

# Northfield Public Library Director's Report January 2019

## Director's Report

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

I would like to recognize and thank our retiring Library Board members who have served during the past year: Sam Demas, Maggie Epstein, Clarice Grabau, Jane McWilliams, Ryan Redetzke, and Sarah Weeks. We appreciate the time, energy and commitment it takes to be on a City of Northfield Board or Commission, and know that the knowledge and experience you brought to the Library Board was invaluable.

For 2019, I would like to see the new Board work strategically with our Programming and Outreach Coordinator, Laurie Kodet, to aid new and ongoing library initiatives. More planning to come, but please consider volunteering for a committee assignment!

## Adult Services

### ***Submitted by Leesa Wisdorf, Adult and Youth Services Manager***

In November we finished up the Hispanic Heritage Celebration with our final event on Saturday, November 3, celebrating the end of Dia de Los Muertos with the Azteca Dancers. The library Atrium is a wonderful performance space for these activities as the sound carries throughout the library and the curious find themselves witness to new and unexpected experiences. The offrenda and papel picado came down leaving the vibrant color and energy in the atrium sorely reduced.



The Friends of the Library held their annual Trivia Bee on November 9 with a record 19 teams competing for prizes. The event at the Grand raised \$3,400 that directly supports library programming. Thank you FRIENDS!



The NPL Teen Advisory Board and YA Librarian Layna Mestad had a team at the Trivia Bee sponsored by library staff member Kathy Rush.

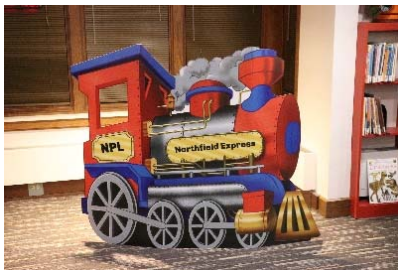
The 2018 Magic of Model Trains show was held December 6 as part of Winter Walk. A record 3,504 people visited the library between 3-5pm to see the model trains placed throughout the



library. Months of preplanning - confirming engineers, volunteers, reserving and /or purchasing equipment like air compressors and stanchions, ordering food, and doing PR - occurs to prepare for the big day. Laurie and Emily assisted as they prepare to take over the

2019 show. Library staff, especially Steve and Tyler, were on

hand to help with the heavy moving, photography, crowd control, and post-event cleanup. New this year we added a cardboard stand-up train engine that kids had their photos taken in, and Emily purchased a few new train toys for the children's area where local musician Neil Rowley and friends invite kids to "sing along!" The Library's Teen Board created a French inspired layout and wore berets to complete the effect.





A big shout out to the Friends of the Library who support this show with their dollars, and especially to Bill North who year after year has been on hand to help haul

equipment, move furniture, put up signs, etc. and to the Engineers who do the bulk of the work by bringing in their trains and layouts to share their hobbies with our visitors. The train show is a wonderful way to showcase the library!

***Submitted by Joan Ennis***

- On December 18, I gave a book talk at Three Links on autobiographies. The books interested the residents and many of the book I brought were checked out.
- On December 18, we had a holiday gathering for the Contemporary Women Writers book group. We were able to use a room at the Village on the Cannon. I planned activities to help members remember the books we read in 2018, while we enjoyed treats.
- On December 19, the Open Writing Group met. We have had new members join and share their writing.
- The Northfield Reads committee has been busy planning activities through May, focusing on the book *A Good Time for the Truth; Race in Minnesota*.
- In January, we will encourage the community to attend one of the MLK events in Northfield and will hold a second book discussion of the book.
- In February, we plan to have one of the essayists from the book speak in Northfield.
- We also plan to have speaker Kristina Medino-Vilarino talk about issues related to the Latinex population.
- In March, we plan to have speaker Joan Hepburn talk about the intersection of race, class and gender. We also plan to have speaker Stephen Kelly talk about jazz and race.
- In April, we will have speaker Adriana Estill talk about whiteness
- In May, we will have a panel of local people of the global majority talk about how to make Northfield a more welcoming place.

***Submitted by Jamie Stanley***

## **Comfort Food: The Importance of Reading Aloud as Adults**

This past summer an older library patron asked me to find a book that she could read to a woman who was bedridden. The benefits and joys of reading aloud as adults is much the same it is for the younger set. Careful concentrated listening improves information processing skills, vocabulary and comprehension. It is a simple, low maintenance way to connect with someone, and a way to expand reading interests as a book does not have to be about a topic you like, to be enjoyable to listen to.

Developing a list of books that would appeal to both this patron and her listener proved to be more of a challenge than I anticipated. A plethora of lists abound for reading to children. Not so for adults. Whether a book is fiction or nonfiction is immaterial when considering a book for reading aloud, length is also not important. Short stories for example, despite the potential virtue of their length, are not an automatic slam-dunk. Nor are books for older children, although there are some exceptions. What is important is the writing style of the author within the book including tone, vocabulary, and pace. The narrative skills of the reader(s) and the listening skills of the listener(s) are also factors.

Since that first request earlier this year, I am always on the lookout for book title suggestions for reading aloud by adults.

Below is a short list of read-aloud recommendations put forward by reading advisor professionals. A rationale for why titles were suggested accompanied each title, but for the sake of brevity, I am omitting the reasons. Since the concept of “sure-bets” does not exist for read-aloud book titles, the next time someone asks me for such a list of I will include book annotations.

1. **The Last Unicorn** by Peter S. Beagle. NY: Viking Press, 1968. 294 pp.
2. **Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence Between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell** by Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, ed. by Thomas Travisano and Saskia Hamilton. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010. 928 pp.
3. **During the Reign of the Queen of Persia** by Joan Chase. NY: HarperCollins, 1983. 215 pp.
4. **The Graveyard Book** by Neil Gaiman. NY: HarperCollins, 2008 312 pp.
5. **The Magicians** by Lev Grossman. NY: Viking, 2009. 402 pp. *This is book one in The Magicians Trilogy*

6. **The Animal Family** by Randall Jarrell. Decorations by Maurice Sendak. NY: Pantheon Books, 1965. 179 pp.
7. **So Long, See You Tomorrow** by William Maxwell. NY: Knopf, 1980. 135 pp.
8. **The Buddha in the Attic** by Julie Otsuka. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. 129 pp.
9. **Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex** by Mary Roach. NY: Norton, 2008, 219 pp.
10. **Pastoralia** by George Saunders. NY: Riverhead, 2000, 224 pp.\

***Submitted by Tyler Gardner, December/January***

In the month of November I created two very well received movie displays. One was for all of our materials with John Huston and Orson Welles, the second for Denzel Washington. I couldn't keep items on the shelf, they were just flying off!

I also noticed that a book I requested we purchase back in April, *Stream Systems* by Gerald Murnane, is finally getting some checkout and requests. A few articles have been popping up about him recently cause a publisher is finally getting his work released in America. He is Australian. Another of his books, *Border Districts*, is getting good press.

Throughout the month we have continued to use our social media outlets more effectively in order to promote our programming and engage the community.

Sometime this month I started taking a look at our Nooks. We wanted to see if there was any way that we could consolidate the content and make them more attractive for checkout. Unfortunately, due to the way the Nooks are set-up, we will be unable to consolidate any of the purchased digital materials. For example, the materials purchased on Nook 1 will only ever be available on Nook 1. This is because each purchased title is connected to a specific account, and each Nook is connected to a specific account. I talked to B&N customer service but no dice.

In November I did a massive evaluation/weeding of our movie collection. I cleared a lot of space in the movie room by removing a lot of the duplicate copies of movies that are no longer as popular as they once were.

I got the opportunity to work with Jamie Stanley and library patron Lyn Bruce to try and find Lyn's father's service record. We learned that a 70's fire at the National Archive destroyed a lot of military records for WW1 and WW2 servicemen. We made a request with the National Archives in the hopes they could piece together whatever documentation they have and get Lyn the information she is looking for.



Outreach Coordinator Angelica Linder and I have been working together to secure funding for a *Club de Lectura*. The idea is to have a book club for the Spanish speaking adults in Northfield. I reached out to a number of organizations to see what our options are. After reaching out to the FFoL they responded that they would be very excited to support the *Club de Lectura*. I wrote up a description and proposal of the *Club de Lectura* and sent it off to the Friends for discussion at their December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Angelica and I have also been in conversation about how we can fund and plan the Hispanic Heritage Celebration 2019. There are some grant options available, some of which are not open for application at this time. I have/will be going through all of the available documentation and budget information from HHC-2018 so I can get a better idea of what our options are and to provide accurate estimates to funding organizations.

## Youth Services

### ***Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Children's Programming Librarian***

December was rich with programs for kids and families, including the second annual Nutcracker Spectacular--an event that includes a story, dance demonstrations from a local production of *The Nutcracker*, and art-making with the Northfield Arts Guild. 84 attended the now-annual event. We also held two Saturday storytimes (one with local writer Mary Bleckwehl), a Music & Movement program, and, during the schools' winter break, a sing-along to the movie *Trolls*, drop-in "Reindeer Games," and a wildly successful Harry Potter Party celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup>



anniversary of the first book's publication. At the Harry Potter party, kids made take-home potions (scrupulously following my intricate invented recipes ☺) and wands, got sorted into their Hogwarts houses and made buttons with their house crests, sampled Potter-themed treats, and played trivia games. ~150 people came to the Harry Potter Party, and one volunteer commented that it was "the best thing [she'd] ever been a part of." We received several comments from parents, both at this party and at other winter break events, thanking us for holding such a variety of programs over the break.



I finished the Social-Emotional Learning book list I'd been working on and shared it with local reading and early childhood teams. Both HCI and the Y are now stocking and handing out copies of the list, and Superintendent Hillman expressed thanks to the library for working to complement the social-emotional focus of the schools' new elementary curriculum. On January 26, I'll be offering a Saturday storytime called "Friends and Feelings," designing and promoting it as a way to build social-emotional as well as early literacy skills. Later that afternoon, for an elementary-aged crowd, I'll be holding a "Family STEAMFest," where families will face engineering challenges, experiment with Arduino and augmented reality apps, and more. I'm hoping to have teens from the high school's robotics team demo a robot or two and answer questions, and have just contacted the team's faculty lead about the opportunity.

There are two more things I'm excited about for January. One is the debut of Catch a Chapter: a Homeschool Read-Aloud program, proposed by a homeschooling parent. I'll select and, for the program, read aloud the beginning chapters of chapter books I recommend to homeschooling families, having copies of each book available for check-out. The second is a new monthly outreach storytime to a preschool class at Longfellow. A new offering this year, it's the only preschool class in Northfield to do two days a week in Spanish and one day in English. I'll be visiting on the English day both for storytime and to promote the resources we have for Spanish-speaking families via take-home literature.

***Submitted by Layna Mestad, Youth Services/Teen Librarian***

November was a busy month for teen services outreach and planning. I attended a Tea at the Key event earlier in the month that was hosted by the Northfield Union of Youth (NUY). Anyone from Northfield was invited to learn how we as a community can support the work of NUY. I appreciated being able to meet the people who make up the youth and adult boards, including the new executive director Emily, and connect over common goals that both NUY and the Northfield Public Library have for teen services. NUY will be having an open house and movie night here at the library on Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 4-8:30pm in the Bunday room. Everyone in the Northfield community is invited! There will be an info session about The Key/NUY from 4-5:30pm, followed by a screening of *It's a Wonderful Life* at 5:30pm. Other NUY and NPL collaborations are in the works, so be on the lookout!

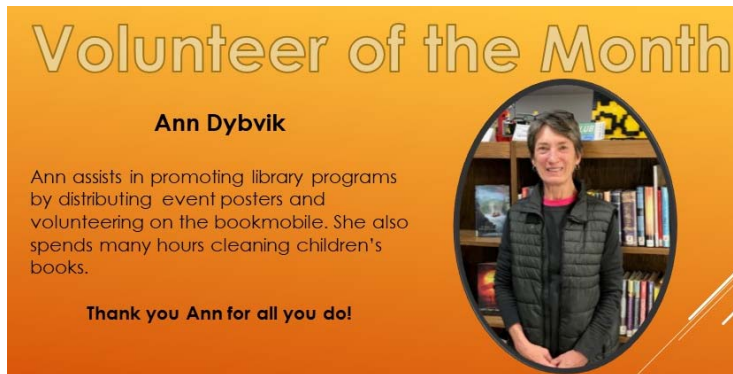
The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) will be starting a Teen Book Group in January. We will meet monthly to chat about books they vote to read as a group.

Lastly, our TAB members have been worked on the Winter in Paris train table for the train show *The Lourve*, Arc de Triomphe, and Eiffel Tower were included—it was a great success!

# Outreach, Shelving and Volunteer Services

*Submitted by Laurie Kodet, Shelving/Outreach Services Supervisor/Volunteer Manager*

## Volunteers--November and December Volunteers of the Month



In November 16 volunteers worked 63 hours in the library. They assisted with programming (Day of the Dead, Great Puzzle Swap, Lego Club, Block Party), shelf maintenance, and more. In addition, 12 volunteers made 53 homebound deliveries. This is just a snapshot of how volunteers expand staff capacity and enable the library to do so much and reach so many. We are so thankful for our library volunteers.



Library volunteers assisted with the Winter Walk Train Show. They assisted the train conductors with their equipment, greeted visitors, and took photos. The event was bigger than ever and our volunteers helped make it a wonderful event for all.

## Student Worker

New this year is the student worker position of Spanish Language Programming Assistant. Javier Ramirez, Carleton student spent six weeks of his fall term working with Angelina to develop programming. One of the program they created was a Spanish immersion program which centered around the Day of Dead, held on Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Beginning in January, the library will be offering a beginning computer and internet use class for Spanish speakers. Javier has helped create curriculum and will be teaching the class. Javier is a great addition to our team.



## City ID

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, Angelica and I took the City ID program to Carleton College. This was the first remote delivery of the program and it was quite successful. Thanks to the IT staff and Kathy who procured the needed equipment and setup, allowing for the remote processing of credit/debit card payments. The students were very excited



we were able to come to campus. We took 60 City ID and 36 library card applications. Library staff will meet to discuss future remote programs in the coming year.

A review of the City ID application process and the success of the remote process, lead us to develop a new model for taking applications. Beginning in January, we will be taking City ID applications in an on-demand style; this process is similar to the way notary service is offered. Six staff members trained to take City ID applications and there are plans to train at least one more staff member next month. We believe this is much more patron friendly and a more thoughtful way to use staff time.

## Professional Development

I have applied to attend the Minnesota Library Association (MLA) Institute for Leadership Excellence (MILE) retreat scheduled on May 7-10, 2019. MILE gives participants an opportunity to develop and refine leadership skills, develop and move forward on professional and personal goals, network and make connections with library professionals in the broader community, and meet and connect with a mentor. I am hoping I will be accepted.

On December 15, I completed my degree from Minnesota State University Mankato in a program called Applied Organizational Studies. The degree focused on communication, leadership, and critical thinking. I found going back to school challenging and rewarding. I am grateful to Teresa for encouraging me to complete my degree.

### ***Submitted by Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator*** **Highlights of December 2018:**

On December 12<sup>th</sup> we had a library card sign up station at the Northfield Community Resource Center during Operation Joy (formerly Christmas Sharing), from 9-12pm and 3-6pm. This was for parents to get a library card for their children and give it to them as a gift for the holidays!

Operation Joy served to 800 youth (birth-teens) each child receives a pair of pajamas, a book, a set of hat/gloves and a quilt. Beyond that a toy or item of some kind. The event stars at 9am until 8 pm.

I had a mother whose kids visited the library with Summer BLAST, at the time she miss the opportunity to sign them up for a card. She was excited to see the library presence there and signed up her kids, whom reminded her to get them a library card.

Overall on December 12, I Issued 22 children's library cards.

On December 20th we had a presentation about a possible program with the Mexican Consulate called "Plaza Comunitaria", presented by Monica Cruz, their Community Affairs officer. This program is an adult education program for Spanish speakers designed to assists in the completion of basic education. Representatives from the Library, Greenvale Park Community School, Human Rights Commission were in attendance. Representatives from the Library, Greenvale park community school, Human rights commission were in attendance.

### **January happenings:**

- Spanish Book Club – Second Monday of the month at 7pm, Bunday room
- Computer Class – Every Tuesday at 6:15pm, Pye room
- Spanish Storytime - Every Friday at 4:30pm, Bunday room

## **Northfield Poet Laureate**

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

### **December Events**

- Wednesday, December 12: Poetry Night with Lisa Dordal and Mary Moore Easter (Content).
- Thursday, December 13: Slam Poetry Workshops with Guante (Northfield High School/The Key)

The Northfield Poet Laureate 2018 Annual Report, including the results of the Northfield Poet Laureate poll, is available here:

[http://guides.mynpl.org/ld.php?content\\_id=46153976](http://guides.mynpl.org/ld.php?content_id=46153976)

### **In the Planning Stages**

**Poetry Nights booked through May 2019:**

January: Faribault Poets

February: Christopher Bakken (co-sponsored by Carleton College)

March: Emily Oliver

April: Justin Watkins (co-sponsored by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership)

May: Daniel Dietrich

#### Participation in Carleton “Public Works” Grant

Poet and Carleton visiting professor Chris Martin has received a “Public Works” Grant from Carleton to produce four brief audio walking tours of Northfield. I’ve been included in the grant as the person in charge of commissioning Northfield residents to produce and record a script. Participants will be paid \$250 each for their work. The project is to be completed in time for Carleton’s reunion in mid-June.

#### Writers Night: Climate

Philip Spensley, on Northfield's Climate Action Plan committee, has asked me to put together a poetry event related to the Climate Action Plan. I was planning to hold another "Writers Night" juried reading, where writers would be invited to submit short poems or pieces of prose on the theme. A panel of judges would make a selection from the submissions, which would then be read by the writers at the event. The tentative date is Friday, March 1 (First Friday Art Night).

#### Poets Laureate Group Book Launch Reading

Two poems by the Northfield Poet Laureate are included in the forthcoming book *Undocumented: Great Lakes Poets Laureate on Social Justice* (Michigan State University Press), due out March 1, 2019. I have reached out to six other current or former Poets Laureate who are included in the book (Ellie Schoenfeld, Shiela Packa, and Deborah Cooper from Duluth; and Ken McCullough, Jim Armstrong, and Emilio DeGrazia from Winona) about giving a group reading from the book in April or May. Link to the book page on the MSU Press Website:

<http://msupress.org/books/book/?id=50-1D0-4581#.XCZVzc9KhTY>

