

Mission: Invite exploration, empower people, engage community

July & August combined

Director's note:

Summer has flown by! Work on the passport office/meeting room/director's office is completed. Passport appointments have been steady throughout the process and tend to pick up with the start of the school year.

Angelica, Naidine, Amy and I authored and submitted a chapter 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 chapter will be peer reviewed and publication date is tentatively expected for Spring 2027. The first draft is due in September. Angelica and Naidine will be co-presenting on the internship at the REFORMA conference in California this fall.

The nomination for the Jerry Kline Community Impact Award is coming along and the letters of support from community partners and elected officials are wonderful. We are so grateful for their support and kind words. We anticipate getting the nomination turned in right at the deadline on September 15th. The award comes with a 250,000 prize so we are especially motivated.

I had the pleasure of working with staff and interns on a new "social story" in honor of Tonya Yarmakov. Pat took the photos, and Ben and Hannah assembled and created the story. Tyler and I worked to get it online and Angelica did the Spanish translation. Rocky Casillas Aguirre contributed the illustrations, made possible by generous community donations in Tonya's memory. The story launched on our website on September 4th and was truly a team effort. View the completed story here:

<https://mynpl.org/socialstory>

I was invited to join the Library Journal Directors' Summit advisory group and SELCO provided scholarship funds for me to attend the summit in Denver at the Denver Public Library in October. We also have staff attending and presenting at MLA in St. Cloud this October and Emily Lloyd is presenting to ARSL in Albuquerque this fall too. It will be a busy stretch to get to November!

Staff reports:

Amy Nelson, Youth Services Manager

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

Hannah Kotek finished her internship (funded by FFNPL) on August 15. In her evaluation she wrote:

After this internship, how likely are you to pursue a career in libraries? Why/why not?

So much more. I truly solidified what I love that libraries provide and do. I don't think I've ever felt more confident in a job choice than now. I love providing and helping people.

Hannah assisted with the Pages weekly programs this summer, visited the YMCA with the Bookmobile, took the Book Bike to Storytime at the Park and at River Market Fair, worked with Em on the Bluey Party, helped me to get board games ready for circulation in the children's area, met with librarians at Carleton's Gould Library, and was a constant source of positivity. She was quick to let people know they were doing great! We wish Hannah well as she continues her studies at NCCC and beyond.

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

In July, NPL was selected to receive a Nex Playground, free of charge. Nex Playground is a small gaming system that combines physical movement and learning. By using a camera and AI motion tracking, it captures the movements players are making on screen. The device is kidSAFE+ COPPA certified, meaning the entire platform and games meet strict safety and privacy standards for kids under 13. There are no ads, and no video is stored or transmitted; in fact, other than game downloads and updates, the Playground doesn't need to be connected to the Internet at all. We also received a one-year pass to the entire 95+ game library!

Board games for children and families should be making their way into circulation in September. These were purchased using funding from the Pat Lamb and Ele Hanson Charitable Fund managed by Northfield Shares. Bilingual staff have been working to translate game instructions into Spanish to make the collection more accessible.

About 70 new titles are making their way into the Bookmobile's collection for Children and Teens, and an addition 70 into the Oasis' collection in 2025. NPL has added about 170 titles for Youth in Spanish to our collection in 2025 as well.

Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

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

I suggested that our next Library Love podcast cover what those presenting at upcoming conferences are sharing. The Traveling Early Literacy Library will get its first public promotion (beyond daycare providers) and I hope it will garner inquiries from people who can use it. I'm presenting on it at the ARSL conference on September 19.

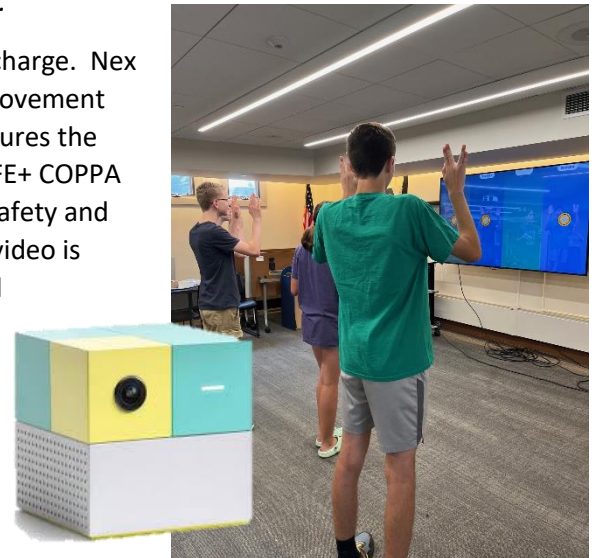
*A **connected community** has access to the resources they need.*

This fall, we'll be holding weekly storytimes at the Oasis. They will be on Monday—a day we DON'T have morning storytime at the Washington St. location—and we hope families who can't attend our weekly Thursday storytimes might be able to join us, as well as those waiting for services at the CAC. One Love Childcare, which operates out of the NCRC, plan to attend, and have sent information about Oasis storytime home to caregivers and parents.

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

Cat, Hannah, and I held an end-of-Paging party and it has been amazing to witness these teen volunteers grow and become more comfortable at the library, relating to adults, and relating to their peers. One in particular seemed almost like a different teen after the weeks of the program. He wouldn't smile and he sat back from everyone else at the first orientation. At the end of Paging, he was carrying himself differently at team meetings, seemed more comfortable in his own skin and with others, laughing and contributing constantly, and feeling very, very at home. It feels weird to write about him here without his knowledge—so I'll stop—but it was one of my biggest library joys this summer.

Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian



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

One Friday at the end of June a woman from South Dakota came to the library asking about some family history. Her mother was in some way connected to the artist Paul Houston, who created the bronze reliefs to the right of the Pye Room, which were donated by the Pye Family. She was so excited that I was able to find two Northfield News articles about her mother. Little did I know there was more to come.

The following day there was a Celebration of Life for a member of the Houston family in Nerstrand. Early that morning a group of women came in asking about the reliefs and they turned out to be the daughters of Paul Houston. While they were here I searched the Dalby Database, a local history resource, and found several articles about their father. As they were only briefly stopping to see the reliefs, I told them I would pull all the microfiche and get scans of each of the articles for them. They were so appreciative and I was glad for the fun task.

Paul Houston was so much more than an artist. He was a MIA for nearly 4 months during WW2 before his mother received a postcard that he was wounded, and a POW in Germany. On liberation day he was secured by the British Army and transported to an English hospital for several months while he healed from wounds from a "potato masher" or hand grenade. While in the POW camp he was treated relatively well, but lost 40 pounds subsisting on a diet of, essentially, sawdust bread.

Throughout the day that Saturday, several members of Paul's family came to admire the reliefs. Having read all of the articles about Paul I had pulled from the Northfield News, every time I saw a new crowd of well-dressed folks come look at the bronze reliefs I made sure to get their attention and asked if they would like to hear the stories I had learned about Paul. Everyone was so appreciative, a few so much that they began to cry as I told them of the long wait Paul's mother endured, unsure of whether her son was alive, and Paul's experience of being picked up by a Panzer unit in Germany. In addition to their appreciation, they were stunned. Not just by the stories themselves, but that I knew the stories, knew them by heart, and that they had never heard them.

Sometimes, things just line up so perfectly. Right place, right time, right attitude, right mindset. We find a gap we didn't know needed filling, and we find a way to fill a gap for someone else they didn't know they had. I see these pieces of art everyday I come to the library. Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. For 7 years I never knew, but now I do.

It goes without saying, I will never be able to look at those bronze reliefs the same way again.

Angelica Linder – Outreach Manager

August 2025

*An **Empowered Community** is Equipped for the Changing World*

On July 23, I joined Natalie as a panelist at the Library Leadership Forum hosted by SELCO, discussing leadership opportunities for library staff and sharing about our *Library Journal Movers and Shakers* award. The panel explored how such opportunities impact professional growth and encouraged staff participation.

I established a coordinated translation workflow for all staff involved in translation projects, including guidelines, shared tips, and consistent terminology via a Spanish glossary. This process now includes bimonthly team check-ins, quarterly preparation for high-demand seasons, and shared project tracking. Natalia will be updating the glossary regularly, and next quarter, Claudia Garcia (City of Northfield) will share her own workflow as a translator and interpreter.

Intern Feedback – Julia:

“I have really enjoyed learning about and participating in library outreach... I especially enjoy getting to personally connect with my fellow Northfielders and help them access library resources.”

Intern Feedback – Ben:

Ben highlighted older adult visits as one of the most impactful services, directly reaching those with barriers to visiting the library. He also mentioned that the park visits served mostly people who would have gone to the library anyway.

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

This year, our partnership with Growing Up Healthy for their Evenings at the Park events saw lower participation from the Latino community compared to previous years. We believe this is influenced by the current political and safety climate affecting immigrant families. The bookmobile made four visits to these events to maintain a presence and support.

On July 29, I was live with Anika Rychner on KYMN radio to talk about the Runway Revival Fashion Show, which celebrates partnerships and environmental sustainability through upcycled, wearable art. I will be emceeding the event for the third time, joined by Natalia Torres.

I was quoted in MPR News’s coverage of Rocky Casillas Aguirre’s exhibit, Cartoons, Culture, and Care, emphasizing the importance of mental health awareness in the Latino community:

“Our community, we are not taught how to express our feelings. You just tough it up and move on and then that's it.”

[Read here](#)

**Francisco Murillo, Library Assistant:**

Hispanic Heritage Celebration (HHC) planning is well underway, with 24 vendors/community partners confirmed, including two food trucks and two food vendors. Sign-ups closed August 8, and the event will feature a full, inclusive program schedule.

The First Responders Picnic drew over 150 visits and more than 20 checkouts, highlighting the value of community partnerships.

The debut Market Fair at Greenvale outreach welcomed 62 visitors, facilitated multiple new library card sign-ups, and encouraged active use of the bookmobile.

Alexus Kreft, Adult Programs & Outreach Librarian:

We had a few exciting moments with the Glass Half Full Book Club this month. We had a record attendance of 23 people in June, plus cupcakes from Nadia Cakes based on the Abby Jimenez book we were reading! Thanks to the Friends for supplying the cupcakes and book club member Angel for going to Woodbury to pick them up!

We were also featured in Racket's story on bookish events at breweries across Minnesota: <https://racketmn.com/a-new-way-to-get-lit-at-twin-cities-breweries>. It was wonderful to get the chance to highlight how book clubs really function as spaces to build community!



A Connected Community Has Access to the Resources They Need

Francisco, Alexis, Steve, Karin, and I continued facilitating monthly book clubs and movie clubs. Steve coordinated Culture Crew's movie night at The Grand, while Karin contributed to the Summer Reading Committee and, on her own initiative, extended the program to home delivery and senior visit participants. Based on feedback, she plans to adjust the program for next year and explore a winter reading challenge for older adults. Steve is also designing a wrap for the 24-hour locker and producing posters and other library graphics that reinforce a welcoming, recognizable library identity.

Francisco's Summer Plus visits are concluding with an average of 155 checkouts per visit, distribution of summer reading challenge buttons, and final visits including free book selection. The bookmobile continues to serve YMCA summer camps, averaging over 60 checkouts per visit, ensuring children have consistent access to materials.



Angelica Linder – Outreach Manager
September 2025

An Empowered Community is equipped for the changing world.

This month, I have been deep in planning for the **Hispanic Heritage Celebration** coming up on September 13, making sure all the details are in place for this annual community celebration. Later in

the month, I've also been preparing for another exciting program: our **Author Talk with Reyna Grande** on September 25, featuring a reading, Q&A, and book signing of *Corrido de amor y gloria*.

I've been coordinating with our Spanish program assistants, Rafael and Gerardo, who are both returning mid-September. I've prepared training and schedules for Gerardo and also scheduled lobby stops at both colleges to connect with new students right away.

This month I also hosted the **Birding in the Colombian Amazon Photo Exhibit and Presentation** with Gerald Hoekstra, which drew 47 participants and brought global perspectives into our local library.

Finally, I wrapped up final evaluations for our two Carleton summer interns, and I've started conversations with St. Olaf about a future collaboration with their Musiking class as part of Hispanic Heritage programming.

An Included Community is seen, heard, and engaged by their library

Another big project for me has been organizing the **Alebrije Workshop & Parade** for the Defeat of Jesse James Days. In partnership with artist Gustavo Boada and Bike Alebrijes MN, we'll be helping families decorate bikes and helmets with alebrije-inspired designs and then join the library float and Bookbike in the parade.

I was also honored to serve as MC alongside Natalia Torres and Rich Larson for the Community Action Center's **Runway Revival** fundraiser on August 21. This "Project Runway-style" event showcased local creativity, upcycled fashion, and sustainability—it was inspiring to see the ways our community combines artistry with environmental responsibility.

A Connected Community has access to the resources they need.

Alexus has been planning our upcoming LGBTQ+ history program *Queer Northfield, Then and Now* for the last couple months. She has partnered with the Minnesota Historical Society on this event and is coordinating with St. Olaf professors to share their research, as well as community members to share their stories. Catering will be provided by the Ole Store. This has been an exciting partnership, and Alexis hopes it will be the first of many with MNHS.

She has also been leading the promotional work for the **Hispanic Heritage Celebration**, creating social media posts and press releases. This event is always a highlight, and she's been trying out new strategies to expand outreach and engagement.

An Informed Community understands what their library offers and has opportunity to shape the library with feedback.

Alexus also made sure patrons had access to resources that aren't always easy to find. One highlight was helping a patron locate an out-of-print book through **Interlibrary Loan**, going beyond MNLink's reach to secure the item from a seminary in Kentucky. The patron only needed to cover return shipping costs, making this rare title accessible.

On August 12, she also coordinated a program with local jeweler **Andrea Turini**, who presented on the Czech tradition of bead and glass making. Patrons viewed traditional Czech pieces, learned about the beadmaking process, and heard about Andrea's personal experience in the craft. Andrea generously offered this program at no cost, and it was a wonderful example of how artists trust the library as a platform to share their work and culture.



An Invited Community feels at home in their library

Francisco has been preparing for upcoming **storytimes at Head Start**, which are always a joyful way to connect with young families in the community. Steve has been finalizing the design for the **24-hour locker wrap**, which will give our lockers a fun and welcoming new look. Karin wrapped up the season of **bookmobile park visits** on August 28, closing out a successful summer of bringing library services directly into neighborhood parks.

