

Northfield Public Library Director's Report March 2019

Director's Report

Submitted by Teresa Jensen, Library Director

I am happy to announce that we have hired librarian Katlin Heidgerken-Greene as Reference manager. Katlin comes to us most recently from the Anoka County Library System where she served as Interim Manager of the Johnsonville library; before that, she worked as Librarian 2 at the Northtown library. Katlin is a graduate of St. Olaf College, and received her M.A. in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin. She has a strong background in Teen and Volunteer Services, and will bring to us some thoughtful, innovative ideas for library service here. Katlin was featured in the American Libraries magazine in April 2013 as one of the Emerging Leaders: Class of 2013. When asked, **What inspired you to become a librarian?** She answered "The opportunity to work with a diverse public in informal teaching and learning situations".

I've included a photo from January 2019's [Sun Focus](#); Katlin is in the yellow sweater. Come by to say hello!

Officials from Anoka County accept the LGIA award for the Anoka County Library's VolunTeen program. From left: Jerry Soma, Anoka County administrator; Jennifer M. Gerbig, librarian; Scott Schulte, Anoka County commissioner; Maggie Snow, Anoka County Library director; Rhonda Sivarajah, Anoka County commissioner; and Katlin J. Heidgerken-Greene, librarian.



Adult Services

Submitted by Joan Ennis

February was a month of many rescheduled events because of snow! Snow days also brought many children and adults to the library looking for books to read, and movies to watch.

- On February 19, the Contemporary Women Writers Book group discussed the Northfield Reads book for this year, *A Good Time for the Truth*. Another member led the discussion because I was asked to give a genealogy presentation at a PEO meeting at St. Peter's Church that evening. I explained and demonstrated Ancestry and Heritage Quest using

some of my grandparents records as examples. I also mentioned other useful databases not related to genealogy, such as Novelist.

- On February 26, I gave a presentation at Three Links Apartments on Disasters in America, focusing on fiction books about World War I, The Great Depression, World War II, and September 11. The group enjoyed the talks and checked out over half of the books I brought! I will return next week and provide activities for their Brain Fitness event, focusing on the above events.
- The Open Writing Group met on February 27. I feel the group members are becoming more comfortable with each other as time goes by, and are giving constructive feedback on writing. We have had some new members join recently.
- Northfield Reads committee is busy planning activities for March and April. We have several speakers lined up for the spring.
- We have several author speakers coming up. Beverly Lewis will speak at the library on April 11. William Kent Krueger will be speaking on April 18. Because he draws a large crowd, I have reserved the Middle School auditorium for the event.

Submitted by Jamie Stanley

The 2019 Tax Season



Librarian Joan Ennis has worked at the Northfield Library for thirty years and until recently was responsible for managing an annual tax form distribution program in the library. Last fall I was tasked with overseeing this service. A service I think is of understated importance in the library.

For years, the U.S. P.S. office in downtown Northfield distributed tax materials but that ceased twenty years ago or more; since then the Northfield Library has been the **ONLY** venue for the distribution of the IRS and Minnesota Department of Revenue forms in the city. In 2016, Minnesota Revenue stopped the distribution of their tax documents to libraries as part of a cost cutting measure and the Internal Revenue Service is also cutting back on their offerings. Like many government agencies, there is a push to go paperless.

But paperless only services leave people who lack electronic access and/or computer knowledge in a difficult spot. While many people own a cell phone they have no idea how to use a computer. The Northfield Library is the option of last resort for this cohort of people. Not only does the library distribute the most widely used IRS 1040 materials for the current tax year it can also access all other Internal Revenue Service and Minnesota Department of Revenue documents for current and previous tax years and can print them on demand.

In the spirit of providing further referral, I compiled information about places in Northfield that provide free and low-cost tax preparation for low-income residents. After contacting each of these organizations and consulting the Minnesota Revenue website, I learned there are no tax preparation sites that provide services in Spanish in Faribault, Farmington, Lakeville or Northfield. Northfield residents with limited English language proficiency are required to provide their own translators. According to the Minnesota Department of Revenue website there are two south of the suburbs locations (Bloomington and Hopkins) and three Twin Cities locations (one in Minneapolis and two in St. Paul) that provide tax preparation assistance for low income Minnesotans whose first language is Spanish. The Northfield Library is not in a position to fill this gap in service, but can hopefully make a positive difference to residents as best as possible.

Submitted by Tyler Gardner

- In the month of February, we had our second month of DiscoverReads, the Adult Winter Reading Program. There were over 50 entries in this month's drawing which was surprisingly higher than the month of January.
- To celebrate Black History Month in the movie room I created and frequently replenished a display of films starring black actors. As a result, I saw an increased circulation of DVD's with black leads.
- In the month of February, I ordered a few new trade paperbacks for the graphic novel collection. A trade paperback, in the comic book world, is a collection of stories originally published in comic book form, but have been collected and reprinted in book format. These titles typically contain one story arc or connected story within the greater comic series. My hope is to get people in to seeing these comic books and the characters within as something akin to the great figures of literature. I mean, what is Batman but a modern Sherlock Holmes, and Superman but a modern Perseus?
- In the beginning of January, the Library Technology Group met up for the first time and discussed some of the future technologies that we could adopt in the library. We discussed Virtual Reality, the Digital Software Workstation (name tbd??), and photo scanning. By the end of the meeting there was a general consensus on moving forward with the photo scanning option as it provides the most immediate and tangible service to our patrons. I brought up some concerns in that meeting regarding Virtual Reality in general and its place in the library. At this time I don't see VR as a reliable tool or resource for the library. Due to the high cost of legitimate VR systems like the Oculus GO, Oculus Rift, and HTC Vive, and the lack of possible programming, including the limitations of programming being directly dependent on how many VR units we have and the ability to properly set them up in a space, it just doesn't seem like a good option for our library, and in my opinion, any library. We also discussed what our technology statement for the library will be. I recommended having it focused on things that provide a direct service to library patrons and could also provide an opportunity for programming. For instance, I'd

envisioned a crash course program for “organizing your digital life” to show people clean and organized methods of storing and backing up their digital content. Nick mentioned that were this designed as “curriculum” (whatever that means) then we could also share it with city employees.

Youth Services

Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Children’s Programming Librarian

February programming highlights included an outreach storytime at the second annual Yeti Fest, a two-day event hosted by Armory Square and Imminent Brewing. Held on a Saturday, it enabled us to reach families who may not be able to make weekly morning storytimes--and, I suspect, some who may not have come to a Saturday storytime offered **in** the library. It was a good opportunity to reach them and be part of a growing community event: last year, Yeti Fest storytime was attended by 11 people; this year, it was attended by over 70.

Another highlight was a Saturday afternoon program with STEM Bunnies. STEM Bunnies brought nine rabbits and kids were able to pet them, which was great, but the main reason I brought them to the library is because of their backstory: when Caleb Smith was 10 and looking for a pet rabbit right after Easter-time, he found over 300 for sale on Craigslist in the metro area. He realized that people were buying rabbits as larks for Easter, then giving them up as soon as they realized that a rabbit is as much of a commitment as a cat or dog. Caleb started his nonprofit, STEM Bunnies, to address this issue by going into schools and libraries and working to convince people "not to get rabbits"--at least not if they weren't up for a commitment--as well as to give them a chance to interact with rabbits **outside** the confines of a commitment. Much more than bunnies, I wanted Northfield kids to see and hear about another kid who saw a real-world problem, made plans to do something about it, and did.



For the second year in a row, all four of Greenvale Park Elementary's third grade classes visited the library, got tailored book recommendations, and--for those who didn't yet have them--got library cards. Funded by a grant applied for by Greenvale teacher Mary Beth Youngblut, these visits, in which each child gets to check out one book, are special to me because I get to really talk *books* with kids, and they learn that at the library they can get not only books but enthusiastic recommendations. Real relationships begin at these visits. Several of last year's third graders continue to ask me for reading suggestions when they visit the library. This month, I also took book recommendations *to* school, booktalking to third and fourth grade classes at Sibley. I'm working to spread the word among Northfield teachers that this is something I'm available and eager to do, and hope to booktalk to more grades and at more schools before the school year ends.



February's many canceled school days had us revisiting our common practice of canceling children's programs like storytime and LEGO Club when school is closed. Going forward, we will hold children's programs as long as the library is open and staff can make it in to cover them. As able, on these days we'll also put out "extra" things--like bookmarks to color and MagnaTiles--in the children's area. Whether to cancel teen programs will be decided by Layna in consultation with me on a case by case basis, since they present different issues and are usually held at night.

In March, I'm excited to be offering two sessions of an "Early Literacy 101" program for adults. It's called "How to Read to Your Grandkids"—and intended for all adults who read with young children. In past positions, I've found there are often insurmountable barriers for parents in getting to such programs, so recasting it as "for grandparents" is something I hope will boost attendance, as well as a simple acknowledgement that we serve a lot of seniors who care for their grandkids in Northfield.

Looking ahead to summer, all Books & Stars acts have been booked and we're ready to apply for the SEMAC grant to fund them. New acts include the Wailing Loons, a folk-rock band with a banjo, fiddle, and stand-up bass; The Fairlanes, an a cappella doo-wop foursome; and Mestifonía, who play "a unique mix of Iberian and South American" music and performed in Northfield for the Hispanic Heritage Month festival this past fall.

Submitted by Layna Mestad, Youth Services/Teen Librarian

February was a tough month for teen programming because we had to cancel a handful of YA events due to the winter weather. One of those events was our big program for the month, Teen Game Night. We're in the process of rescheduling. New date TBD. In other YA programming news, our TAB members came up with the idea of doing an anonymous teen poetry display in the YA section for National Poetry Month in April (depending on how this goes/the number of poetry submissions we receive, I'd like to do this a couple of times throughout the year). They stressed the importance of communicating that poetry submissions can be anonymous as some writers may not feel comfortable having their name attached to their work (though anonymity is optional). Similar to the Sidewalk Poetry Submissions, teens middle-high school can hand in their poetry at the front desk, and there will be a folder at my desk for library staff to place the submissions. I will look through the submissions on an ongoing basis and add to the YA display throughout the month of April (assuming we get a number of submissions to have a rotating display). I would also like to use the display case on the main floor for this (contingent upon the number of submissions we receive). I think the library space is an incredible platform for the voice of youth to be heard and represented, and it's exciting we can incorporate this with National Poetry Month.

Secondly, we are finalizing a Self-Defense Workshop for Teens that will take place on a Saturday afternoon in late April. This is such an important life skill, and one that I'm thrilled the library can cover with our programming budget (free for participants, of course). Many self-defense classes charge participants, so we're excited to offer an accessible option for teens here in the library space without a financial barrier that could prevent them from attending.

Lastly, if you're on Instagram, follow our TAB Instagram page! @northfieldpubliclibrarytab

Circulation Services

Submitted by Kathy Rush, Technology Circulation Services Manager

I have been busy working on the Library's Annual Report that we complete every year and send to the Minnesota Department of Education by April 1. It is a 15 page report that asks for statistical information from the previous year.

This is my sixth year completing this report and it takes a great deal of time to compete. I keep notes from one year to the next and I have

streamlined the process as much as I can. The report asks for statistics on programs and attendance, circulation numbers, FTE information and pay ranges. They want to know how much we spent on the collection and what was spent operating the library. Computer and wireless numbers and this year they have added hits to the library webpage. I have to get some of the information from SELCO, other information from the city finance office and other



information from running reports in Incode and Horizon. I will be happy when this is done and accepted by the state.

Outreach, Shelving and Volunteer Services

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



City ID-

The implementation of the “on-demand” process for City ID applications is working well. Melanny Castillo, Library Clerk I, has been trained so there are seven staff members available to process City ID applications. Angelica and I will be at Carleton College on March 4th and St. Olaf College on March 7th to doing library promotion and processing City ID applications.

Outreach-

February continues to be busy with scheduling outreach programs. On February 4th, Angelica and I attending Sibley Elementary School conferences where we promoted library services and issued 14 library cards. We also attended conferences at St. Dominic School on February 18th & 21st and issued 9 library cards. In March we will be visiting Greenvale and Bridgewater schools.

Link Center-

The Link Center will become part of library services on May 1st, this action became official at February 19th City Council meeting. Teresa and I have worked with HCI and City staff to prepare for the transition. I am meeting with the Link Center coordinator and am working on the action plan.

Other-

We will be holding a staff-training day again this year on April 26th. The library will be closed for the day. I am currently organizing the training and hope to cover building and personal safety, bookmobile and book bike training, first aid and AED training, and new Link Center operations.

I am the staff liaison on the Friends of the Library Board and attended my second meeting on February 26th. Upcoming Friends Event- Puzzle Event on Saturday, March 23rd 10:00 am – 1:30 pm at the Weitz Center. There will be teams of up to 4 all trying to simultaneously complete identical 500 piece puzzles. There will be 2 age levels, 12 and under, also 13 and up. The winning team in each bracket will take home a bag of prizes from local businesses.

Submitted by Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator

Highlights of February 2019:

Our computer classes in Spanish are going really well. Tuesday 6 students attended; Sundays have not been very successful, Javier Ramirez (Carleton student worker) will continue computer classes after the spring break through May. Some of the students have made great comments about their instructor.

On February 15th, The Coordinators of Greenvale Community School, a representative from Neighbors United, and I had the opportunity to visit and tour the Centro Tyrone Guzman in Minneapolis. They offer Adult literacy “Plaza Comunitaria” a program through a partnership with the Mexican Consulate, the Institute of Mexicans in the Exterior and CONEVyT, adult learners earn their primary and secondary school diplomas in the Spanish language.

March happenings:

- Spanish Book Club – Second Monday of the month at 7pm.
- Computer Class – Every Tuesday at 6:15pm and Sunday at 3pm
- Zumba- instructor Victoria Nolasco, every Saturday in February and March @ 8 am.
- Elementary School visits during conference to promote library services and issue kids library cards. Laurie & Angelica.
- St. Olaf & Carleton City ID visits
- St. Dominic Church – visit promoting library services and City ID

Northfield Poet Laureate

Submitted by Rob Hardy, Northfield Poet Laureate

Events

February 6-7: Christopher Bakken Talk, Reading, and Class Visits (total attendance: 85).

Bakken's visit, co-sponsored by Carleton, was significantly impacted by winter weather. On Thursday, February 7, school was canceled, which meant the cancellation of his scheduled visit to Northfield High School to talk to AP Spanish students about literary translation. His poetry reading was scheduled for 7pm at the library, but because of deteriorating weather conditions, the library closed at 6pm and the reading was held at Content for an audience of 12. Despite the weather, Christopher enjoyed his visit and said he felt inspired by every interaction during his two days in Northfield. In addition to his poetry reading, he visited three classes and gave a public talk at Carleton on Wednesday.

Other

- In February, I visited one of Bridget Novak's art classes at one of Laura Baker Services' independent living residences. I plan to return in March and work on poetry with the residents. One idea we are exploring is writing a poem with residents and commissioning Dan Kallman to turn it into a short choral piece that the LBSA choir can sing.
- There were 30 submissions from 14 different writers for the Writers Night program at Content on Friday, March 1 (First Friday Art Night). The judges chose 18 pieces to be read on the program. I collected the submissions, anonymized them, and notified the writers of the judges' decisions.
- I spent some time in February planning for a group reading at Content on April 11 by all three current and former Poets Laureate of Winona (Emilio DeGrazia, Jim Armstrong, and Ken McCullough) and the 2010-2012 Poet Laureate of Duluth (Sheila Packa). The reading is to promote the new anthology *Undocumented: Great Lakes Poets Laureate on Social Justice* (Michigan State University Press). I will also be reading at the event, and will be traveling to Duluth on April 28 for a reading to promote the book at Zenith Bookstore. I may also take part in a reading at the public libraries in Winona (April or May) and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (July).
- Invited Madison (WI) Poet Laureate Oscar Mireles to read as part of 3rd annual Northfield Poetry Festival & National Hispanic Heritage Month programming (<http://oscarmireles.com/bio/>)
- I met with Teresa Jensen to discuss requesting proposals and creating a PARC for a public poetry sculpture. This will be presented to the ACC as a separate item for discussion.

Scheduled Events: Poetry workshop at FiftyNorth (March 11-14); Emily Oliver (March 14), Danny Caine (March 26); Justin Watkins (April 4); Poets Laureate (April 11); Jimmy Santiago Baca (April 17); PIYP Day (April 25); Daniel Dietrich (May 2); Anders Carlson-Wee (May 16)