

Mission: Invite exploration, empower people, engage community

May & June combined

Director's note:

Summer has been quite busy! Circulation is up quite a bit over last year (about 20% higher) which is partly due to the new ILS, and partly extra foot traffic. Automatic renewals have helped boost our numbers to where they should be (if people remembered to renew their books on time). Our circulation numbers were the one minor casualty of going fine-free in 2022 but that should correct itself. Door count is up as well, and programs have been very well attended. Our staff and interns are keeping busy as summer and all that comes with the season is in full swing.

I had the good fortune to attend the American Library Association Conference in Philadelphia last month on a scholarship from SELCO. It's wonderful to be in a place that supports and encourages professional development for library workers. I met with vendors and colleagues, attended a screening of *The Librarians*, heard from Michigan Governor, Gretchen Whitmer and former Librarian of Congress, Carla Hayden, and attended a number of excellent sessions. One session in particular stood out as something the library can implement right away: *Don't Just Shake it Off: using debriefing tools to support front-line staff*, presented by the Calgary Public Library. They provided their toolkit with permission to customize, use, and share as we see fit. I am always impressed by the generosity of library workers—we love to share ideas with each other as much as we love to share resources at the library.

Work on the passport office/meeting room/director's office is going smoothly, if a bit slowly, and coming along nicely. I hope to see passport services using the space comfortably in a couple of weeks. Passport appointments have been steady through the summer so far and typically are heavier in the spring/winter/fall.

Budget season is fully upon us and we have submitted our budget request to Rice County. We will present to the Rice County Board of Commissioners on August 5th. As usual, we have requested a 4% inflationary increase. The majority of our budget is City of Northfield with Rice County providing around \$200k/yr. The request to Rice County as well as our City of Northfield budget narrative are attached to this report for your information only. No action is required.

We submitted (and have been accepted!) a chapter proposal about our NCCC internship program for an edited volume published by Rowman & Littlefield, "Pathways for Change: Strategic Programs for Cultivating Diversity in the Library Workforce". The chapters will be peer reviewed and publication date is tentatively expected for Spring 2027. The first draft is due in September.

May Staff reports:

Alexus Kreft, Adult Programming & Outreach Librarian

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

Angelica and I collaborated with Northfield Hospital + Clinics to host a series of three bilingual workshops on heart health. Registered dietitians from the hospital shared tips, tricks, and recipes with patrons on staying heart healthy throughout the month of May. I'm hopeful this marks the beginning of a wonderful collaboration between us and the hospital—we're already discussing more bilingual and Spanish-language programming to come!

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

We hosted two photoshoots for our upcoming community cookbook *Northfield Cocina*. All told, over 20 participants stopped by with their dishes to have their photos taken by our wonderful photographer, Rio Perez. It was a truly joyful couple of days—at one point I believe we had six countries represented all in one room! I cannot wait to share the completed cookbook with our community. A sneak peek at the photos:



On a more personal note, I was thrilled to get to organize an open house to celebrate Angelica and Natalie's recent Mover & Shakers recognition. It was so great to see folks come together to celebrate both of my incredible coworkers and the library as a whole. It was extra special to see some former staff members come back. It reminds me of how the work we do is only possible because of over a century of hard work and community support!



Amy Nelson, Youth Services Manager

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

On May 27, we welcomed Hannah Koteck to the library as an Intern, funded by FFNPL. Hannah will be working 20-24 hours a week for 12 weeks this summer. Hannah is a NCCC student and hopes to one day become a librarian. She has been open to all the new experiences we have thrown her way to help launch the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

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In May, I spent a lot of time with Evergreen, our new ILS, both troubleshooting bugs and also beginning to add new items. Northfield now has three “regional catalogers,” myself included, so we attended the first virtual meeting of all those in the SELCO region with that designation. We are prioritizing what most helps patrons, or what might cause the most confusion for patrons as we work through our lists of issues/changes/hopes for the future.

Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

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Every May, the FFNPL sponsor busing all of the first grades in Northfield (St. Dom’s students walk) to the library, where they get a tour, participate in an interactive story, and learn about the summer reading challenge. These visits are joyful and exciting for them and for us. To promote our Summer Reading Kickoff with Pizza and Taco, I wore a shirt with the characters from the graphic novel series on it during

these visits, and kids were already buzzing upon seeing it before Cat and I opened our mouths to talk to them. We saw a total of 242 first graders in May, and the classes from Greenvale Park all got library cards (a tradition for GVP) if they didn't have them already.

In addition to these visits, at the end of their school year, Spring Creek 3rd graders take their annual walking field trip to a variety of downtown locations, with each of five classes spending an hour at the library—hearing about summer reading and programs, listening to cliffhanging chapters from a few recommended books, and then browsing, giving staff a golden opportunity to show off our readers' advisory skills by finding the exact something to excite each kid. **An informed community understands what their library offers**—and readers' advisory is one of the things patrons of all ages should know that we do, but often don't!

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Summer Page (teen summer volunteer) trainings also take place in May, as we get to know a great group of youth—some of whom have volunteered here before, some of whom are new, and facilitate them getting to know each other and the library, too. We position Paging as a kind of “practice job” as our Pages aren't yet old enough for paying summer jobs. We talk in small groups about where we've received good customer service and where we've received bad customer service, and what they feel characterizes each. They brainstorm about programs they want to offer other youth during the summer, and they are given the responsibility of designing those programs mainly on their own, bringing a little project management experience into the mix.

June staff reports

Alexus Kreft, Adult Programming & Outreach Librarian

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I was thrilled to host Ethno USA as part of their Minnesota tour on Tuesday, June 24th. Nine musicians from all over the world performed songs from their homes right here in our atrium. The crowd of over 60 patrons was super engaged—singing, clapping, and dancing along!



We hosted another successful Adult LEGO Craft Night on June 26th! It's always great to see fresh faces and a wide ranges of ages at these events.



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

We hosted the Mobile Sign Shop on June 30th as part of SELCO's Legacy Vetted programs. 45 adults, teens, and kids stopped by to create their own personalized sign. It was wonderful to host a program outside, although it did highlight the lack of shade in our outdoor programming spaces.

Amy Nelson, Youth Services Manager

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

I've been accepted into the 2025-2026 cohort of the Educators' Neighborhood, a professional learning community that is a project of the Fred Rogers Institute. The cohort will be convened in September. More information about the Educators' Neighborhood:

<https://www.fredrogersinstitute.org/files/content/guidebook2025.pdf>



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Over the last few months, I worked with an individual in MRCI's employment program. MRCI is a nonprofit that supports individuals with disabilities or disadvantages at home, at work and in the community. They were able to get a taste of what library work is like and provided helpful assistance with our collection maintenance goals, particularly identifying many DVD labels that were too sun faded to read any longer.

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Youth Services has a line item in our collection budget each year for eBooks that we use to enhance what SELCO provides in Overdrive/Libby. Purchases Em made this year include eAudiobook titles such as the *Zoe and Sassafras* series, *Real Pigeons* series, *The Liars Society* series and a selection of Minecraft books perfect for summer reading.

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

Over the first 5 months of the year, volunteers contributed 349 hours of time to the library. Volunteers drop off library materials to folks on our home delivery routes, help maintain our collections by ensuring items on the shelves are in good condition, in the correct order, and the areas are dust free and tidy. They assist our shelving staff, support library programs by helping staff with preparations, and more. We are currently at capacity for most volunteer opportunities, but we accept applications as they come in to review and keep on file for future needs or openings we may have.

Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

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I approached KYMN to ask for some air time to promote summer reading, and got a full 20 minutes, plenty of time to promote our Summer Reading Kick-off, all-ages sign-up for the summer reading challenge, summer programs, Libby, and the value of letting kids read what they want over the summer (after all, adults do!) This is something we haven't done before but will now do annually—I think it especially helped to get the word out about the kick-off.

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Early June saw one of the most engaging events we've held in the nine summers I've worked at NPL—the Summer Reading Kick-off with Pizza and Taco held in front of the library. There were 357 attendees and the library door count for the day was 1000—contributing to a festive community feel and neighborly, block-party kind of atmosphere. There were games, dancing, free pizza and tacos from local restaurant event partners, and time with Stephen Shaskan, the author of the Pizza and Taco graphic novels. Shaskan made a personalized Pizza and Taco drawing for one lucky attendee, and her mom wrote me to share a photo of the drawing: “[My child] requested Pizza and Taco meeting an axolotl that had been ‘zapped’ into the form of a unicorn. He understood the assignment! The picture is currently framed and hanging in her room.”



I visited Summer PLUS teacher training to talk about involving and registering PLUS attendees in the summer reading challenge, and will present to the kids attending the week PLUS starts. Francisco will be visiting PLUS once a week after it starts, so classrooms can check out books and kids can claim their summer reading buttons and book as they earn them. This partnership has done so much to connect kids who might never get to the bricks and mortar library with all we have to offer, down to our faces: PLUS attendees frequently come up to me over the school year to let me know that they “know me” from Summer PLUS.

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With summer family road trips in mind, I bulked up our Libby eAudiobook offerings with, mainly, titles targeted to the early chapter book crowd. At Pride, I heavily promoted Kanopy with a “Hold Your Own Queer Film Festival!” flier featuring covers of historic LGBTQ+ films—many of which I’d only ever seen before in a 400 level LGBTQ film class in the late 90s! It’s an amazing resource for queer films, full-length and short.

A session about the Traveling Early Literacy Library (TELL) program, designed to eliminate barriers to access for in-home daycare providers, was accepted to the Association for Rural and Small Libraries’ (ARSL’s) annual conference coming up in September.

Just a fun, cool thing: The Minnesota Historical Society is working on a story map of LGBTQIA+ history in greater Minnesota, and approached Alexis and myself about adding the history of Pride in the Park in Northfield and its beginnings as a library-led and conceived program. They interviewed us on July 1, and we look forward to seeing our story on the map and hosting them for a program about the project in September.

Katlin Heidgerken-Green, Collection Development Librarian

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- Between May and June, created 6 themed book displays (3 fiction, 3 NF) with student worker and library intern assistance
- Created PRIDE booklist for adults which was shared at PRIDE in the Park
- Created 11 shelf talkers for PRIDE sharing LGBTQ+ romance displayed during June
- Created 3 new genre fiction booklists for romance

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- Minnesota state parks passes were cataloged and made available in time for soft launch the 1st of this month
- Updated Novelist platform--Worked with EBSCO to link our new Aspen catalog to Novelist's new website so that NPL collections are connected. (Novelist is a library subscription used by staff and patrons for book recommendations, readalikes, book series info and other book content.)
- Wrapped up tax season at the library in early May by reporting on tax publications we distributed and balance left on hand to the IRS. Overall quantities ordered were sufficient (we used up our 1040 instruction booklets right before the filing deadline April 15) and there was very little waste left over.
- Since May I have taken over copy cataloging for adult items (included CD books and all books except graphic novels) which used to be done by SELCO. We now send in only a handful of items each month that need original cataloging, all the rest are done in house.
- Since the migration I have worked with Karin and Becky on our process for adding catalog holdings as new books arrive, experimented with age hold protection to determine effects on our hold wait time for popular books, and have created and managed weekly holds reports.
- With the new ILS we have a new process for creating on-order records in the catalog so that patrons can again place holds for on-order titles farther in advance of publication. This is a huge benefit to our avid readers and a feature we had been missing since January with the old ILS once the acquisitions module of the old catalog was not supported. Patrons can now view on-order titles in the catalog long before they arrive and place requests.
- At the same time, we've noticed that order fulfillment has slowed recently from Ingram. Therefore, I am placing orders earlier for fall publication date books. August and September fiction have been ordered. Nonfiction for August and September will be ordered this week, with October title orders to follow immediately.

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- Worked with author-donated e-book (Latin Art in Minnesota) to add to our curated local collection in Libby. The book, which highlights Northfield Latine artists along with others from throughout Minnesota, is now available and can be checked out for simultaneous use.
- We have received several local-author book donations recently, which I am happy to include in the library's collection so they are available to all. These titles often require original cataloging. They are an important way to support our local author community and help share local stories.