

Library Director's report

Submitted by Natalie Draper, Library Director

The biggest news in September was an outstanding day in Central Park on the 18th! This year's Hispanic Heritage Celebration was held on a beautifully warm and sunny fall day and 2,406 people joined us in the park to celebrate. Library staff were overjoyed (and exhausted) at the end of the day and are already looking forward to next year. We are so grateful to all of the community volunteers and supporters who made the day possible.

September also saw the strategic plan process begin rolling along, with about 60 surveys returned so far. We are hoping to get at least 200 back. We'll be holding a staff stakeholder workshop with SELCO on October 15th, and a Board and Community member stakeholder workshop in November, on Monday the 15th from 6-8 PM.

Now, we're looking forward to winter, which means Winter Walk, Winter Concerts, and winter fun.

Reference Services

Submitted by Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Reference Services Manager

- *Shelf Life*, the library's monthly newsletter, continues to grow. We've more than doubled our audience since July, with now over 202 subscribers. The newsletter is [available](#) in English and Spanish.
- Created 50 "take and make" mask lanyard kits for kids for giveaway in the children's area
- Started a new library committee, "Care and Feeding of Staff," which will meet quarterly to work on staff appreciation and social events for library staff. There are 8 committee members. So far, the committee has organized a dress-up week for Halloween, a staff social outing in October, a team for the current city-employee-wide wellness challenge, and more.
- Took bookmobile to Keepsake Cidery on 9/26 with Angelica. We checked out books, did a craft with kids, and presented a bilingual storytime together (8 kids and 2 adults attended).
- Met with Hsianghui Liu-Spencer (Carleton), Sue Garwood (Rice County Historical Society) and Cathy Osterman (Northfield Historical Society) about Pye Room collections and possible digitization projects and to learn about the Northfield-Rice County Digital History Collection
- Finished weeding biographies in nonfiction and purchased new and updated titles, including several BIPOC biographies and memoirs

Submitted by Tyler Gardner, Reference Librarian

- Finished writing and submitted MSAB Grant for HHC2022
- Took a bunch of great photos and worked the HHC 2021
- Began talks for November program about Racism Against Indigenous Peoples
- Attended Customer Service training through City of Northfield.
- Set up Vinyl Listening station for public use (finally!)

Submitted by Jamie Stanley, Reference Librarian



On Thursday, September 9th at 6:30 pm local historian Susan Hvistendahl gave an hour long multimedia presentation about the history of the Archer House. The presentation included photos of the hotel as well as video footage of the hotel after the fire in November 2020.

The Bunday Room was filled slightly beyond capacity with 70 people in attendance. Fortunately, Sam Temple, videographer in the City of Northfield, Communications Department taped the program which debuted on the Northfield Public Broadcasting Channel 187 on Friday, September 24th @ 6 pm. The presentation can also be viewed on demand on the NPB website (npb.ci.northfield.mn.us).

Youth Services

Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

Directors' Report September 2021

In September, I met with Laura Turek (many thanks!) to brainstorm about and then submitted a grant application to Northfield Shares for a "Traveling Early Literacy Library" (TELL), a project I'm really excited about. A quick peek with bits from the application:

1. The number of books children encounter before kindergarten makes an enormous difference to their reading readiness and school success. In-home daycare providers identify transportation, naps, and fear of accruing lost/damaged fees as barriers to regular use of the library.
2. The TELL pilot will consist of ten kits that circulate between a goal of ten in-home daycares, and one English-Spanish kit dedicated for use by ParentChild+, a Rice County program that makes in-home early learning visits to low-income families. Each kit will include a balance of ten books selected to build vocabulary, letter sound knowledge, and other early literacy skills. Every three weeks, providers will receive a different kit. Title-specific early literacy tips to increase child engagement and early literacy skill-building will be fixed to the books' front covers. During the circulation period for the pilot (February through August 2022), providers will each access 100 different TELL books to share with the children in their care!
3. Rice County Early Learning Specialists will coordinate use of the ParentChild+ kit to visit as many families as the grant period allows. The PC+ kit will also include library card applications and invitations to families to use library resources.
4. The library will replace lost or destroyed books with no penalty to participants (from grant funds, donated books, and other potential funding sources). The library will provide an orientation training to the TELL for PC+ specialists and at a

Rice County Daycare Association gathering. Delivery will be coordinated by Northfield Promise and will be volunteer-driven. Kits will be stored at First UCC (thank you!) due to the library's lack of sufficient storage space.

- Identified a grant opportunity to purchase sets of decodable readers, and am in the process of working on the application (due at the end of October)
- Enjoyed class visits from St Dominic's 4th and 5th graders to get tours and genre recommendations. They're all doing a reading challenge that requires them to read several books in each genre, and plan to visit the library each month to check out books and connect with me for more suggestions.
- Reached out to Portage elementary teachers for possible Zoom visits or "quick tours" of the library if their caregivers feel safe bringing them in (all masked). Booked in-house tour, library cards, and readers' advisory for K-5 Portage students on Oct 7.
- Provided our first outreach storytime at Head Start since early 2020. (in earlier years, I've done one a month at Head Start—still not sure how we'll handle colder months, but plan an outdoor one in October)
- Updated our Social Emotional Learning booklist; shared the pdf with Rice County's Ready for Kindergarten team, the Early Childhood Initiative Coalition, and the Northfield Promise Reading Team; and uploaded the pdf to the library's website in addition to having copies available at the library. The pandemic greatly affected little ones' opportunities to build social emotional skills and I've heard as much from teachers!
- served as a Poetry Judge for Northfield Retirement Community's contest (in 2019, I held a series of outreach poetry workshops at NRC, invited by poet and resident Orrin DeLong)
- Reintroduced Seek & Finds to the children's after a long pandemic break. These work to build number recognition, discernment skills, letter recognition and letter sound knowledge (from letter handstamp for finishers) and vocabulary skills in young learners
- Worked with Natalie and Catherine to begin thinking about Pride in the Park 2022. We've reached out to potential Pride committee members and plan our first meeting with the full committee in December. Members so far include Emily, Natalie, Catherine, librarian Tyler Gardner, Deb Balzer, Mar Valdecantos, Joni Cromer, and Jake Odell. We will include a teen on this committee as well.
- Began promoting ebooks inside print books: for example, BOB Books sets in CD containers now have labels that say "GOOD TO KNOW: All sets of BOB books are also available on our free ebook app Libby. If you have a tablet, give them a try!" and include a Libby graphic
- Weeding, etc. Discovered that only *one* book in our children's fiction collection hadn't circulated since September of 2019.
- Things to celebrate:

1. Halloween! We'll be holding two events in Bridge Square on Friday, October 29: one for young children at 10:00 a.m., and a "Truly Terrifying Tales" storytelling program meant for elementary-aged youth and up at 6:00 p.m. The HideAway has agreed to donate hot chocolate and apple cider for the evening event.
2. Baby Storytime on the patio has been really well-attended and appreciated! We weren't sure how it would go. We'll see how October does, when it gets a bit chillier.
3. Getting to be a tiny part of an amazingly successful Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Submitted by Catherine Stricklan, Youth Services Librarian

In September I:

- Started Family Storytime at Central park every Wednesday. We have had a good crowd that social distances well, so I've had the interesting problem of figuring out how to engage a very spread out group. I've incorporated lots of movement and interactive books, and I've adapted three stories to felt board/magnet board format (Fall is not easy, Mouse Paint, and Wee Granny's Magic Bag).
- Guided the TAB teens (and HS Spanish class volunteers) in staffing a Hispanic Flag button making station for the Hispanic Heritage Celebration.
- Finished my term as with the MN Author Project as a judge for the YA finalists.
- Hosted two programs: Minecraft Folders for elementary aged kids, and Locker Crafts for teens.
- Worked with TAB to re-think the way we use Instagram to promote programs and changed the way I plan programs to take more input from TAB.
- Hosted the 3rd (of 4) Recipes for Life workshops, and had a workshop exclusively for staff to create their own screen printed tea towels.

Things to celebrate:

- I bought my first house in September!

Circulation Services

Submitted by Kathy Rush Vizina, Circulation/Technology Services Manager

It's periodical subscription time! This is the time of year when a subcommittee of library staff evaluate the periodicals that we receive and decide what we want to change for 2022. We look at how many times a magazine has been checked out and what new trends there are – like beer brewing magazines. Our most popular based on check-outs are *Real Simple*, *House Beautiful* and *The Atlantic*. If a patron requests a magazine we try to subscribe. We always have some magazines that cease publication or go to just digital. We currently subscribe to 153 different magazines and newspapers down from 224 in 2014. Our patrons can also get many different magazines digitally on Overdrive.



Outreach & Volunteer Services

Laurie Kodet, Library Services Manager & Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator

Bookmobile & Book Bike

- The bookmobile and book bike were in the DJJD parade on Sunday, September 12th.
- The library collaborated with Northfield Downtown Development on Thursday, September 16th at the final Bridge Square Block Party. Angelica and Laurie promoted library programs, services and the Hispanic Heritage Celebration.
- On Sunday, September 26 Angelica and Katlin visited Keepsake Cidery with the bookmobile and shared a bilingual storytime.



2021 Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Library staff and a committee of community partners hosted the 4th annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration! The event was held on Saturday, September 18 in Central Park. The new location allowed for more than 35 community partners, vendors, kid's activity booths, food trucks, and more. Staff and committee members are pleased the attendance (2,406) and the performances were top notch. We thank all the volunteers who helped and look forward to next year.



Meetings & More

Angelica

- Community Action Center (CAC) Board Meeting- September 9th, 7:00-8:30 am
- Barrio Latino radio Spanish program to promote HHC September 12th
- State Library Services BIPOC Advisory Group- September 21st, 2:30-4:00 pm
- Friends & Foundation of the Northfield Public Library Board meeting- September 28th, 7:00-8:30 pm

Laurie

- Minnesota Library Association Institute for Leadership Excellence (MILE) meeting – September 1st, 1:00-2:00 pm
- Age Friendly Northfield (AFN) Steering Committee Meeting- September 8th, 2:30-4:30 pm
- AFN Executive Board Meeting- September 20th, 2:30-3:30 pm

Angelica & Laurie

- Recorded Radio Ads for Hispanic Heritage Celebration (HHC) September 3rd, 9:00-10:00 am
- Hispanic Heritage Celebration Committee Meeting- September 7th, 7:30-8:30 am
- KYMN radio to promote HHC September 12th, 7:15-7:35 am
- Hispanic Heritage Celebration Committee FINAL Meeting- September 21th, 7:30-8:30 am

Northfield Poet Laureate Report

Submitted by Rob Hardy

Events

- I introduced the winners of the Spanish Sidewalk Poetry contest at the capstone event at the Hispanic Heritage Celebration in Central Park on Saturday, September 18. Francisco Gaytan read his poem, Alondra Pérez read Tyler Gardner's poem, and Mar Valdecantos read Luis Rivera's poem. Angelica Linder provided Spanish interpretation.

- Danny Solis gave a poetry reading in the library atrium on Thursday, September 30 as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. Angelica Linder and I co-hosted. Danny was paid an honorarium from funds budgeted for the Poet Laureate program. About 16 people attended.

Kudos

- Becky Boling, Rob Hardy, and Steve McCown had poems published in the Fall 2021 issue of *Willows Wept Review*. <https://www.magcloud.com/webviewer/2071575?r=150177&s=w>
- Leslie Schultz's poem "Dandelion" was featured on the website of the literary magazine *Third Wednesday*. <https://thirdwednesdaymagazine.org/2021/09/19/dandelions-leslie-schultz/>
- Becky Boling's poem "Here" appeared in *Visual Verse*. <https://visualverse.org/submissions/here/>
- D.E. Green's poem "Abstraction: After Stein" appeared in *Visual Verse*. <https://visualverse.org/submissions/abstraction-after-stein/>
- Diane LeBlanc's essay "Mountain Quartet" appeared in *Atticus Review*. <https://atticusreview.org/mountain-quartet/>

Public Art

"It's glorious!" —commenter on Facebook, about the Riverwalk steps poem.

- Natalie and Teresa finished painting the collaborative poem on the Riverwalk steps, and the seventeen poets involved have been submitting photographs of themselves on their step to be compiled into a photomosaic. There have been discussions of posting a temporary sign near the steps with the text of the poem in both Spanish and English.

Despite the withdrawal of Say Their Names—Northfield's request to the ACC, I believe the commission needs to decide how it will deal with such requests in the future. It was my impression that the ACC was making this unnecessarily complicated and time-consuming by delaying action and attempting to introduce a new policy to cover these requests. The City already has a policy on Art in Public Places, passed by the City Council in 2017, the purpose of which is "to guide public and private development and the installation of public art within the City of Northfield." Among the policy's objectives are:

- "Enhanc[ing] the aesthetic environment of public places, such as buildings, roads, paths **sidewalks**, and landscapes, through high-quality public art, including permanent and **temporary** art installations (emphasis added).
- "Involving a broad range of groups, neighbors, and organizations in the planning or creation of public artworks."
- "Involv[ing] artists in the creation and development of art by encouraging a variety of creative opportunities for artists with a range of experiences."

All of these objectives are met by the Say Their Names—Northfield project. The policy authorizes creation of a Public Art Review Committee to review proposals for the installation of public art. All that needed to be done in the case of Say Their Names was to follow this policy, to convene and PARC, and consider the request.

I would also like to suggest that the ACC recommend that the City Council revise the ordinance that prohibits marking on City property, to permit the use of temporary media such as sidewalk chalk. In Spokane, Washington, the City Council amended the city's anti-graffiti ordinance, which had been similar to Northfield's, to allow "expressive conduct on the public right of way using non-permanent, non-toxic means, such as chalk or water-soluble paints, in a manner which does not obstruct or interfere with the public right of way." (The entire ordinance can be found here: <https://my.spokanecity.org/smc/?Section=10.10.070>). This could be used as a possible model for an amendment to Northfield's unnecessarily restrictive ordinance.

Removing the (selectively-enforced) prohibition on chalking would open more opportunities for artmaking in Northfield. Numerous cities, including several in Minnesota, host sidewalk chalk (or street art) festivals, which draw both artists and tourists and enhance the reputation of the city.¹ In 2020, the city of St. Paul organized a sidewalk chalk version of its sidewalk poetry project, encouraging residents to compose their own poems and chalk them on the sidewalks of the city. As Public Art Saint Paul said in a press release: "This project encourages participants to re-imagine the sidewalk as a space to share their voices" [reference]. This is what public spaces should be for: the sharing of the diverse voices that make up our democracy. But such a project would not be permitted under Northfield's current ordinance.

In 2015, the ACC sponsored, and Council Member Nakasian facilitated, a discussion on Peter Kageyama's book *For the Love of Cities*. In that book, Kageyama discusses, among other things, the ways in which cities can move from being "squelchers" to being "supporters" of creativity. Kageyama writes that "in order to facilitate the creative endeavors that its citizens have been inspired to bring to life, cities may need to lighten up a bit" (124). He goes on to say that the squelching of "street-level creativity in the city" is often caused by "a stupid interpretation of the rules" (126). Northfield should not be known as a place that squelches creativity and free expression among its residents. It should be the purpose of the ACC to facilitate and encourage creativity, as it is directed to do by City policy, and not insist on "a stupid interpretation of the rules."

¹ Examples of chalk art festivals in Minnesota:

Chalk the Walk (Centennial Lakes Park, Edina, MN)

<https://www.bettertogetheredina.org/chalkthewalk2021>

Chalkfest Arbor Lakes (Maple Grove, MN)

<http://www.chalkfestarborlakes.com>

Downtown Minneapolis Street Art Festival (Minneapolis, MN)

<https://www.mplsstreetartfest.com>

Two Harbors Chalk.a.Lot (Two Harbors, MN)

<https://twoharborsarts.com/chalk-a-lot>

City-Wide Chalk the Walk Festival (Rochester, MN)

<http://www.rneighbors.org/chalk-the-walk-festival/>

