



**Northfield Public Library  
Director's Report  
July 2020**

## Director's Report

***Submitted by Teresa Jensen, Library Director***

It's that time of the year again—budget time! This will be my last budget, after 7 years of this process. I've gone from budget newbie in 2013 to an old hand for the 2021 budget. This year, we have no outsized asks of the city, as we did last year, when we asked for full funding for our Outreach Coordinator position, with the exception of asking for a no fine policy. This would have a budget impact of approximately \$14,000 by eliminating late fees. We hope to include this measure as a part of the Racial Equity and Inclusion initiative being brought to City Council this year.

We are also in the midst of our Rice County funding request, which funds library services for country residents beyond the boundaries of Northfield. For NPL, that is about 6,000 library users. Rice County, for the last two years, has allocated \$192,239. I do not anticipate any increase in funding from Rice County; the county could be negatively impacted by reduced revenue due to the pandemic, which will affect their budget for 2021.

As much as possible I am including our library managers in the budgeting process, so that they are fully able to build the 2022 budget next summer.

## Adult Services

***Submitted by Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Reference Services Manager***

Summer is here! The Library's Summer Challenge kicked off June 8, and virtual Books and Stars concerts and weekly virtual storytimes in June were a good start to the summer. I was able to "guest star" in Angelica's last virtual Bilingual Storytime in June and it was so fun to help with the rhymes and songs. Weekly storytimes are on a break for July and August, and will resume in the fall.

Just in time to promote the Summer Challenge, I worked with members of the PR committee to plan and script a Public Service Announcement video about the library at the request of the City

of Northfield's Communications department. Library staff members pitched in to read for and record the video, and we learned a lot in the process! The finished video is available to watch on the City's YouTube channel and will be played on NPB as well. Now we are ready to create more videos! Staff did a great job sharing what we have been up to at the library and some of the services and events available for patrons.

Longtime reference librarian Joan Ennis retired this month, which was bittersweet as the pandemic played a role in her decision. She will be sorely missed by staff and patrons. Joan's many contributions to Northfield Public Library over the years mean her absence leaves quite a hole, but we are working to transition her duties and collections and she has graciously offered to continue to run her book club as a volunteer, which I so appreciate. Congratulations to Joan on her retirement and on over 30 years of service to the Northfield Public Library! We wish you all the best and hope you will be a frequent visitor.

We also had some new beginnings this month:

Atia Cole, our Library Youth Services Intern, has been helping Emily with the Summer Challenge drawings and Books and Stars events, and has also taken on additional projects that run the gamut of library services. Most notably, she is working on a visual-format Annual Report document for the library, which will help tell our story and share our service impact as well as showcase library/community connections and partnerships. She is also creating a "Plan Your Visit" page for the library website (and accompanying video tour) that will help new visitors know what to expect when they come to the library, including accessibility information. Atia has been a great addition to the library team this summer. Welcome, Atia!

New databases have been added to the collection of statewide library resources that all Minnesotans can access (Electronic Library of Minnesota, or ELM). The selections offered change periodically after going through a vetting process. Newspapers and magazines from national to regional interest, great resources for homework help, and more are included. Check them out at [elibrarymn.org](http://elibrarymn.org) or by visiting the Database page on our website, [mynpl.org](http://mynpl.org).

The new Summer 2020 title selected for One Book One Minnesota is *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota* edited by Sun Yung Shin. This book was a Northfield Reads title in 2018-2019, but if you didn't read it then, (or if you want to revisit the book!), now is a great time. It is available as an e-book (free unlimited download through August 23) from [E-BooksMinnesota](http://E-BooksMinnesota), and statewide virtual book discussions are forthcoming.

***Submitted by Jamie Stanley***

With the departure of Joan Ennis at the end of June, I will be assuming responsibility for managing the adult fiction collection while continuing to oversee the mystery, science fiction, and western fiction genre books. I am honored to be offered this opportunity, and aspire to be a good steward of the majority of the adult fiction books in the library.

One of my first tasks is to review and if necessary rewrite the collection statements for the “general” fiction collection. I plan to use the CREW method (Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding) to help me manage this collection as I use it with the other genre collections. The foundational belief of the CREW method is that collections should evolve. Items in the collection should be attractive, the shelves should not be overly crowded, books should be continually evaluated to determine if they are “a good fit” for inclusion in the collection. I also look forward to better familiarizing myself with the general fiction collection and working with readers by acquiring and recommending authors and titles they may enjoy.

The evening of Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> eight people attended the monthly Northfield Library Mystery Book Group meeting at which we discussed two books. [Gone to Dust](#) by Matt Goldman and [Deal Breaker](#) by Harlan Coben.

My email list for the Mystery Book group numbers twenty-two people, but I knew ahead of time the approximate number who would attend the event. Early in the CoVid-19 pandemic, it became apparent which members wanted to self-isolate but keep in touch, and those that wanted to minimize all communication while in quarantine. It was to the base of willing communicators that I suggested we meet either virtually or in person for a meeting in June.

As a city employee, I can use picnic shelters free of charge, but I hedged my bets when planning this meeting by also scheduling a virtual Gotomeeting appointment for the group. I communicated my plan to members who were interested in attending and they made clear to me that they preferred to meet in person outdoors. After monitoring the weather forecast, I made the decision five days in advance that we should meet in public, which in hindsight was the right one. Members seemed to relish the opportunity to gather outdoors in the spacious, airy picnic shelter. We brought our own chairs and arrayed them around a couple of picnic tables spaced far enough apart to all feel safe. I did not stipulate ahead of time that a mask was necessary so while most members did wear a mask, a couple or people did not and this subject was a nonissue. Finally, we have two new people attend the meeting, which was heartening given ongoing concerns about the current viability of hosting library programs.

Since the June meeting, I have kept in touch with Mystery book group members and pitched the idea of meeting at the Spring Creek Picnic Shelter on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> to talk about [Bluebird](#), [Bluebird: A Novel](#) by Attica Locke. To date, I have received four additional confirmations from members interested in attending this meeting. .

***Submitted by Tyler Gardner***

During the month of June, I lead a meeting with Jamie, Laurie, Teresa, Katlin, Emily, and Atia to discuss LibGuides. The purpose of the meeting was to come to a consensus about some of the guides that we wanted to delete from our page. A lot has changed with how people search and find information on the internet, and by looking at the statistics from our Subject Guide usage we were able to make some determinations about which pages we should keep and which we

should be getting rid of. Ultimately, we were looking for ways to make sure people who come to our website are finding the information they want to find easily and without having to click through a maze of links to get to where they need to be. The changes that we discussed were rolled out the day we had the meeting. It was good to come together with staff and make some decisions that we could act on without much hesitation. Going forward we will continue to look out our LibGuides and our website for more ways to make it an easier site to navigate from an information and accessibility standpoint.

The Dungeons and Dragons group met online again at the end of June. We used the same Discord chat server and had 5 people in attendance. There was also a young person who had just moved to Northfield a few days prior who was excited to learn about the Dungeons and Dragons group through the TAB Instagram page. Soon, the group leader will be going off to college and we will need to find an alternative/replacement for him. I believe there is someone in the group who is interested in taking over but those conversations have not taken place yet.

One interesting thing that happened in June was we had a visit one late afternoon for a first amendment 'auditor'. He came in with a cell phone recording on a selfie stick. He recorded pretty much every corner of the library. When circulation staff asked what he was doing he said "I'm exercising my first amendment rights". He must have been pretty bored. He did not provoke anyone or try to get a reaction out of anyone. After he was done recording he left and we saw nothing more of him.

Before Covid-19 struck, as far back as November 2019, I had started conversations with Kathy Rush about Benefits for Part-Time employees. I had been invited to attend the meetings where these benefits would be discussed but once the pandemic struck and we all went home those conversations shifted to more pressing matters. Now that things are starting to return to "normal" (but very far from normal), I am hoping that we will see this topic of conversation come back in to the fold. In June, I reached back out to Kathy, who then communicated with Michelle Mahowald, and I was informed that a meeting is coming soon.

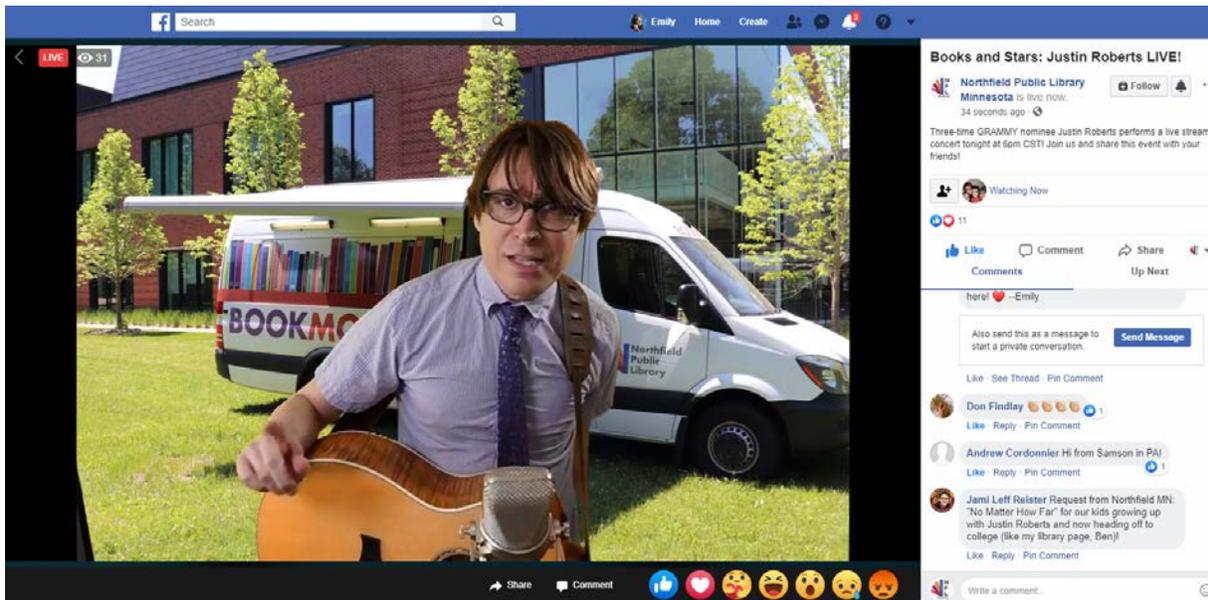
## Youth Services

### ***Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian***

Summer Challenge, a twist on traditional summer reading programs, began on June 8 and has been enthusiastically received. Youth who complete five from a list of 35 challenges are entered into weekly drawings for \$25 gift cards to Content Books (teens may also choose cards to The Sketchy Artist or Games N' Geek). I've been wanting to move away from the "little prizes youth 'shop' for" model since I began work at the library, and this summer--when so much is new for all of us--offered the perfect opportunity. The new model cuts down on non-Youth Services-staff's involvement, the proliferation of plastic doodads, etc--and allows us to support local businesses during a year where that is particularly important. I'd like to stick to this model in

future summers, perhaps with tweaks here and there (gift cards in smaller amounts to more local businesses, for ex). As of June 30, 275 youth have registered for Summer Challenge. Laurie and Angelica promote Summer Challenge on their outreach visits to youth, and Northfield Promise is including all necessary materials when they hand out free books to children. The entire program can be completed online for folks who prefer.

We've partnered with the Northfield Arts Guild to offer free grab & go art activity packs--100 of each art project while supplies last--that have also been popular. These are co-branded and the bilingual instructions inside include a call to register for Summer Challenge and suggestions for related resources from Ebooks Minnesota's large selection of kids' nonfiction. My thanks to the Friends and Foundation of the library for funding this hit of a program.



Virtual Books & Stars concerts kicked off on June 10th, with Justin Roberts livestreaming to the library's Facebook channel from his home. Justin and I talked a lot about how to make this performance feel "Northfield"--connected to our community rather than just another virtual concert. Roberts has a green screen, and we sent pics of the bookmobile and outside of the library that he used. I asked him to give special by-name congrats to several graduating high school seniors who have been very involved at the library: Pages, a youth Library Board member, and TAB participants. This was a nice surprise for them! Our other June Books & Stars performances, from Salsa del Sol and Six Still Standing, went without a hitch livestreamed from the library's patio to our Facebook account.

Knowing that the Friends' fiscal year closes on August 1, I knew I wasn't going to be able to spend much of the funds allocated annually to children's programs: I had several programs scheduled for April and May, all of which needed to be canceled. The Friends agreed to my using \$1000.00 from this budget on books, an unexpected windfall! I used it to purchase new additional copies of extremely popular books--many of which are checked out so frequently that

they are barely hanging together after a while. Big Nate, Dog Man, and Elephant & Piggie books are some examples.

Facebook Live storytime attendance declined sharply in June. The weather is nice, older siblings are home, and my hunch is that a lot of people are feeling burned out on streamed events which were so critical in early “stay at home” times. We’re taking a storytime break in July and August and considering new ways to serve the early learning set, including early literacy packets (similar to the activity kits), story strolls, and programming for a new library YouTube channel.

I’ve been taking advantage of the library’s fuller shelves to do some weeding around the YS collection, including CD audiobooks and board books, with more to come.

## Circulation Services

***Submitted by Kathy Rush Vizina, Technology/Circulation Services Manager***

June was a sad month for the Circulation Staff. After 23 years of employment, Janet Sletten retired from the Library. Janet always worked full time as a teacher at St. Dominic School, and began her part time job at the library because she wanted to buy a new car. Five cars later she has decided to retire. We will miss her smile and friendship. She knew so many of our adult patrons and kids from her teaching. We wish we could throw her a big party, but that will have to wait. We wish her well in her new endeavors.

## Outreach, Shelving and Volunteer Services

***Submitted by Laurie Kodet, Shelving/Outreach Services Supervisor/Volunteer Manager and Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator***

### **Link Services-**

Angelica and Laurie have just completed the July issue of the Link Services Newsletter. To view current and past newsletters visit <https://guides.mynpl.org/resources>.

### **Home Delivery Service-**

Home Delivery Service continues to average 9-12 stops a week. I excited to report we have now arranged delivery and retrieval of materials to all senior living facilities. Patrons are very appreciative and have told us how much they missed getting their books.

### **Outreach-**

Angelica and I met virtually several times with Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) staff from both Growing Up Healthy and Northfield Promise brainstorming ways to connect with the community. In a partnership with HCI and Northfield Public Schools meal delivery program called



Well Read, Well Fed. Northfield Promise provide bags of books and the library's Summer Challenge and Books and Stars information, which Angelica and HCI intern, Ana handed out to families when they picked up their lunches. We

delivered this program eight times this month and reached 214 people.

The library offered a pilot program called, Bilingual Storytime Driveway Tour on June 15<sup>th</sup> at a local home daycare. Angelica wore a unicorn costume and she and Laurie, sang songs and shared a story in the front yard. 9 daycare children and 5 neighborhood children participated. This is another partnership project with HCI. We have scheduled four dates in July to provide this program to up to 12 local home daycares.



Angelica and Laurie are so excited to be out in the community again.

## Poet Laureate

### ***Submitted by Rob Hardy, Northfield Poet Laureate***

June saw the publication of the Summer 2020 issue of *Willows Wept Review*, which includes poems by Northfield poets Becky Boling, Heather Candels, D.E. Green, Rob Hardy, and Steve McCown. Northfield poets contributed 13 poems all together, and account for 45% of the contents of the issue, which also includes work from poets in nine states and England. To celebrate the publication, I coordinated a poetry reading via Zoom in which all five poets read their contributions. I edited the video of the Zoom session and posted it on the Northfield Poet Laureate YouTube channel. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/aZ-7O4DugB4>

The organization End in Mind (<https://www.endinmindproject.org/>) has created a Pandemic Poetry Project that pairs readings of poems (read by Cathy Wurzer) with words and images. The first two installments were by Northfield poets Rob Hardy (<https://vimeo.com/428116862>) and D.E. Green (<https://vimeo.com/429310701>).

I met with Heather, Alyssa, Teresa, and Kathy to discuss plans for the virtual Sidewalk Poetry Capstone in August. I also spent an hour walking around the east side of Northfield (between Washington and Oak Street and 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets) finding the locations of the 2020 sidewalk poems.

I created a list of questions for Bridget Novak to use with Laura Baker clients to elicit their experiences during the pandemic and stay-at-home order. The responses will become part of Carleton's Covid-19 Archive (<https://covid19archive.sites.carleton.edu/>).

I was asked, and agreed, to read and write a promotional blurb for the forthcoming poetry collection by Northfield poet (and perennial sidewalk poetry winner) Steve McCown.