



**Northfield Public Library  
Director's Report  
October  
2020**

## Director's Report

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

- We are excited to be reviewing the applications and résumés from the Youth Services librarians for the new YA and Teen librarian position. We cast a wide net with a nationwide search, and at this point have over 50 applicants! Katlin and I will be reviewing the apps on Friday (October 9) and narrowing our choices down for interviews in the coming weeks.
- The city has purchased equipment that will aid in translating for events and meetings. The equipment consists of a transmitter that will broadcast the voice of a human translator, who will be listening and simultaneously translating, out to a number of receivers, in the form of headphones that will be distributed to an audience. Originally slated to be housed at the library for checkout to community organizations, we felt that having the equipment available at City Hall would keep it on hand for City Council meetings if needed. Prospective borrowers will check out the equipment from the HR/Communications department on the second floor of City Hall
- We have been purchasing needed/wanted AV equipment to help improve the quality of sound and video recordings for our live and virtual programs, now and for the future. This includes two high-quality speakers with soundboard, and soon to come, an upgraded microphone system that will integrate with our A/V system. Funds for these purchases come from our programming budget for 2020, which was not as actively spend as in past years, due to the coronavirus limitations.
- We have put the finishing touches on the brochure for the Library Director position, and sent that off to HR for final tweaking. The brochure will be used as a recruitment tool; as with the YA librarian, we expect to advertise for the job nation-wide. I will share the brochure with you all in an upcoming Library Board meeting.

# Adult Services

## ***Submitted by Katlin Greene***

As we settle into a beautiful fall, I've been working behind the scenes to support several virtual programs and have had the pleasure of seeing staff grow more comfortable putting them on. We've used a variety of different approaches and have really grown in our skills as virtual, passive, and physically distant programs have become an integral part of the way we operate.

In August, a library Zoom interactive dance workshop taught choreography to participants, who then created their own dance videos or came in to have their moves recorded. The video compilation turned out great and was shown at the library for a week, which was a fun way to show off everyone's contributions to a joyful project.

Storytimes continue to be virtual on Facebook, some live and some prerecorded. Staff are learning to use new tools in their recording setup, from better cameras and a green screen to more advanced recording and livestreaming software (OBS) that will help us produce better video, more easily. I continue to be impressed with how staff rise to the occasion and push themselves to learn and improve in the digital realm. We are growing in a way I would not have imagined in any other year, but the pandemic is pushing us—at least this is one positive result!

I dusted off my youth-services-librarian crafty skills this month to help Emily and HCI roll out a new Story Stroll to accompany our Hispanic Heritage Celebration events. Several rolls of contact paper and many rides around town later, the Story Stroll has visited 6 Northfield parks and been enjoyed by many who happened upon it. What a fun way to combine reading a book together with taking a nice fall walk! Thanks to Emily and HCI for this successful partnership. I hope to see more Story Strolls take shape in the spring once the weather warms again.

In the building, library staff are fielding lots of questions about voting and elections information. Along with the Census, providing voter information is a major public service the library can provide. We are referring calls to the Northfield City Clerk's office, and also answering lots of questions using information from the Minnesota Secretary of State's office (see their website at [mnvotes.org](http://mnvotes.org) for really comprehensive information on this topic) on viewing sample ballots, voting early in person or by mail, finding polling places, registration info, and more. Voter Registration forms and Absentee Ballot Applications are available at the library in paper copies; they are also online. Make your plan to vote now; library staff are here to help! 😊

***Submitted by Jamie Stanley***

**Sustaining the intellectual self during the Covid-19 pandemic**

As a front line library staff member, I have a prime opportunity to observe how my co-workers, the public and I have adjusted (or not) to the need to self-isolate more. Almost without exception, every conversation I have with people who frequent the library is imbued with a sense of weary resignation and stoicism. The stoicism serving as a default coping mechanism. As time has passed, less mention is made of any expectation of a quick end of the Covid-19 pandemic. People are hunkering down for the duration and not expecting a person in a position of authority to wave the “all clear” flag anytime soon.

My metaphorical elixir of choice during this time as been to read books about books. That is, books that provide guidance about what books one could/should read at some point, and books that can be given a pass. In addition to escapism, reading these books has provided me with collection development guidance that I hope to use to purchase books that will enrich the Adult Fiction collection, and raise my level of competency providing Reader’s Advisory Services. Below is a list of four of the many titles I have been working my way through.

- *1001 books for every mood* by Hallie Ephron. Avon, Mass.: Adams Media, c2008.
- *500 essential cult books: the ultimate guide* by Gina McKinnon, with Steve Holland. New York: Sterling, c2010.
- *\*Beowulf on the beach: what to love and what to skip in literature's 50 greatest hits* by Jack Murnighan. New York: Three Rivers Press, c2009 (*Exceptionally great!*)
- *The writer’s library: authors you love on books that changed their lives.* Edited by Nancy Pearl and Jeff Schwagerl. NY: Harper One, 2020.

***Submitted by Tyler Gardner***

As we move from summer in to fall, I reflect on the tumultuous year that we have endured and consider what remains to be seen. In light of the disturbing and, at times, mentally unbearable state of the world staff at our library continue to come in to work and provide services for our community that would be otherwise unobtainable. The ongoing availability of our computer workstations, physical materials, and virtual programming is a source of light to our patrons.

Thanks to an offer by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, we were able to borrow a Climate Resiliency display. Erik Johnson was kind enough to pick it up from the agency and deliver it to the library. We have had the display up in the mezzanine for the month of September. There is no way to track who has engaged with the display but hopefully people have seen it and learned something from it.

In coordination with the City of Northfield the Library “co-hosted” a virtual presentation and Q&A session about the City’s work towards developing a Land Acknowledgment Statement.

Carleton College professor Meredith McCoy led the program. As a member of an Indigenous tribe and a scholar of Indigenous American Studies, it was great to hear her perspective on the importance of Land Acknowledgement Statements. Nearly 60 people attended and there were no disruptors. Highlights of the presentation for me included the realization that it is not only white people who have to do this work. Indigenous descendants of tribes living and operating on land that once was home to other tribes, as well as descendants from Spanish colonizers must also acknowledge the space they occupy. The point of the Land Acknowledgement Statement is to identify the physical space we occupy and acknowledge the people who lived here and who were likely murdered in order for us to be here today. Once we acknowledge the true heritage of our physical locations, we can begin the healing process through communication and building relationships with our Indigenous neighbors. The library needs to develop its own land acknowledgement statement separate from whatever the City works up and it should be read before every program.

The DVD collection-weeding project is moving along swimmingly. We are opening up a lot of space on the shelf for new materials and materials are shifting up on the shelves so it will be easier for patrons to browse.

Despite all, life is great.

## Youth Services

### ***Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian***

Outside of storytimes, September children's programming included a Kids' Book Chat and the second of two Zoom scavenger hunts. For the scavenger hunts, I wrote rhyming prompts of things for kids to find on their persons or in their homes, read them live, and had the kids go look for items, then return for show and tell with the group. It was amazing to see the ingenuity they applied (as well as their faces!). Sample prompt: "Time for another! Ready, friends? / Find something flexible or something that bends." Sample find: a 3-yr-old showed her elbow. It was important to me to only ask for things I knew they'd be likely to find even if they had very little in their homes (or were currently unhoused), so I made every prompt something they could potentially find on their bodies—but I was surprised and thrilled to see a child actually answer with a body part.

With youth programming funds, I purchased a green screen for use with storytime and we're all imagining lots of other potential uses. Steve Maus introduced staff to OBS Studio, open-source software for use with the green screen and for filming in general. Starting with the Hispanic Heritage events, library videos are starting to look more branded and professional. I'm hoping to get my storytime videos up to the standard that the HHC events have set for November's storytimes (giving me time to learn and experiment with the software) if not sooner. Two of my

longer-term goals for using the greenscreen and software are recorded book talks I can share with teachers, and a recorded take on a previous live program, "How to Read to Your Grandkids: Early Literacy 101," for TV and the library's YouTube channel.

Collection and children's area-wise, I've started adding early literacy tips to the monitor in the format of our branded banners; I've been updating book lists and adding a few (Black Books Matter, BIPOC picture books, and BIPOC chapter books); weeding book packs and assembling new ones (Unicorns, Spider-Man, and Learn About Magnets are new this month); and offering rotating take-home activities like bilingual "I Spy" sheets. In September, I spent the rest of 2020's children's and YA digital collection allocation to put that part of the youth materials budget to bed; I'm monitoring the print allocations closely as the year winds down.

Looking ahead to a Halloween that will no doubt be hard for lots of kids in pandemic season, we'll have two programs: one a storytime on Zoom so little ones can show off their costumes; the other, prerecorded tellings of scary stories for older kids selected from books we have in the collection. From a surplus site, I've ordered Halloween-themed paperback picture and chapter books for giving out at the children's desk during Halloween week. I plan to ask the library's endlessly creative staff for ideas and help making something special and staff-designed to include inside them--activity? bookmark?

For older youth--and adults--we're launching a Six-Word Horror Story Contest, to be judged by Jessica Peterson-White and Benjamin Percy, with the winners announced on Halloween Eve. Entries can be submitted from October 6-October 26, online or in person. I'll work to promote this to middle and high school and college youth as well as adults.

## Circulation Services

### ***Submitted by Kathy Rush Vizina, Technology/Circulation Services Manager***

Since our re-opening on May 26<sup>th</sup> I have been following our numbers very closely. I find them very interesting. Our circulation numbers, without the summer reading kids and families coming in the library this summer, and compared to 2019 was down 25% in June, 31% in July and 28% in August. This month our circulation compared to September of 2019 was only down 16%. So patrons are certainly checking out materials. Door count has also been interesting. It has over the past 4 months been increasing little by little, June was down 53%, July was down 51%, August 49% and September 44%. This tells us that patrons are coming back slowly and checking out a lot of materials. Another statistic that I have found interesting is our Kanopy numbers. This is our movie streaming service. April, the month we were all shelter in place, we had our highest month of 566 views followed by May that had 419 views. Summer comes and folks are enjoying the outdoors and the numbers go down with June 295 views, July 382 and August 330.

September went down to 293 plays. I would guess as the weather gets colder our numbers for Kanopy will rise again.

## Outreach, Shelving and Volunteer Services

*Submitted by Laurie Kodet, Shelving/Outreach Services Supervisor/Volunteer Manager and Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator*

### Outreach & Programming

#### Hispanic Heritage Celebration (HHC) 2020

(virtual) programming began on September 15<sup>th</sup> with a kickoff event for Spanish Sidewalk Poetry competition and a bilingual poetry reading. This event was a collaboration with the Arts and Culture Commission. Seven additional events were held including, Folklore presentations from Mexico, Ecuador and Spain, Flamenco Dance workshop, poetry writing workshop, cooking demos (Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia), and Mariachi music. Access to most of the events will continue to be available on Facebook and YouTube (<https://guides.mynpl.org/hhc> and click on the event title).



Many thanks to our sponsors: Friends and Foundation of the Northfield Public Library, Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC), and the City of Northfield.

**Outdoor Bilingual Storytime** was held on September 9<sup>th</sup>, the library unicorn joined Angelica for a story, rhymes, and songs on the library patio. Two families (3 adults, 4 children) braved the overcast, chilly day to sing, dance, and laugh.



**Virtual Bilingual Storytimes** premiere on the library's Facebook page on Wednesdays at 10:00 am.

**Spanish Book Club** continues to meet using a hybrid version- in person outside socially distanced on the library patio and online using Go To Meeting. Six people attended the September meeting.

**New technologies & skills:** Program delivery has a very different look these days. Library staff have spent a lot of time exploring and learning new ways to reach our patrons. Leading up to HHC, Melanny and Jeniffer researched the Hispanic and Latin countries, which Lily used to create 20 6-page Instagram posts. Steve researched lots of equipment to enhance our video recording

abilities and shared his knowledge with the staff. Kathryn expanded her skills in video editing helping the library to create high-quality videos. Laurie learned to new software that can livestream to Facebook and record video at the same time. As we look at the future of library programs, we will be able to incorporate the new equipment and skills to provide professional and accessible offerings.

### **Other**

Angelica joined the Community Action Center (CAC) board. The CAC is a non-profit supporting Northfield families through food access, housing, employment services, clothing, emergency assistance and more.

Laurie attended her first Age Friendly Northfield Steering Committee meeting serving as the city liaison.

## Northfield Poet Laureate

### ***Submitted by Rob Hardy***

The Northfield Poet Laureate did not host any events over the summer. I'm grateful to Alyssa Herzog Melby for hosting the Sidewalk Poetry Capstone in August and the Spanish Sidewalk Poetry Kick-off and reading by Danny Solis in September. My only role in the event was to negotiate with COMPAS to book Danny Solis for the reading.

In August, I worked with more than a dozen local poets to create a poem in both English and Spanish to be displayed on the risers of the steps from the Riverwalk up to Bridge Square (west of Carlson Capital Management). Teresa is working with Graphic Mailbox to have the poem stenciled onto the risers.

An anthology of poems compiled by the Northfield Poet Laureate, *Legacies: Poetic Living Wills*, was a Finalist in the Minnesota Authors Project's 2020 Communities Create competition. Although our submission did not win the grand prize, it was an honor to be chosen as a Finalist.

The Northfield Poet Laureate is hosting a Facebook Live poetry reading by Steve McCown (reading from his new collection of poems, *Ghosting*) on Thursday, October 22, at 1pm.

### **Kudos**

Becky Boling had poems published in *Visual Verse*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, and featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project.

Doug Green had poems published in *Visual Verse*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, and featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project.

Leslie Schultz had poems published in *Third Wednesday*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *MockingHeart Review*, and *The Orchards Poetry Review*.

Diane LeBlanc won *Mid-America Review's* Fineline Competition with the poem "Possum," which appears in *Mid-America Review* 40.1.

Steve McCown published his first book of poetry *Ghosting* (Shipwreckt Books), and had poems published in *Willows Wept Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, and featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project.

Heather Candels had poems published in *Willows Wept Review*

David Walters had a poem featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project.

Rob Hardy had poems published in *Poems from the Lockdown* (Willowdown Books), *Willows Wept*

*Review*, *Lost Lake Folk Opera*, and featured in a video created by the End in Mind Project. He had prose published in *Critical Read*.

Becky, Heather Doug, Steve, and David are all members of a poetry group that originally met in the Northfield Public Library (and now meets via Zoom). They have been active and very productive throughout the pandemic.