

Library Director's Report

October 19, 2021

Submitted by Jill Dugas Hughes

TOP INITIATIVES

- Staffing/Coverage for Youth Services and Public Service Desks/Hiring
- Planning first quarter 2022 public services and priorities
- PR Promotional Campaigns: In-Library Hold Pickups, Library Card Registrations, Videos
- Winter Reading Planning
- Compensation Study and Strategic Planning (March 1, 2022 deadline)

HOURS/SERVICES

- **Hours Open**

The library was open 265 hours in October 2021, which is 119.5 (82%) more hours than October 2020, and 28 hours (12%) more than last month.

- **Days Open**

We were open 31 days in October 2021, which is 8 (35%) more days than October 2020, and 4 (17%) more days than last month.

- **Visitors**

7,031 people visited the library in October 2021, which is 3,591 (104%) more visits than October 2020 and 328 (5%) more people than last month.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

- **Insurance:**

At the most recent Admin Committee meeting we reviewed current coverages for our General Liability Coverage. A question was brought up during the review about coverages for Director's and Officer's insurance. I followed up with Brian Cooke, NFP Insurance Agent, and he explained that our insurance company, Utica National, calls D&O insurance "Legal Liability." We do have Legal Liability coverage which covers "wrongful acts" (breach of duty, neglect, error, omission, misstatement etc., in discharge of duties as Trustee) of Trustees. Additionally, we have two other coverage declarations that are often requested, Employment Related Practices and Abuse and Molestation Liability Coverage (including sexual misconduct or sexual molestation). The coverage forms have been emailed to the Admin Committee for review.

- **Rensselaer County Funding:**

A letter was distributed to our Rensselaer County, District 2 Legislators, requesting restoration of funding for Special Legislative District Libraries to assist in our efforts to effectively serve changing community needs. The letter describes our successful pivot from in-person to completely virtual during the early pandemic, resulting in a growth of digital services beyond expectation and clarification that post-pandemic normal service delivery has evolved permanently. The public wants, and is using, both traditional in-person service and the virtual library option. We have asked that the County assist with funding to assist in our efforts to responsibly manage our commitments, including new state and federal mandates and required expenses while providing relevant resources and programs to the public.

Historical Funding for East Greenbush Community Library from Rensselaer County:

1996-2000: \$6,500 annually

2001: \$12,500 annually

2002: 9,000 annually

2003: \$8,699 annually

2004-2010: \$8,700 annually

2011-2017: No Funding

2018-2019: \$250 annually

2020: No funding

2021: \$250 annually

- Follow up: Once feedback has been received, I will forward the information to the Admin Committee to determine next steps.

- **Schodack:**

We have not yet heard from Schodack with any official news on the 2022 contract. The Schodack Town Board published preliminary budget proposes \$514,263 for library services. This is the exact amount that the three libraries proposed collectively.

At our joint presentation the following information was proposed to the Schodack Town Board: \$514,263 (increase \$26,164; 5.4%) with the following breakdown:

- Castleton: \$159,263 (increase \$12,477; 8.5%)
 - Nassau: \$35,000 (increase \$5,000; 16.7%)
 - East Greenbush: \$320,000 (increase \$8,687; 2.8%)
- Follow up: I have reached out to the Schodack Town Supervisor and asked for a status update. Once received, I will forward to the Admin Committee to determine next steps.

- **Meeting Room Fees:**

We were targeted to go live in Spring 2020 with the ecommerce component/new meeting room fees for the Meeting Room policy when COVID unexpectedly hit. After revisiting this project, we recommended to the Service Committee that we permanently hold-off on implementing meeting room fees for several reasons:

- COVID has permanently altered our community landscape. We do not know if providing meeting room availability for businesses/private parties/for-profit purposes is still a need. We will evaluate this need during the upcoming strategic planning process.
 - The policy itself required a higher level of sophistication than our software vendor could provide. If this policy were to go into effect sometime in the future, we would need to make changes to the policy to simplify the metrics required for software implementation.
- Follow up: For the interim, we will need to make amendments to our current meeting room policy to implement several of the other (non-fee) components of the policy which were made when the policy was proposed. I will present these recommendations to the Service Committee to bring forth an official recommendation to the Board.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- **East Greenbush Central School District:**

Circulation Staff Members Holly Huzar and Merrin Sardi represented the library at Goff Middle School's Trunk or Treat this month, by dressing up, handing out candy, and telling fortunes. Over 450 middle schoolers attended!



Holly Huzar, Circulation Department at Goff Trunk or Treat Merrin Sardi, Circulation Department at Goff Trunk or Treat

- **Town of East Greenbush:**

Our three Youth Services Outreach Story Times held at the East Greenbush Town Park proved to be so popular that we arranged to hold three more in the month of November. Attendance details: 10/6 (36 attendees), 10/13 (42 attendees), 10/20 (46 attendees).

Molly collaborated with the Town of East Greenbush for their first ever Spooky Stories & Smores event on October 22nd at the Town Park, and presented interactive songs, jokes, and some slightly spooky stories to the costumed children who attended the event (33 attendees).

- **Kiwanis Club:**

Our popular Halloween parades were back this year, and children's librarians presented two short story times followed by parades outside of the library for our youngest patrons. Staff members lined the sidewalk, many in costume, and handed out treats, while the Kiwanis Club of East Greenbush provided munchkin donuts and apple juice on the patio.

- **The Great Giveback/ Color a Smile:**

We also participated in The Great Give Back on October 23; a day dedicated to providing opportunities for the patrons of public libraries of NY to be involved in service-oriented experiences. Families colored autumn pictures to support Color a Smile, a nonprofit organization that distributes cheerful drawings to senior citizens, our troops overseas, and anyone else that would benefit from a bright and colorful picture.

- **Hawthorne Ridge**

Catherine Snow, Adult Services Librarian, continued to work with Kevin McCann, volunteer to provide Books with Wheels service to Hawthorne Ridge residents

- **Questar III BOCES:**

Head of Adult Services, Elizabeth Putnam worked with Ron Valentine to coordinate Adult English as a New Language courses held at the library. Previously these classes were held weekly in the Hurr Education Center. We have moved these classes to Meeting Room A/B to provide additional space for social distancing.

- **Other Organizations:**

During the month of October Adult Services staff partnered with the Alzheimer's Association, Greenbush Garden Club, Poets & Writers, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and NYS Museum to provide programming/workshops for the community.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND CULTURE OF LEARNING/GROWTH

- **Strategic Planning**

Our one-year extension for our adopted Strategic Plan (required by law) nearing its end.

In February 2020, the Admin Committee proposed that we begin the process by asking the Board to discuss their views on the future of the library property, funding, and services. I was in communications with an outside consultant to work with the Board to develop the next plan.

In March, COVID hit and strategic planning was paused.

At the April 2020 board meeting, the Service Committee reported to the full board that the library's 2017-2020 strategic plan would be extended for one more year to encompass 2021.

At the January 2021 board meeting, the board voted to extend the plan through 2021 with the plan to be revisited in 2022.

As we are coming to the end of 2021, it is critical that we move the planning process forward. As such, I have scheduled an initial planning meeting with the Executive Board Leadership Team (Michael, Bob, Lynne, Mari) to discuss our process moving forward. I have invited Community Relations Coordinator, Susan Bell to be a part of the discussion.

Once we have a proposal for the planning process and timeline, we will present it to the full board for approval. As discussed during the budgeting process for 2022, we should engage a strategic planning consultant to assist with this time sensitive endeavor to allow us to involve the community in the planning process.

The community landscape and library needs have shifted considerably over the last 2 years. Our process should lead to a flexible, forward-looking plan for providing resources and services to our users.

While the COVID crisis has impacted us, what worked at the height of the crisis will most likely not result in the best solution for the “new normal” or for any future crisis. It is impossible to plan for everything, but the best future proofing option is to plan to flex/pivot as necessary.

We should be aligning our services to support community goals, provide equitable access to content in all formats, ensure the long-term sustainability of the library, and cultivate leadership/volunteers, as well as provide access to education, learning opportunities and social connection. Societal trends and the economy are rapidly transitioning from industrial/service-based models to one where knowledge, creativity, information, technology, and learning are central. Our role as a highly trusted community anchor where resources are universally available, and everyone is welcome remains strong and is particularly valuable in such a critical time.

Our future “plan” must also solve known challenges such as sustaining the addition of a “digital branch” to our “physical branch” with limited resources. Several other topics which have been identified will need to be addressed: fine-free, options for future space use, unique issues associated with operating the largest library in Rensselaer County, service priorities, capacity,

any gaps in skill sets, funding challenges, etc. Additionally, I expect that additional topics will arise during the planning process.

Simultaneously, we need to move forward with our Compensation Study to ensure we are remaining competitive and supporting those we value and who ultimately make the difference between an adequate and an outstanding library: our people; our staff.

We need to capitalize on our strengths and implement a planning process resulting in a plan which is succinct, flexible, and forward-thinking. We should invite entire community, including board members, staff, friends of the library, community leaders, library users and non-users to participate in the planning process.

- Follow up: Executive board committee will meet, agree on timeline, and target goals for plan. Present to Service and Admin committees at December meeting.

- **Book Drop/Return:**

We are coordinating a purchase of a Book Drop/Return from the Guilderland Public Library which is 38x38x56 tall for Friends of the Library Donations. It comes with two rolling carts for the interior so the book drop can be emptied quickly in rain/snow. Each cart is divided into book and media compartments which have covers. The return is lockable. I have reached out to the Friends of the Library to see if they would be interested in using the return for donations.

- Follow up: Coordinate with Friends and maintenance staff to pick-up from the Guilderland Public Library. Will need 2-3 people to help lift it into a trailer or truck due to its bulkiness. We also need to coordinate the permanent location for the return and related procedures.

- **Telecommuting Policy**

The Service Committee has reviewed the second draft for a new telecommuting policy. The third draft and an associated procedures document has been distributed to the committee.

- Follow up: Service Committee members will provide feedback by 11/20 and I will revise as necessary for the December service committee meeting. We hope to present a recommended policy for Board consideration at the December or January board meeting.

LIFELONG CURIOSITY, IMAGINATION AND LEARNING

- **Book Discussion Groups for Adults**

Various book discussion groups have been popular for adults. Three Virtual- Wednesday Night Book Chats on Facebook were held (30 participants), and two in-person book discussion groups were held (Monday Morning and Monday Evening book discussion; 15 people).

- **Other Adult Programs:**

Greenbush Garden Club (7 participants), Jewelry Making with circulation staff member, Marcia Rossetti (16 participants), Knitting & Crocheting for Beginners (7 participants), Izzy Singer in Concert (18 attendees), Virtual Cooking Class (4 attendees), two Writing Workshops- Telling Life Stories facilitated by Susannah Risley (21 participants).



- **Storytime's:**

Five successful outdoor story times were held in October, with growing attendance and fairly good weather (195 people). Three virtual story times (41 people) were also held, although participation has been dwindling for virtual youth programming and we are actively planning for in-person programming move forward.

Marcia Rossetti, Circulation Department, Jewelry Making Class

- **Indoor Programs for Youth:**

We have begun holding small programs indoors for children and held Building Club (15 people) for school-aged children in the large meeting room on Columbus Day. Additionally, 165 people in the self-paced “Bag O’Bones Scavenger Hunt” in the children’s room during the month of October.

- **Outdoor Lawn games**

The Youth Services department set up lawn games on the library lawn on two Saturdays (34 people).

- **Take & Make Kits for Kids**

Weekly Take & Make Kits for kids have remained popular. In October, themes included: Acorn Buddy, Beaded Pumpkin, Firetruck, and Wobbly Bat (355 activity kits distributed).

- **Teen Services:**

Teen Services are picking up again, with Anime Club (21 participants) and four Friday Fall-O-Ween (41 participants) programs that offered middle and high schoolers a chance to socialize and make fall craft projects.

Usage of the dedicated teen space in meeting room A/B continues, with 83 teens using the space in the 20 days that staff have been in the area (this does not include the teens that are in the space for programs).

- **1000 Books Before Kindergarten**

6 new preschoolers registered for the popular early literacy program.

- **Book Bundles for Kids**

21 personalized book bundles were curated by youth services librarians for kids in October.

DISPLAYS

Children's Room October display:

- Spooky Stories

Teen Room October displays:

- Scary Stories
- Books made into Movies/TV

Main Library October displays:

- Fall Audiobooks
- Indigenous Authors (fiction)
- Judge a Book by its Cover
- Halloween Music
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Books about the 'burbs
- Horror Movies, Scary/Horror Books

DIGITAL LIBRARY READERS' ADVISORY/SOCIAL MEDIA

Three Word Book Reviews (Adult Collections)

- The Storyteller
- We Are Not Like Them
- Sankofa
- The Inheritance of Orguidea Divina
- Payback's a Witch
- Beautiful World Where Are You
- Beautiful Country
- Bewilderment
- You Got Anything Stronger

Readers Advisory Flyers (Adult Collections)

- Indigenous Authors
- Judge a Book by its Cover
- New Horror Titles
- Classic Horror Titles

COMPARISON OF USAGE OCTOBER 2021 VS 2020

October	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	Website Visits	Total Collection Use
2021	20,379	4,785	7,944	1,896	461	1,021	1,197	265	2,338	8,237	26,361
% Change	4%	-11%	53%	419%	159%	18%	-63%	82%	-29%	8%	-7%
2020	19,611	5,362	5,191	365	178	868	3,262	146	3,315	7,595	28,235

COLLECTION USAGE

In-Person Borrowing

Current Month (October 2021)

- 20,379 items were borrowed: 77% of total collection use
- 16% of in-person borrowing was at the drive-thru window
- 84% was at the circulation desk.

Last Month (September 2021)

- 20,610 items were borrowed: 78% of total collection use
- 15% of in-person borrowing was at the drive-thru window
- 85% was at the circulation desk

Last Year (October 2020)

- 19,611 items were borrowed: 69% of total collection use
- We did not keep statistics on the circulation breakdown between the drive thru window and the circulation desk last year

Digital Borrowing

Current Month (October 2021)

- 5,982 digital items were borrowed: 23% of total collection use
- 4,785 electronic materials (Overdrive/Hoopla) were borrowed: 80% of digital use
- 1,197 database sources were accessed: 20% of digital use

Last Month (September 2021)

- 5,788 digital items were borrowed: 22% of total collection use
- 4,691 electronic materials (Overdrive/Hoopla) were borrowed: 81% of digital use
- 1,097 database sources were accessed: 19% of digital use

Last Year (October 2020)

- 8,624 digital items were borrowed: 31% of total collection use
- 5,362 electronic materials (Overdrive/Hoopla) were borrowed: 62% of digital use
- 3,262 database sources were accessed: 12% of total collection use; 38% of digital use

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Dugas Hughes, Director