



Northfield Public Library Director's Report February 2017

Director's Report

Submitted by Teresa Jensen, Director of Library and IT Services

This month's missive's theme could be called looking backwards, and looking to the future, as we have had several retirements and an expected career opportunity changing the composition of our staff. Kathy Ness has been the face of Northfield's children's programming, including storytimes, Summer Reading, the library Page program, the Bookmobile and the Lego program, among many others. She produced most of our social media posts via Facebook, and she also created most of our graphic designs for our posters, calendars and displays. Her creativity was endless. Kathy's retirement is well-deserved after 29 years with the library.

Claudia, one of our excellent Library Assistants, was with us for two years, and she brought a welcome diversity to our staff and to our patrons. Claudia aided with translating our library publications, helped patrons whose primary language was Spanish navigate the library system, provided regular bilingual storytimes at area schools, manned a primarily Spanish language library collection at St. Dominic church, and was a tireless representative for the library to the community. She gave wonderful hugs! Claudia is now working in her chosen field of youth services for the Archdiocese of St. Paul.

Julia, one of our library shelvees, retired in November from the library, after working as an early childhood educator for many years. Julia occasionally led storytimes at the library that were very popular. She had a rich, infectious laugh that brought a smile to everyone within earshot. DeLora, our other retiring shelvee worked at the library for seven years, and recognized, along with Julia, that shelving was a physically demanding and repetitive job—challenging for joints, hands, knees and sometimes clothes! Shelvees are the unsung heroes of the library—if material doesn't get back to its place, chaos ensues—and believe me, I've been there!

We have to admit that for a lot of us at the library, we represent a population that is similar in makeup. Older, female, white. A lot of our patrons echo this same demographic. Several of us at the library are all within a few years in (advanced) age, and no doubt there will be more retirements in the relatively near future. We'll be handing over the library to a new generation, and hopefully one that reflects a new generation of Northfielders. Hiring for diversity in a profession that tends to be not especially diverse in age, ethnicity or sex is challenging, but it is a challenge that we are ready for.

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Adult Services

Submitted by Debby Nitz

In addition to working at the reference desk and help people with various technology and reader's advisory questions, I have been mainly working on setting up adult programming for the library, February through April. We have some great programs coming up including some Friday noontime concerts in February featuring guitarists Greg Smith and Randy Ferguson, harpist Elinor Niemisto and Andrea Een on hardanger fiddle. These will be casual affairs in the library atrium. Please come! We will also have our first adult (and teens 16 and up) coloring session this Sunday. Adult coloring has become a calming way to destress. All supplies are provided Sundays in Feb. 2-4 pm. More in March with a program on the Jazz Age, Northfield Architecture, the Science of Star Wars and Decluttering your house! Stay tuned!

We resubscribed to a reading resource called Novelist in January. It is a great resource to help people, all ages, to find a good book to read. If you're looking for a book in a series, need a read-a-like or need reviews and questions for a book group, this is the place to go! Look for Novelist under our resources tab, then Databases. It's available 24/7 with your library card. I will be looking for ways to promote this resource to our patrons, book groups, school librarians, etc.

Submitted by Jamie Stanley

Graphic Novel (GN) Collection

The Northfield Public Library now hosts a distinct graphic novel collection for older teens and adults. For a number of years, the library has had graphic novels for adults, teens and children and while the Juvenile (children's) collection and teen collections were more actively managed, acquiring graphic novels for adults was more of an afterthought. After talking to staff in December it became apparent that there was a willingness to more fully develop a graphic novel collection for adults.

Public libraries began purchasing graphic novels in the 1980s initially as a way to get young people to read. The hope was that the popularity of comics and graphic novels might lure kids to the library and induce them to read. Since that time graphic novels have secured a place within library collections and their appeal has expanded to new reading audiences. Below are some of the reasons the Northfield Library will host a graphic novel collection:

- Comics have a proven capacity to increase visual literacy; an essential skill in the digital age.
- Their high visual content recommends their use with reluctant readers and English language-learners.
- Their established visibility verifies that they are a new and constantly evolving art form.
- Their demonstrated capacity for increasing circulation and enhanced use of other library collections.
- Their indispensable place in popular culture.

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I have written a Graphic Novel (GN) collection statement that outlines the criteria for inclusion or exclusion in the collection, core GN titles as well as enduring areas of interest in this. This statement will be used as the guiding document for building and maintaining this collection.

Submitted by Joan Ennis

January has been a very busy month at the library with programs and students. Two adult programs I organized were a nutrition program on January 12 by local nutritionist Noel Aldrich, and, on January 26, a story of a family's escape from Iraq to the United States, by Taha Muhammed. Noel Aldrich presented 7 Steps for Healthy living, and had presented a nutrition series at the library two years ago. Taha Muhammed and his family have lived in the United States for over 20 years, and currently live in Lonsdale. He was a teacher before leaving Iraq and obtained his license for teaching here and has taught for many years. His story of his family's escape from Saddam Hussein's regime was harrowing. He has written a memoir of his experience.

I was contacted by a St. Dominic teacher who wanted to know if we would be having a History Day Hullabaloo for History Day projects. The middle school is not doing History Day projects this year, but I told the teacher I would provide a "mini" history day Hullabaloo for her students. Seven students came on January 12, and I talked about primary and secondary resources, and then showed them a number of resources in our library. On January 19, the students returned and I had volunteers, so that each student had one to one time with an adult, and they narrowed their topics and were directed to appropriate sources.

I was contacted by the media specialist from Bridgewater school about our American Decades database. The fifth grades students are working on a decades project. I went to Bridgewater three times over a week and demonstrated to four classes how to use the database. I provided a worksheet for the students to answer questions, moving around in the database.

Another St. Dominic teacher contacted me and brought over a group of 6th and 7th grade students on January 24 to look for biographies. They were looking for African American biographies, and I talked to them about various sources.

On January 24, Jamie and I went to Three Links apartments and gave a presentation on books about the Civil War.

On January 28, on my own time, I was a judge for the Minnesota Book Awards.

I have organized Hot Reads for Cold Nights, our winter adult reading program. We have about 30 participants, and three names are drawn each week for \$5.00 gift certificates for local businesses.

Tax forms have arrived, and we have a minimum selection. We print forms for patrons who want forms that we do not receive.

Children's Services

Submitted by Leesa Wisdorf, Children's Librarian and Reference Manager

- Worked with Kathy Ness to try and organize various program information notes for the new children's librarian. This was quite a feat as you can imagine 29 years-worth of materials to sort and to throw.
- Organized retirement parties for Kathy Ness including Justin Roberts concert, City acknowledgement, a pot-luck dinner at Teresa's. This was a bittersweet assignment. I am happy

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and excited for Kathy to be able to retire, but very sad to lose such a creative and productive friend and co-worker. The Justin Roberts concert was the perfect tribute to Kathy and I want to acknowledge all of the help I received from Bill North who obtained space at the Weitz Center, ordered the cake, and drove Justin from and to the airport.

- Finalized 2017 acquisitions budget so Reference staff could begin purchasing new materials. This is always an interesting responsibility as I review how the previous years' monies were spent and where to allocate funds for the current year. We have relied on gift money to augment our materials budget for several years, so this year with a \$10,000.00 materials budget increase we were able to reduce our reliance on gift funds.
- Worked with Teresa to write final draft of job description for new Children's Librarian position. Ditto with new Library Assistant position with an emphasis on public relations
- Began review of applicants for Children's Librarian position. We have over 60 applications for Kathy's job. Teresa and I have read through the applications and have made the first round of cuts.

Teen & Web Services

Submitted by Ian Holms, Teen and Web Services

The website is rolling along nicely and the new tech time program has gotten off to a stellar start. We have helped nearly 15 people with their tech problems and have more in the pipeline. The library blog is being updated twice a week and is able to be subscribed to, meaning you'll get any new posts straight to your email inbox.

Shelving and Volunteer Services

Submitted by Laurie Kodet

You may have noticed a few new faces around the library. We have several new volunteers:

- **Susan** began volunteering last November and comes in on Wednesday mornings from 9:00-noon. She is a retired law librarian and is enjoying shelf-reading the adult non-fiction collection. She is also looking at the condition of the materials and setting aside any books that Debby may want to withdraw or replace.
- **Teresa** began volunteering the last week of January and will be here on Wednesday nights from 6:00-8:00 pm. She speaks fluent Spanish and will be available to assist our Spanish-speaking patrons. She will also be working on translating materials for the library as needed. I have asked her to shelf-read the Spanish language collection and to look at the condition of the collection.
- We have three volunteers who are either in library school or thinking about going to library school. I have asked staff members if one of these volunteers could shadow them for 30 minutes during their shift and of course the staff is willing and welcoming. These volunteers are looking for insight into our jobs and want to discover what really goes into running a library.
- **Curran** began volunteering in December and comes in on Tuesdays from 2-4. She is caring for our Juvenile Non-fiction collection. She is shelf-reading, dusting and looking at the condition. She is currently pulling books from that collection from a weeding list for Leesa to review.

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Edward began volunteering two weeks ago and will continue to work Thursdays from 2-4. He will be tending to our music cd collection. He has begun his volunteering by pulling music CDs from a weeding list for Leesa to review.

Layna started volunteering two weeks ago and will be coming in on Mondays from 6-8. She will be available for Tech Time appointments and will be shelf reading and looking at the condition of our mystery collection.

We also have had three Northfield High School National Honor Society students working with us for the past couple of months:

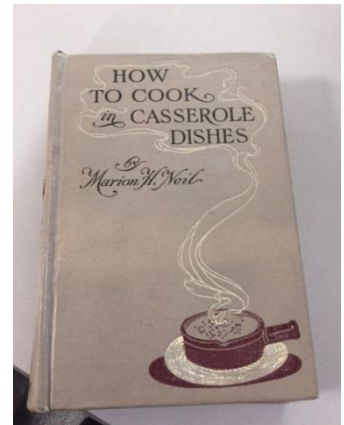
- **Dylan** is in the library on Tuesdays from 4:30-6:00. He has been covering the “Do not put in bookdrop” stickers on our music CDs and has put together dozens of welcome and homebound brochures. He will continue to volunteer at least through the end of February.
- **Olivia** volunteered on several Saturdays from 10-12. She spent her time cleaning and looking at the condition of picture books. She volunteered in the months of December and January.
- **Courtney** is also a high school student. She will begin her volunteering Wednesday, February 1st and will work every other Wednesday for a few months. She will be cleaning toys and wiping down board books. Courtney will also be delivering homebound materials on every Friday afterschool.

We are grateful for these and our other library volunteers who help the library in so many ways

Circulation Services

Submitted by Kathy Rush, Technology Circulation Services Coordinator

One thing that the circulation staff deals with is a lot is donations. Not cash - but used books, magazines, CDs and DVDs. Our patrons are very happy that they can bring us their donated materials. We get every kind of book you can imagine. Patrons will drop off bags and boxes of used materials. We never know when books are coming or how many. We recently had a donation of about 500 DVDs. Sometimes they give us 20 year old textbooks or books that are dirty and completely falling apart. Today we received this cook book published in 1912.



After we receive the books we do a quick look to see if they are yellowed or falling apart or really old, and these will be put on the book sale shelves right away. The rest go on a shelf that circulation staff will take the time to look to see if the book might be something we might keep. Perhaps it is a bestseller and we could replace our current copy with. Perhaps it is a classic and our copy is in worse shape. Patrons are eager to purchase items from the sale table. Those items we don't sell we donated to Better World Books.

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