

# Poudre Libraries

## February 2023 Report from the Executive Director

### 2023 ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

#### GOAL 1: Improve the Customer Experience in our Physical & Digital Spaces

- Activated storytime room at Old Town for weekly Sensory Storytimes and activities and began offering "Messy Me" developmentally appropriate process art programs.
- Customers can now reserve all five study rooms at the Harmony Library.
- Implemented new "Clover" credit card payment system at the circulation desks of all three libraries. The system will allow customers to pay fees with a credit card directly at the desk, with staff help, as opposed to through their account online

#### GOAL 2: Expand Places Where People Connect with the Library

- Fort Collins Book Fest: *For the Love of Reading* took over the month of February with more than 30 authors and 40 sessions held at venues throughout the community: the three libraries, Old Firehouse Books, Snowbank Brewing, Mythmaker Brewing, Peculier Ales Fort Collins, FCMoD, and Wolverine Farm Publick House.
- Front Range Community College (FRCC), Colorado Humanities, and Poudre Libraries partnered on offering a *History Comes Alive* program in the Long Peaks Student Center at FRCC. Actor Becky Stone portrayed Josephine Baker.
- Librarians read at Timnath Elementary School for Read Across America Day.
- Started monthly Outreach BYOD (bring your own device) visits at the Murphy Center and Redtail Ponds (in addition to the ones we were already offering at Oakbrook I and II)

#### GOAL 3: Develop & Expand Strategic Partnerships

- Received 33 applications for the open Board positions to be appointed by the City and County in March
- Developing STEM/art programming initiatives with CSU extension, Little Shop of Physics and the NoCo Astronomical Society
- Partnered with SAVA to do displays for Sexual Assault Awareness month in April and encouraged SAVA and Summit Stone to sign up for community led programming at the library
- In partnership with PSD's Professional and Community Experience (PACE) program and CSU's Empowerment program, Council Tree Circulation staff trained two neurodiverse volunteers to process materials (check in, simple shelving) for a few hours each week.
- Attended County Commissioner meeting to provide updates on library activities and Evie launch plans.
- Met with key staff from Front Range Community College to review existing IGA and discuss possible updates and clarifications.
- Outreach staff participated in the [Latinx Community Network](#) (LCN) monthly Steering Committee meeting. Their aim is to foster collaboration amongst the different community serving agencies.

- Outreach manager, Irene Romsa, and bilingual Outreach Librarian, África García-Fariña, participated in the City’s BIPOC+ Diverse Identity Agency Serving Circle. The group is reviewing the City’s Strategic Plan and sharing a diverse perspective with City leaders.

#### GOAL 4: Build Opportunities for Staff Development & Engagement

- Creating space and opportunities to be involved in intentional EDI work including launch of affinity groups for LGBTQ+ and Hispanic/Latin(o)(a)(x) staff
- Launched EDI training for subcommittee members (communications and Training/Development subcommittees) and developed implementation plan for Foundations of EDI training for all staff.
- Teen Services Librarians and the Bilingual Outreach Librarian in charge of teen programming are reviewing and discussing teen services competencies from the American Library Association’s Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). The team will focus on developing a shared language and understanding of service values, determining levels of current staff competencies, and discussing where the YALSA’s Teen Services Competencies aligns with and District goals and strategic plan.

#### GOAL 5: Create & Implement Key Metrics and Tracking

- Identified public libraries to use for benchmarks and created district spreadsheet
- Created a new data dashboard concept for future reporting
- Completed week-long DART reference tracking and logged nearly 3,500 customer transactions from February 13 – 19 at all locations.

#### GOAL 6: Uphold Intellectual Freedom & Democracy

- Communicated with several customers about the types of offerings and programs happening at the library and they WHY behind them.
- Prepared for staff informational campaign in conjunction with Freedom of Information Day on March 16.

## FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

### MIDTOWN/COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT RELOCATION

The District’s Collections department has occupied space in midtown Fort Collins for the past several years. The District’s current lease on the space expires this Spring and the property owners have opted not to renew. Subsequently, we need to find and lease new space. We are working with a commercial real estate firm to identify appropriate space. After reviewing available properties we’ve identified a space that will meet our needs. We have shared a letter of intent regarding our top choice. We are currently awaiting a response from the owners.

## PROGRAMMING



*Once Upon a Tune* trio performed at Harmony in the Round for an audience of 136 people.



**Seed Swap** – Old Town hosted a very successful seed swap this past weekend in partnership with Homegrown Foods. They had 550 attendees in 2 hours!

This program aligned well with our strategic plan goal to align programming with identified community needs (in this case, “environment, sustainability, and climate change”), as well as our 2023 goal to develop and expand strategic partnerships. Big thanks to Meg Schiel for organizing!

In partnership with the Museum of Discovery and the City of Fort Collins, we successfully hosted a [Human Library](#) event at the Museum. The event brought together 27 human books and around 150 readers. In addition, we issued library cards and offered books for check-out during the event.

*Probably the best Human Library I've attended. That's a fact.*  
– Cristy Moran, Colorado State Library





Council Tree Circulation Supervisor, Xochil Arellano, provided a **before-hours tour of Council Tree Library** to our **state Representative Cathy Kipp** on February 27. Talking with elected officials about libraries was an assignment within Xochil’s Colorado Association of Libraries Leadership (CALLI) program. Xochil helped Rep, Kipp get a new library card and check out a ukulele from our Gadgets and Things collection!

## FEBRUARY MEDIA COVERAGE

### FORT COLLINS BOOK FEST

- “Fort Collins Book Fest Kicks off Friday with a Month of Presentations, Workshops, and Guest Authors,” *Greeley Tribune*, <https://www.greeleytribune.com/2023/02/01/fort-collins-book-fest-kicks-off-friday-with-a-month-of-presentations-workshops-and-guest-authors/>
- “Fort Collins is celebrating books with a festival — for a whole month,” *Colorado Public Radio*, <https://www.cpr.org/2023/02/02/fort-collins-is-celebrating-books-with-a-festival-for-a-whole-month/>
  - Radio air times: Thu Feb 2, 2023 5:45am - 5:50am; 7:45am - 7:50am; and 5:44pm - 5:49pm
- “Old Town Library hosts annual Book Fest kickoff party,” *CSU Collegian*, <https://collegian.com/articles/aande/2023/02/category-arts-and-entertainment-old-town-library-hosts-annual-book-fest-kickoff-party/>
- “Book Lovers are uniting as Fort Collins Book Fest returns this month,” *Retro 102.5 FM*, <https://retro1025.com/book-lovers-are-uniting-as-fort-collins-book-fest-returns-this-month/>
- “A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words,” *Rocky Mountain Collegian*, <https://collegian.com/media/2023/02/category-media-gallery-bookfest/>
- “Women authors to talk American West at upcoming book discussion event,” *CBS 4*, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=usJo4pbM4n0>
- “The international Human Library program comes to Fort Collins Feb. 26” (press release), *City of Fort Collins*, <https://www.fcgov.com/news/?id=8432>
- “International Human Library Plans Stop in Fort Collins on Feb. 26,” *Townsquare NoCo Media*, <https://townsquareno.co/international-human-library-plans-stop-in-fort-collins-on-feb-26/>

## LEGAL

- “Former Poudre River Library District employee sentenced to probation in theft case,” *Coloradoan*, <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2023/02/01/former-fort-collins-library-employee-sentenced-in-theft-case/69862909007/>
- “Former Poudre River Public Library District employee pleads no contest to theft charges, sentenced to 3 years probation with restitution payment,” *Loveland Reporter Herald*, <https://www.reporterherald.com/2023/02/01/former-poudre-river-public-library-district-employee-pleads-no-contest-to-theft-charges-sentenced-to-3-years-probation-with-restitution-payment/>

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- “Poudre River Public Library District Seeks Two New Board of Trustee Members,” *North Forty News*, <https://northfortynews.com/category/news/poudre-river-public-library-district-seeks-two-new-board-of-trustee-members/>

## GENERAL

- “Fort Collins libraries: About the Poudre River Public Library District,” *Coloradoan* (video), <https://www.coloradoan.com/videos/news/2023/02/03/fort-collins-libraries-poudre-river-public-library-district/11180510002/>
- “Fort Collins libraries won't proactively test for meth contamination. Here's why.” *Coloradoan*, <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2023/02/08/fort-collins-libraries-will-not-proactively-test-for-meth-heres-why/69878954007/>
- “25 Life Hacks Fort Collins Residents Need to Try Right Now,” *Townsquare NoCo Media*, <https://townsquareno.co/5-ways-to-get-ongoing-help-in-noco/>
- “Best Spots to Sit and Read a Book in Fort Collins,” *Townsquare NoCo Media*, <https://townsquareno.co/the-best-spots-to-sit-and-read-a-book-in-fort-collins/>
- “No Bathrooms, Computers, or Couches: How Boulder’s Main Library is Dealing with Meth Contamination,” *KUNC*, <https://www.kunc.org/news/2023-02-21/no-bathrooms-computers-or-couches-how-boulders-main-library-is-dealing-with-meth-contamination>
- “Fort Collins URA preparing to buy long-vacant Albertsons grocery on North College,” (mentions “a library branch”), *Coloradoan*, <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2023/02/22/fort-collins-may-buy-former-albertsons-considering- eminent-domain/69925203007/>

## HOW'D WE DO?

Received as a valentine to Library Staff: As a person with dyslexia and dyscalculia, I find the library system of alphabetized letters and numbers daunting! However, because I am an avid reader and a book lover, the library is a critical part of my life! The cheerful, kind, helpful support of the librarians here in Fort Collins is crucial to my ability to access and enjoy all the libraries many offerings. Thank you!

Received at Old Town Library: Erin at the computer desk was very friendly, polite and helpful as I am not computer literate. Thank you for being such a wonderful employee.

Received at Harmony Library: I love the Poudre River Library System! Friendly staff, books, DVD – THANK YOU!!

Received via online comment:

Re: Library Collections Need To Stop  
Hello -

I find it incredibly ridiculous that our local public library will send families to collections for unpaid fines. Multiple times now I have failed to return books - childrens books - that quite honestly, I returned late. But in both instances, I returned. Two times now I have been sent to collections for fines that exceeded \$50.

This is a horrible practice that needs to stop for the following reasons 1) I pay property tax. If my property tax is NOT enough, then please go to a ballot to ask for more money 2) For families and individuals that CANT find a book to return, you are punishing them. You are punishing them for things that probably a lot of people dont have control over - dont you think everyone would love to return their books on time? The punishment of sending someone to collections is too harsh and is not in alignment with your organization - and how much revenue does this practice even generate?

And finally - I tried to pay, multiple times. While I was at the library - where you now refuse to collect payment at a desk. I was told to 'Go pay online' using your public computer, or use my phone. I challenge your board and your executive team to try to enter a barcode into their phone, while managing two children under five and a stack of books. The alternative was to enter in my credit card information into a public computer and use your unsecured network to accept payment. I felt unsafe doing either of those options. Please. You are making it challenging for families to access your facility and this needs to stop.

I love the library. The programs, outreach, and space you provide the community is invaluable. This practice is completely out of alignment with your mission, vision and purpose within our community and needs to stop. Accept payment in person and stop sending families to collection.

Response:  
Dear Kelly,

Thank you for your email regarding library collections. Understandably, it is frustrating to get sent to collections. Please know that while we do use a collection agency to help us contact customers who have overdue materials, we do not report accounts to any of the credit reporting bureaus.

We understand that items can get misplaced and take longer to return. If you receive a notification for an overdue item that you cannot find, library staff are more than happy to work with you. When you call the Answer Center at [\(970\) 221-6740](tel:9702216740) or talk to library staff, they will add a note to your account that you are looking for the item. Your account will not be turned over to collections.

Below is our process for notifying people about returning materials. Feel free to let us know if you did not receive the notifications or have suggestions for other ways to notify customers. We strive to make

everyone's experience with the library positive and will continue to review the processes and communications that we use to facilitate getting library materials back so that other can use them.

Day Before item due	Reminder email is sent
Day After item due	Reminder email is sent
Week (7 days) overdue	Reminder email is sent; if there is no email connected with your account, notification is mailed via USPS to your address
2 Weeks (14 days) overdue	Final notification is mailed via USPS to your address
3 Weeks (21 days) overdue	Item is considered "lost/missing" and the amount for replacing the item is billed to your library account
4 Weeks (28 days) overdue	Accounts with a fee balance of \$50 or more are turned over to an outside agency for collection and assessed a \$10 processing fee

The good news is that we now have a way for customers to pay for lost materials at the library. I agree that not having a way for customers to pay for fines in the library was problematic. We have also just started auto-renewals to automatically renew items that haven't been requested by another customer.

I am glad you are enjoying the programs, outreach, and spaces at the libraries. Thank you for reaching out.

Sincerely,

Diane