

Mission: Invite exploration, empower people, engage community

March & April combined

Director's note: The upgrade to the new Evergreen ILS is complete and we're settling into the new system. Still working out some fiddly quirks but overall, the migration went smoothly, and I think everyone is glad to be done with training.

Informed Community Tune into KYMN on 2nd Wednesdays at 9 am (or wherever you get your podcasts) to the new Library Love podcast featuring staff of the library in conversation with Rich Larson. We do a deeper dive into library topics like intellectual freedom, federal news, collection development and other fun stuff, and even make some reading recommendations. This has not replaced the regular monthly first Friday spot at 8:40 am.

Natalie and Angelica were both recognized by Library Journal as "Movers and Shakers" this month, just one year after receiving honorable mention for the Best Small Library in America award by the same publication.

Invited Community We had a very successful second year of our Celebrate Asia Pacifica event for AANHPI month, in partnership with St. Olaf. We got try out the city's fancy new stage and with the giant library banner added to it, summer concerts and Hispanic Heritage Celebration will be extra fabulous.

Connected Community Our staff retreat was lovely, thanks to beautiful weather, the talents of staff who created a special day, and the beautiful Charlson Meadows retreat center in Victoria.

While the federal picture for libraries remains uncertain at best, we are comforted by how supported we are by the local community, and state support in Minnesota for libraries is generally strong. Libraries have weathered many storms over the years and we usually come out stronger. We are ports in a storm for many at difficult times as well. The institution is built to survive. We attract creative and adaptive people. We support resilient communities. We are always looking for innovative ways to serve our mission. We will continue to meet people where they are and go out of our way to serve the underserved. We will continue to celebrate diversity in our community and work to include everyone--on our staff, in our programs and through our collections and services.

Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian

March

Empowered Community A patron who worked for a couple decades as a nurse decided to go back to school at St. Kate's to get her BSN. I worked with this patron once every couple weeks as she adjusted to going back to school. I was once a grad school level writing tutor, and we called these kinds of students "re-emerging learners". They were our most frequent clientele. As a former Katie I am very familiar with their online course module. When she started her first course after enrolling, she came to me very frustrated and unsure about her decision to go back to school. The course module was difficult to navigate, and they found it confusing. I was able to help her get everything set up that day. Throughout the last year I have helped her navigate the module to do assignments, work with APA formatting, decipher less than well-written assignments by her professors, develop theses, write lit reviews, create works cited pages, and more.

Everyone who works at the library has a set of skills and experiences that we bring to the table every day. It just so happens that, for this patron, I have experience providing exactly the kind of help she

needed. One Sunday, for the first time ever, she approached me without her laptop in hand. She sat down and said, "I'm finished." I asked her what she meant, and she told me she had graduated. We celebrated together and she walked away. Minutes later, she returned with her laptop in hand. "You aren't through with me yet," she said "can you help me with my resume?"

April

Connected Community Benedictine Living Community has a card that they use to order materials from the library in bulk. They also host regular movie nights with a movie they get from our collection. A patron/resident of Benedictine had requested several times for the activities coordinator to order a DVD of the 1978 film *King of the Gypsies*. She was told it couldn't be done. When the patron called the library herself to inquire about this, I answered the phone. She was in a state of exasperated desperation. She wasn't mobile, didn't have her own library card, and felt lied to. How is it possible that the movie wasn't available? As I was searching for the DVD she said she just wanted to see the movie again before she died. I was able to find a copy of the DVD through MNLINK, our statewide interlibrary loan service. She was ecstatic to know she might get to see this film again. I told her I would order it for her and that it would be sent to Benedictine.

Fast forward two months. I got a phone call, and I recognized the voice of the patron. She was expressing her gratitude at getting the movie to her after many months of her trying on her own to get Benedictine to order it. She said they refused to show it on the community movie night "...because of nudity! Can you believe that? We're OLD! I threatened to move out!" The patron rallied a handful of her more "mature" peers, as she put it, and arranged for a special screening of the film with that group. She said she was able to share the experience with nine other individuals, and they all had a great time. "Now I can die." A joke, I'm sure, but is there anything more serious than unmet desires at twilight?

Alexus Kreft, Adult Programming and Outreach Librarian

March

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

Steve and I had the opportunity to both visit and host the class of St. Olaf *Asian Conversations* students that we're working with on our Celebrate Asia Pasifika event. We shared information with them about the library's mission and how CAP fits into our larger work at the library, gave them a tour, and discussed logistics. We also signed 14 of the students up for library cards!

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

Submissions have opened for *Northfield Cocina*! We're looking for a diverse group of home cooks from across Latin America to contribute recipes and stories to the upcoming cookbook. If you know of folks who might be interested, they can sign up here: <https://forms.gle/gfGQdm1xJypxL6ty7>. We've already received our first recipe, for a Peruvian pork stew!

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

We had a great turnout for our first-ever Book Bingo at Imminent Brewing on March 6th! Around 40 people turned out to play bingo, win free books courtesy of donations from Content Bookstore, and learn about library services. We got the chance to share about sometimes-overlooked resources like our Library Oasis, STEAM kits, and bookmobile park visits!



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

Angelica and I collaborated with Just Food Co-op to host their annual Spring Seed Swap in the Atrium on March 15th. Patrons could swap seeds and learn from master gardeners. It was a successful collaboration that I look forward to continuing.



April

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

On April 13th, we held Headshot Day at the Library! Patrons signed up for 10 minute sessions with a photographer at the library and received 2-3 digital photos for their LinkedIn or resume. Clothes Closet partnered with us to provide free business-appropriated attire for participants! This event was also funded by our ALA/CapitalOne Community Connect grant.

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I was thrilled to both record and share our first episode of Library Love, created in collaboration with KYMN. I think it's a great example of us meeting our community where they get their information, and I'm excited to listen to future episodes! I've already gotten positive feedback from community members on the program.

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

A main focus of my April, related to my largest program of the year, was planning our May 3rd *Celebrate Asia Pasifika* event in collaboration with St. Olaf's Asian Conversations program. It was our second annual event but first time closing the street in front of the library for it and first time using the new Showmobile. We saw a 100% increase in attendance from last year, with around 550 participants! It was

a beautiful, joyous day, with amazing performances from St. Olaf student groups like the Hmong Ole Student Association, Pamilya Pinoy, and Natya South Asian Dance and food from Tin Tea.

Afterwards, I heard from a regular library patron that his family went not knowing what to expect and planning to only stay for a bit, but they found themselves staying for the entire event and thoroughly enjoying themselves. I was so happy to see our community members and students gathering and celebrating together and am incredibly grateful to St. Olaf for their partnership.



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

Francisco and I had a full day of outreach on April 26th, visiting both the YMCA's Healthy Kids Day and Earth Day on the bookmobile. Altogether, we interacted with almost 300 community members!



Amy Nelson, Youth Services Manager

March

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

Using data from the Annual State Library Services Report, I have been able to connect with colleagues at libraries around the state whose circulation of children's materials was very similar to NPL in 2023 (the most recent data set available). I am seeking to compare the number of items owned by each library in different categories (such as board books, picture books, children's nonfiction, etc.) to determine optimal sizes for Northfield's collection.

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

I assisted Karin with her idea for recognizing the valuable work volunteers contributed to the Library in the last year. We plan to begin distributing our small tokens of appreciation during National Library Week, April 6-12, 2025.

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

I visited the Oasis and Bookmobile this month to evaluate the condition of the children's collections in both outlets. Collections were inventoried and evaluated. Orders will be placed soon to increase in-demand items.

New Spanish language materials will be coming for the fiction, nonfiction, graphic novel, and early reader collections.

April

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

My time and energy in April was focused on preparing the collections for the Evergreen migration from a data perspective, preparing staff training day instruction as well as printed materials for quick reference at service desks, attending 10 hours of virtual training from the vendor, and fielding a lot of questions!

Cat Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian

April

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

The highlight of April for me was presenting at the Prairielands Library Exchange's annual Teen Summit with Martha Lundin, the youth engagement coordinator at HCI. We presented twice (in two locations) on the importance of collaborating with community partners to more effectively engage and support teens. Our presentation shared some ways that Martha and I have collaborated (with each other, and with other community partners) and the benefits we've seen from these partnerships. However, the bulk of our presentation focused on an extended metaphor of interplanting, using the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash) to illustrate how our communities are interconnected, with each organization giving and receiving different resources to contribute to the thriving of the community as a whole. We encouraged participants to look at their own community, identify where their library and existing community partners fit in with the metaphor of the Three Sisters, and examine what elements of the interplanted community might be missing. Participants discussed challenges of community collaboration, imagined what their "dream garden" (aka ideal collaboration network) looks like, and brainstormed some partnerships they could cultivate in their own communities.

The presentations went very well (especially the second one) and we connected with many incredible youth services librarians from the western side of the state. I have communicated to SELCO that they should host a similar teen summit for our region, as I think it would be a great opportunity to collaborate with and learn from youth services librarians in our region. Also, because the presentations were so well received, Martha and I have applied to present on the same topic at both MLA (2025) and PLA (2026) conferences.

Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

March

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

The Event of the Month for families was our first annual Potato Derby, a collaboration with St. Olaf's STEMQuest that we held on a Saturday to include those who can't get here during the week. This was a two-part program: in February, Eric did a presentation on the physics of speed and mass and kids got their free potato derby kits—with russets donated by Family Fare and wheels and axles from the library. Meanwhile, Eric's STEMQuest team were tasked with constructing the best possible track for this kind of event and space, first in software, then in materials. Derby Day arrived; competition was fierce, fun, and full of families; and we all agreed that "Tater Swift" was the best-named potato car, if not the swiftest.



A variety of making, experimenting, storytelling, and history programs took center stage for kids during Spring Break's well-attended youth programs. STEMQuest was back with drop-in science experiments—their goal, always, to show kids they, too, can be scientists and to think of themselves as scientists.



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

I presented two baby storytimes and shared early literacy tips and library resources at ECFE. Almost all of my rhymes and bounces were unknown to Ellen Haefner, who teaches the baby class, and she shared some with me that I'd never heard. It was great to learn from each other. Two baby/caregiver pairs I met at ECFE now attend Baby Storytimes at the library—having previously not known about it.

After school activities for 6 to 11 yr olds have gathered steam, with 9 kids--several I hadn't met yet--attending an afternoon of rock painting

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On the engaged side: I met with Stephen Shaskan, author-illustrator of the popular graphic novel series *Pizza & Taco*, to discuss our summer reading kick-off. Shaskan will be reading, performing music, and collaboratively drawing with attendees, as well as creating a special personalized *Pizza & Taco* drawing for a randomly selected summer reading registrant. We will be offering free pizza and tacos from local businesses at this event, and are approaching them about sponsoring by donating food.

In April, we're holding a Baby Toy Swap in honor of reducing/reusing/recycling, and a poetry workshop for kids in honor of National Poetry Month, both on a Saturday.

We've scheduled three Pride month events for June at the library, two of which I'll be working on—a Pride version of Open Mic Poetry Night (LGBTQ+ poets reading their own work, and people of any community reading poems by LGBTQ+ poets) and a special storytime featuring classics by LGBTQ+ picture book writers (Maurice Sendak, Arnold Lobel, etc--many don't know they are or were LGBTQ+) and a mini Wild Rumpus dance party with music by LGBTQ+ performers. The library will also be participating in Pride in the Park: I'll be offering a storytime, and Alexis and I will be signing up summer readers and tabling with the BookBike.

April

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

Karin, Angelica, and I visited local restaurants to inquire about potential food donations for our Summer Reading Kick-off event with free tacos, pizza, and a visit from Stephen Shaskan, author of the popular *Pizza and Taco* graphic novels. We want to feature as many of Northfield's small, independent taco and pizza restaurants as we can, with bilingual signage including their addresses and encouraging event attendees to visit them on their own. We made it clear that if they want to participate but are not able to donate, we can purchase food with FFONPL funds and simply list it as donated by the FFONPL rather than the restaurant. I worked on various other aspects of the Kick-off in April—reserving trash and compost containers, submitting the community event application, and more—as well as on the Summer Reading Challenge itself.

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

I submitted a proposal to ARSL (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) to present on the Traveling Early Literacy Library at their September conference, which connects in-home daycare providers with library resource. I hope to see this program spread to other small and rural libraries across the country.

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

I booktalked to a total of 196 second graders this month, getting them jazzed about books that were new to them and about this year's Summer Reading Kickoff. We have a newer joke-writing book for kids called *LOL 101*, and it was especially fun to talk this book and have the second graders make up jokes in real time. Library visits from first grade classes begin May 15.

Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Collection development Librarian

March

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

Library staff are getting ready for our migration to a new ILS (database and online catalog). In March, I completed more training on the new system for cataloging staff and have continued weeding library collections in preparation for the switch. There will be some interruptions to normal staff processes behind the scenes as the migration approaches (including cataloging and adding new items) so planning and training now will help ensure a smooth transition and empower staff to make the upgraded system a good experience for the community.

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Due to rising costs, the library is re-evaluating its Hoopla subscription access, which is one source of library ebooks and e-audiobooks. A portion of the funds not used for Hoopla going forward can be added to our budget for Overdrive, a shared platform for all of SELCO for library e-books and e-audiobooks. In March, a press release about this was shared with the community to keep readers informed of the situation and allow for feedback. Library ebook costs are increasing and access models available to libraries to purchase are more complicated than most people realize. However, it's important to us to continue providing access to e-books in order to meet demand going forward.

Angelica Linder - Outreach Manger

February & March

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



Our Bookmobile visits to Hand in Hand Preschool continue to provide young children with opportunities to explore library resources and discover new books. Additionally, since transitioning bilingual storytime at the library to a once-a-month Saturday session, we've seen increased participation. This program, led by Francisco, has become a valuable space for families to engage in early literacy activities. Francisco also continues his monthly visits to Head Start Preschool, further strengthening our outreach and engagement with young learners.

We are making steady progress in scheduling Bookmobile and BookBike stops for both spring and summer, expanding outreach to Dundas and strengthening community engagement.



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Recurring bilingual and Spanish Programs: Our spring programming includes a variety of educational and language-learning opportunities:

Homework Help: Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and Sundays from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Spanish Computer Class: Tuesdays from 6:15 – 7:30 p.m.

Spanish Conversation Table: Fridays from 11:00 – 11:45 a.m.

English Conversation Table: Wednesdays from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Club de Lectura: This season, we read *La Vegetariana* by *Han Kang*, a Nobel Prize-winning novel. Our discussions were deeply engaging—Yeonghye’s quiet rebellion against societal expectations, triggered by something as simple as giving up meat, led us to explore themes of control, autonomy, and nonconformity. While we appreciated the thought-provoking nature of the novel, we also found ourselves puzzled by its Nobel Prize recognition!

We have also coordinated Spanish conversation classes for library staff, tailored to the library's needs. This initiative followed training on the "Spanish for Library Staff" professional development series. The classes took place twice a week for three weeks and aimed to help staff with basic Spanish skills. Staff who participated found the classes helpful and appreciated the opportunity to feel more comfortable using Spanish in their interactions with patrons. 4 Library staff participated.

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

On February 10, the Mexican Consulate visited the library to host a Sesión Informativa Comunitaria on consular protection services and other resources. The event had a strong turnout, with 53 in-person attendees and 5 online participants.

On February 12, we facilitated a community conversation with Northfield Police Chief *Jeff Schroepfer*, providing a space for the Spanish-speaking community to ask questions and express concerns—particularly regarding immigration policies and ICE enforcement. Francisco and I served as Spanish interpreters. 22 people attended in person, and 5 joined online.

On March 6, I collaborated with Alexis on her successful Book Bingo event, which was a fun and well-attended program. Additionally, on March 15, I partnered with Just Food Co-op to host their annual Spring Seed Swap, bringing together community members to exchange seeds and gardening knowledge.

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

On March 20, I participated as a community partner in the HealthFinders Health Check Gala, an event focused on expanding healthcare access and wellness resources for underserved communities. The health check highlighted HealthFinders' impact in the region and fostered valuable conversations about community health initiatives. It was an excellent opportunity to strengthen our collaboration and reinforce the library's role in supporting health literacy.

We have also reestablished our partnership with Valley View Assisted Living. Karin and Francisco will visit once a month to provide outreach services.

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

We have hired two Summer Fellow interns from Carleton College, who will begin on June 9, 2025, as Northfield Public Library Outreach and Marketing Assistants. Their focus will be on library outreach, marketing initiatives, and other special projects.

We are also adjusting The Oasis's hours to include afternoon availability, ensuring better access for the community.

April, 2025

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

In April, we focused on offering programs that build skills and confidence.

Turn Your Memories into Memoirs, a two-part writing workshop in Spanish led by author Anna De Santis, supported participants in developing storytelling and writing skills.

We visited a St. Olaf "Adulting" class to share how public libraries equip individuals with tools and knowledge for real-life decisions.

Coordinated a staff training session with HealthFinders on Intercultural Effectiveness contributing to a more informed and empathetic staff team.

*An **Informed Community** Understands What Their Library Offers*

We worked to raise awareness of our services and how to access them.

Visited Carleton's Gould Library (April 8) and St. Olaf's Rolvaag Library (April 9) to promote library card sign-up, our event calendar, the SELCO app, and passport services.

Shared information about library resources and programming with families during Healthy Kids Day (115 attendees) and Earth Day Downtown (153 attendees).

*An **Included Community** is Seen, Heard, and Engaged*

We offered programming that centers language, identity, and participation.

Our Spanish book club met on April 17 to discuss *El desbarrancadero* by Fernando Vallejo.

Francisco led a bilingual storytime at Open Door Preschool with the bookmobile (April 23), reaching 15 children.



Continued bilingual storytime at Head Start once a month and at the library on the third Saturday of the month. On April 30, we celebrated *Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros* with a bilingual puppet show, *The Way of the Monarch*, and free books. Thirty-five attendees joined us, including children from Head Start.

We registered our *Día* event with ALA—Northfield appears to be the only Minnesota library listed on the national 2024 map: [ALA Día Registry Map](#).

A Connected Community Has Access to the Resources They Need

We provided practical support and direct access to essential services.

On April 14, we hosted a POA/DOPA clinic at the Oasis to help members of the Latino community complete legal forms, with support from notaries, interpreters, and attorney Kimberly Decker.

Continued outreach to older adult communities including Valley View (April 24), Benedictine, 1000 CVD, Three Links Apartments, and NRC, helping residents stay connected to library services.



An Invited Community Feels at Home in Their Library

We created joyful, welcoming spaces where everyone feels like they belong.

Hosted Latin Dance workshops (Champeta) on April 19 and 26, bringing people together through music and movement.

Held the *Día* celebration in the Library Oasis, reinforcing the space as a welcoming hub for multilingual and multicultural families.

Continued offering family-focused bilingual storytimes that invite families to engage comfortably in their home languages.

Steve designed and created a new stage banner to enhance our visual presence at events and create a more inviting experience.