



Library Director's Report

February 10, 2021

Submitted by Jill Dugas Hughes

JANUARY HOURS/SERVICES

- Library was open 21 days / 136 hours for the public and drive-thru window
- Returns were accepted 24 days / 148 hours

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!*
- Launched 1000 Books Before Kindergarten on Beanstack
- Virtual Programming and Educational Kit distribution
- Website Update Project: Evaluate visitor behaviors on website (privacy protections enabled) to develop list of enhancements needed
- Staff Manual Update Project and Quarantine Paid Time-Off Policy
- Updated UHLS Sierra data to ensure all Schodack/Castleton residents receive EG residency perks (laptops, hotspots, museum passes, Hot off the Press, subscription database access)
- Planning future drive-thru window and hold pick-up services; evaluation of limitations within UHLS Sierra database
- Wi-Fi parking lot access point installation in progress
- People Counter System upgrades for Children's Room
- NYS Annual Report Department of Library Development
- NYS Annual Financial Update Documents to Office of the State Comptroller
- March/April print newsletter

PROGRAM & SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Connecting Readers with Books

Reading for pleasure is associated with positive emotional, social, and educational outcomes. It is more important than ever to find new ways to provide access to books for the community. Our librarians have not let the pandemic deter them from connecting with individual community members about their interests. They have developed a plethora of in-person and online readers' advisory services designed to connect readers to books.

Many of our signature reading programs have been moved to an online platform, in addition to the traditional paper, in-person versions. The Beanstack App (<https://eastgreenbushlibrary.beanstack.org/>) is available to download on the Apple App Store or via Google Play for community members who would rather track their program participation "on the go."



1000 Books Before Kindergarten early literacy program was added to Beanstack and parents are loving it! In January, 16 new toddlers and preschoolers were registered, and program participants logged a total of 687 books read during the month! Be sure to visit the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten webpage to learn more or to register a new reader: <https://eglibrary.org/children/1000-books/>



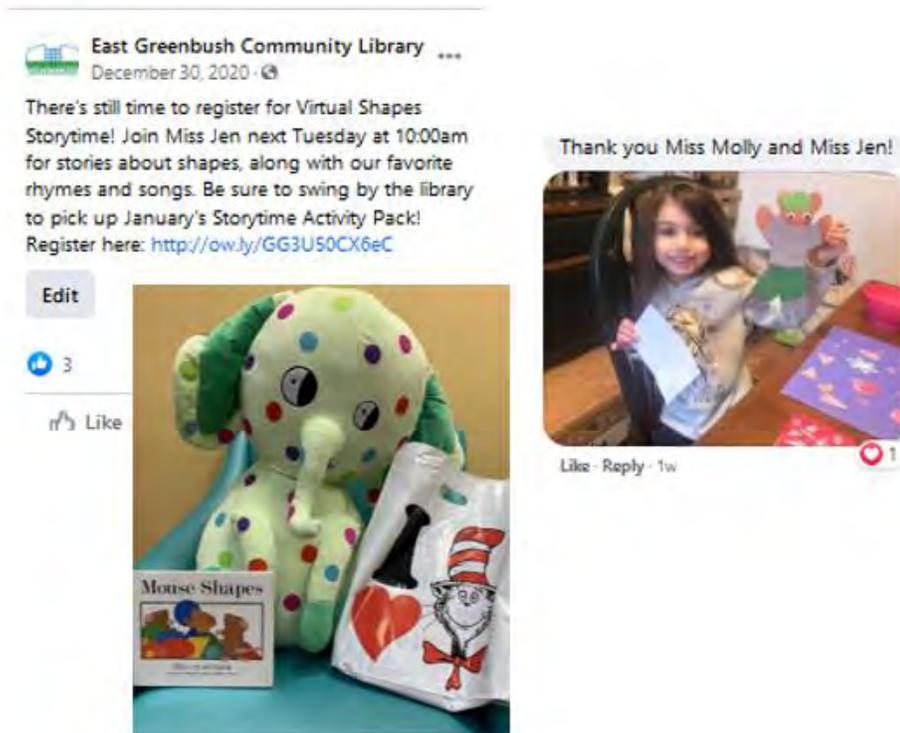
On January 5, we kicked off our **2021 Winter Reading Challenge-Fun & Games: Just Roll with It!** So far, 80 kids are participating, and 140 adults have been reading books, attending programs, exploring new games, hobbies, and earning raffle tickets for a chance to win fun prizes. Everyone is encouraged to join the fun: <https://eglibrary.org/winter-reading-2021/>

GRAND PRIZE BASKET

- Fire TV Streaming Stick
- Exploding Kittens Game
- Buzzfeed 2000 Ultimate Trivia Game
- Wonderful Pistachio Nuts
- Pop-Secret Popcorn
- 2 ice cream scoops
- Set of 6 dessert bowls
- Tostitos Scoops Chips
- Chex Mix
- Hershey's Dippers

ZOOM STORYTIMES

Zoom Virtual Storytime attendance is growing in popularity. In January, youth services librarians provided 4 online storytimes with 211 participants! Their special touches to personalize the storytimes are a hit. Circulation staff work collaboratively with youth services staff to curate storytime activity packs, which are picked up at the library drive-thru window. **Storytime packs** include activities to coordinate with the monthly storytime themes. Each pack includes activity sheets, crafts, and an extra fun item or two. This month librarians added egg shakers so the kids can rock along making music with the librarian during the storytime songs.



MERCHANDISING/READERS' ADVISORY SERVICES

We have a variety of in-person and online readers' advisory services which are all growing in popularity. The number one reason most people visit the library is for books, and our librarians are trusted resources for book referrals.

Merchandising is still an important priority and has evolved as fewer people are able to visit the physical library, and more are using the library as a pick-up location through the drive-thru window or using our digital resources. In fact, how we showcase our collections is as important as what we purchase, perhaps even more important in the age of COVID. When a member visits the library, they have a limited amount of time to explore. Our staff focus on helping narrow down people's choices. We know that it can be overwhelming to look at a bunch of book spines on shelves. Often, one enters the library with a specific title in mind, but we hope that they end up leaving with a stack full of titles because they may have seen something on display that they didn't know they wanted or needed.

We use savvy merchandising as a tool to inspire members to try new titles focusing on elements of surprise; providing something delightful when they come into our space. We are intentionally making our physical and virtual spaces as visually appealing as possible. Merchandising inside the library can be as simple as using traditional tall shelves as a showcase by turning books face out so that members cannot help but notice the titles available, as seen in our **JPOP** collection.

Our staff treat displays with a “less is more” approach. If displays are too large or fancy, people are hesitant to borrow the books; it feels too much like a museum display. Our **Hot off the Press** collection is one example of a simple display where multiple copies of books are grouped together in attractive, odd-numbered combinations, designed to subconsciously encourage browsers to think “popularity.”



Fewer items displayed properly leads to increased collection use. Simplification is a priority when staff are creating displays.

Maintaining a **strong connection with the community** is just as important. Merchandising the collection doesn't end once the display is installed. Our staff monitor the displays and respond. If after a week a display has not been touched, it is replaced. If items are flying off the shelf, staff keep it stocked!

We **cross-merchandise** materials by posting images of our physical displays in our digital spaces. Whatever is happening inside the library is reflected on our website and social media. Additionally, librarians curate book lists and post images of book covers.

CHECK IT OUT WITH CHARLIE!



By using merchandising strategies, community members are provided a sense of discovery.

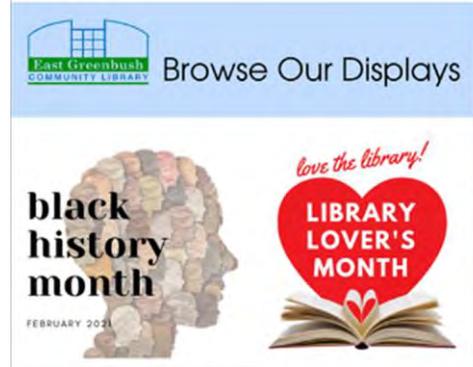
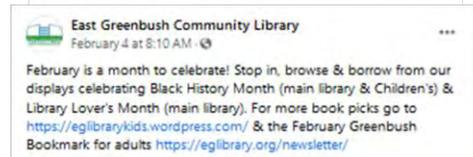
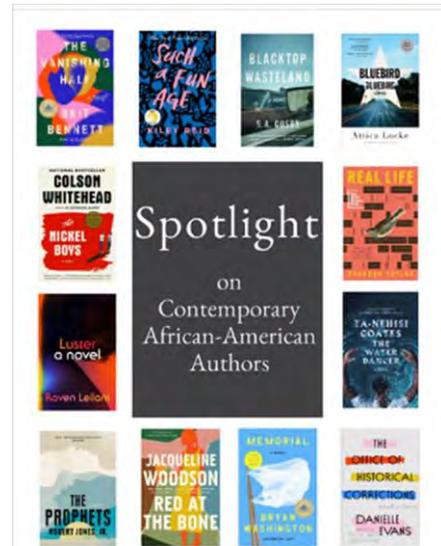
Collection Spotlight: Black History Month #OwnVoices

Do you know what #OwnVoices books are? #OwnVoices is a way of finding and exploring books about different cultures and identities, written by authors about their own experiences or those of the backgrounds they come from! During Black History Month this February, check out some of Charlie's favorite books on African-American culture, history, and identity—written by African-American and Black Indigenous authors.

Picture books, both nonfiction and stories, for young readers:



Celebrating Black History on Facebook



Merchandising efforts provide visual cues to entice community members to find hidden treasures. It also allows staff to be creative and share their interests. This helps us build close relationships with the people we are serving, showcase our collection, to surprise and delight patrons, and most importantly, encourage them to borrow our materials!

BINGE-WORTHY BOOK SERIES
You won't want to stop until you've read every book!
for adults

East Greenbush Community Library
 January 28 at 7:01 PM · 🌐

Check out these first in a series books!
 Clickable PDF with links to ebooks and our catalog:
<https://libraryaware.com/284C9C>

Book covers shown: Bluebird, V.E. Schwab, Sweetness on the Bottom, Cuckoo's Calling, The Girl on the Train, Princess Theory, Still Life, Red Rising.

democracy in action
 explore American political processes through fiction & history

Book covers: Wilmington's Lie, Empire of Resentment, American Spy, Framers' Coup, The Mueller Report, Missionaries, Dark Money, Act of Congress.

access these items through OverDrive & Hoopla
 East Greenbush COMMUNITY LIBRARY
 or Ask A Librarian for more recommended reads!

NEW READS for the NEW YEAR

Book covers: People Like Her, Detransition, Baby, The Four Winds, The Lost Boys, Nick, Back Buck.

Find more forthcoming titles!

READERS' ADVISORY FORM SERVICE (PERSONALIZED READING RECOMMENDATIONS) FOR ADULTS

Personalized reading recommendations are available for adults too!

- Adult Services Librarians compile a list of approximately 6-12 books that match the patron's reading interests.
- Up to three of the books on the list are put on hold for the patron to pick up at the drive thru window, unless they indicate they do not want any books to be put aside for them.
- This service is fully personalized/customized to the patron's request.
- Normally, this service is for EG/Schodack/Castleton patrons only. Because it is a task on the winter reading challenge, we've opened it up to all UHLS cardholders for the duration of the challenge (through 3/5/21).

GRAB-AND-GO BOOK BUNDLES FOR ADULTS

Preassembled, thematic book bundles for adults.

- This is the most recent service addition.
- Adult Services Librarians select high quality, popular books for the bundles. Everything is chosen with care. However, the contents are not customized.
- Bundles are kept on display on top of the adult paperback collection.
- Since not every can or chooses to come into the building, we've recently added a paper form listing our bundles that patrons can pick up at the drive-thru.
- Items will then be placed on hold for patrons to pick-up (within 48 hours).
- Any UHLS cardholder can check out our book bundles.

PERSONALIZED BOOK BUNDLES FOR KIDS AND TEENS

Book bundles are an easy way for grownups to find just the right titles for the children in their lives and encourage them to check out more than one book about their favorite topics or try something completely new.

- Kids/teens/parents fill out a form on our website indicating the type of books and/or AV materials they are interested in.
- Youth services librarians select materials from the shelves (usually 5 items: a "bundle" of books) that match the patron's reading preferences.
- The materials are put on hold for the patron to pick up at the drive-thru window.
- This service is fully personalized/customized to the patron's request.
- Any UHLS cardholder can use this service.

ONLINE PRESENCE

- Still some delay on residency for programs. Castleton library card prefix cannot be added as residents, so until ILS authentication rolls out for meeting rooms, only EG/Schodack library card prefix is considered a resident when signing up for events.
- Ancestry and Flipster are no longer available through UHLS. We have purchased our own Ancestry subscription, but Flipster is not necessary as OverDrive acquired a competing digital magazine platform and expanded their offerings. We updated in our print and web locations and informed patrons. We created an Ancestry authentication page on our website for temporary remote access (set to expire March 1 unless extended by ProQuest).

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The public computers and public copier were shut down, and staff began manually fulfilling copy, fax, and print requests on staff machines. These services were not counted automatically as they had been when the public machines were in use, so actual counts for faxing and printing are unavailable/inaccurate for this month. Manual counts are now in place.
- During the changeover in our Ancestry subscription, the service was unavailable to patrons for a significant portion of the month.
- Major spike in NovelList usage over previous months.

	Physical Circulation	Circulation of Electronic Material	Library Visits	Program Attendance	Public Internet Computer Users	WiFi Sessions	Successful Retrievals of Electronic Information	Hours Open	Reference Questions
January									
2021	18,223	5,301	4,695	1,187	25	778	1,549	136	1,884
% Change	-37%	24%	-68%	-40%	-99%	-71%	-24%	-54%	-49%
2020	28,926	4,281	14,607	1,971	2,192	2,666	2,043	293	3,673

STAFF TRAINING

- Tech-Talk training was launched for reference staff.
- Completed testing of the new Meeting Owl teleconference equipment. Paper documentation and video training have been created.
- Paper documentation and video training for the Logitech Group teleconference equipment have been created.
- Square Terminal training video was created and posted for staff.

FACILITIES UPDATES

- Paul painted two walls in the Children’s Room.
- We replanted a Butterfly Bush which was uprooted in a storm.
- Main library painting has resumed by JJC Finishing after several delays.
- Expansion of the parking lot Wi-Fi has been 99% installed. The network surge protector is scheduled to be finished by an electrician this month.
- On 1/26, a widespread Spectrum outage caused our phones to go down for nearly two hours. The Grasshopper phone system was still working, and patrons were able to leave messages for staff there.
- SenSource conducted a site survey to finalize the quote for a people counter sensor installation and SafeSpace subscription for the Children’s Room.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- J. Connell *“You are our community heroes.”*
- K. & P. Lasher *“Thank you so much for the info. As always, we appreciate what all of you do over there to make these crazy times bearable!”*
- B. & P. Frament *“Thanks to you and the EG Library for offering this program. My husband and I enjoyed cooking with the group last evening. We look forward to similar classes and other great offerings by the library. We appreciate the virtual options you are all working hard to provide. BTW- The yoga classes were excellent, and I hope they could resume once the virus is under control Happy Holidays!”*
- R. & T. Russo *“Dear Librarian, thank you for providing services at our East Greenbush Library. This disc skips a lot, hard to watch.”*
- K. Pelletier *“Hello, On the evening of Jan. 15 I visited the library with my two young daughters. My keys were accidentally locked in my car. I want to thank the kind, caring and compassionate staff members at the library who assisted my daughters and I do not know their names; however, they went above and beyond to assist us in getting into our car. Thank you, again, from myself and my two girls.”*
- Cassandra *“Your response time is amazing! Thank you so much.”*
- Patron (drive-thru) *“The trivia was so great. You ladies did a great job, you should have your own podcast!”*
- J. Palome Nassivera *“Thank you, East Greenbush Community Library, for offering so many different virtual programs! You are a treasure.”*

- A. Kocan-Smith *"Happy New Year! I recently read some good one's handpicked for me by the library staff for a bundle deal. Home Before Dark and the Mistletoe Murders. I'm now reading Uprooted. Thanks for the great selections."*
- S. Shea "I'll just register online again for this edition [Winter Reading Challenge 2021]. Can't wait to see all the fun challenges. Please let everyone at the library know how thankful we are for these events and the continuation of the Monday Night Book Chat. It's a nice escape every Monday evening."
- J. Harding *"It's time to extend your hours. 4 hours on Saturday and then nothing on Tuesday is ridiculous."*
- C. Miller "Is there any way of getting the books and movies about libraries and librarians without going to the library? I'd love to see them. Thanks."
- Angela *"I recently had and am recovered from having COVID 19. I would be glad to come in and help out as a temporary volunteer. Good luck with everything. You and the staff have done a marvelous job under impossible circumstances."*
- S. Hicks & B. Colgan "so wishing every one of our library employees well.... please let us know how it is going.... much love"
- S. Kramerson *"it is in the interest of all library members that COVID regulations are in place at least until next summer. I think that the use of laptop computers for one sole individual per use in the past was a poor choice, since there was an individual tested positive that used the laptop computer in the secluded area. We all have to make smart choices to keep ourselves coronavirus-free. I think you need to be more vigilant in your policies for library members while coronavirus is still a threat. I wanted you to know that you have some library members sorting and handling some of the returned library books and movies in the drop boxes. I have witnessed this on three occasions and did not interact with the guilty party handling returns at her or his leisure. I wonder how you can monitor that no one is contaminating each patron returning library books movies or media while coronavirus is still rampant in our capitol district. I am a 67-year-old resident and volunteer of the library that for one, does not appreciate coronavirus-afflicted individuals using library media and affecting other innocent library members. I am not sure what the situation can yield as to returns, but you need to address this issue, as it is concerning the community and its use of library functions. Please address this issue. thank you in advance."*
- Staff Patron feedback (a physician): This patron wanted us to know that from the beginning of the pandemic this library has done everything right. Stated that even before all other places could even think of reacting, we were sending out emails and info and doing virtual programs. And when we opened, we did it safely.
- Staff *Patron feedback regarding book bundles: Her teen daughter absolutely loved all the books. She said it was like whoever picked the books knew her daughter. She said we are doing a great job and that it is a very helpful service.*