitors, completed 30+ checkouts, and signed up three new library card holders. The team also joined our friends at Head Start to celebrate the children's graduation, sharing information about the Summer Reading Challenge and other upcoming library programs with families.

Alexis joined Francisco on monthly visits to Valley View and Millstream Commons, where they connected with residents through readers' advisory, conversations, and library materials. They met one resident who was looking for audiobook recommendations as she transitions from print due to vision loss and another who leads the community movie club and was looking for new film recommendations.

Steve and Alexis once again attended A Great Day Farm, where they participated in the inclusive art class and connected with participants.

In June, Francisco expanded outreach by adding Jefferson Parkway as a regular monthly stop. The team also began weekly summer visits to Summer BLAST and Summer PLUS, increasing access to library resources and summer reading opportunities for youth throughout the community.

Planning is also well underway for the 2026 Hispanic Heritage Celebration, including coordination with community partners, development of cultural programming, and a new children's passport activity that will encourage families to explore cultural exhibits and learn about the many countries represented at the celebration.

*An **included community** is a community in which every person is seen, heard, and engaged.*

Francisco reported the successful completion of Rafael's Spanish-language digital literacy classes held in partnership with St. Dominic Church. Through the Newman Grant that Rafael secured in collaboration with Carleton College, participants who completed the course each received a Chromebook, helping bridge the digital divide within the Spanish-speaking community.

As Rafael shared, there is a strong demand for technology assistance within the Hispanic community. Following increased ICE activity in the area, the classes were moved from the library to St. Dominic Church to provide a more familiar and accessible location. The change resulted in stronger participation and helped community members feel more comfortable attending.

Gerardo continued providing one-on-one assistance by helping community members obtain official birth records, translate and scan documents, and navigate a variety of community resources.

The Sabios Cantores Latino Choir continues to thrive, bringing together a diverse group of Spanish-speaking older adults through music, cultural expression, and community.

Alexus shared a meaningful story from the Oasis. With interpretation assistance from Community Action Center staff, she helped connect a Spanish-speaking mother seeking reading support for her kindergarten-aged daughter with library literacy resources, including Summer Reading, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, storytimes, and the ParentChild+ program through Healthy Community Initiative. The Oasis location allowed the family to access services from three organizations during one visit.

*A **connected community** is a community with access to needed resources for all.*

This quarter included expanded outreach efforts in Dundas and throughout Rice County as we explored additional opportunities to bring library services to new audiences. Community partnerships remained central to our work through ongoing collaboration with Head Start, St. Dominic Church, Healthy Community Initiative, Community Action Center, senior living communities, Summer BLAST, Summer PLUS, and many other local organizations.

As a member of the Sharing Our Roots Board of Directors, I continue serving on the organization's strategic planning committee to help strengthen long-term partnerships and collaborative programming.

*An **informed community** is a community that understands what their library offers and shapes their library with feedback.*

We offered several programs throughout May and June, including the Minnesota Summer Birds Photo Exhibit, Spanish-language Candle Making Workshops, Bilingual Family Game Afternoon, Bilingual Storytime, and continued promotion of the Spanish Book Club and other adult programming.

Alexus also reported a record 27 participants at June's Glass Half Full Book Club, noting the wonderful mix of longtime residents, newcomers to Northfield, and first-time attendees. The program continues to grow as a welcoming space for community connection and conversation.

*An **empowered community** is equipped for the changing world.*

Professional development remained a priority throughout the quarter.

I completed the Library Journal Management Training Certificate, a two-day professional development course focused on library leadership, supervision, and management.

I also participated in the webinar World Refugee Day 2026: Libraries at the Heart of Integration and Inclusion, which explored best practices, data, and resources for developing responsive refugee and immigrant library services.

In June, Alexis and I presented a poster session at the American Library Association Annual Conference titled "Relationships to Recipes: Preserving the Stories of Our Latino Community Through a Collaborative Cookbook." The presentation highlighted the Northfield Cocina bilingual cookbook project and demonstrated how community storytelling, cultural preservation, and partnerships can strengthen belonging through libraries.

The Outreach team also welcomed Nicholas Livingston, the Friends of the Northfield Public Library summer intern. As Alexis shared, Nicholas is a former Page and TAB member, so many staff already knew him by name. This summer he is joining the Outreach team at community events, creating marketing materials, and assisting with programming.



Great Day Farm



Computer class Graduation



Nerstrand Market



CAP Celebration



Cinco de Mayo



Sabios cantores

ALA conference



Nicholas – Storytime

Rivermarket Fair



PRIDE



Candle workshop



Pumpers in the Park



Francisco – Bilingual Storytime Early Ventures

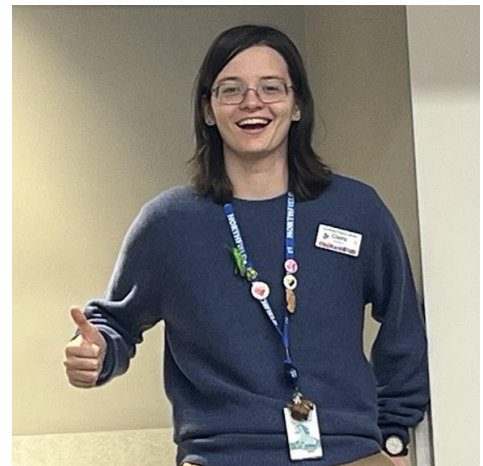
Youth Services

Submitted by Amy Nelson, youth services manager, Emily Lloyd, Cat Sebright, youth services librarians

An invited community is a community that feels at home in their library.

Paint Your Pride was for tweens aged 6 to 11, a drop-in program to paint rocks, wooden boxes, and even toy dinosaurs with the colors of a flag you identify with and that makes you feel proud. The description left room for this to be a country's flag, an LGBTQIA+ flag, a team's colors, and so on. A mom told Emily that she was so glad to see a Pride program for this age group and said it meant the world to her child.

We are pleased to be working with Claire Saunders (they/them), a Carleton student, this summer to support our Pages program as well as general youth services programs, events, and collections. They have hit the ground running and are building great relationships with the Pages and collaborating well with library staff. They will be here through the start of the Carleton year!



*A **connected community** is a community with access to needed resources for all.* Emily also writes, “We’re back bringing the Summer Reading Challenge to Summer PLUS this year, and, while we’ve previously folded PLUS students into the larger library program when it comes to the grand prize drawings and Reader of the Week, this year we are having separate prize drawings and a Reader of the Week program just for PLUS. There are 180 kids, so it’s still a very big pool, and it’s a way to build on the already strong connection between PLUS and the library that the weekly bookmobile and “button awards” visits from Francisco have for the past few years.”



At the end of May, Amy got to accompany Steve and Francisco to Martha’s Eats and Treats for the first of a series of monthly visits on Friday mornings to Dundas. She says, “despite the light rain, I had a great crowd for our baked goods-themed storytime, and several folks created utensil creatures with simple items to pair with their free scone from Martha. I had also brought oven mitts and various balls for folks to try to toss back and forth with a partner. Doing it with oven mitts is surprisingly challenging!”

*An **included community** is a community in which every person is seen, heard, and engaged.*

Emily writes, “....and what engaged a lot of the town was the 10th Annual Worm Races held in Bridge Square in June! We partner with Ziggy’s for Worm Races, an event geared to school-aged kids, and to mark the 10th we had town “celebrity” adults choose worms and run a race before the kids’ races: Mayor Erica, Officer Mike, Officer Kenna,



Poet Laureate Russ, and (winner!) Library Director Natalie. A volunteer trumpeter played the familiar racetrack call before every race, KYMN covered the race, and Culver’s donated “mud and worms” custard treats. I love this event because it’s a community celebration that brings people together, including a hefty number who aren’t regulars at the Washington St building. I’ve heard from teens that they grew up attending Worm Races

every year when they were younger—it’s a memorable part of their childhoods. It feels like we’ve created a real town tradition. Bonus points that it’s a quirky, silly one born of a great partnership. I’ll be presenting on this event and partnership at the annual ARSL (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) conference in September.”

The teen advisory board is on a roll! This spring, teens have come up with a lot of new program ideas, most notably two recurring events: Creator Club and Fandom Friday. Creator Club is a space for teens to share anything they’ve been making, from writing to drawing to short films, and more. Fandom Friday is a gathering spot for teens to share their excitement for their niche nerdy interests. Both programs have been very well attended and supported by teens. At Fandom Friday, teens have, unbidden, shown up with full on PowerPoint presentations to explain the nuances of their fandom. Cat has learned more than they ever expected to about the characters in *The Amazing Digital Circus* and the plot arc of a new Disney show, *The Doomies* (just to name a few). Coming up in August, teens are planning an outdoor field day event involving reusable water balloons and outdoor games at Central Park. With the success of the most recent teen-planned events, Cat is excited to see how that event comes together.

An informed community is a community that understands what their library offers and shapes their library with feedback.

As of the end of June, we have nearly 900 folks registered for the summer reading program, which is about 80% of last year’s total. With over a month left to register, we are hopeful that we will at least match the number of participants in last year’s program. We are pleased so many community members look to the library each summer and want to be a part of our challenge.

An empowered community is equipped for the changing world

With a Love Your Library mini-grant from SELS, Emily brought Ash Tifa of OutFront in to do a two-hour workshop in June going step by step through all the forms needed to change your name and gender markers on official state and federal documents. Emily says, “Attendees were provided with all forms, and every last one asked multiple questions and stayed completely engaged (during a two-hour session on legal forms!) One man had come all the way from Mankato, excited to find a workshop like this in Southern Minnesota, not just the Twin Cities.”



Ten Library Pages joined us the first week of summer reading to kick off 9 weeks of summer volunteering at the library. These middle school aged teens are here for 5 hours a week each, helping sign folks up for summer reading and handing out buttons, assisting with programs for kids and teens, planning and prepping an event for teens, helping with small library projects, and more. Cat and our summer intern Claire have been working with them to give them a first-job type experience, giving them opportunities to be creative, focused, and responsible. Many Pages go on to include their experience at the library on resumes! Look for teens in these bright green shirts at the library—they’re a Page!