



Library Director’s Report

March 16, 2021

Submitted by Jill Dugas Hughes

FEBRUARY HOURS/SERVICES

- Library was open 20 days / 134 hours for the public and drive-thru window
- We now accept returns 24/7 at the drive-thru window

TOP INITIATIVES

- COVID-19 response and planning
- 2021 QuickBooks update project: to include detailed program budgets, account numbers, and grant/donor information
- 2021 statistical data collection set up
- Interior library painting
- Winter Reading Program: *Fun & Games: Just Roll with It!* - Wrap-Up & Evaluation
- 2021 Times Union Best of Campaign
- Planning future drive-thru window and hold pick-up services; evaluation of limitations within UHLS Sierra database
- Wi-Fi parking lot access point live
- NYS Annual Report Department of Library Development
- NYS Annual Financial Update Documents to Office of the State Comptroller

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

BORROW FROM US MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The most recent series of “Borrow from us” social media posts and e-news weekly highlights focused on some non-traditional collections as well as untapped digital resources (Gale Database resources). The campaign ran in conjunction with collections and resources that were highlighted in the March/April print newsletter. The goal was to increase peak interest through discovery of these January, there were 61 searches via Gale Databases and in February, usage increased more than 700% (489 searches)!



awareness about the library and resources. Marketing works! In

Database Usage (# Searches)	January	February
Gale Databases	61	489

2021 TIMES UNION BEST OF MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Jan 22 – Feb 5 (nominate & vote) and February 22- March 4 (voting period)



Thanks to our supportive community, we were nominated as one of the Top 5 libraries in the Capital Region for the Times Union 2021 Best of the Rest/Best Library in the capital region. Susan Bell coordinated a marketing campaign to “vote for us as the Best Library” with a mix of social media, email, in-library signage, flyers for drive-thru distribution, and buttons for staff. The marketing pieces included a variety of images and customized posts that requested community votes while highlighting our programs and services. The voting period ended March 4th and results will be published at the end of April. Winners will also be listed on timesunion.com and their social media. Guilderland, Colonie, Clifton Park, and Bethlehem Public Libraries were also nominated.

See below for sample media campaign posts:

Patron comment: 2/22/21 - Facebook - Best of Campaign

Lance Smith Wish I could vote five times a day like the baseball all-star game. You ARE the best in this region! Break out Tina Turner....” You’re Simply the best.... better than all the rest...”



WINTER READING 2021 RECAP

YOUTH SERVICES WINTER READING

This winter, we held our first online Winter Reading Challenge using Beanstack, a program that allows participants to track their reading and complete fun challenges to earn prizes. Our goal this winter was to encourage kids, and teens to explore new books, games, and hobbies with their families while promoting literacy and the use of library services.

During the Winter Reading Challenge, we were thrilled to have approximately 100 kids and teens complete 1,295 activities and log a total of 729 books read! Participants completed activities such as writing book reviews, checking out cookbooks and making recipes with their families, and drawing pictures or writing poems about their favorite things about winter. Once these activities were completed, they earned tickets for entry into our prize basket raffles!

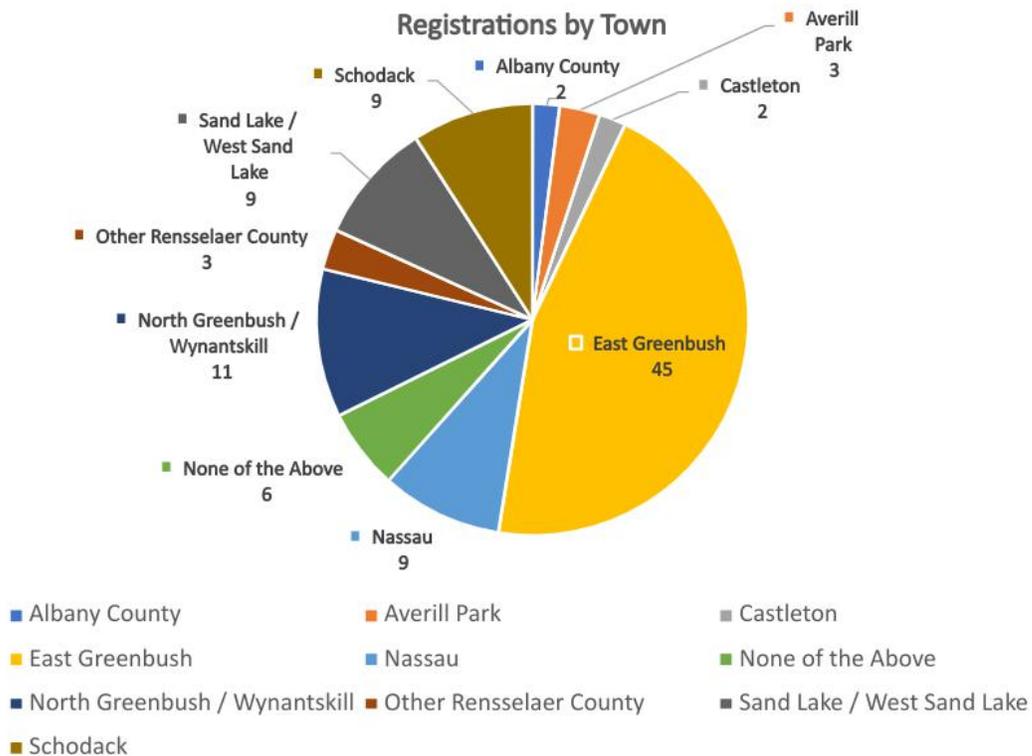
We were pleased to receive lots of positive feedback from the community during our Winter Reading Challenge! Many parents emailed us pictures of their children completing activities and the projects they created as part of the challenge.

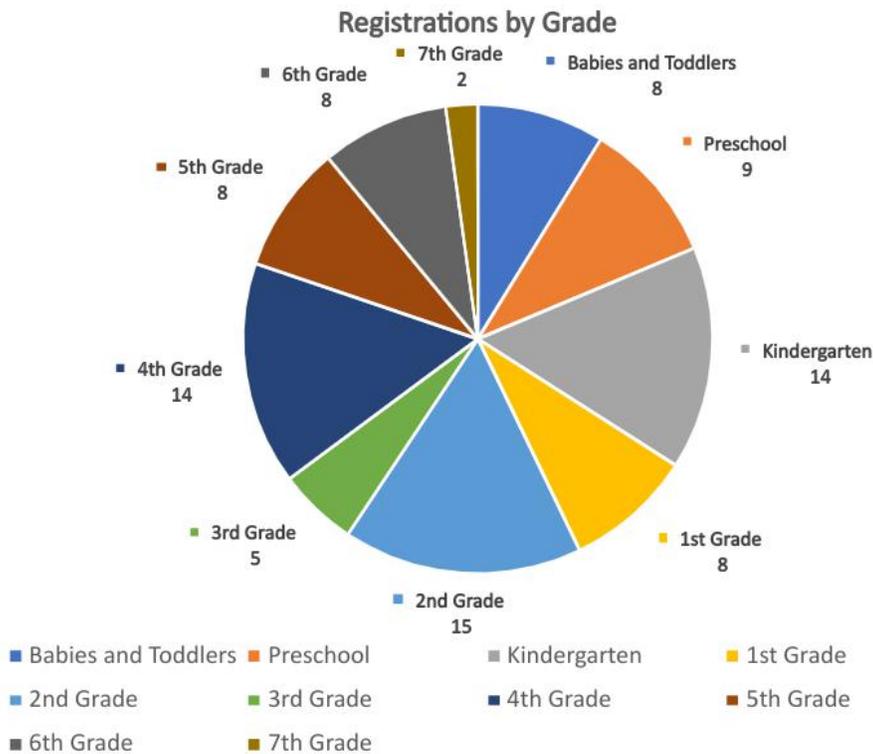




One happy mom emailed us an update about an activity that prompted kids to write to their favorite authors:

"James reached out to Dan Gutman not thinking we would hear back from him because he is so busy. James and I were overjoyed when we got an email response from him today!!! We can't believe it!! Thanks for encouraging us to reach out to yet another author!!!"

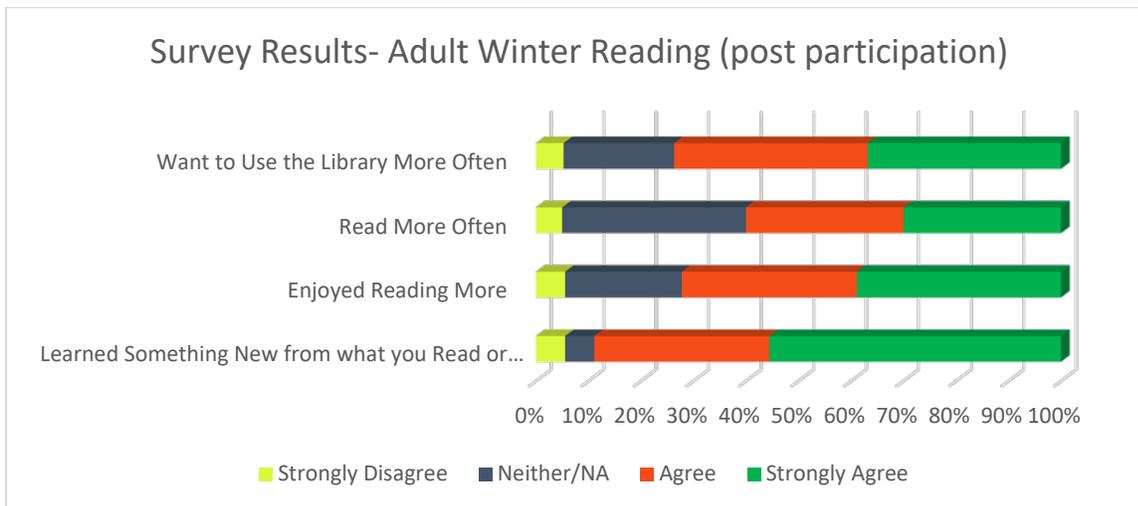




ADULT SERVICES WINTER READING

The Adult Winter Reading Program was also a success! We had 157 participants, and an additional 12 staff members! Most of the participants used the online reporting system: Beanstack, while just 11 library members used the traditional paper game card format.

Participants were invited to fill-out feedback surveys where they ranked their engagement as a “result” of their participation. We received 18 surveys (11% participation rate). Survey results were overwhelmingly positive.



What did you like most about the program/service?

It got my mind off the pandemic and gave something positive to do. I borrowed 2 books on card making and made cards for a nursing home and for nurses at St. Peters.

I like the staff picks

Thank you for all your hard work during this very unusual time.

The game board was a fun concept

I loved having so many challenges to choose from and I loved the platform (Beanstack).

I was not aware of what many things and services our library offers until now. Thank you!

It was creative and reached out to me regarding book selections.

Variety of activities and book topics!

That you could do everything digitally

The variety of *tasks* including Zoom options

I didn't have to use Facebook!

I tried things I would not have ordinarily like borrowing a board game borrowing a book bundle or trying an online video game.

I liked how it had you try more than just reading. I didn't know the library had craft books available. I discovered a new hobby that I really enjoy from that challenge.

Challenge

I joined this program for the first time because I am living alone during the pandemic and was feeling isolated.

Encourages more reading

Fun to do with the kids!

I liked that there were several facets to the Challenge and wasn't just about how many books you could read in the allotted time frame.

I enjoyed the variety of subjects and different methods used to complete the badges. For example - the making of quilt squares for the Linus Project. I had never heard of it and was pleased with the opportunity to take part in contributing to a quilt.

Interacting with the wonderful librarians reading some books I might not have read exploring a new craft

Motivation for reading more

The program gave me something to focus on other than the pandemic and winter months. It introduced me to things I wasn't aware were available i.e. virtual museum and reintroduced me to things I liked i.e. puzzles and games.

What could the library do to help you continue to learn more?

Make the website easier to find things.

Sign up for Universal Class or Creative Bug (or Craftsy Domestika or similar) so patrons have access to free classes.

No comments

I find the library offers a variety of books and services.

(This is a small criticism.) I signed up for the Ancestry Zoom meeting but that seemed to be more geared for librarians helping patrons to access features. I would have preferred one that addressed my needs as a beginner.

Post resources that most people don't know about on Facebook.

Continue education programs outreach

N.A.

Similar Reading Challenges (perhaps much smaller) over the course of the year.

Continue their excellent efforts to make the challenges interesting.

Keep up the great work!

Training or skills e.g. computer skills etc.

Continue to offer activities and challenges. After pandemic one on one scheduled meetings to assist specific questions/challenges that apply to accessing library information.

Do you plan to participate in future library reading challenges?

(Coming up next: Summer Reading Challenge 2021!)

yes

Absolutely

Of course.

Mostly!!!

Not sure unless I understand the to tally my reading tasks and completed readings. Also, when I tried to choose books, they weren't available especially with the restrictions associated with the pandemic. I wanted to challenge myself to read more but jumping through hoops was not for me and started to frustrate instead of motivate.

Yes

Yes

Oh yes!

Yes!

Yes

Yes!!

yes

Sure!

Absolutely!

Definitely YES.

YES! (So much fun!)

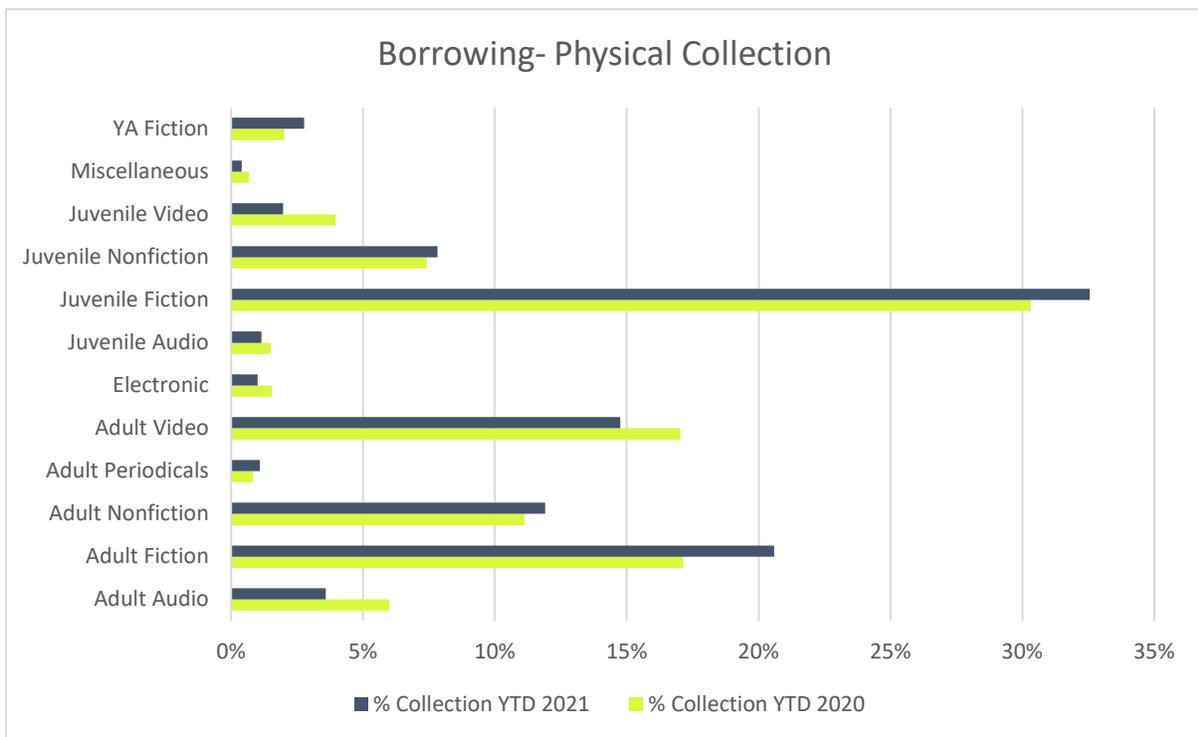
Yes :)

Possibly. Summer months tend to be busier except during a pandemic.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Database usage has increased 114% over last month. Most of the usage can be attributed to Ancestry Library Edition (+388%), Tech-Talk (+43%), and Gale databases (+702%). Ancestry was not available for the entire month of January, so the increase is most likely simply increased access.
- We are seeing some trends in the percentages of the physical collection that are being borrowed.
 - Fiction- in all areas- Juv, YA, and, Adult are all seeing significant increases.
 - Nonfiction is also increasing, although not as significantly as Fiction.
 - Video (all collections) and Audio (all collections) are all seeing significant decreases.

When evaluating the trends, it is important to compare the lending of each individual physical collection to the total physical collection to see the shifts. Relying simply on raw numbers can be misleading. The difference in items circulated year-to-year tell us less about how people are using the collection and more about the impact COVID has had on people’s ability to borrow physical books.



January		Physical Circulation	Circulation of Electronic Material	Library Visits	Program Attendance	Public Internet Computer Users	WIFI Sessions	Successful Retrievals of Electronic	Hours Open	Reference Questions
2021		18,223	5,301	4,695	1,771	25	778	1,549	136	1,884
% Change		-37%	24%	-68%	-10%	-99%	-71%	-24%	-54%	-49%
2020		28,926	4,281	14,607	1,971	2,192	2,666	2,043	293	3,673

February		Physical Circulation	Circulation of Electronic Material	Library Visits	Program Attendance	Public Internet Computer Users	WIFI Sessions	Successful Retrievals of Electronic	Hours Open	Reference Questions
2021		18,832	5,182	4,709	1,277	17	731	3,436	134	2,140
% Change		-35%	22%	-66%	-34%	-99%	-68%	41%	-52%	-28%
2020		29,065	4,249	14,030	1,946	2,017	2,320	2,439	278	2,959

FACILITIES UPDATES

- The Heat Pump Filters were replaced 2/25-2/26 (MERV-11). MERV-13 filters are still back-ordered.
- Main library painting 95% complete
- Expansion of the parking lot Wi-Fi is now complete!
- We have moved ahead with engaging Sen Source to install a people counter sensor and Safe Space subscription for the Children’s Room.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Staff 2/12/21 I had an email from a patron with a billed item she still had. I explained how it would work when she returned it, quarantine, fine-free, etc. Here's her response:
Is there a way I can donate to the library? Y'all have been so wonderful and I'm absolutely in love with being able to read while stuck in the house 😊

Staff 2/19/21 Female patron at circ desk said, "whoever is putting the adult book bundles together...let them know it is fantastic idea" She is thrilled. States we are doing a wonderful job here.

Staff A grandparent said that the magic workshop was wonderful, and her granddaughter really enjoyed it!

H.C.
Collins

email response from newsletter:

2/27/21

"through this difficult time you have done everything right.

you are a bright spot in a very challenging time.

big claps and respect to the staff and directors who have guided the facility safely while keeping it open and available those of us who depend on library access for our books and sanity.

I am proud to be a supporting member of this wonderful institution."

T. Sutton

[For the Winter Reading Challenge, I checked out a DIY book. I then installed new shades in the master bath \(see photo\).](#)



Staff
(3/4/21)

Email from a parent about the February break Magic Workshop "THANK YOU! What a fun event! Joey loved it and is practicing all the tricks right now!"

Staff
(3/4/21)

[Tonight's presentation was great. I have listened to/participated in a lot of Zoom meetings lately and this was by far one of the best. Thank you for organizing this](#)

Staff
(3/4/21)

Thank you for arranging the presentation yesterday evening. It was very interesting information and a great presenter.

Staff
(3/8/21)

[A happy mom emailed us this update on Saturday: "James reached out to Dan Gutman not thinking we would hear back from him because he is so busy. James and I were overjoyed when we got the email response below from him today!!! We can't believe it!! Thanks for encouraging us to reach out to yet another author!!! "](#)
[James,](#)

[Thanks for the nice note, and for reading my books too. It is kids like YOU who inspire them. Sorry it took me so long to get back to you. By the way, I got the idea for My Weird School when my daughter Emma was in second grade. She was enjoying the Junie B. Jones books, and I wanted to try a series for that age group. I thought it would be cool if there was something like Junie B. Jones told by a boy. Most of the books in](#)

My Weird School, you may have noticed, are dedicated to Emma. The first title, "Miss Daisy is Crazy," came from the old song "Tutti Frutti." The second verse goes, "Had a gal named Daisy, she almost drove me crazy." YouTube it!

I have been having fun getting A.J. and his friends into all kinds of trouble. By the way, when I was your age, there was a girl in my class named Andrea Young, and she was a real smarty pants know-it-all. I hope she never reads these books!

Tell your mom and all your friends that I say hi, and keep reading lots of books...ESPECIALLY MINE!

Stay safe and wear a mask,

Staff (3/9/21) Patron at drive thru today says we are "PHENOMENAL", He doesn't know how he would have done without the library this last year. Another says she voted every day for us Best Library

Staff (3/9/21) Patron - Whoever does the displays are doing a great job... I have never read a book from there that I did not like. (They were referring to the curved shelves in front of circ desk)

Staff (3/13/21) Patron at drive thru picked up adult craft. Wanted to pay for it. When told no charge she gave \$20 donation, states we are the best library.



A few images of happy kids completing library craft kits!

