

January & February combined

Director's note: 2025 has gotten off to a very busy start. Tyler has been busy getting the annual report ready for approval tonight, staff are occupied with extensive training in preparation for the new ILS, passport appointments are filling up fast, and programs have been popular with the community, keeping programming staff very busy. We still do not have any word, good bad or otherwise, as to the status of the federal grant we applied for at the beginning of the year. It is in the courts' hands now so all we can do is await notification.

January updates *submitted by Alexis Kreft, Adult Programming & Outreach Librarian*

*An **informed community** understands what their library offers and has the opportunity to shape the library with feedback.*

Thanks to Legacy funds made available to us through SELCO, we hosted historian and librarian Nancy Vaillancourt for *Minnesota's Hooded History: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Minnesota* on January 7th. Interest was overwhelming—we were at full capacity in the Bunday Room and set up an overflow room upstairs to accommodate additional patrons. All told, about 95 people joined us for the incredibly informative talk. We're hoping to have Nancy back again this year to reach even more folks.

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

I really enjoyed visiting Valley View Assisted Living with Francisco on January 23rd. It was our first time stopping by, and patrons were excited to have us there. We checked out books and renewed library cards, plus got an idea of what residents are interested in to better curate our trips in the future. We had about 1/3rd of residents show up, which was great!

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

Planning has begun for a project Angelica and I are collaborating on: *Northfield Cocina*, a cookbook of recipes from Northfield's Latino community. We just applied for SELCO's Community Reads grant and should hear back from them soon. We're working with local photographer Rio Pérez and will soon begin reaching out to folks to gather recipes and stories. This is a long-range project, but we hope to have everything completed by October.

January updates *Submitted by Amy (Commers) Nelson, Youth Services Manager*

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

I am working to connect with staff at libraries around the state who circulate a similar volume of children's materials annually to get a sense of collection sizes. This information will inform future decisions regarding collection development and management as well as discussions regarding appropriate shelving fixtures down the road.

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I am looking forward to attending a virtual conference February 13-14 called Power Up: A Leadership Conference for Youth Services Managers and Staff hosted by the Continuing Education department at the UW-Madison iSchool. I presented at this conference in the past and it is the only conference to my knowledge that specifically scopes for Youth Services Managers. I look forward to sharing more about what I learn in next month's report!

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

I set up standing order plans with our main vendor for print materials, Ingram, to ensure consistency in collecting series, books about popular children's characters, and formats. Plans can be adjusted at any time to respond to declines in popularity or additions of new series/characters in the future.

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We have been trying out some new furniture placements in the children's area as we are thinking about making the best use of the limited space. We have received positive comments about rotating the picture book bins so that more book covers are visible as you enter the area.

January updates submitted by Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian

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The Ice fishing dramatic play area launched in January, and has seen a lot of action in the two weeks it has been in the children's area. I transformed a kiddie pool into a frozen pond with cutouts for kids to "fish" in with magnetic fishing poles. The absolute best part so far has been hearing a small patron saying "Mama, did I catch a walleye?" Except this small human couldn't pronounce their Ls, so it sounded more like "wawweye" which was so incredibly cute. And, it showcased the kiddo using the fish identification chart in the dramatic play area to correctly ID their fish! Hooray for learning through play!

The Summer Reading planning committee convened in January to begin the planning process. We are replicating (with minor changes) the same structure from SRC 2023 and 2024, so we expect the planning process to go smoothly. Summer will be here before we know it!

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My favorite thing about beginning Teen Tuesday as a regular rotating event is that I have **finally** seen some success in a teen book club! We regularly have a group of 4-5 kids there to discuss the book of the month. In January we read a graphic novel/comic book, *Civil War: A Marvel Comics Presentation*; in February we will read *Iceberg* by Jennifer Nielsen, a historical fiction novel about a young teen aboard the Titanic.

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Held a digital wellbeing facilitated discussion with the Bring Change to Mind group led by art teacher Karna Hauck at Northfield High School. We met during their lunch period to discuss how the influence technology has on their lives and what digital wellbeing looks like for them. This was a great discussion and I look forward to using my Live More, Screen Less to put together similar discussions with parents and caregivers in Northfield.

January updates submitted by Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

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Prairie Creek Community School students have a big personal research project every year, and print books are the school's preferred source. After talking with teachers about Ebooks Minnesota—most importantly, that the books accessed there are the same books by the same children's publishers they'd see on the juvenile nonfiction bookshelves if we were able to stock

more titles than we physically can—they decided that Ebooks Minnesota would be an acceptable source for these projects. This will help a LOT of students immediately get their hands on a desired book, rather than waiting for a requested book to come in from a library with a bigger nonfiction section.

I visited Prairie Creek and introduced 60 4th and 5th graders and their teachers to Ebooks Minnesota, ways to search it, and how to highlight or make notes in the books they check out. A teacher stopped by NPL two days later to say that students had been excitedly exploring the resource, and that almost all had been able to find something they could use right away for their personal project. In March, Prairie Creek 2nd and 3rd graders will be visiting the library for tours, scavenger hunts, and stories, and they've requested we add Ebooks Minnesota to the agenda. I can't emphasize how helpful greenlighting this resource will be both for Prairie Creek students and for those of us assisting them with their research, this year and in the future.

February

February updates submitted by Alexis Kreft, Adult Programming & Outreach Librarian

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

Steve and I have had multiple meetings with folks from St. Olaf regarding this year's (newly rebranded!) *Celebrate Asian Pasifika*. This year, we'll be closing part of Washington St, similar to the first few years of our Hispanic Heritage Celebration, and expanding our programming to include an Anime Fair for teens and adults, an Anime Film Fest on St. Olaf's campus, and even more! It's been a joy to collaborate so closely with St. Olaf's Asian Studies and Academic and Civic Engagement departments.

At Angelica's suggestion, we recently created a WhatsApp for Business account. This will be especially helpful for patrons who prefer to reach us by text. Because many members of the Latino community in Northfield already use it, it also helps us meet our patrons where they're at.

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I led a local history and genealogy research training for staff to better understand the resources available to them and patrons when it comes to doing research on their families, homes, or Northfield history. Working at the Northfield History Center has helped me hone my local history research skills, and I really enjoyed getting to share that knowledge with our staff.

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

We hosted another wonderful Adult LEGO Craft Night on February 6th, this time focused on Valentine's Day builds. This program always brings a great crowd of intergenerational LEGO builders including college students, seniors, and everyone in between.



February updates submitted by Amy (Commers) Nelson, Youth Services Manager

On a personal note, I got married on January 18 and will be changing my last name from Commers to Nelson.

*An **informed community** understands what their library offers and has opportunity to shape the library with feedback.*

I had a wonderful time attending the virtual Power Up conference for Youth Services Managers and staff. I was selected to participate in the conference planning committee for next year's in-person event at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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We have recently had an influx of community members interested in volunteering at the library, so I have been gathering opportunities from staff and assessing capacity to see how we can connect these folks with the library. I have two introductory meetings scheduled for this week!

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I worked with the Youth Services staff and Circulation staff to develop new labelling standards for picture books, early readers, and the parenting collection. The previous standards included labels which were not available through any of our main vendors, meaning we were paying just about as much for shipping as we were the stickers! Labels can now be created in-house, and we hope the changes will make the collections more user-friendly.

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Cat and Em have scheduled a fun and engaging slate of programs during Northfield Public Schools' Spring Break March 24-April 2.

February updates submitted by Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian

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A recent interaction with a patron got me thinking, sometimes it takes a long time for experiences to simmer to the point they become memories. I was talking with a patron, Susan, and she was telling me about some of the things she enjoyed about the library. Then, she started talking about the World Cup. Mind you, the World Cup was two years ago. We showed

the World Cup on the TV in the atrium back in 2022. Susan told me she stopped at the library for an unrelated reason but ended up staying to watch soccer for a while. She was sitting next to a group of Spanish-speaking men. She told me that the men and her had exchanged some glances of unsureness at each other, as if they were both maybe aware that they might be “unwelcome company” to the other in some way. However, when one of the teams scored, both Susan and the group of men all cheered and celebrated the goal. They all looked at each other and laughed. Then the men proceeded to explain all about different formations and strategies taking place on the field to the, self-described, soccer novice. Susan told me this is one of the best things that has happened to her since she started living in Northfield in the 1980s, and the library, hands-off, facilitated that interaction and connection. I thought it was a great reminder of how organic connections like this are happening all the time in the library, but staff aren’t always fortunate enough to hear about them.

February updates submitted by Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Collection Development Librarian

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I have been enjoying attending weekly Spanish language classes provided for library staff. Our instructor is David, one of the library’s Carleton student employees. He does a great job tailoring the vocabulary and content to library customer service scenarios and I have learned some new-and-improved vocab for common library interactions. I have already been using my (limited) Spanish language skills with library patrons when the need arises, and this is making me feel a lot more confident in those moments! Of course, I love being able to connect Spanish-speaking patrons with our bilingual Spanish-speaking staff members, but this helps me to be more welcoming, respectful, and helpful anytime someone prefers to speak in Spanish.

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I weeded the bookmobile collections this month (removing some items that had been on the bus since 2018-19) to make room for more recent titles by popular authors and newer nonfiction in both English and Spanish.

27 new *Very Short Introductions* (a series by Oxford University Press) have been ordered with FFNPL collection gift funds. They are wide-ranging in topic, including authoritarianism, J.R.R. Tolkien, cancer, borders, gender history, ancient Egypt, Sylvia Plath, and more.

I am working on inventorying mystery series books in our collection. I’ve found that many gaps in series exist and am working on cleaning up our collection holdings to be more useful to mystery series readers and to keep current on new series books as they publish.