

May 2021 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

Community Outreach Services

The Library District’s Community Services department has gone by its current name for several years. Recently staff in the department asked if we might revisit the name. In their experience, the name is confusing to the public and sounds too much like court-ordered community service that some individuals perform as part of their sentencing in the judicial system. Also, staff said that the term “outreach” is widely used and recognized, and accurately described the work the department does as it reaches outside the walls of our libraries and into our communities. Administration and Communications staff agreed with that assessment. Effective June 1, 2021, the department name will be “Community Outreach Services”.

From Awareness to Action #MentalHealthAction Day

Since the beginning of the pandemic, American communities have been faced with a myriad of stressors: not only physical safety risks, but financial and economic strife. In May, the United Nations warned that the pandemic may generate yet another potential problem: a mental health crisis due to increased psychological stress from grief, shock, isolation, and uncertainty. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 25 percent of young adults ages 18 to 24 have seriously contemplated suicide during the pandemic.

Public libraries have a long history of providing services in their community. This past year, librarians have gradually taken on other functions and have become navigators for a healthier community. We have assisted families and individuals navigate complex issues of health care, mental health, aging, and other important topics around healthy communities.

This past May 20th, the Library District participated in Mental Health Action Day. In the wake of COVID-19, millions of people have uncovered new mental health conditions and millions more have had their existing challenges exacerbated. While more people than ever before are comfortable discussing mental health, many fall through the cracks in the space between awareness and action. Therefore, a coalition of nonprofits, brands, and influential leaders – including Poudre River Public Library District – came together last month to launch the first-ever Mental Health Action Day to help drive our culture from awareness to action.

Action looks different for everyone, and Mental Health Action Day encouraged people to do what feels right for them, such as reaching out to a friend, joining a peer support group, or simply enjoying sunny weather outside.

Poudre Libraries has various resources and materials to help users find valuable mental health research and information. Our health partner, Summit Stone Health Partners, is also a good local resource for mental health support and referrals.

Print and Digital Materials

In addition to a large collection of print books focused on mental health topics, library users might also be interested in resources through Kanopy, Films on Demand, OverDrive and Libby, and Hoopla.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

May Highlights:

- Helped launch new library app for smartphones and digital devices. The new app by Solus UK offers improved features and user-friendly design.
- Earned media coverage: *The Silver Lining*: article highlighting library resources for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.
- Awarded two grants to help fund the 2021 Fort Collins Book Fest (October 22-24).
 - City of Fort Collins Fort Fund (\$7,827).
 - Lilla B. Morgan Memorial Endowment (\$2,000). We are proud to partner with CSU's Department of English to plan and host this year's book fest.
- Digital advertising to promote Summer Reading began on various social media platforms and local websites.
- Printed the June newsletter/calendar – this is the first time we've had a printed version since March 2020.
- Worked with SA and others on the staff intranet and file management project. The new Staff Cache intranet – based on SharePoint platform - will launch in June. This project includes department and team focused sites like the Communications SharePoint.



Ongoing Activities:

- Building a library programming plan, including staff input, best practices, evaluation options, and more.
- Summer reading marketing materials and promotions.
- Planning for 2021 Fort Collins Book Fest, happening October 22-24. Visit FoCoBookFest.org for news and updates.
- Efforts related to social media, email communications, newsletters, video development and other key activities to keep the community updated on Library services and news.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

Programs:

Be Ready fair. In collaboration with Amy, Angela, Ludy, and library volunteers, Africa Garcia put together 200+ library bags with different “goodies” and crafts to be hand out at the fair. I was also there during the program for set up and clean up, as well as acted as welcome person to check in people and ask for preferred language.

Citizenship Study Group. Africa prepared and delivered 3 sessions, including mailing materials to participants, and worked with library volunteer Danielle to have mock interviews with participants.

Know Your Rights as a Renter! In-person program where we helped 40 people apply for rent assistance. We also had an ILL available for adults and children.

Café de Olla bookclub: read the book moderated the discussion.

Other Community Engagement activities:

Ludy Rueda coordinated a donation of 10 personal computers from HP. These computers have been given to Housing Catalyst Villages. The goal of this effort is to help bridging the digital divide in vulnerable communities. The PC’s will be installed at the different Club Houses across Housing Catalyst so residents can have access to computers and the internet.

Our Spanish Facebook page “Rincón de Cuentos” is going through some changes. We now have a new name “Bibliotecas Poudre” and an image that will replace the Rincón de Cuentos profile.

Students from CSU Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures provided all the recordings for July’s Phone-A-Story content.

We met with Community Partners to discuss Día de Muertos.

A new bilingual Story Stroll featuring the book “I need a hug” by Aaron Blabey was placed at Stove Prairie Elementary School.

Larimer County Digital Inclusion Project. Have been meeting with our District team (Eileen, Miranda, and Kristen) regularly and recently started meeting with the whole Larimer County team to develop a plan for digital inclusion where libraries collaborate.

Colorado Access to Justice. Africa attended a meeting hosted by CO Access to Justice and organized by some of its commissioners in an attempt to learn more about barriers that people face when entering the justice system. Multiple local organizations were invited to give their feedback.

Early Childhood Council of Larimer County. Staff attended monthly meeting after participating and collaborating in Be Ready fair.

LatinX Multicultural Center. Africa attended first informational meeting and asked to be included in future meetings.

Summer Reading Program

Ludy Rueda provided her first in-person (outdoor) presentation for the kindergarteners at Irish Elementary school. She visited each of the three Kindergarten classes and presented 2021 Summer Reading Challenge followed by a bilingual Storytime. Promo materials, reading logs and books were distributed.

Finalized in-person storytime schedule. We'll be offering in-person storytime to 13 different sites.

SRC Children check in meeting with children's librarians for summer plans updates.

Delivered bookmarks and logs to multiple partner sites.

Identified communities to offer our "Thursday crafts" as part of SRC. Six out of nine sites have been confirmed.

Communicated with Melissa Grogan to partner with her alternate sentencing clients who will be working on putting together some of the summer crafts.

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

By Currie Meyer

Be Ready Fair May 1: CTL Children's Services Librarian Amy Holzworth, CTL Library Assistant Erin Walters and Community Outreach staff Ludy Rueda and Africa Garcia hosted a booth at the event at First Presbyterian Church to promote kindergarten readiness. The four provided information about library early literacy services and other resources in both English and Spanish.



Over 300 Bird-themed Take and Make kits fly out of CTL during May! CTL Library Assistant Jillian Harrison and Amy coordinated the creation, assembly and distribution of over 300 multi-sensory interactive kits for kids during the month. When the kits ran out in mid-May, Jillian and Amy made bird coloring sheets available to families.

From 400 visitors per day to 600! During May, CTL's average daily visitation jumped from an average of 413 (during February, March and April) to 593 people per day. Late May and early June are typically the busiest times of year for CTL. The closure of Harmony library on May 11 caused an increase in visits. The decrease in COVID risks due to increased local vaccinations along with a reduction in mask-wearing requirements also may have contributed to the jump.

Xochil Arellano on-boarded as CTL's new Circulation Supervisor, May 2. We are all excited to welcome Xochil to the CTL crew. A former staff member at CTL, Xochil brings years of experience in circulation and front-line service to the job. In her first month, Xochil has competently handled COVID issues, circulation impacts from Harmony's closure, increased customer visits, final preparations for summer reading and hiring.

Teen and Tween programs in May, coordinated by Teen Services Librarian Jenny Thurman

Design your own Face Mask, April 30, Twin Silo Park.

Chocolate Flight and Write featuring local author of YA fiction, Laura Resau, May 8 via Zoom. The program provided pre-make kits for registrants that included a sampling of specialty chocolates along with information about chocolate production, several writing exercises, and a signed bookmark.



De-Stress Take and Make Kits, May 1-30, Kits featured simple art supplies, art activities to calm anxiety and guided breathing exercises. Library Assistant Drew Gaede coordinated the kits with Jenny's guidance. 40 kits were picked up during the month.

Development and Learning in May:

Day of Dialog: DEI in Collections and Readers' Advisory, presented by School Library Journal, May 20, Amy and Jenny attended.

Designing for a Flexible Future, presented by Library Journal, May 5, 12, 19, Currie and Jenny attended.

Indigenous Voices: Authentic Children's Literature in the Classroom & Library, presented by California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center at Cal State, San Marcos, May 25 and 26, Amy attended.

OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

Ian hosted author Libby Copeland to discuss her new book *The Lost Family*. He trained 7 volunteers who are working on the digitization project. We now have 50 reels processed of the 160 we have scanned. Ian is also working on process improvements for managing library subs.

Meg continues to manage the Bookfest by booking authors, securing partnerships, and working with the larger Bookfest team. She also hosted the Old Town book club, a program about starting an Etsy shop, and Know Your City.

Deidre has been working on storytimes, creating library displays, and planning for fall programming.

Youth Services staffing: welcome to our new part-time LAs Angela S., Jace L. and Rita F. They will be using their amazing skills and talents with programming for children/teens including English storytimes, Bilingual storytimes and teen activities. We are thrilled to have them join our team!

OTL offered a passive program, DIY Outdoor scavenger hunt during May. Over 300 people participated.

Thousands of SRC Bookmarks were delivered to area schools to promote our summer reading challenge. OTL library Liaisons have had many inquiries from area schools wanting help getting kids library cards and access to books over the summer.

Music and Movement Storytime in the park: All sessions of outdoor storytime during the month of May filled quickly. Shout out to Erin L. Deidre H. Meg S. and Angela S. for planning and presenting fantastic storytimes!

Kristen continues her work on the file management project and the county-wide digital inclusion project. She worked with Mark to get the Skedda software running for the study rooms.

Holly and her team were busy managing a non-fiction shifting project and prepping to receive overflow from the Harmony closure.

Eileen devoted time to the following projects: OTL furniture RFP (awarded), GC RFP process (currently posted), Digital Inclusion project, training new employees, ESL mentor training, schedule discussions, Library Park irrigation project (proposed for 2022), and coordinating with Fuerza Latina to host rental assistance support at OTL. Eileen, Rita and Erin W. from CTL, supported the larger rental assistance event at the Boys and Girls Club. Anne M. was hired as a mentoring coordinator to grow the ESL mentoring project and expand the District's mentoring services. There are currently 9 active mentoring pairs with 12 more learning pairs starting in the coming weeks. This program is gaining momentum. With the irrigation project moving forward, Eileen re-engaged with the Library Plaza landscape plans in order to integrate this work with the irrigation construction work. She is working with City partners and Ripley to coordinate these projects. She is also working to bring back the DBA meetings to Old Town Library's meeting room in the fall.