

Wilmette Public Library Director's Report – January 18, 2022

Library Activities for November 2021-January 2022

Anthony Auston, Director

Strategic Plan Progress Updates

In the coming months, the Library will begin collecting feedback and preparing to draft its next Strategic Plan. Staff, Trustees, and our community will review past performance and evaluate future opportunities. We'll reflect on emerging trends, conduct environmental scanning, meet together to learn about our operations and aspirations, and develop tools, questionnaires, and opportunities for community engagement and listening sessions. Stay tuned for more updates about this exciting process to build upon our legacy as we imagine our Wilmette Public Library of the future. Our current Strategic Plan (<https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/about>) will continue to guide us through fiscal year 2021-2022.

Appended to this month's report is our year-end summary of our recent progress towards our Strategic Plan goals, covering the months since our last summary: November 2020 through December 2021.

Objective 1.1: Beginning October 2018, expand provision of library materials and programs outside of the established library facility.

In November and December, Preschool Outreach Librarian Ruth Bell made five in-person visits to the Wilmette Parks District preschools where she presented storytime to a total of 75 children and teachers.

Our StoryWalk expanded to Hibbard Park in November in our new durable sign holders. Patrons took a walk through the park and a vibrant, heartwarming story *Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora, which celebrates generosity, gratitude, and community. Special thanks to the Wilmette Park District for installing the brand new signs.

Objective 1.3: By April 2020, host public forums for residents to explore and discuss community-wide issues or topics.

On November 13, the Library hosted a [Braver Angels](#) event, *Families & Politics* to help prepare families for challenging dinner conversations during the upcoming holiday season. Braver Angels is a citizens' organization uniting red and blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America. The workshop offered these highlights:

- Insight into why family differences over politics are uniquely challenging;
- Recognition of common roles that family members play in political conversations (for example, the Gladiator, the Defender, and the Sniper);
- Strategies and skills for handling family political differences in a constructive way.

- Although the focus is on family relationships, you can use learnings in this workshop with any loved one. You'll laugh and have some fun in this workshop—it won't be all serious. After all, we all come from quirky families.

This was a two-part workshop combined an online eLearning course and an online, interactive workshop offered over Zoom. Part one consisted of a 40-minute, interactive course that patrons completed online before the workshop. Part two was the interactive online workshop where patrons were guided in practicing active listening and speaking skills.

On December 11, Local History and Genealogy Librarian EvaAnne Johnson partnered with the North Suburban Genealogical Society to present a program about using U.S. Church Records in genealogy research. Interest was high in this virtual program, and 63 patrons attended. We will continue to partner with this organization in 2022, co-hosting programs in May and July 2022.

Objective 1.4: Explore ways to connect local government, non-profits, businesses, and individuals with relevant community resources.

On November 4, AS librarians Rachel Garcia and Katy Jacob presented a “Book Buzz” program to the Delta Gamma North Shore Alumnae Group. This is the fourth year Rachel has been invited to booktalk to this group and they are always so appreciative and excited to see the list that she creates. Together, Katy and Rachel shared a slideshow and handout featuring the biggest titles of the year, under-the-radar picks, and librarian favorites.

Objective 3.2: Beginning January 2019, create and adapt library services to accommodate the needs of people living with disabilities.

In December, the Library updated and replaced its on-site courtesy mobility equipment with a new rolling walker with wheels and seat, and a new wheelchair. The mobility equipment is available at the main entrance lobby.

Objective 3.4: By August 2019, develop a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff.

On November 10, Teen Librarian Krista Hutley hosted YA author Darcie Little Badger. Darcie is a Lipan Apache writer with a PhD in oceanography. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Elatsoe*, was featured in *Time Magazine* as one of the best 100 fantasy novels of all time and is a Nebula, Ignyte, Locus and Lodestar finalist. In a starred review, *Kirkus* magazine called it “[a] fast-paced whodunit set in a contemporary world like our own, this is a creative fusion of Indigenous cultural influences and supernatural fantasy. A brilliant, engaging debut....”

On November 18, Krista hosted “Supporting Trans and Gender Expansive People” with Lizzy Appleby from Youth Services of Glenview Northbrook (YSGN). The event was recorded and was made available to staff and has received positive feedback from staff and from patrons. One of the patrons she recognized was a parent she spoke with during the pandemic; her child was

coming to virtual programs and was shy about turning on his video because he had started using male pronouns and gone through a few name changes over 2020 and 2021. Krista recommended YSGN's Pride groups to them and they still continue to go to events there, and events at the Library as well.

Local language teacher Ling Liu presented Mandarin-English Bilingual Storytime on two Saturdays, November 27 and December 18. 15 children and parents enjoyed stories, songs, and fun in Mandarin and English.

Objective 5.4: Beginning July 2020, identify and reach out to people who are not currently aware of library services.

The Circulation Department continued its work in conjunction with Wilmette-Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce in connecting with new residents. Staff stuffed envelopes with welcome brochures giving new residents a brief glimpse into what the library collection, programs, services, and technology offerings we offer.

New Trier Township High School Librarian Julie Novak partnered with Teen Librarian Krista Hutley and Circulation Manager Kim Hegelund in signing up several students for library cards. By putting procedures in place for new students, similar to those used for D39, we are looking to create a stronger relationship with Wilmette and Kenilworth students that go to NTHS.

Welcome Desk

Shelving/Switchboard Manager Patsy DeVuono is happy to report that we now have permanent Welcome Desk furniture. Our new desk arrived in early December, and appears intentional and more appropriate to convey its purpose. Although we have not been counting statistics on patron feedback about the desk, the public loves it. We often have patrons stop to tell us how nice it is and then stay to chat with us about their visit.



Desk statistics for November/December reflect high engagement. While we do not have a very busy switchboard, we do get a steady stream of calls that we personally respond to. Adult Services gets the most transfers with 528 in November and 549 in December. Circulation is next with 266/343. Things picked up in December – all of the stats went up slightly. The amount of calls about our operating hours was 140 in November, and because of questions about holiday hours that went up to 175 in December. We still get a number of people inquiring about study spaces (20/28), and continue to field questions about donations of used books (99 in both months).

Patron interactions also went up in the month of December. In November, we greeted 2,957 patrons, and in December that went up to 3,345. We provided directional assistance to 435 patrons in November, and 520 in December. While we have given out a lot of masks (76/99), there have been no problems with patrons over wearing them; most people forgot their masks in their car, etc. and are glad we have one to give them. Welcome Desk staff also sees a number of patrons with large bags of materials to return who do not want to hand them one by one through the bookdrops or to circulation through the barrier. We happily take their bags and bring them to Circulation ourselves.

Collections

Digital

Each month our patrons access nearly 20,000 e-books, e-audiobooks, newspapers, magazines, streaming music, TV programs, and movies with their Wilmette Library cards. This figure is further augmented when including articles from databases, genealogy resources, business resources, homework help resources, and other digital products. August is a slowest month of the year, and that was reflected in both our digital circulation statistics and acquisitions data.

In November, we began collecting monthly statistics for Mergent Archives, Creative Bug, Fold3, Encyclopedia Britannica, Twyane's Author Series, and various literary criticism databases through Gale. We had not been tracking these previously and they should help to increase and better reflect our actual monthly usage statistics. Jill McKeown will also fill in the rest of the fiscal year's statistics for past months before the end of this FY for the above stated databases.

We are now offering a new database by Ancestry called Fold3, which provides convenient access to military records, including the stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who served. This resource offers a wealth of searchable original documents for genealogists. Already a popular tool, in its first month this new resource saw 65 on-site users and 49 remote users.

To facilitate remote access to our wide array of subscription resources, AS Manager Jillian McKeown has been working with OCLC to develop and host our EZproxy server. The proxy service will enable patrons to access our online resources offsite (though with the same services and options as though they were at the library, hence "proxy"), and with the highest level of data security. The project entered its test phase in early January, with a prospective roll-out date on the website in late January. Jill will work with Communications Manager Sarah Beth Brown to promote this update to our patrons. The EZproxy service simplifies access to our digital resources. After a patron logs into their library account with their library card number, they will have access to all of our online resources without having to re-enter their card number each time (this applies to databases that require library card authentication and does not apply to resources where they may need to create an account, such as with Kanopy, Hoopla and Libby, in which they will enter their specific account credentials).

Full summary of digital items added in the past three months and 2021 totals:

<u>Collection</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>2021 Total</u>
eAudiobook Overdrive	691	207	722	7062
eBook Overdrive	1286	489	2102	18659
eMagazine Overdrive	86		124	695
Hoopla items	930	943	893	7375
Monthly total	2993	1639	3841	33791

Full summary of digital items withdrawn in the past three months and 2021 totals:

<u>Collection</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>2021 Total</u>
Hoopla	198	307	292	3666

Year-to-date digital resource statistics are appended to this report.

Physical

Children's materials are by far the largest volume of physical items that staff sorts and shelves - especially during school breaks. Staff has been keeping up with the returns and getting materials back on the shelves quickly.

To ensure proper organization of the collections for ease of access, the Shelving team periodically does a deep dive to maintain order. Staff has started reading and straightening the shelves on the first floor, getting through the Large Type area and Genre Fiction. We will be starting Fiction soon.

Technical Services and Shelving staff retrieved the remaining classical music CDs from storage, repackaged the items, and interfiled them into the CD collection in the Media Room.

Jillian McKeown and John Amundsen reorganized some of the Business Reference and College Corner areas. We shifted print materials so our College Reference titles would have more room, and patrons would have more seating space; new signage was also added. New signage was added to the New Large Type, Large Type, and Reference areas to facilitate wayfinding since all three collections are in very close proximity to each other.

RFID Project

The final stage of the RFID project was the delivery, installation, and training associated with the new Automated Material Handling System (AMH) in early December. Technical Services Manager Jessica Thomson, Shelving/Switchboard Manager Patsy De Vuono, and Circulation Manager Kim Hegelund collaborated on the AMH's programming to establish sorting rules for the bins. Patsy DeVuono, Shelves Mary Dormin and Michael Mah, and Director Anthony Auston received formal training from Bibliotheca on how to use and manage the machine. Staff learned how to clean it so it continues to work properly, and most importantly, we learned not to lean on it or bump into it with carts, as it is sensitive equipment!

We were excited to see the efficiency of the system: processes that took hours of manual handling and judgment were completed in minutes, and automatically sorted into bins for easier processing of the final steps. With some initial trial and error, Patsy reports the whole team feels confident using it now, however only trained staff are allowed use and operate the equipment. Trained staff are happy to demonstrate the system to anyone who would like to see it operate, however we have had to ask people not to use it on their own as this can create unintended consequences. We will be training a few people from Circulation to use it as a backup in case we need support.



Shelver Michael Mah and Shelving/Switchboard Manager Patsy DeVuono pose with our new Automated Materials Handling System following its installation in December.

Following installation of the AMH, the Shelving team officially moved back into their original space in the Shelving Room. This space has been through various changes and purposes in the past 2 years, so it's good for the team to be back, even with the new workflow changes due to the new machine. The AMH is large and takes up a good deal of room, so staff has had to adapt their procedures. Staff started by storing a number of the carts that we used to use as we are sorting directly from the bins now. We are not getting as many items from Circulation, so we do not need as many of the large carts. We have a number of items that used to go on carts that are now being stored on the counters: Genre fiction that will be changed to storage, items that currently do not fit on the shelves, extra copies of materials, reference books, repairs, and storage items. We have figured out a system for sorting the materials and arranging the carts so they are accessible and readily available.

Technical Services Statistics

Full summary of materials added in the past three months and 2021 totals:

Collection	October	November	December	2021 Total
Adult Fiction	559	580	391	6529
Adult Non-fiction	617	612	648	6804
Teen Fiction	66	34	22	456
Teen Non-fiction	22	6	5	107
Youth Fiction	642	500	501	6941
Youth Non-fiction	111	80	132	996
Adult Magazines	514	536	525	5124
Youth Magazines	38	35	32	422
Adult Multimedia	201	221	168	2036
Youth Multimedia	38	49	53	414
Monthly totals:	2808	2653	2508	29860

Full summary of items withdrawn in the past three months and 2021 totals:

Collection	October	November	December	2021 Total
Adult Fiction	342	140	227	8435
Adult Non-fiction	339	138	281	14288
Teen Fiction	384	3	2	471
Teen Non-fiction	3	0	3	92
Youth Fiction	843	428	563	4225
Youth Non-fiction	67	606	358	1314
Adult Magazines	387	391	487	4382

Youth Magazines	3	4	2	388
Adult Multimedia	95	27	127	2228
Youth Multimedia	157	9	198	1496
Other	8	1	2	17
Monthly Total:	2628	1747	2250	37336

We sent 15 boxes of books to Better World Books in December.

Circulation



In December, Circulation staff discussed ways to decrease our carbon footprint on single use plastic and suggested a change to the way we package our Parking Lot Pickup materials for patrons. With the recent acquisition of more circulating totes, we are now using our WPL logo circulating totes instead of the compostable green t-shirt bags we had been using since launching Parking Lot Pickup in 2020. The totes are more durable and reflect our organizational commitment to sustainable solutions.

The Circulation Department welcomed Megan Noone, our new full-time Circulation Assistant. Amy Jung worked closely with Megan, providing training on policies and procedures for the library and at the Circulation Desk. Megan comes to WPL with extensive knowledge and skill previously acquired working at the Hinsdale and River Forest public libraries in circulation.

Circulation also saw the retirement of Medwin Textor, a familiar and friendly face in the library and long standing Circulation Assistant of 18 years. Medwin started as a Circulation Clerk in 2004. She also worked as a Feature Films Technical Services Clerk for 10 years, where she ordered and processed feature films for the Technical Services Department. Medwin's extensive knowledge, customer service skills, reliability, dedication, and sense of humor will certainly be missed. Medwin's last day was December 26, 2021.

With multiple staff using benefit time in November and December, Circulation staff has begun helping out the Interlibrary Loan team on evenings and weekends with the picklist of patron requested materials. In turn, the ILL staff have been covering breaks and lunches at the Circulation Desk. Their flexibility and ability to assist has helped out instrumentally. In turn, Circulation staff helping out with the picklist has allowed for patrons to be notified earlier for their materials, and kept the picklist manageable on days when the ILL team is not fully staffed.

Circulation Statistics of Note

The library welcomed 292 new patrons in November/December, and of those 89 used our online library card application system. Over the course of the two months, 55 of the online library card applications were issued a physical card resulting in a 61.8% conversion rate.

Over the course of two months, there was consistent and increasing use of Parking Lot Pickup. There were 162 appointments, 66 individual patrons and 96 repeat patrons. This service continues to be in demand for our community and with the Omicron surge we are already seeing higher levels in the beginning of January.

The month of November and December are a bit harder to gauge statistically against 2020, as the library closed on November 16, 2020 due to the return of COVID, resulting in reverting back to only Parking Lot Pickup.

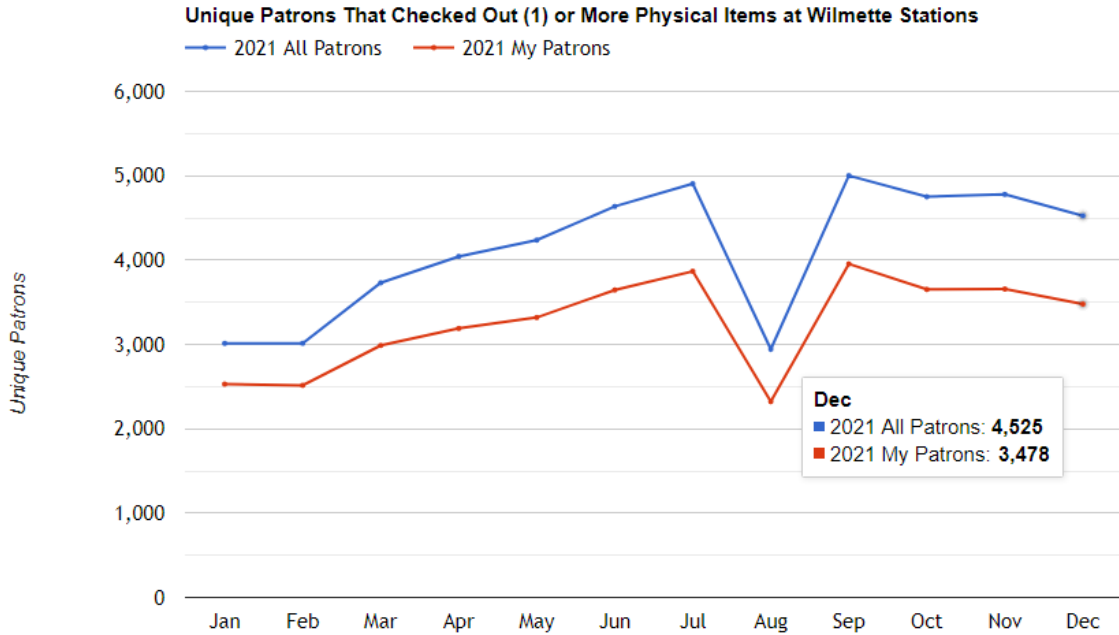
One detail to note is the significant increase in our self-checkout machines. In November 2019, only 6,741 items were checked out by this method (roughly 19.7% of the month's total checkouts). In November 2021, 13,692 were taken out, accounting for 46.3% of checkouts.

The ILL team is still seeing a significant daily workload. In December, 6,656 holds were filled. Staff sent out 3,078 pieces to other CCS libraries, while receiving 3,115. Outside of the CCS requests, we sent out 116 items and received 52.

Our total physical circulation for the two months compared over the prior two years shows a positive trend of returning to our pre-pandemic figures:

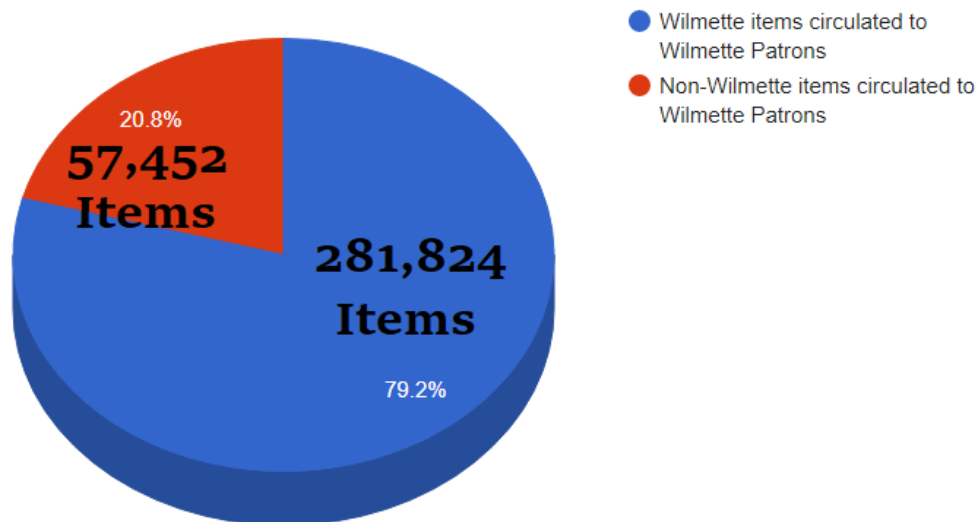
	2021	2020	2019
November	53,720	46,631	61,037
December	51,141	35,822	55,668

Over the course of the year, we have seen an increasing trend of unique patrons checking out materials at the library. The graph below represents individual cardholders that have checked out at least one physical item. The red line indicates a Wilmette cardholder and the blue line is a combination of Wilmette and other cardholders (such as Evanston, Winnetka, Chicago, or Glenview) that might stop into our library to borrow materials. The dip in August is relative to our closure for capital improvement project.

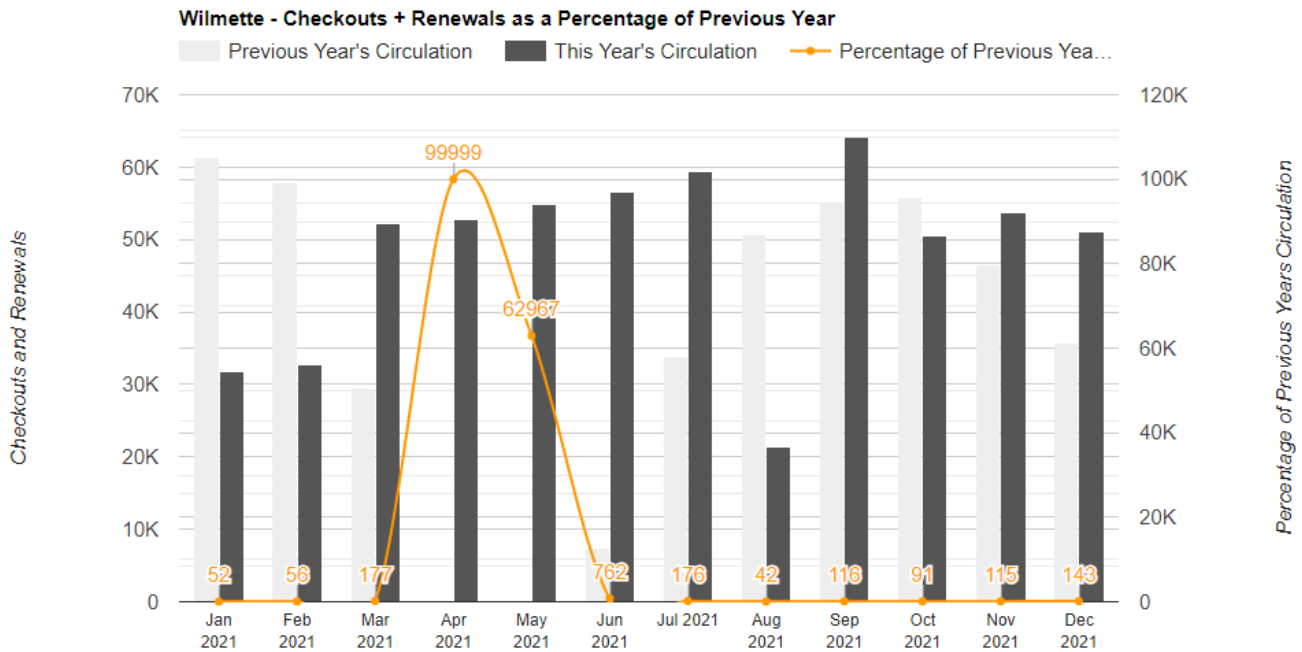


With all of the unique patrons shown above, we can see that the library’s collections are still highly circulated to our residents. In total, 339,276 items went out to our patrons and we have had many active cardholders over the course of the year. In total, we had 9,645 patrons check out at the library, and that averages roughly 35 items per patron throughout the course of the year.

Wilmette - Circulation by My Patrons From 01/2021 Through 12/2021



Below is another indicator of what our yearly circulation statistics looked like compared to 2020. The months from April to June 2020 appear distorted, as that was when the library was relatively closed and no materials were due. The library has since been hovering in the 50,000 items per month range when the building is open to the public.



Year-to-date circulation statistics are appended to this report.

Adult Services



Our annual [Meet the Author](#) program was held virtually on Wednesday, December 1. This year, we hosted Omar El Akkad and featured his latest novel, *What Strange Paradise*, a modern fable about the current migrant crisis. El Akkad was joined in conversation with Northwestern University professor emeritus Jack Doppelt and together, they had an illuminating discussion. Sarah Beth Brown sent out the survey following the program and the feedback was extremely positive. We had 69 screens in attendance and of the surveys submitted, most viewers were from Wilmette, Evanston, Kenilworth, and one was a Wilmette resident who joined us from college in Rhode Island.

The Winter Reading Clubs launched on January 3. This year, Adult Services is asking patrons to “Broaden their Bookshelf” by reading genres, authors, and perspectives that they normally would not. Katy Jacob, Rachel Garcia, and Jillian McKeown have created several reading lists on

the [Winter Reading Club \(WRC\) web page](#) for ideas and inspirations. To promote ease of access, we are keeping the adult and teen clubs virtual, enabling participants to submit their reading lists online through the Library's website. For incentives, the Library is continuing to award our popular e-gift cards to The Book Stall in Winnetka.

The League of Women Voters/WPL Book Group especially enjoyed November's title, *Oak Flat: A Fight For Sacred Land in the American West* by Lauren Redniss. Rachel Garcia reported that participants were grateful that we spotlighted such an important topic during Native American Heritage Month and encouraged the library to continue focusing on these issues. Rachel also led the book discussion for our Meet the Author title, *What Strange Paradise* by Omar El Akkad on November 23.

On November 3, Wilmette joined Evanston, Skokie, and Glenview libraries and their respective Chambers of Commerce to host "LinkedIn for Business," presented by Dee Reinhardt, Social Media Strategist of Time2Mrkt, Inc. Reinhardt discussed how businesses can leverage a presence on LinkedIn to build engagement with their brands and connect with their customers. 32 registered for the program and 23 attended, including 6 who registered via Wilmette.

Beginning in January 2022, Business Librarian John Amundsen will be mailing out monthly welcome packets to new businesses registered with the Wilmette-Kenilworth Chamber, sharing information on our business library cards, an overview of our services, and a letter introducing him as the Library's dedicated business librarian.



Local History and Genealogy Librarian EvaAnne Johnson is helping to plan for next year's village sesquicentennial celebration. She met with Kathy Hussey-Arntson, Director of the Wilmette Historical Museum, to discuss a joint oral history project that they are launching, and to coordinate programs that each of agency will be hosting in 2022. Wilmette Library and the Historical Museum will work together to coordinate oral history kits and collect oral histories from Wilmette residents and community members, and communicate about upcoming 150th events. With Sarah Beth Brown, she also attended the village-wide

Sesquicentennial Planning Committee Meeting. A staff committee was also formed within the library to start planning our signature programs in support of the 150 celebration. Learn more about the Village's history and the 150 events here: <https://wilmette150.org/>

EvaAnne's "Preserving Family Recipes" program on November 17 was another success. According to EvaAnne, "there were many engaged and interested attendees who asked many questions at the end. Many people were very excited to start small and start organizing the family recipes. The presenter, Valerie Frey, is an excellent speaker and very knowledgeable about food traditions and food heritage. At the end she recommended several great books, all of which we happened to have at the library. Several patrons and staff mentioned that they couldn't attend her talk live, and although it wasn't recorded, there is a recording of the same

presentation several years ago at the Library of Congress. The presenter sent some bookmarks to send out as a "handout" to attendees, and I printed some of these to put in the genealogy reference area." EvaAnne created a blog post for this event with helpful tips: <https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/posts/saving-your-familys-beloved-recipes>

AS Manager Jill McKeown wrote a blog post for our *From Our Librarians* blog on holiday cooking: <https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/posts/snapshot-cookbook-collection-winter-holiday-edition> and included a link to our Cookbook Concierge service, where patrons can submit ideas of new cuisines and staff will curate a list of cookbooks just for them.

Teen Librarian Krista Hutley hosted several sessions of the "Your Space" drop-in teen program on Monday nights in December, where teens are invited to come and hang out in the teen room, socialize and play games. She also had her regular virtual D&D (Dungeons and Dragons) session through Discord and Roll20 on December 18. She has a consistent group of about 4-6 teens that continue to meet online. Her December Teen Take & Make featured candle-making and included a colorful tin for the candle. Forty kits were made and 35 were picked up by those registered. The remaining were placed in the Teen Room as leftovers for patrons to take. Krista was also one of the facilitators at the 3D Design with Tinkercad program for grades 5-8 with Janet and Ruth from Youth Services.

Youth Services

Maker Appointments

Patrons of all ages can now book a private appointment with the library's Maker equipment in the Youth Program Room. We can accommodate groups of up to four people, or small family groups, for one hour at a time. Equipment available includes our vinyl cutter, button maker, design station for 3D printing, sewing machine, jewelry making and metal stamping, and Lego WeDo. Basic supplies are available at no cost. In November and December, our Maker Librarian Janet Piehl opened up appointments on Sunday afternoons. In November, we served 19 people and in December 16 people. We have been training more staff in Youth Services and Adult Services to use our maker equipment so we could expand appointments in January to most Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and select other times.



Maker Garden: Sticks

In November, patrons young and old got creative with sticks in our new interactive intergenerational Maker Garden next to the front entrance. We saw different structures every day like fairy houses, a bridge, and letters.

Book Displays

In November, Youth Services curated displays of books to highlight picture books about funny animals and food and family gatherings, Native American Heritage Month, Native Voices, Native Lives. We also displayed books by and about Jerry Pinkney and Gary Paulsen, two great book creators who passed away in November.

In December, Youth Services curated displays of books to highlight gifts and giving, winter and hibernation, staff favorites, and chapter books about Christmas.

Youth Services Programs

In November, Youth Services presented 25 in-person and virtual programs which were attended by 232 people. In December, Youth Services presented 19 in-person and virtual programs which were attended by 164 people.

Early Childhood Programs

Our early childhood programs shifted to Zoom in November for the winter months.

In November, Youth Services presented 14 weekly storytimes over Zoom which were attended by 98 patrons. In December, we presented eight weekly storytimes to 25 attendees before the storytime break in mid December.

- 11/22: Wiggleworms Party! (Virtual) During the storytime break, 18 patrons tuned in for music and dancing with teacher Diana Laffey from the Old Town School of Folk Music.
- 11/22: Pajama Storytime (Virtual) Children's Librarian Susan Kaplan-Toch presented her cozy bedtime stories and songs to 16 children and parents.
- 11/23: Spanish-English Bilingual Wiggleworms Party! (Virtual) During the storytime break, 13 patrons tuned in for Spanish-English bilingual music and dancing with Vivian Garcia from the Old Town School of Folk Music.
- 12/6: Pajama Storytime (Virtual) – Children's Librarian Susan Kaplan-Toch presented her cozy bedtime stories and songs to 16 children and parents.
- 12/13: Wiggleworms Party! (Virtual) During the storytime break, 10 patrons tuned in for music and dancing with teacher Karen Banks-Lubicz from the Old Town School of Folk Music.
- 12/14: Wiggleworms Party! (Virtual) During the storytime break, 11 patrons tuned in for music and dancing with teacher Rob Newhouse from the Old Town School of Folk Music.

School Age Programs

- 11/4: K-9 Reading Buddies of the North Shore – 13 children read to therapy dogs.
- 11/11: Favor Boxes – Six children created 3D paper gemstones that can hold little gifts, serve as place cards, or brighten up a holiday table.
- 11/17: STEAM Lab: Bee Hotel – Ten children learned about bees and make a bee hotel to

provide them shelter.

- 11/18: 2nd and 3rd Grade Book Discussion (Virtual) – 12 children chatted about Ranger in Time #1: Rescue on the Oregon Trail, by Kate Messner, and made a craft together.
- 11/10: Graphic Novel Book Club – nine children attended our new monthly discussion and comic making program in the auditorium.
- 11/23: Fall Mandala Suncatcher – ten children made a fall mandala suncatcher using flowers and other items from nature.
- 11/27: Mandarin-English Bilingual Storytime (Virtual) – four children enjoyed stories and songs in Mandarin.
- 11/27: Storytown Improv (Virtual) – On the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend we hosted an improv show with Storytown. Founded by a Second City alum, Storytown brings improv to kids. Storytown uses audience suggestions and ideas to create a different story for every program. This program was attended by 10 families.
- 12/2: K-9 Reading Buddies of the North Shore, 13 children read to therapy dogs.
- 12/15: STEAM Lab: Bee Hotel – 11 children learned about bees and made “bee hotels” to provide them shelter.
- 12/15: Graphic Novel Book Club – nine children returned to talk about a graphic novel and make their own comics.
- 12/16: 2nd and 3rd Grade Book Discussion (Virtual) – Ten children discussed Princess Cora and the Crocodile by Laura Amy Schlitz and made a craft together.
- 12/18: Mandarin-English Bilingual Storytime (Virtual) – was attended by nine children.
- 12/21: Desktop Vision Board (Virtual) – Five children made a vision-board collage using the four surfaces of a CD jewel case to express their identity, goals, hopes, and wishes for the new year.
- 12/29: Andertoons: Wide World of Wacky Winter Sports – Back by popular demand, professional cartoonist Mark Anderson led 22 kids in grades 1-3 and ten kids in grades 4-8 to draw silly sporting events and create their own comic stories.

Communications & Events Programs

November Programs

Virtual programs continue to be well-attended, and we have resumed several core programs, specifically Armchair Travels (bi-monthly for now) and International Film Screenings. Many patrons have been happy to have in-person options for events, and Jennifer is working closely with facilities to make sure we are providing distanced seating and enforcing mask usage. We will continue to work towards a healthy balance of in-person and virtual programming to provide offerings for everyone.

- 11/4: Armchair Travels: Santa Fe Trail w/ John Lynn; 15 patrons, in person
- 11/8: Holiday Side Dishes w/ Chef Susan Maddox; 61 patrons, virtual
- 11/9: At Home Film Discussion: *The Florida Project*; 8 patrons, virtual
- 11/12: Native American Culture in Illinois w/ Kim Sigafus; 59 patrons, virtual
- 11/14: Estrella Piano Duo Concert; 35 patrons, in person
- 11/16: Lyric Opera Lecture: Mozart’s *Magic Flute*; 42 patrons, virtual

- 11/18: International Film: *King of Devil's Island*; 6 patrons, in person
- 11/18: Armchair Travels: Umbria with Ralph Danielsen; 16 patrons, in person
- 11/30: Armchair Travels Presents Moscow w/ Olga Cardamone; 59 patrons, virtual

EDI Program Goals in November

Adult programs featured a number of diverse authors and subjects this month. Here are a few of the ways we used our programs to meet our EDI goals:

- We explored Native American Heritage Month with a number of programs:
 - *Oak Flat*, featured as the November League of Women Voters book discussion title, explores the fight to protect sacred Native land in the American West.
 - Lipan Apache author Darcie Little spoke in the beginning of the month. Her book has Native representation and asexual representation.
 - Kim Sigafus, an Ojibwa Indian, discussed her culture, daily life, importance of oral traditions & music, and history of Native Americans in Illinois at a November 12 presentation.
- Braver Angels, an organization that has presented at the library in previous years, brought a two part workshop to the community to teach skills to de-polarize conversations about politics and hold respectful discussions about value differences
- The Supporting Trans and Gender Expansive People program coincided with Trans Awareness Week and the National Trans Day of Remembrance on November 20.

December Programs

In December, we offered a variety of in-person and virtual programs, including a craft program and several food-based programs that were all big draws for patrons. As we neared the end of December and the omicron variant began to rise, we did put a critical eye to the safety of our in-person programs. Staff decided to postpone our traditional in-person New Year's Eve concert. This concert, held annually on December 30, typically draws a large crowd and we did not want to put any community members in a risk to their health with an overcrowded space. As we moved into 2022, we continued to discuss the safety of our in-person events and decided to temporarily pause on-site programs for at least the duration of January. We have worked hard over the past two years to remain flexible, offering as many services as possible while also keeping health and safety at top of mind, and this type of temporary service contraction allows us to prioritize programs and services we feel offer the most safety to both patrons and staff.

- 12/2: Armchair Travels: Jordan with Barbara Sugden & Ron Vargason; 16 patrons, in-person
- 12/6: Make A Needle Felted Hedgehog with Natasha Lehrer Lewis; 18 patrons by Zoom and 5 via out YouTube recording
- 12/8: Holiday Charcuterie Boards with Kristyn Slick; 43 patrons, virtual
- 12/14: At Home Film Discussion: *The Man with the Golden Arm*; 11 patrons, virtual
- 12/16: International Film: *In Between*; 6 patrons, in-person
- 12/16: Armchair Travels: Christmas Markets with Ralph Danielsen; 6 patrons, in-person
- 12/20: Armchair Travels Hidden Meanings of Chinese Food with Yvonne Wolf; 46 patrons, virtual

EDI Program Goals in December

Programs for adults and teens explored a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds this month. A few programs that helped meet our EDI goals this month:

- *What Strange Paradise*, our fall Meet the Author selection, is written by an Egyptian man and the book discusses immigration.
- *The Street* is novel written by a Black female author and explores social and racial justice issues in 1940s Harlem
- *Cantoras* features a community of queer women live on an isolated island in defiance of the brutal 1970s Uruguayan government.
- “Hidden Meaning of Chinese Food” explores significance of certain foods & Chinese culture.

Communications

November

In November, the focus of our communications team was planning for the rest of the year following a very busy September and October, as well as working on a number of promotional pushes throughout the month. Sarah Beth Brown continued to work on the website, with ongoing updates and maintenance to make sure that the site stays dynamic and accurate. Team members wrote a number of blog posts, a long time goal that our new site makes much easier. Posts included information about our collection, online resources, recent reads, and much more. Sarah Beth also created a page dedicated to Native American Heritage Month. Throughout the year, we plan to honor heritage and cultural months with our programs and collections, highlighted in pages on our site that can be updated and used from year to year. Sarah Beth also began work on the January-March newsletter. This is the first three month newsletter of our new newsletter cycle, so design, workflow, planning, and content all had to be modified to take the extra month into account.

In addition to her normal work of creating graphics for print and online to support our programming schedule, Graphic Artist Sarah Rose worked on a number of design projects in November. She worked with Ruth Bell on a layout for the new Storywalk, a new social services brochure with Suzanne Arist, a new template for Youth Services, and a number of new signs throughout the building.

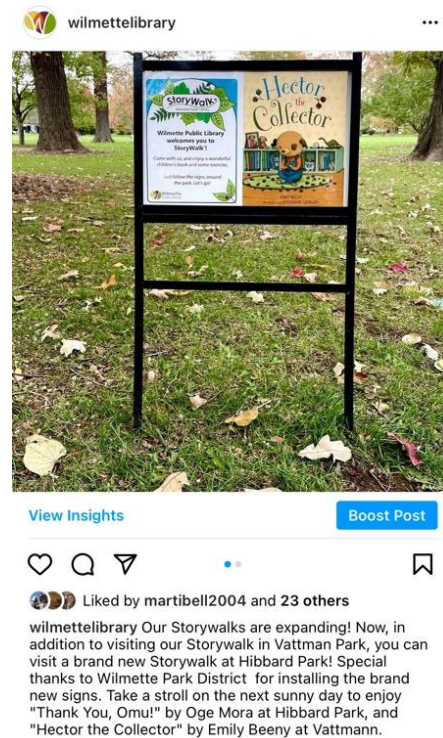
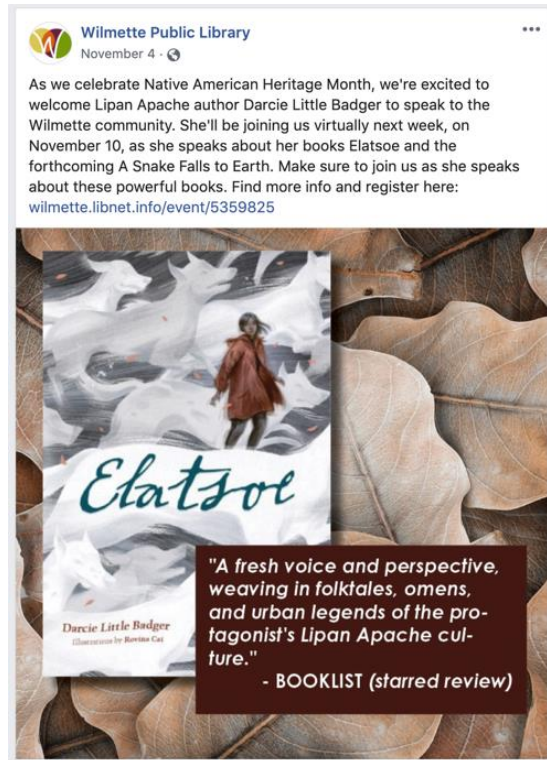
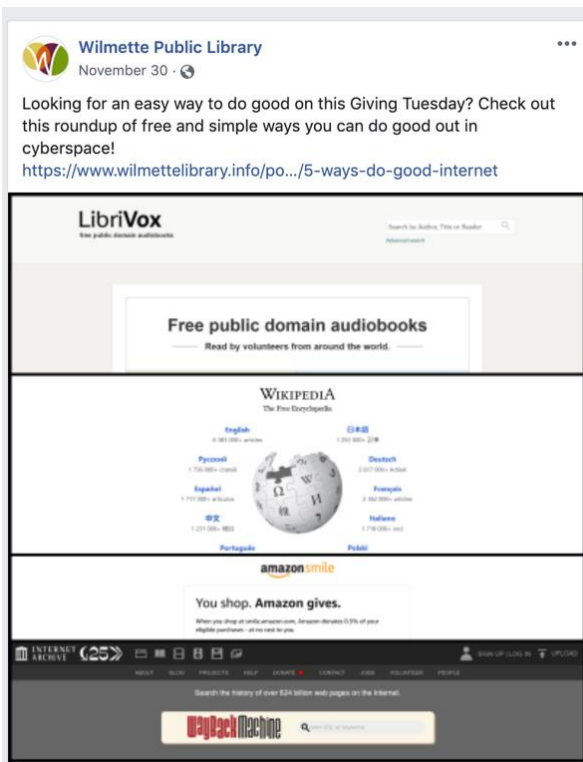
Email Communications & Social Media (November)

In November, we used our email marketing platform to promote Meet the Author, content from our blog posts, and our full schedule of upcoming programs.

Email newsletter statistics from November:

- 87,914 Sends
- 33,684 Opens (41% open rate)
- +16% Better than Industry Average
- 81% Desktop, 19% mobile

Highlights from our Social Media in November



December

An exciting piece of news that we got to share with the Wilmette community in December was our third consecutive year being recognized as a *Library Journal* 5-star library. We shared this news across our platforms, accompanied by graphics created by Sarah Rose. The Record North Shore shared the announcement on their site, and the post on our Facebook page got excellent traction. As we closed out the year, it was fun to be able to share positive news with the community.

The primary project that we worked on in December was our January-March issue of the newsletter. Covering three months, this issue is 33% larger than previous newsletters. In addition to three full months of virtual and in-person programs, the issue share library and community news, information promoting Winter Reading Clubs and the Library of Things, and an announcement of the 2022 One Book, Everyone Reads selection, *Three Girls from Bronzeville*. Due to COVID-related complications at the print shop, the newsletter was slightly delayed in reaching homes, but still arrived in Wilmette the first week of January.

Two other large projects that we worked on in December were promotions that would launch in January: Winter Reading Club and One Book, Everyone Reads. Sarah designed a suite of images for both series that we were able to use in print and on our website. The One Book roll out will happen throughout the winter, and we are preparing a full range of graphics to support our print and online promotions.

We also tackled a number of other small projects, including signage requests and brochures that Sarah produced for Adult Services. Sarah Beth has been working through regular website maintenance as well, working to find and redirect broken links from the old website and continue to make small updates throughout the site to improve the patron experience, including tweaks to the menu items and reintroducing our COVID safety protocols to the site.

Email Communications & Social Media (December)

In December, we used our email marketing platform to promote a number of initiatives, including holiday closures, holiday gift guides, the beginning of the Wilmette 150 celebration, and more.

Email newsletter statistics from December:

- 73,742 Sends
- 35,249 Opens (51% open rate)
- +24% Better than Industry Average
- 91% Desktop, 9% mobile



Highlights from our Social Media in December

Wilmette Public Library
December 10, 2021 · 🌐

Planning to do some holiday shopping this weekend? 🛍️ Check out these great gift guides compiled by our librarians. We have picks for all ages and interests. Finished your shopping? No problem! Place a library hold on these picks and read them yourself 😊 Happy shopping (and reading!)

Adult Gift Guide: wilmettelibrary.info/posts/gift-books-adults
Children's Gift Guide: wilmettelibrary.info/posts/gift-books-children

Our Favorite Gift Books



381 People reached **40** Engagements

[Boost post](#)

Wilmette Public Library
December 26, 2021 · 🌐

Experiencing decision fatigue? Binge Boxes to the rescue! With a binge box, you get a curated selection of dvds on a given theme. Just pick a theme or actor, and the binge box does the rest! Bing boxes are available for every interest and age group. Check them out today!



355 People reached **26** Engagements

[Boost post](#)



[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)


👍 🗨️ 📌

🌐 Liked by [alehyshea](#) and **145 others**

wilmettelibrary Watching our new automated materials handler sort returned items feels a bit like, well, magic! You can check it out in action through the windows by our Parking Lot Pickup spots.

Wilmette Public Library
December 21, 2021 · 🌐

We're excited to share we've been named a Library Journal 5-star library for the third consecutive year! This places Wilmette Public Library in the top 10 libraries nationwide for our budget range in this annual statistical analysis. Learn more about the star libraries here: <https://www.libraryjournal.com/.../Americas-Star-Libraries-Th...>



898 People reached **166** Engagements

[Boost post](#)

👍 🗨️ 📌 62 2 Comments 3 Shares

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

Technology & Digital Services

The project to upgrade and enable the video recording and live broadcast of Board Meetings was completed in November, culminating the broadcast of the first in-person Board Meeting since February 2020. The system uses dedicated computer workstation, wireless microphones, and the Auditorium's public address system, along with a video camera and software. Multiple staff contributed to the success of the project, including IT Manager Fred Wallace, IT Assistant Christine Hightower, Software Training Associate Linnea Lundberg, Facilities Manager Marcos Levy, and Jimmy Lee of CVI. The first video was a learning experience in-action, since it was a live event, but one that we can all grow from. Linnea did a great job on site at the meeting and Christine watched from home and subsequently discussed with Linnea how to adjust the production for the next meeting. Linnea also did some light post-production work on the YouTube video livestream, using YouTube Video Editor.

Linnea has been developing a Cyber Security presentation. It will eventually be added to our online [Technology Class Handouts](#), and be part of our training curriculum.

Linnea created a blog for the webpage entitled "[5 Ways to Do Good on the Internet](#)"

Christine assisted a number of patrons with problems printing documents from phones, paying for printing with credit cards and scanning to fax this month. She also rewrote the "how to scan and print" copier instructions to provide more clarity.

Christine coordinated with Adult Services Manager, Jill McKeown to arrange to have the Digital Services Desk covered when Digital Services staff are unavailable. Christine also compiled some quick tips and FAQs regarding the Computer Room, to have them available to staff as a reference guide.

As part of our departmental cross-training, IT Assistant Debi Thompson helped Christine work through the process of putting in support tickets to CVI.

Debi located the staff members that had been issued former classroom laptops to work from home. They were asked to exchange those laptops with alternative equipment so Fred could have CVI reconfigure the classroom laptops for in-person classes that have been reintroduced.

The projector in the Auditorium would not display a connection to the connected PC. Fred diagnosed the problem and discovered that the signal booster under the stage was not securely connected to the HDMI cables. He had Christine assist him with the process as part of her ongoing training.

Several steps needed to be taken to resolve a problem with emails from AT&T, Ameritech, Prodigy.com and SBC. The emails were being returned as undeliverable. The Library had been placed on a RBL (Real-time Black List), where the IP address is used to identify active spammers or spam sources. Debi alerted staff regarding our investigation of the issue and Fred contacted

the Postmaster at AT&T to inform him that we are not spammers. The issue seems to be resolved at this time.

The Mac computers in YS would not connect to the home page. The problem was with the browser. The firewall for the VLAN did not get updated with the workaround for the recent certificate chain issues that affected the staff VLAN a few weeks earlier. Once Fred contacted CVI and they updated the MAC VLAN with the same workaround, the website certificate issue corrected itself. All browsers on patron computers were updated by CVI per Fred's request.

Facilities and Safety

2021 Capital Repair Project

With the majority of our project complete, November and December activities were focused on finish work and inspections ahead of the final punchlist. The Access Control system was officially put into service, introducing a new method of accessing staff areas by proximity cards instead of number pads. The Fire Alarm system's remaining components were received and installed, though a number of details about this system remain on hold pending inspection and testing. The finish work in the Shelving/AMH workroom was completed ahead of the AMH system install. The installation and replacement of the mullion caps on the curtain wall on the west entrance appears to be final element of the project that may have to wait, as those materials remain on backorder.

The Library was planning to open to the public at noon on Thursday, January 6 to allow for all of the new (noisy/strobing) safety systems to be tested, and to allow staff the opportunity to conduct a safety drill with the new systems in place. As a result of incomplete inspections, however, the necessary testing/late start will need to be deferred to another date. We'll update everyone as soon as we coordinate the rescheduled testing with the inspectors, contractors, and engineers. If we can, we'll try to test when the building is already closed, but we may still need a half day to complete this important task. Ultimately, the end of this project is in sight.

Human Resources

Recruiting

Recruiting remains at the forefront of our HR activities. Here is a list of our current efforts:

- **Administration**
 - **Assistant Director** – After a month-long search that resulted in 25 strong applicants who were sourced both locally and nationally, we conducted two rounds of interviews with a hiring team that was comprised of Executive Director, Anthony Auston and five Department Managers. We are excited to announce that we have hired **Leah White** as the new Assistant Director for the Library. Leah comes to the Library with an impressive work history that includes five years as the Learning & Development Manager at Skokie Public

Library and prior to that, four years as the Head of Popular Materials at Ela Area Public Library. With Leah's experience in librarianship, staff development, commitment to EDI initiatives, and her ability to bridge staff goals with the Library's overall strategic vision, we are confident that Leah will be a strong asset and advocate for the Library. Leah's first day in this new role will be February 7.

- **Technical Services**

- **Assistant Manager** – The Library has hired **Matt Womack** as our new Technical Services Assistant Manager. Matt brings an invaluable mix of leadership and technical services experience to the table having served as both Head of Technical Services as well as Executive Director for Ela Area Public Library. Matt also previously worked as a Customer Support Liaison for Polaris Library Systems (our current ILS). In addition to assisting Technical Services Manager Jessica Thomson in managing the department's workflow, Matt will also help with cataloging responsibilities, specifically focusing on Adult Services materials. Matt's first day was November 30, and in a short amount of time, Matt has proven to be a valuable resource to Jessica and the TS team.
- **Cataloging Librarian** - We have also hired **Carly Stauss** as our new Cataloging Librarian for the TS Department. Carly has held a variety of part-time positions at WPL, including Shelver and Switchboard Operator, since she started at the Library in 2018. In June of 2021, Carly began helping out in TS and soon was hired as a part-time Technical Services Assistant. Carly will be responsible for cataloging a variety of materials to promote and enhance access to the collections for our patrons. Carly will work closely with the Youth Services Department, as she will focus her efforts in cataloging youth materials and providing support with special projects, and will also be working the Youth Desk on occasion. Carly's first day in her new role was January 5.

- **Digital Services:**

- **Digital Services Assistant** – We will soon welcome **Annabella Irvine** to Wilmette Public Library as our new Digital Services Assistant. Annabella, who earned her MLIS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, recently worked as a Research Specialist for the Slavic Research Service at the University Library. Annabella also served on a pilot program at the university that focused on improving library services to patrons with disabilities. Annabella also worked as a Youth Services Library Assistant at Cameron Village Regional Library, where she served a variety of Circulation responsibilities and assisted patrons with technology and online reference support. Annabella's first day will be January 17.

- **Circulation:**
 - **Circulation Assistant** – We have recently posted for a Substitute Circulation Assistant to provide assistance at the front desk. We are looking for an individual with exceptional customer service who has a flexible schedule to cover shifts on an as-needed basis. This role is in need, especially with an increase in staff absences due to health reasons.

- **Facilities/Safety:**
 - **Safety Monitor** – We are still searching for a part-time Safety Monitor for the Facility’s Department. In addition to RAILS and our website, we have posted on Indeed, CCJobnet, Handshake, and NPO.net, but unfortunately, have not been successful in filling the role yet. We are hoping that a post on CareerBuilder will have better luck at attracting some qualified candidates.

Special Projects

COVID-19

Isolation & Quarantine Periods - The CDC updated their quarantine recommendations over the holidays in an effort to continue to promote safety while allowing businesses to function. They have lowered the quarantine period for positive COVID cases from 10 days to 5 days for individuals who are fully vaccinated. While we have strictly followed the CDC’s guidelines since the start of the pandemic, we have decided to hold to our current quarantine period of 10 days, especially during this peak time post-holiday season, where our own numbers of positive cases and exposures have steadily increased.

At-Home COVID Test Kits – Under the Families First Corona Virus Response Act, at home tests will now be covered under health insurance policies as preventative measures, effective January 15, 2022. After this date, the testing kits will be covered under most healthcare policies at no cost to covered employees. Currently there is a limit of 8 tests per 30 days.

Vaccination Policy

Following anticipated Board approval on January 18, 2022, we are getting ready to enact our Mandated Vaccination Policy effective February 1, 2022. Under the policy, staff must either show proof of vaccination status or submit to weekly COVID testing. Our first step will be reaching out to staff to request proof of vaccination status. We will offer requests for medical or religious exemptions. There will be a form to complete and additional documentation may be required for consideration. All requests will be reviewed and handled on a case-by-case basis.

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

It's tax time, and the time of year that we need to audit staff data regarding benefit eligibility and participation to assist our payroll company, B2E, in preparing and filing our 1094/1095 forms for 2021. While the deadline to provide the 1095Cs to staff is extended to March 31 of this year, B2E's goal is to generate these forms and distribute by the end of January.

Select Staff Meetings & Workshops

Since the pandemic shifted our operations in March 2020, nearly all staff have been meeting virtually with one another weekly, regularly with their teams, hosting or participating in Zoom meetings, and keeping up with professional reading and training. The overwhelming majority of staff have attended multiple developmental webinars and are cultivating new skills. The modified/remote environment has been especially conducive to professional engagement and future planning for the "new normal" of the foreseeable future. Staff have hosted and attended dozens of programs and developmental workshops on a diverse range of topics, including:

Events:

11/2-3: Sarah Beth Brown attended the virtual Library Marketing and Communications Conference. Sessions included: Librarians' Declassified Social Media Survival Guide; The Great Influence: How to use data throughout your marketing cycle; Creative Approaches to Promoting Libraries through Nontraditional Partnerships; Is this On-Brand? Empower Your Library Team with Brand Strategy; Building a Crisis Communications Squad; Let's Go, Team! Harnessing Cross-Departmental Expertise to Create and Promote Digital Content; and Once Upon a Time: Practical Tips for Gathering Stories to Promote your Library.

Training:

11/17: Krista Hutley attended the Harm & Healing workshop through RAILS. The webinar explored how libraries may unknowingly perpetuate stereotypes, racism, cultural appropriation, etc. and how we can be more aware of traumatic history and systemic issues and thus do better for our communities. The speaker, Naomi Bishop, spoke mostly about Native American populations, but the subject is broadly applicable to other races and cultures and misrepresented populations. According to Krista, "she talked a lot about how Native tribes are represented with certain biases in the media, focusing on trauma, and that libraries have a role in either perpetuating or subverting these stereotypes by seeking out and highlight books and other media with strong representation that focuses on diverse experiences (i.e., not all books about Thanksgiving, not all historical Native Americans but portrayals of what life looks like now, etc.). She also talked about using trauma-informed practices with children. She gave a number of suggestions on how to promote healing over harm in our programs, book displays, and services."

Webinars:

- 11/3: Extinguishing the myths of the Great Chicago Fire (Newberry Library) (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 11/3: LinkedIn for Business (John Amundsen)
- 11/4: Women in the Kitchen with author Anne Willan (American Ancestors / New England Historic Genealogical Society) (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 11/6: Getting Ready to Use the New RDA - RAILS webinar (Jessica Thomson)
- 11/9: Harm and Healing RAILS webinar (Krista Hutley)
- 11/12: Actively Anti-Racist Library Service to Leisure Readers: Foundations (Katy Jacob)
- 11/15: CollectionHQ diversity, equity and inclusion overview (Jessica Thomson)
- 11/16: Uncovering and Promoting Diverse Women's Voices of the Past (Library Journal webcast) (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 11/23: Beyond the Numbers (Federal Reserve conference) (John Amundsen)
- 11/26: Beyond the Numbers (Federal Reserve conference) (John Amundsen)
- 11/29: Supporting Trans and Gender Expansive People (EvaAnne Johnson, Sarah Rose)

- 12/1: CCS webinar: Cataloging in Leap version 7.0 (Jessica Thomson, Matt Womak)
- 12/5: Supporting Trans and Gender Expansive People Webinar Recording (Megan Noone, Mark Cegielski, Amy Jung, Rebecca Vrana-Naquin)
- 12/6: RootsTech Genealogy Virtual Conference: Kids and Family History Series (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/6: RootsTech Genealogy Virtual Conference: Culinary Heritage Series (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/7: CCS webinar: Bulk Changes in Leap (Jessica Thomson)
- 12/11: Illinois Library Association: DIY Takeout (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/11: Illinois Library Association: Actively Anti-racist Library Service to Leisure Readers (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/13: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Illinois Migration and Settlement Patterns (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/16: ALA webinar: Tackling Racism and Bias in the Library Catalog (Jessica Thomson)
- 12/16: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Before the Vital Records: Illinois Research Prior to 1880 (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/16: Collection HQ DEI Analysis Training Webinar (Rachel Garcia)
- 12/17: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Illinois Research after 1880 (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/17: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Researching Pre-Fire Chicago (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/20: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Why Were They There? Merging Evidence to Explain Migration (EvaAnne Johnson)
- 12/21: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Researching at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (EvaAnne Johnson)

12/23: Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference: Discovering Family and Local History Through the Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) System (EvaAnne Johnson)

12/29: Illinois Library Association Conference: Little Library: Big Dreams: Elevating a Local Project to a Global Platform (EvaAnne Johnson)

12/30: Illinois Library Association Conference: The Chicago Collections Consortium: Building Community by Collaborating, Preserving, and Sharing (EvaAnne Johnson)

Meetings:

11/2: CCS Database Management Committee (Jessica Thomson)

11/11: Tea with Anthony - Virtual All-Staff Meeting (32 attendees live, also recorded)

11/11: Young Adult Services Forum meeting (Krista Hutley)

11/17: CCS CAMM meeting (Jessica Thomson)

11/17: DEI in Metadata - RAILS Networking Group (Jessica Thomson)

11/18: Wilmette 150 meeting (Sarah Beth Brown, EvaAnne Johnson)

11/19: LACONI Meeting with Lurie Children's Hospital (Kim Hegelund)

12/8: CCS Executive Board Meeting (Anthony Auston)

12/8: Wilmette Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Interview (Anthony Auston)

12/13: NSLS Directors Group - Prospect Height Library Tour (Anthony Auston)

12/14: Wilmette 150 meeting (Sarah Beth Brown, EvaAnne Johnson)

12/14: Tea with Anthony - Virtual All-Staff Meeting (36 attendees live, also recorded)

12/16: Charmm'd Wilmette Leaders Group (Anthony Auston)

1/5: Tea with Anthony - Virtual All-Staff Meeting (28 attendees live, also recorded)

1/12: CCS Governing Board Meeting (Anthony Auston)

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Attachments:

- Article from 12/24/21 Record North Shore: "Wilmette library earns distinct national honor once again"
- Circulation Statistics by Collection (November and December 2021),
- Circulation Statistics by Material Type (November and December 2021),
- Digital Resource Statistics (monthly statistics for FY21-22, through December 2021),
- FY2020-2021+ Strategic Plan Progress Summary Report

<https://www.therecordnorthshore.org/2021/12/24/news-briefs-township-trustee-appointed-local-library-lauded/>



By [Staff](#) | 4:54 a.m. December 24, 2021

Wilmette library earns distinct national honor once again

The Wilmette Public Library again received the highest distinction in the Library Journal's annual review of [library services in the Star Library program](#).

According to a press release from the library, it has earned the honor of five stars for three straight years.

Library Journal reportedly analyzed 5,846 qualifying libraries, awarding stars to 261 libraries in 40 states. Fifteen Illinois libraries qualified as star libraries, with eight earning a five-star rating: Naperville Public Library, Gail Borden Public Library District, Schaumburg Township District Library, Northbrook Public Library, Elmhurst Public Library, Oak Park Public Library, and Ela Area Public Library District, and Wilmette.

“We are delighted to again receive this recognition of our commitment to excellent service,” Wilmette Library Director Anthony Auston said in the release. “The Wilmette and Kenilworth community’s continued support and enthusiasm for our Library inspires us to continue to reach higher. We are honored to be a valued and trusted local resource and to be nationally recognized for it.”

Library Journal analyzes and indexes data from public libraries nationwide to recognize American public libraries. The Star Library program provides quantitative analysis in seven key areas: per capita circulation of physical materials, number of visitors, e-circulation, public computer use, program attendance, Wi-Fi sessions and e-retrievals.

Wilmette reportedly performed particularly well in several categories, including within the digital realm: e-circulation and Wi-Fi sessions were among the highest among peer libraries, with 7.08 e-circulations per capita and 40.15 Wi-Fi sessions per capita. Wilmette also performed remarkably well in overall circulation (27.18 per capita) and program attendance (1.23 per capita).

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12/01/2021

**Wilmette Public Library District
Activity At Wilmette Library Stations
Monthly Statistics For 11/2021**

Collection	Number Of Items	Local Charges	Local Renewals	Total	Total + Lender	CCS ILL Lender	CCS ILL Borrower	Ratio	Auto Renewal
Fiction	48,078	4,650	3,077	7,727	8,488	761	565	0.16	2,911
Magazines	4,711	269	374	643	643	0	16	0.14	366
Multimedia	42,134	3,941	2,232	6,173	6,828	655	726	0.15	2,090
Nonfiction	68,547	3,884	4,025	7,909	8,702	793	654	0.12	3,766
Online	126,994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Other	513	417	208	625	625	0	4	1.22	185
Teen Fiction	2,531	277	348	625	660	35	89	0.25	335
Teen Multimedia	86	12	13	25	25	0	4	0.29	13
Teen Nonfiction	403	54	111	165	169	4	16	0.41	108
Teen Online	3,248	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Youth Fiction	44,266	12,477	10,571	23,048	23,505	457	676	0.52	10,249
Youth Magazines	753	43	123	166	166	0	0	0.22	123
Youth Multimedia	9,083	1,370	1,037	2,407	2,462	55	57	0.27	1,010
Youth Nonfiction	25,043	2,172	2,016	4,188	4,333	145	164	0.17	1,943
Youth Online	5,181	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Youth Other	36	17	2	19	19	0	0	0.53	1
Totals	381,607	29,583	24,137	53,720	56,625	2,905	2,971	0.14	23,100

Item Count is where the Item Owing Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Local Charge is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Local Renewal is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Lender is where the Item Owing Library = YOUR LIBRARY and the Station_Library not = Item_Library

Borrower is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY and Item Owing Library not = Station_Library

The number of Auto Renewals is included in the numbers found in the Renewals Column

12/01/2021

**Wilmette Public Library District
Activity At Wilmette Library Stations
Monthly Statistics For 11/2021**

Material Type	Number Of Items	Local Charges	Local Renewals	Total	Total + Lender	CCS ILL Lender	CCS ILL Borrower	Ratio
AV equipment	21	12	0	12	12	0	0	0.57
Bag	453	345	200	545	545	0	0	1.20
Blu-ray	1,408	226	150	376	408	32	49	0.27
Blu-ray Hot	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0.00
Blu-ray New	56	96	2	98	98	0	2	1.75
Book	172,283	18,237	17,831	36,068	37,365	1,297	1,820	0.21
Book Hot	1,382	1,448	188	1,636	1,637	1	0	1.18
Book New	5,973	3,021	1,817	4,838	5,614	776	299	0.81
Boxset	0	17	15	32	32	0	17	0.00
Cassette	61	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.02
CD	16,877	888	490	1,378	1,592	214	233	0.08
CD Audiobook	7,863	292	345	637	697	60	47	0.08
CD Audiobook Hot	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
CD Audiobook New	279	149	65	214	253	39	14	0.77
CD New	206	119	98	217	254	37	11	1.05
DVD	18,762	2,406	1,503	3,909	4,173	264	341	0.21
DVD Hot	2	8	0	8	8	0	0	4.00
DVD New	366	494	55	549	583	34	25	1.50
eAudiobook	48,544	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
eBook	82,938	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
eMagazine	3,914	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Equipment	14	3	0	3	3	0	0	0.21
eReader	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
ILL Material	0	43	7	50	50	0	4	0.00
Kit	0	5	4	9	9	0	5	0.00
Laptop	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Large Print	7,039	295	271	566	639	73	27	0.08
Large Print New	320	101	33	134	180	46	5	0.42
Magazine	4,773	314	497	811	811	0	16	0.17
Magazine New	263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Map	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0.00
Mobile Hotspot	13	14	0	14	14	0	0	1.08
MP3 Audiobook	0	1	1	2	2	0	1	0.00
Multimedia Kit	28	2	4	6	6	0	2	0.21
Newspaper	430	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Online Resource	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Other	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0.00
Playaway	2,310	245	213	458	476	18	11	0.20
Playaway Audio New	59	21	30	51	61	10	0	0.86
Record	1,577	2	6	8	10	2	0	0.01
Scores / sheet music	0	3	1	4	4	0	3	0.00
Seasonal AV	297	54	12	66	66	0	6	0.22
Seasonal Book	1,810	395	1	396	398	2	5	0.22
Special Collection	0	4	3	7	7	0	4	0.00
STEAM equipment	21	6	0	6	6	0	0	0.29
STEAM Kit	15	11	0	11	11	0	0	0.73
Tablet	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
VHS	149	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Videogame	1,061	301	293	594	594	0	22	0.56
Videogame New	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0.00
Totals	381,607	29,583	24,137	53,720	56,625	2,905	2,971	0.14

Item Count is where the Item Owning Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Local Charge is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Local Renewal is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Lender is where the Item Owning Library = YOUR LIBRARY and the Station_Library not = Item_Library

Borrower is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY and Item Owning Library not = Station_Library

This report excludes transactions with these patron codes:

In-House Use

actions with these patron statistical Classes

Test User

01/01/2022

**Wilmette Public Library District
Activity At Wilmette Library Stations
Monthly Statistics For 12/2021**

Collection	Number Of Items	Local Charges	Local Renewals	Total	Total + Lender	CCS ILL Lender	CCS ILL Borrower	Ratio	Auto Renewal
Fiction	48,229	4,679	3,086	7,765	8,575	810	638	0.16	2,894
Magazines	4,837	190	435	625	625	0	8	0.13	419
Multimedia	42,173	3,868	2,340	6,208	6,939	731	762	0.15	2,156
Nonfiction	68,906	3,456	3,786	7,242	8,203	961	699	0.11	3,489
Online	127,995	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Other	507	400	213	613	613	0	1	1.21	182
Teen Fiction	2,551	356	354	710	746	36	107	0.28	339
Teen Multimedia	86	5	12	17	17	0	0	0.20	12
Teen Nonfiction	405	61	130	191	196	5	20	0.47	128
Teen Online	3,236	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Youth Fiction	44,148	9,898	11,226	21,124	21,520	396	650	0.48	10,824
Youth Magazines	784	55	90	145	145	0	0	0.18	90
Youth Multimedia	8,930	1,374	1,225	2,599	2,644	45	65	0.29	1,180
Youth Nonfiction	24,814	1,730	2,160	3,890	3,984	94	164	0.16	2,072
Youth Online	5,141	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
Youth Other	36	12	0	12	12	0	1	0.33	0
Totals	382,778	26,084	25,057	51,141	54,219	3,078	3,115	0.13	23,785

Item Count is where the Item Owing Library = YOUR LIBRARY

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Local Renewal is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY

Lender is where the Item Owing Library = YOUR LIBRARY and the Station_Library not = Item_Library

Borrower is where the Station_Library = YOUR LIBRARY and Item Owing Library not = Station_Library

The number of Auto Renewals is included in the numbers found in the Renewals Column

01/01/2022

**Wilmette Public Library District
Activity At Wilmette Library Stations
Monthly Statistics For 12/2021**

Material Type	Number Of Items	Local Charges	Local Renewals	Total	Total + Lender	CCS ILL Lender	CCS ILL Borrower	Ratio
AV equipment	20	12	1	13	13	0	0	0.65
Bag	451	335	198	533	533	0	0	1.18
Blu-ray	1,384	295	135	430	463	33	66	0.31
Blu-ray New	60	110	1	111	113	2	7	1.85
Book	172,457	15,157	18,258	33,415	34,732	1,317	1,840	0.19
Book Hot	1,303	1,253	227	1,480	1,480	0	0	1.14
Book New	5,953	2,861	1,897	4,758	5,614	856	399	0.80
Boxset	0	15	11	26	26	0	15	0.00
Cassette	61	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.02
CD	16,865	747	586	1,333	1,571	238	203	0.08
CD Audiobook	7,913	236	331	567	615	48	33	0.07
CD Audiobook Hot	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
CD Audiobook New	258	119	92	211	244	33	13	0.82
CD New	225	130	93	223	283	60	13	0.99
DVD	18,693	2,447	1,648	4,095	4,392	297	404	0.22
DVD Hot	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
DVD New	366	502	53	555	593	38	31	1.52
eAudiobook	48,821	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
eBook	83,486	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
eMagazine	4,038	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Equipment	14	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.07
eReader	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.25
ILL Material	0	39	13	52	52	0	1	0.00
Kit	0	2	5	7	7	0	2	0.00
Laptop	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Large Print	7,080	283	284	567	638	71	21	0.08
Large Print New	320	82	51	133	190	57	5	0.42
Magazine	4,864	245	529	774	774	0	8	0.16
Magazine New	266	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Map	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.00
Mobile Hotspot	10	12	0	12	12	0	0	1.20
Multimedia Kit	28	2	1	3	3	0	2	0.11
Newspaper	493	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Online Resource	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Other	0	1	1	2	2	0	1	0.00
Playaway	2,328	282	263	545	566	21	14	0.23
Playaway Audio New	51	27	29	56	60	4	0	1.10
Record	1,578	6	5	11	13	2	0	0.01
Scores / sheet music	0	1	1	2	2	0	1	0.00
Seasonal AV	298	70	4	74	74	0	6	0.25
Seasonal Book	1,877	533	10	543	544	1	10	0.29
Special Collection	0	2	3	5	5	0	2	0.00
STEAM equipment	21	7	0	7	7	0	0	0.33
STEAM Kit	15	4	0	4	4	0	0	0.27
Tablet	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
VHS	149	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.01
Videogame	991	264	325	589	589	0	18	0.59
Totals	382,778	26,084	25,057	51,141	54,219	3,078	3,115	0.13

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In-House Use

actions with these patron statistical Classes

Test User

Electronic Services to Patrons: July 2021 - June 2022

	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Total
GENERAL REFERENCE													
Children's Literature	5	0	15	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Culture Grams	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Facts on File	5	0	0	12	9	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
First Search	34	15	70	31	47	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	244
Gale Databases (ex. InfoTrac)*	79	14	27	81	58	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	284
Legal Forms	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Novelist	39	22	51	201	60	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	471
PebbleGo	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Reference USA^	46	21	27	29	12	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	157
World Book Reference Center	3	0	3	1	17	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
PERIODICALS													
Chicago Tribune	72	82	67	132	145	255	0	0	0	0	0	0	753
Chicago Tribune-Historical	273	159	181	491	434	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,800
Consumer Reports	87	64	90	70	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	401
Consumers' Checkbook	15	5	10	5	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	49
InfoTrac	9	3	9	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Lexis Nexis	44	58	95	85	65	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	371
Mergent					1	0							
Morningstar	38	33	12	26	34	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	165
New York Times	38	45	46	19	22	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	211
New York Times-Historical	15	43	31	9	38	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	185
Newspapers.com	127	42	291	30	803	230	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,523
Press Reader	385	167	201	109	136	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,298
Proquest-Research Library	80	63	93	124	144	132	0	0	0	0	0	0	636
S&P NetAdvantage	180	139	20	6	340	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	685
Weiss Ratings	3	2	9	24	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	44
GENEALOGY													
Ancestry Plus	122	132	154	95	128	99	0	0	0	0	0	0	730
Heritage Quest	7	3	4	12	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	38
Fold3	0	0	0	0	5	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	
HOMEWORK/STUDY													
Brainfuse	51	6	94	168	24	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	357
Gale Courses	4	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8

Wilmette Public Library District

Fiscal Year 2020-2021+ Strategic Plan Goal Progress Summary

Friday, January 14, 2022

The Library's 3-year Strategic Plan (covering fiscal years July 2018 through June 2021), encompasses 5 broad organizational goal areas with related time-specific objectives and action steps, and has recently completed its first year. The entire plan, entitled *Shaping Our Future*, is available online at:

<https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/about/about-us/mission-and-strategic-plan>

The following summary comprises a year-end (November 2020-December 2021) review of staff's specific activities in fulfillment of the plan's goals and objectives in the following key areas:

1. Growing Community:

Focus library services to promote strong connections in our community.

2. Knowledge & Discovery:

Create an adaptable environment that encourages pursuit of knowledge and discovery to enrich your life.

3. Diversity & Inclusion:

Create an inclusive environment so that all feel welcomed and served.

4. Sharing Resources:

Allocate staff, facilities, and other resources effectively to provide outstanding library services.

5. Marketing & Communications:

Increase visibility and awareness of the library's value to you and to your community.

1. Growing Community:

Objective 1.1: Beginning October 2018, expand provision of library materials and programs outside of the established library facility.

The Library was represented with a table at the Wilmette Park District's Community Garage Sale on Saturday, May 22 from 9-1. Librarian Ruth Bell registered patrons for eight new library cards, met several families who are new to Wilmette, promoted the Summer Reading Program and events, answered questions, and gave out WPL-branded sunglasses and frisbees. The event was attended by over 400 people.

In August, just in time for Library Card Signup Month, the Library began offering an annual School Library Card for teachers and staff at Wilmette/Kenilworth preschools and K-8 schools. Through the Teacher Checkout service, teachers and staff can request that librarians select books (K-8) or a bag of themed materials (preschool) ahead of time or come into the library themselves to select materials. Materials may be picked up in-person or delivered to preschools. School library cards for each school are kept on file at WPL, but need to be renewed each year. In order to begin or renew this service, principals or directors sign the application and return it to the library along with a list of staff that has permission to use the school card. Invitation letters were sent to the preschools and K-8 schools in September.

The Library promoted Library Card Signup Month 2021 at the Library in September, throughout the community, and via social media.

On Sunday, October 10, Circulation Manager Kim Hegelund and Director Anthony Auston staffed the Wilmette Public Library table at the Kenilworth 125 block party. The event, celebrating the anniversary of the village's incorporation in 1896, drew Kenilworth residents and partner organizations for an afternoon of entertainment, food, recreation, and connection with neighbors, elected officials, and community organizations - like Kenilworth Public Library District (KPLD). 4 KPLD trustees attended and helped to inform participants about their District's Library Services Agreement with Wilmette Public Library and Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, who were also present. Both libraries registered residents for library cards and promoted the collections, programs, and resources at each facility.

Youth Services Outreach Librarian Ruth Bell gave a presentation at the national 2021 Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services Virtual Conference, "Jazz Up Your Outreach" on October 11. With co-presenter Kary Henry from Deerfield Public Library, she gave a talk titled POPCORN! Preschool Outreach Programs - Creating Outstanding Relationships with our Neighbors. The presentation was attended by 322 librarians.

Youth Services Outreach

Our Storywalk in Vattmann Park has been a popular community destination throughout the pandemic. Due to the popularity of these safe, socially distant outdoor activities for families, staff updated our stories every month to sustain interest and traffic.

In November 2021, the Library launched its new permanent Storywalk in Hibbard Park. This partnership Wilmette Park District features more durable signposts that the Park District installed with concrete to ensure a solid footing. We like to think that this is a symbolic representation of our partnership, and we also value presence as a feature destination on the west side of the village, increasing our visibility and promoting family reading.

Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell continued to conduct regular monthly outreach visits to preschools, daycares, and park district camps, presenting storytime, STEM activities, and Summer Reading Club programming to children throughout the District.

On November 20, 2020, the Library hosted a virtual version of the annual professional development program *What's New in Children's Literature* for early childhood educators. Joined by librarians from Glencoe Public Library and Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, Youth Services Assistant Manager Lisa Bigelow presented picture books to use in the preschool classroom. The program was updated for 2021, and our YS staff presented an all-new presentation on September 23, hosted by the Alliance for Early Childhood.

Preschool book & STEM kit Delivery Program

During the 2020-2021 school year we had 13 preschools participate in our monthly book & STEM kit delivery program. Teachers sent in their book and kit requests, YS librarians pulled the books, checked them out to the school card and delivered them to their locations. Materials came from the Wilmette Public Library collection as well as a separate seasonal preschool collection that was funded by a donation and a Creativity Grant. Children's Librarian Ruth Bell

delivered nearly 1500 books and over 50 STEM kits to 13 preschools, in addition to virtual classroom visits for storytimes while schools were in session. Ruth also supported All Things Bright and Beautiful to set up their own Storywalk for their classes to explore on their property.

Participating schools:

All Things Bright and Beautiful Church of the Holy Comforter
Avoca Community Preschool
The BJE Early Childhood Center (Board of Jewish Education)
A Joyful Noise Preschool
Lechner Early Education Program at Romona Elementary School
Ronald Knox Montessori School
Rose Hall Montessori School
Sprouted Child Care & Early Education, by One Hope United
St. Francis Xavier School- Early Childhood Program
St. Joseph Early Childhood Program
Trinity Church Nursery School
Wilmette Community Nursey School
Wilmette Park District Early Childhood Center of Wilmette

Summer Reaching Club Outreach

To promote Summer Reading Club we couldn't rely on our usual presentations in the schools due to the pandemic this year. Staff created a promotional video that was shared widely in all Wilmette public and private schools with a description of this year's program (Reading Colors Your World).

By the end of the summer, over 700 youth and teens reported ten days of reading to our online Summer Reading Club booth and received a \$5 gift card for the Dairy Queen of Wilmette. Over 500 youth and teens returned to report twenty days of reading and received a \$15 gift card for The Book Stall. We were able to offer these exciting gift card prizes with the generous support of the Friends of the Library.

Each e-gift cards emailed to young readers was accompanied by a personalized message from a Youth Services librarian, commenting on the books reported. Many parents expressed appreciation for this moment of connection during an isolated time. One parent's response made our day: "Thank you for your personalized and thoughtful responses to each of my kids! We appreciate all of the staff at the WPL during this crazy time, but your individualized emails really made us smile!"

Meet The Author

The Library hosted our first-ever virtual Meet the Author event on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 via Zoom, featuring Arshay Cooper discussing his inspiring memoir *A Most Beautiful Thing: The True Story of America's First All-Black High School Rowing Team*. 485 patrons attended and participated in an insightful question and answer session. Two "sold out" book club discussions were held the week prior to the event and were facilitated by librarians Rachel Garcia, Amy Barrow, and Barbara Goodman. We partnered with Semicolon, a black woman-owned bookstore in Chicago, to sell [signed copies](#) of *A Most Beautiful Thing*. Learn more about the book and film, a new feature-length documentary: <https://www.amostbeautifulthing.com/>

Adult and Teen Services Outreach

The monthly Classics and Contemporary group, which has consistently been a well-attended program on-site, has translated well to Zoom maintaining the same, if not higher numbers via the online platform. Copies of the books were made available for pickup at the Library, and via ebook and eaudiobook, copies are also available the Digital Library of Illinois, Libby, and Hoopla apps. Titles and programs included the following:

- On November 10, 2020, AS librarian Rachel Garcia led the discussion of the classic feminist novel *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.
- On December 8, 2020, AS librarian Jennifer Klein led the discussion of *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy.
- On January 12, 2021 AS librarian John Amundsen led his first Classics and Contemporary book club discussion of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* by John le Carré.

On January 27, 2021, Local History and Genealogy Librarian EvaAnne Johnson hosted her first “sold-out” Genealogy 101 class via Zoom, where she walked patrons through the initial steps to researching their family history. She explained how to start putting together a family tree, where to start looking for their roots at home, and some basic online tools that they could use when ready to start researching. This program was so popular that she has scheduled two for February. It’s evident that the Wilmette and Kenilworth community has a great passion for their family’s history; we are thrilled that EvaAnne is able to instruct them on how to carry out those searches using the Library’s resources.

Eva also offered hour-long Zoom, genealogy one-on-one sessions where patrons can reserve her expertise for an hour. During that time, they can ask all of their genealogy-related questions while Eva walks them through a live Zoom tutorial on how to use the Library’s databases.

Teen Librarian Krista Hutley hosted weekly online interactive Dungeons and Dragons games, and reached out to other librarians to strengthen her knowledge of online gaming, platforms, and programs, including popular games like Animal Crossing, Mario Kart, and online role playing sites to meet our community where they play. During this time at home, she is making connections to new groups, both professionally and with our youth and teens. Krista’s programming was featured in the cover story of *American Libraries* magazine in November 2020: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/11/02/escape-isolated-library-dungeons-dragons/>

Adult Services staff have expanded our readers’ advisory services and online book clubs using the Goodreads platform. AS Librarian Nancy Wagner has taken the lead in creating subject specific book lists on the site and has supported staff in adding new titles and content. Patrons now have access to another resource for curated titles, while staff can also use the new tools in support of their quality readers’ advisory recommendations.

Objective 1.2: By February 2019, establish a committee to explore new outreach opportunities and deepen existing partnerships.

On December 3, 2020, Adult Services librarians Nancy Wagner and John Amundsen hosted, “Is Your Business Ready for the New Normal?” featuring Linda Darragh, Clinical Professor and The Larry Levy Executive Director of the Kellogg Innovation & Entrepreneurship Institute at Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management. The program was presented in partnership with

the Skokie, Evanston & Glenview Public Libraries and the Wilmette/Kenilworth, Skokie, Glenview and Evanston Chambers of Commerce. The program was well received and provided timely and valuable insights for local businesses looking to navigate the challenges of operating amidst the pandemic. The partners agreed the event was successful and would approach Prof. Darragh again for future programs.

The Library and the League of Women Voters Wilmette continued its partnership to present a co-hosted book club. The Library purchases extra copies of the title both in print and digitally, and the Library and the League co-host the discussion on Zoom. Copies of the book are available in the new Book Club Hub in the center of the first floor of the library.

- In March 2021, the group discussed *How the South Won the Civil War: Oligarchy, Democracy, and the Continuing Fight for the Soul of America* by Heather Cox Richardson.

On March 10, 2021, the Library, in collaboration with the League of Women Voters Wilmette and the Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL), hosted a presentation where the CCL explored how Wilmette residents should vote on the advisory question on the April 6 ballot, asking: "Shall the U.S. Congress pass legislation to place a carbon fee on fossil fuel producers, where the collected revenue is given equitably to American households, incentivizing businesses and consumers to reduce climate disrupting emissions, transition to clean energy, and protect our economic well-being?" Citing scientific facts, the CCL made a compelling argument that we need to put a cap on carbon emissions for the health and safety of the planet and specifically, Wilmette residents. CCL representative Mike Ryan allowed us to record his presentation, which was later hosted on the LWVW's website for those who could not attend the program:

<https://www.lwvwilmette.org/environment.html>

Objective 1.3: By April 2020, host public forums for residents to explore and discuss communitywide issues or topics.

On Monday, November 9, 2020, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, one of the country's leading anti-racist voices, and the #1 New York Times bestselling author, National Book Award winner, and historian, discussed the context of his book *How To Be An Antiracist* with WBEZ's award-winning journalist Natalie Moore. Eleven area libraries shared in hosting the event (Arlington Heights Memorial Library, Aurora Public Library District, Deerfield Public Library, Glencoe Public Library, Highland Park Public Library, Lake Villa District Library, Northbrook Public Library, Schaumburg Township District Library, Skokie Public Library, Vernon Area Public Library, and Wilmette Public Library). Nearly 6,000 patrons from the participating libraries registered for the virtual event, with 4,217 unique logins that evening. We estimate that, in many cases, there were more than 1 viewer associated with each login, making the actual attendance of the event much higher. Following the event, participants were asked to complete a survey. Of Wilmette Public Library's attendees, the majority rate the event "very good" to "excellent", and indicated that they "agree" to "strongly agree" that they are "more aware of racism and inequality in our society" and that they "intend to apply what [they] just learned." 128 local attendees also offered overwhelmingly positive narrative feedback of the event.

The League of Women Voters Wilmette (LWVW) partnered with Wilmette Public Library to hold candidate forums prior to the April 6, 2021 Consolidated (Local) Election. We recognize that local elections impact every area of our daily lives, including school quality, park district and library programming, public health and safety, and environmental sustainability. This year's

forums were held via Zoom for safety and convenience. There were 2 separate candidate sessions: Saturday, March 13 (Village President, Village Trustees, Park Commissioners), and Saturday, March 20 (Library Trustees, D39 Board, D203 Board). With a League of Women Voters Evanston member serving as a neutral moderator, these forums were an overwhelming success with 246 screens viewing on March 13, and 137 on March 20. It was a wonderful collaboration between the Library and the League, and we received several emails from the candidates and the Wilmette community alike thanking both organizations for providing a neutral space for political discourse. Recordings of the forums remain available: <https://www.lvwilmette.org/>

On Wednesday, May 26, Krista Hutley organized a community conversation called “Talking Whiteness,” exploring how white people learn to talk about and fight racism without recentering white supremacy, led by facilitators from Talking Whiteness in Evanston. The group presented a well-organized and researched program. The presenters started with a presentation on the history of racism and redlining in Wilmette with source material from archived newspaper articles. Then they separated the participants into breakout rooms with a facilitator in each, and asked a series of questions including, “What does it mean to have a diverse community?” “What factors contributed to you living in Wilmette?” The answers were thoughtful, respectful, and the participants demonstrated they were there to have honest conversations. We’re grateful to Talking Whiteness for sharing their facilitation skills and expertise with the Library.

About the group: Talking Whiteness is an action group made up of young people from North Shore communities who believe it is white people’s responsibility to take action against anti-Black racism on the North Shore. After successful community dialogues in past summers in North Evanston and downtown Wilmette, Talking Whiteness is continuing with virtual conversations and workshops in local communities.

On October 13, Wilmette Library participated in an author discussion with multiple Illinois libraries, held in partnership with Racial Awareness in the North Shore (RAIN) and Together is Better Alliance (TiBA). Author Richard Rothstein discussed his book *The Color of Law & Reversing Segregation*. He presented an overview of policies that led to racial segregation in American communities and what can be done to reverse these practices and work towards racial equity.

On November 13, the Library hosted a Braver Angels event, Families & Politics to help prepare families for challenging dinner conversations during the upcoming holiday season. Braver Angels is a citizens' organization uniting red and blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America. The workshop offered these highlights:

- Insight into why family differences over politics are uniquely challenging;
- Recognition of common roles that family members play in political conversations (for example, the Gladiator, the Defender, and the Sniper);
- Strategies and skills for handling family political differences in a constructive way.
- Although the focus is on family relationships, you can use learnings in this workshop with any loved one. You’ll laugh and have some fun in this workshop—it won’t be all serious. After all, we all come from quirky families.

This was a two-part workshop combined an online eLearning course and an online, interactive workshop offered over Zoom. Part one consisted of a 40-minute, interactive course that patrons

completed online before the workshop. Part two was the interactive online workshop where patrons were guided in practicing active listening and speaking skills.

On December 11, Local History and Genealogy Librarian EvaAnne Johnson partnered with the North Suburban Genealogical Society to present a program about using U.S. Church Records in genealogy research. Interest was high in this virtual program, and 63 patrons attended. We will continue to partner with this organization in 2022, co-hosting programs in May and July 2022.

Objective 1.4: By November 2020, explore ways to connect local government, non-profits, businesses, and individuals with relevant community resources.

The Library served as a community partner on the Complete Count Committee for Census 2020 with the Village of Wilmette, which completed its project at the beginning of year's evaluation period. The committee had coordinated efforts with village stakeholders to achieve as complete as possible Census count of the Village. The Library scheduled informational programs for the community, including an event presented by Rep. Jan Schakowsky and other elected officials. The Library worked with the League of Women Voters of Wilmette to assist residents in filling out the online census form throughout 2020. Librarians and the League also assisted residents at Mather Place who required assistance navigating the online form.

Adult Services staff continued to develop our partnership with the Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce and SCORE to provide more mentoring and learning opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

As part of an ongoing job search series, Wilmette Library with coordination from Business Librarian John Amundsen, partnered with Skokie, Glenview, Morton Grove, Evanston, Lincolnwood, and Niles-Maine public libraries to reach as many patrons as possible in need of help navigating the world of searching, preparing, and applying for jobs during the pandemic. Events in the series included:

- On January 21, 2021, Skokie Public Library's Career Librarian Mike Buhmann discussed essential portfolio-building tools and how patrons can develop the knowledge and skills to land their optimal job.
- On January 28, 2021, career professionals Jerry Donahue and Joan Neumahr talked about the best ways to market yourself during the pandemic. Patrons learned techniques to create an optimal resume, LinkedIn profile, cover letters, and more.
- On February 4, the group presented, "Navigating the Job Search: Informational Interviewing," where Martin Gahbauer of Elmhurst College provided a guide to take control of your job search by conducting a series of directed interviews that will develop your network and help you land a good job.
- On February 11, the group presented, "Navigating the Job Search: Interviewing in the Virtual Age." In this program, long-time human resources professional Frances Price explained the techniques for looking and sounding your best in an online interview.

On January 20, 2021, John Amundsen hosted the event "Investing in Your Financial Health During Covid." Local certified financial planners Ed Gjertsen and Darryl Newman walked attendees through a "financial health check-up" to clarify their investments and discuss steps that they could take before the next downturn.

On May 4, Business Librarian John Amundsen teamed up Skokie, Evanston, and Glenview Public Libraries and the Wilmette/Kenilworth, Skokie, Glenview, and Evanston Chambers of Commerce to present the program, “The State of Small Business Assistance.” This program provided an update on federal and state programs for local businesses, including a panel discussion with representatives speaking from the offices of Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, State Representative Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, and the Small Business Advocacy Council. They discussed the current landscape of government and other resources available to benefit small businesses. The panelists also answered questions from the audience, a wonderful opportunity for patrons to connect directly with our elected representatives.

In July, Business Librarian John Amundsen visited the Business Resource Center (BRC) at the Wheaton Public Library and NaperLaunch at Naperville Public Library. John reports, “Both of these collections had different approaches – Wheaton’s model of resource presentation and collocation was more viable for Wilmette than NaperLaunch’s co-working model based on sheer space. Both illustrated the importance of branding their business services to make them more attractive to the community.”

John worked with Graphic Artist Sarah Rose to create new branding and graphics with the brand Strictly Business @ Wilmette Public Library along with web and print graphics, signage, brochures, a quarterly business e-newsletter, and other collaterals. John is working with Manager Jill McKeown and TS staff to relocate our business newspapers and periodicals to the business area. He’s also worked with Facilities staff to relocate the copier and place comfortable seating in the space to make the business area more inviting.

On July 8th, Assistant Manager Rachel Garcia met with Caroline Bewley, a recent New Trier graduate and summer intern at the Wilmette Historical Society. Her project for this summer is to create a podcast documenting how Wilmette residents experienced COVID-19. Rachel participated in the episode, exploring ways that Wilmette was able to retain community during the pandemic. They discussed how the Library shifted its programming to a virtual platform when the building closed in March 2020, and the many challenges the Library has met and the successes we have celebrated since then as part of our new service model. The podcast will be released later this summer.

On September 18, Genealogy and Local History Librarian EvaAnne Johnson hosted, “Your House Has a Story: Researching the history of your Wilmette House.” Patrons learned how to research their house's history, with a focus on Wilmette homes. Author and local historian Julia Johnas presented an illustrated, step-by-step program on how to research the history of your house. She served for more than 20 years as the research liaison to the Highland Park Historic Preservation Commission. This program was tailored specifically for those researching properties in Wilmette and its surrounding communities.

On October 7, Business Librarian John Amundsen hosted “Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning Basic: Steps to Plan for the Future and Protect Your Wishes.” Attendees learned about wills, trusts, powers of attorney probate and guardianship with attorney Jacob K. Ehrensaft. He explained how to select the appropriate advocate to make healthcare and financial decisions on your behalf when you cannot, and the importance of updating existing documents to reflect changes in the law and personal circumstances.

On October 19, John Amundsen hosted “Understanding Medicare: Know Your Options” for those approaching 65 or those currently enrolled in Medicare. Area insurance professional John Larson presented an educational seminar about Medicare, exploring enrollment periods, understanding parts A, B, C, and D, as well as covering gaps with co-insurance and deductibles. Those new to Medicare learned about what Medicare covers (and what it doesn’t), and potential out-of-pocket costs. Current enrollees gained a better understanding of how the system works and how to make informed decisions to maximize benefits while minimizing costs.

On November 4, AS librarians Rachel Garcia and Katy Jacob presented a “Book Buzz” program to the Delta Gamma North Shore Alumnae Group. This is the fourth year Rachel has been invited to booktalk to this group and they are always so appreciative and excited to see the list that she creates. Together, Katy and Rachel shared a slideshow and handout featuring the biggest titles of the year, under-the-radar picks, and librarian favorites.

The Library continues its partnership with Wilmette Public Schools District 39 to increase the number of students with public library cards.

In late 2020, School District 39 launched its partnership with the Library in an effort to provide greater access to its ebook collections. District 39 had initiated a plan to focus on digital collections and digital curriculum for this past school year, and Sora is a new OverDrive ebook interface for public schools which allows an opportunity for partner public libraries that share similar boundaries to present and promote their holdings alongside the school’s digital collections. By logging in to D39’s Sora site, students will see both the resources available at the school’s library as well as at WPLD. The project has enhanced our resource sharing with local schools and provided greater visibility to our collections for families with students in the schools.

Director Auston served on School District 39’s Strategic Planning Committee. The team is multifaceted, including school staff, parents, students, community members, and leaders of other community organizations. The process, and the resulting 5 year plan, was designed to honor D39’s commitment to inclusion and the individual uniqueness of each person. The strategic plan addresses the student, staff, and family experience within the District as well as academic performance. The Library is interested in better understanding our community from this perspective in an effort to partner with the schools in fulfillment of the greater needs of our community’s students and families. Information about the planning process was continuously updated on D39’s website throughout the project:

<http://wilmette39.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=44612212>

2. Knowledge & Discovery:

Objective 2.1: By July 2018, create a “Library of Things” that circulates non-traditional library items.

Two mini projectors, five Merge Cubes, and five Merge VR/AR headsets were added to the circulating Library of Things, bringing the total number of items in this collection to 91. The collection includes:

Bee-Bot card mat (x5)

Bee-Bot: programmable floor robot (x5)
Bird watching kit (x2)
Cubelets discovery set (x5)
iPad 2 (x2)
Kill A Watt meter (x2)
Magnifiers (x7)
Merge cube (x5)
Merge headset (x5)
Mini projector (x2)
Mobile hotspot (x12)
Nintendo 2DS (x7)
Nook (x4)
Ozobot (x6)
Portable CD player (x7)
Portable DVD player (x7)
Sphero (x6)
Telescope (x2)

All items are available for check-out, listed the catalog, and on the Library of Things web page:
<https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/libraryofthings>

Objective 2.2: By March 2019, develop a flexible, functional, and inviting interior space plan that preserves core services while meeting the evolving expectations of our community.

Staff observed an increased need for casual seating and study seating prior to the pandemic. To respond to that need, staff made room on the Mezzanine to increase the seating options, culminating in the complete relocation of all collections previously stored in that space. Staff worked to right-size and relocate the reference books, back periodical/newspaper collections, and the oversized books. The moves resulted in simplified wayfinding, grouping of like materials together, and ultimately the expansion of open seating options in this popular quiet study area.

In February, following weeding of the collections, we were able to backshift enough of the lower level non-fiction collection materials to free up two entire shelving units in the 900s room. With that task complete, we relocated all of the Non-Fiction DVD collection to that area. Non-fiction DVDs had historically been inter-filed with the non-fiction book collections. This new location/presentation of the collection was designed to support users who prefer to browse our collections by format, making our documentary, instructional, and other non-fiction videos more accessible, and reflecting the demand for such media. The audio counterparts of the Great Courses collection were also relocated from the first floor Media Room downstairs to the end of the non-fiction DVD shelving. This move created more space for the audiobook collection, making that popular collection more accessible and easier to browse.

After coordination with the Friends, Circulation, Shelving, and Adult Services teams, the former Friends' annex on the first floor was repurposed for library collections (as hold expanded into the Recent Arrivals shelving). The annex space is now the home of the Book Club collection and has been be rebranded as the "Book Club Hub".

In November, following installation of new shelving, the Oversized Collection (formerly housed on the Mezzanine) was relocated to the corner adjacent to Books Down Under. With this move, all of the Non-Fiction Collections (except for Large Type) are now shelved on the lower level.

The move of the Oversize Collection allowed us to expand seating options on the Mezzanine, with safer and more spread-out seating plan to help accommodate individual and group study.

In December, Facilities staff relocated some now unused shelving from the Mezzanine to the Media Room corridor to expand shelving for the CD boxed sets collection, and relocated the Adult/Teen videogames to the former boxed sets unit, increasing visibility and accessibility to both collections.

Objective 2.3: Beginning June 2019, adjust current practices to increase ease of use of physical and digital collections, e.g., fines, wait time, holds.

Last fiscal year, at the Library Board meeting on June 23, 2020, the Board unanimously approved the Library's plan to eliminate the collection of overdue fines on materials checked out from Wilmette Public Library, effective July 1, 2020. In the months since, staff have noted an increase in the number of active library cards and an increase in overall circulation. Management of overdue and long overdue items has been anecdotally negligible. We have seen an average of 5 items per month being handled as "lost and paid" where the patron ultimately finds the "lost" item and staff has to initiate a refund. That said, it's a small number of such instances and the overall patron experience has vastly improved in the "fines free" environment.

The self-service holds new location in the Recent Arrivals area has been a remarkable success. Patrons have responded favorably to this location once they discover where their items are shelved and waiting. The 3 adjacent self-service stations are used primarily for those picking up holds. While some patrons continue to prefer direct customer service at the Circulation Desk, about 60% of our overall circulation is coming from the self-service stations, and the majority of the holds materials are checked out there as well. As much as 75% of our youth materials are checked out on the second floor at the 2 self-checkouts in Youth Services.

Objective 2.4: By September 2019, foster a "Culture of Yes" that allows for quick, low-cost, trial implementation of new ideas from patrons and staff.

Staff continues to maintain a running list of when we have to say "no" to a service question posed by a patron. This will help us to assess opportunities for changing the "no" to a "yes."

In January 2021, EvaAnne Johnson's Genealogy 101 Zoom workshop "sold out", prompting her to coordinate several more in the coming months. On February 10, she offered this program again, with it filling immediately after its posting on the website. She explains how to start putting together a family tree, where to start looking for your roots at home, and some basic online tools to use when you're ready to start researching using the Library's online resources, such as FamilySearch and Ancestry.com.

EvaAnne Johnson also hosted a program on our subscription database Newspapers.com. The program was well-received, with some Wilmette staff members joining as well. Eva developed

useful research programs using a resource that the Library already owns and shared how to operate it with our patrons and staff.

The Switchboard operation became the Welcome Desk for a trial period beginning with the resumption of our regular hours in July. The switchboard had already been relocated from its original location in the Shelving workroom (rebranded as the Parking Lot Pickup room during the pandemic - and soon to house the new Automated Material Handling system), and needed to be relocated from its temporary location on the lower level due to the disruptive drain tile installation project. Staff recommended that we revisit this prior service model that preceded the 2016 renovation - so we said yes!

The new Welcome Desk is located adjacent to the low portion of the Circulation Desk, directly in-line in front of patrons as they enter the building. Staff reports that patrons are responding well to the new service point, having grown accustomed to a greeter during the past pandemic year. Beyond answering incoming calls, staff provides directional assistance, and will be booking Study Rooms when they reopen in the fall. We're taking statistics at the desk to get a feel for how patrons use this new service, and have already made some patron request improvements as a result: we've added a material returns bin in front of the desk, and relocated the "Line Forms Here" sign up closer to the Circulation Desk. We are evaluating furniture options for a more permanent desk solution if we decide to maintain this service model beyond this trial period.

On June 24, Adult Services hosted K.J. Dell-Antonia, the author of *The Chicken Sisters*, providing patrons the opportunity to discuss the book and have a Q&A session with the author. A patron won this virtual visit with the author and offered it to the Library so that more community members could participate, and we happily said yes!

In lieu of gathering for our annual Staff Development Day this year, staff suggested alternative methods to recognize achievements. Funds regularly earmarked for the event were used to provision branded library wear for staff in the form of cozy fleece vests, jackets, and cardigans.

3. Diversity & Inclusion:

Objective 3.2: Beginning January 2019, create and adapt library services to accommodate the needs of people living with disabilities.

Youth Services updated language about our programming for disabilities. In the past we described our sensory-friendly performances with the phrase: "This performance is intended for children with special needs and their families." After learning that people with disabilities do not like to be described as having "special needs," the new description is: "This performance intended for children with sensory-input challenges and disabilities and their families." On the online event calendar we added a description: "Sensory-friendly shows are intended for children with autism spectrum disorders, sensory processing disorders, anxiety, or other cognitive or physical disabilities who have a low tolerance for crowds, loud noises, darkness, flashing lights, and other similar sensory input. Audience members can feel comfortable moving or vocalizing throughout the performance." In addition, Community Services changed the tag in our online event calendar from "special needs" to "sensory-friendly."

Youth Services designed a social story to help youth and adults with disabilities feel more comfortable visiting the library. A social story is a series of images and descriptions which help prepare first-time visitors by showing what the library looks like and what they can expect during a visit. The social stories will be available to the public on our website.

Librarian Nancy Wagner continued to expand our partnership with Mather of Wilmette by offering delivery service to the roughly 125 senior patrons who live there. Nancy has continually kept the line of communication open with our senior population throughout the entire shelter-at-home, providing them with book recommendations and support.

In December, the Library updated and replaced its on-site courtesy mobility equipment with a new rolling walker with wheels and seat, and a new wheelchair. The mobility equipment is available at the main entrance lobby.

Objective 3.3: Beginning April 2019, develop intergenerational opportunities for youth and adults to work together on a shared goal.

Youth Services collaborated with Teen Services to expand our monthly Three Minute Mental Makeover creative writing program to include teens and adults in response to interest in the community, making it officially an intergenerational program open to grades 4 and up, teens, and adults.

On Saturday, June 12, Youth Services hosted a Tie-Dye Extravaganza for all ages on the library lawn. Attendees brought their own prewashed cotton t-shirt or other item to tie-dye with us. We plan to bring this popular program back in the future.

In September, Youth Services librarians Janet Piehl and Ruth Bell created the Library's new Maker Garden. Located in the raised planter adjacent to the main entrance bookdrops, the Maker Garden is an all-ages interactive space where patrons are encouraged to imagine, create, and play with natural materials.

Objective 3.4: By August 2019, develop a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff.

In late 2020, Digital Services Manager Stephen Koebel (Chair of WPL's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee), was appointed to a 3.5 year term on the RAILS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Stephen reports, "While we are still in the early stages, we're sharing challenges at our institutions and have begun brainstorming trainings for staff, toolkits for staff, and the like. It's a great opportunity that I'm proud to be a part of. I'll acquire tools to bring home to WPL that will benefit our staff and patrons alike." In May 2021, Stephen attended the inaugural Staff Training, Leadership, and Advocacy subcommittee meeting of the committee in May. As part of this committee, he has been tasked with developing tools for library administration, human resources, and staff education and training regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Stephen will help to identify (and ultimately implement) an accessible, online platform to house the committee's resources, encourage collaboration, and provide access to content for RAILS members and the broader library community.

In November 2020, in support of the Library's [Antiracist Statement](#), YS librarian Sheri Reda presented two books for budding antiracists. *What Lane?* by Torrey Maldonado, is a short novel that helps young people imagine their way to antiracism. *This Book is Antiracist* by Tiffany Jewell is a fun guidebook with tips for antiracism actions anyone can take. Her video was shared on our website and social media: <https://youtu.be/uRvIC-O7VWQ>

Youth Services continued to update our recommended reading lists to include more diverse and "own voices" titles, and promoted these resources both through displays in the building and in reading lists and "book rivers" on our new website.

YS librarian Sheri Reda compiled an updated Black History Month booklist for the website, which we promoted in our e-news and social media. To help selectors in Youth Services, Sheri also developed a collection development tool to identify independent publishers who specialize in Own Voices and EDI books.

Lunar New Year Storytime on Saturday, February 13, 2021 was attended by 46 patrons celebrating the Year of the Ox and practicing Mandarin Chinese with songs and stories about the new year. The program was presented by local educator Ling Liu, who has also continued to host our monthly Mandarin storytimes, averaging a dozen participants at each program.

Librarian Sheri Reda continues to represent WPL at regional EDIT/YS (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Team in Youth Services) meetings.

YS librarians Ruth Bell and Diane dos Santos took part in The United Way of Illinois Equity Challenge, a 21-week program encouraging Illinois residents to engage in racial equity conversations to gain a deeper understanding about the impact systemic racism and inequity have on our state and in our local communities. <https://unitedwayillinois.org/equity-challenge/>

Several Youth Services staff have been viewing the Augusta Baker Storytelling Experience: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programming for Children of All Ages lecture series, hosted by the University of South Carolina School of Information Science. In each kid-friendly session, experts talk about EDI themes at a level appropriate for children and their caregivers and educators. Topics include anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ issues, rainbow families, gender issues, and immigration.

AS librarian Joan Blecher attended a webinar on three Native American museums and how they are introducing recognizable contemporary displays to help visitors feel more comfortable and interested in the collections. Joan brought this knowledge to her #ownvoices readers' advisory skills and shared her experience with staff.

Programs and Services

On January 13, 2021, AS librarian Rachel Garcia, with local racial justice group Montgomery Travelers, arranged to have former white nationalist, now author and activist Christian Picciolini discuss his most recent book, *Breaking Hate: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism*, with Chicago Public School teacher and activist Nora Flanagan. They discussed how schools can counter white nationalist organizing, with 161 participants watching and submitting questions on Zoom. Sarah Beth Brown arranged for patron feedback following the event and the

comments were overwhelmingly in favor of the Library hosting anti-racist programming and were pleased with the event. Comments included the following:

- Just superb and sadly so topical. Both the speakers and their connection was great, as was Rachel, the WPL moderator.
- Love that you are addressing the issue of racism and hate.
- This type of subject is great because of its relevance to today's difficult current events. Also other political discussions. Or the role of artists in the political arena would be a great subject for a program... Thanks. Wilmette Library is a treasure
- I love the topics of addressing systemic racism, and the history of race in our country. Keep up the great work.

On January 25, 2021, Youth Services launched a new program called the Family Language Cafe to offer patrons of all ages to connect with others in the community who speak the same languages or who are learning the same languages.

The Library celebrated the life of civil rights activist and south side luminary Timuel Black, who passed away on October 13, 2021. He had previously appeared at the library on November 16, 2019 to an enthusiastic crowd of 106 attendees. His recently published *Sacred Ground: the Chicago Streets of Timuel Black* recounted his life within the context of the struggle for civil rights. Our community had been inspired by his presentation and legacy. Two Wilmette residents and former students of Mr. Black's from his years as a high school teacher in Hyde Park reintroduced themselves to him after this presentation and reflected on his impacts on their lives.

Youth Services added a booklist with recommended books about gender expression and identity and we updated our rainbow reads bibliography. Staff expanded our booklist display spaces in the junior high room, children's fiction, and picture book areas to make space for these lists.

In an effort to help all patrons feel welcome in story time, Youth Services has been compiling a list of story time themes that work well in winter and around major holidays that are alternatives to celebrating holidays in story time. Staff also shared read-aloud books with each other that feature a diverse representation of race, gender, and ability, with a focus on "own voices" titles. An "own voices" book means that the author writing a main character who is part of marginalized group is a part of that marginalized group.

Librarians Nancy Wagner and Rachel Garcia attended the webinar "OwnVoices for All Readers: Incorporating EDI Values into Readers' Advisory Service," which is essential for all librarians but especially Rachel as our primary Readers' Advisory librarian, and Nancy said it "raised my consciousness about trying to be more inclusive in my book recommendations." Because of this webinar, Adult Services librarians are being encouraged to create their book recommendation lists to include a general ratio of 50/50 women and 30% #ownvoices. Own Voices is not a genre in and of itself, but instead: "#OwnVoices is a term coined by the writer Corinne Duyvis, and refers to an author from a marginalized or under-represented group writing about their own experiences/from their own perspective, rather than someone from an outside perspective writing as a character from an underrepresented group"

On May 20, EvaAnne Johnson hosted "Online Resources for Jewish Genealogy in Chicago."

The program provided an overview of records and resources that are useful to Jewish researchers in search of their Chicagoland roots. They began with a brief history of the Jews of Chicago and the seminar mostly concentrated on uniquely Jewish resources such as cemeteries, funeral homes, and “Life in Jewish Chicago” which includes access to searchable online publications. The presentation also covered the naturalization process, location/residence records, and legal documents including wills and probate files. The program was presented by professional speaker and genealogist, Mike Karsen. Karsen is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG), the Genealogical Speakers Guild (GSG), and is Past President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois. He has presented over 300 talks on genealogy topics locally, nationally, and internationally including Newberry Library and Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership in Chicago. Karsen is the author of the JewishGen website “Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Chicagoland” and has published articles on genealogy.

On June 12, Local History and Genealogy Librarian EvaAnne Johnson arranged a program both for Pride Month and for our adult summer reading club called, “LGBTQ Genealogy: Inclusion of All our Ancestors” using clues in genealogical records to find ancestors who may have been Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer. 19 patrons attended. Program description: LGBTQ folk have always been a part of our history and family stories. The confirmed bachelor or spinster aunt in our trees may not have been single. Perhaps they did have partners but there is no legal documentation or family acknowledgment. In this presentation, Stewart Blandón Traiman will explore census, newspapers, obituaries, military records, photographs, phone books, and archives for clues on our ancestor's sexuality. He'll also add in some LGBTQ history to put family stories into a social context. Finally, we'll discuss necessary changes to genealogical software to be inclusive of all families. Stewart has gathered a wide breadth of genealogical source knowledge with over 30 years' experience in the field, both on-line and off-line. He is a professional genealogist, writes a genealogy blog, and volunteers for the California Genealogical Society.

On November 10, Teen Librarian Krista Hutley hosted YA author Darcie Little Badger. Darcie is a Lipan Apache writer with a PhD in oceanography. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Elatsoe*, was featured in Time Magazine as one of the best 100 fantasy novels of all time and is a Nebula, Ignyte, Locus and Lodestar finalist. In a starred review, Kirkus magazine called it “[a] fast-paced whodunit set in a contemporary world like our own, this is a creative fusion of Indigenous cultural influences and supernatural fantasy. A brilliant, engaging debut....”

On November 18, Krista hosted “Supporting Trans and Gender Expansive People” with Lizzy Appleby from Youth Services of Glenview Northbrook (YSGN). The event was recorded and was made available to staff and has received positive feedback from staff and from patrons. One of the patrons she recognized was a parent she spoke with during the pandemic; her child was coming to virtual programs and was shy about turning on his video because he had started using male pronouns and gone through a few name changes over 2020 and 2021. Krista recommended YSGN's Pride groups to them and they still continue to go to events there, and events at the Library as well.

One Book Everyone Reads

For our 2021 edition, we read and discussed the 2020 National Book Award-winning novel *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu. The programming committee, consisting of Jennifer Bartel, Jillian McKeown, Rachel Garcia, EvaAnne Johnson, Sarah Beth Brown, and from Youth Services,

Andrea Vaughn Johnson, Jennifer Lee, and Lisa Bigelow, set a goal of focusing on both our strategic goals and community conversations. We sought to plan programs that provoke original thought in our staff and patrons alike while focusing on what is happening in our world and community right now.

On March 13, EvaAnne Johnson and the North Suburban Genealogical Society (NSGS) co-hosted, “Beginning Steps to Finding Your Chinese Ancestors” via Zoom with Kelly Summers, an Accredited Genealogist. Patrons learned the first steps in collecting and gathering family data and searching U.S. genealogical records for Chinese family information. They discussed the importance of identifying the Chinese surname character and the ancestral village in China. The program was an overwhelming success with the program filling up. Eva said that the feedback was extremely positive, citing that Kelly Summers was an excellent and knowledgeable speaker.

On March 18, Jennifer Bartel organized the OBER program, “The Untold Story Behind Mahjong,” where patrons learned about the history and cultural significance of the ancient game of Mahjong with Yvonne Wolf of Chinese Intercultural, LLC.

On Tuesday, March 23, the OBER committee hosted the first of two book club discussions for staff (the next will be in April) to discuss the selection with their peers in order to understand the book on a deeper level so that they can discuss it with patrons. In order to facilitate this, the committee provided around 30 paperbacks of the book and put them in the breakroom for staff to keep or pass around, and they were enjoyed by staff from all over the library.

On March 24, the Library hosted the program, “Anti-Asian Racism, Xenophobia, & COVID-19,” which may be one of the most important discussions during OBER that directly affects both our Asian American community and staff. The program discussed the psychological impact of stereotypes and racism, including the Asian American images in popular culture and the model minority stereotype. Finally, the presentation included the importance of ally-ship in addressing injustice. Presented by Dr. Teresa Mok, a licensed clinical psychologist, and Dr. David Chih, director of the UIUC Asian American Cultural Center.

As we explored this year's One Book, Everyone Reads selection, children were also invited to read about Chinese American experiences. Youth Services created a list of critically acclaimed children's books featuring Chinese American characters and historical figures. (<https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/books-and-more/recommendations/kids-book-lists/chinese-american>). On April 2 we offered a Mandarin Conversation Café, and on March 27 a Chinese Bilingual Storytime with teacher Ling Liu, both related to OBER objectives.

4. Sharing Resources:

Objective 4.1: By December 2018, improve the Library's outdoor space to provide an attractive, environmentally friendly space that maximizes safety, accessibility, and enjoyment.

As a result of our renovated Library Lawn (an outcome of the 2019 Outdoor Renovation Project), with careful distancing and masks, we were able to host on-site programs for all ages for the first time since early 2020. In-person programs included a variety of favorite programs, including storytimes, crafts, K-9 Reading Buddies, and much more in our outdoor spaces.

We contracted with a new landscape management company this year and performed necessary maintenance to our mature trees. Due to unusual drought conditions this summer, some of the experimental grasses that we installed in 2019 will need to be replaced in early 2022.

As part of the 2021 Capital Repair Project, we also repaired several exterior areas of the building, including the roof, comprehensive cleaning and repointing of the brick façade, and repairs to the permeable paver parking lot. Of particular note to our sustainability initiatives, about half of the parking lot pavers were pulled up, new base stone was installed and leveled, the bricks reinstalled, and refreshed arrows and striping were also completed. A number of broken bricks were replaced in high traffic areas, like near the book drops on the east end of the parking lot. We'll perform regular maintenance going forward to help reduce the need for such involved remediation in the future, and to ensure that the lot is able to perform its purpose. Permeable pavers allow water and pollutants to drain through to the soil below, where gravel, sand, and natural bacteria help to trap and break down pollutants naturally. The resulting water, now free of the majority of pollutants, can then continue on to refill local aquifers.

Objective 4.2: By February 2019, refine personnel and compensation policies to equitably recruit, retain, and recognize talented staff.

The Leadership Team conducted 2021 Performance Evaluations following the review and update of the evaluation tool. All staff completed an Employee Work Assessment self-evaluation. Managers and supervisors completed the evaluation forms for their teams. All new hires will receive a 6-month review. Following completion of the annual process this winter, staff will receive a mid-year review in July/August for their 2021-22 goals.

While some staff continued to work a portion of their hours under our Remote Work and Telecommuting Policy in 2021, the majority have returned to work their regular hours from within the library building. Our policy remains available for most positions to apply for some manner of flexibility in remote work.

The Library participated in the annual LACONI Salary & Fringe Benefits surveys. The compiled results are available to all participating libraries. The data results from the survey are a valuable benchmarking tool to compare our salaries and benefits and see where they fall within other neighboring libraries, ensuring that we are aware of trends and remain competitive in the local library labor market.

Compensation and Salary Structure Update Project

To supplement the LACONI study, the Library recently completed an additional professional compensation study to help ensure that we pay our employees competitively in the current labor market. An overview of the project and process follows.

Background

In Spring 2018, WPL completed a comprehensive study of our compensation structure and implemented a number of improvements. Our objectives were to:

- a) Ensure that our pay rates were comparable to the market rates offered by our competitors (libraries of similar size, budget, and staffing),

- b) Ensure that our positions were ranked appropriately and equitably within the organization, and
- c) Forecast future labor costs and provide a means to attract and recruit top talent.

We worked with Management Association (now known as HR Source), who provided a benchmarking analysis from five different labor surveys, and reviewed our internal job descriptions and job assessments as completed by staff at the time. Rather than conduct the project internally, we again determined that an unbiased third party should perform the project. We chose HR Source because they have experienced compensation professionals on staff, and have executed similar projects us and other libraries. It was a long process, but a very meticulous and thoughtful one that has served us these past three years.

This Year's Project

In Spring 2021, the Library again partnered with HR Source to conduct our 2021 HR Compensation and Market Benchmarking Study. This year's project used new market data, resulting in updated pay structure that reflects our current positions and goals.

The first step of the project was to analyze each position and update our job descriptions. Managers and staff completed this process over the course of the past few months. HR Source used these documents to become familiar with the nature and level of work performed by each position.

HR Source then matched our jobs to published compensation survey data. A total of five new compensation surveys were used while completing our project. Our project resources included library data, public sector/non-profit data, and (new this year) private sector/for-profit data when available.

When collecting compensation data, we made sure to include similarly-situated employers. That means we used data from other organizations with a similar budget, employee size, etc. for an "apples to apples" comparison. All data used in our project reflects the greater Wilmette area.

Project Results

With the project complete, we now have updated pay ranges for each position at the Library. Based on our previous project and compensation plan, the current project affirmed our annual improvements to both the pay structure and staff increases. In some cases, a position may have positively changed in market price or grade, leading to adjusted increases in pay. Staff eligible for such increases have been notified. As before, our pay ranges have minimum, midpoint, and maximum values.

We are pleased that our pay ranges continue to allow us to remain competitive in the current job market. Going forward, we are invested in maintaining our competitive pay ranges and making sure each employee is paid fairly.

Minimum Wage

Libraries in the region are preparing for the impact of the gradual increase to the state minimum wage over the next 6 years. The minimum wage will increase incrementally from \$11.00 on January 1, 2021 to \$15 by January 1, 2025. To meet this requirement, our positions need to meet minimum thresholds for new hires while also making concessions for wage compression

when the salary gap between a new hire and an experienced employee narrows. Administrative staff have been implementing our plan for this initiative with peer analysis, professional HR consultation, and legal counsel, noting that some area libraries are already administering supplemental, across-the-board increases as well as adjusting their overall salary grade scale by a percentage to address the potential gap for fairness and equity. Illinois minimum wage was established at \$12/hour on January 1, 2022. WPL currently does not have any positions that start at less than \$12/hour. More to the point, as of January 1, 2022, no WPL staff make less than \$14.50/hour. Human Resources Manager Michael Boone continues to evaluate compensation and benefits trends to ensure our planning and pay grades are appropriately aligned to sustain any mandated increases and to remain competitive with our peers.

Objective 4.3: By October 2019, implement emerging technologies and provide curated digital resources to improve the user experience.

Circulation staff continued to promote and maintain our Parking Lot Pickup service model, scheduled using our online calendar software from Communico.

AS librarians continued our Book a Librarian service. Patrons can fill out an online form stating what help they need and a librarian will either call or video conference with the patron. The full-time librarians have been calling patrons and our patrons have been excited to connect with us. Staff continue to serve across a wide variety of channels including chat, email, text messaging, phone call, and video conferencing.

On June 28, Librarian EvaAnne Johnson presented, “Genealogical Records You Should Be Using” via Zoom. During the presentation she introduced patrons to different types of genealogical records that they should use in their family history research, including birth, marriage, and death records, census records, immigration records, and more. She also briefly discussed where these kinds of records could be found. This workshop was for those who are just starting their journey into family history, or who wanted a refresher on using common genealogical records.

RFID Project

Libraries utilize a range of automation solutions to promote efficient and highly effective deployment of our resources. In the past 20 years, public libraries have overwhelmingly embraced Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) as a tool to track, inventory, and facilitate the circulation of our physical collections. RFID systems enhance the security, availability, inventory, data metrics, and accessibility of our materials for both staff and patrons. RFID makes self-service more user-friendly through self-checkout and returns, and reduces repetitive stress for staff in the highly-physical tasks of checking materials in and out. Further, by improving workflows and facilitating the more labor-intensive tasks, staff are able to elevate their service from more transaction-based interactions to more relationship-oriented service.

WPL had long considered tagging its collections with RFID as part of our long range strategic and capital planning projects. In the midst of the 2020 pandemic, the Library recognized the unusual opportunity afforded by the challenges of reduced building hours and capacities to develop a plan to utilize staff for this big project. Staff researched the latest innovations in RFID and collected local trending statistics to assess our needs. Staff contacted other neighboring libraries who recently adopted RFID systems to learn more about their solutions and the processes they used to implement them. This research was compiled into a comprehensive 30 page overview

packet advertising our project in August 2020. In October 2020, the Library Board awarded the project to Bibliotheca.

Bibliotheca on-boarded WPL in December 2020, trained staff in January on the systems, and delivered 5 new self-checkout stations, new security gates, and the RFID tagging equipment and materials in February. Patsy DeVuono (Shelving/Switchboard Manager), Kim Hegelund (Circulation Manager), Gayle Rosenberg Justman (Senior Manager), Jessica Thomson (Cataloging Librarian and Interim Technical Services Manager), and Anthony Auston (Director) were the primary stakeholders for various aspects of the project, though all members of the Leadership Team were involved in this large building-wide project at one stage or another. Patsy coordinated and directed the complex and labor-intensive collection tagging project utilizing staff from the Shelving department as well as paid volunteers from others departments. Her team finished the majority of the tagging project by the end of June. Staff did a phenomenal job on this project, individually handling nearly 250,000 physical items and systematically installing RFID tags in each over from February through June, averaging 250 items per hour. Handling every item in our collections had countless other benefits, including a comprehensive inventory, shifting, relocations, signage updates, weeding, replacements, discoveries, and all-around improvements. Above all, the staff who have worked on the project have regularly commented how much they enjoyed the work itself, the opportunity to become more familiar with the collections, and the sense of camaraderie and accomplishment that came from such a large task. We're excited for the opportunity to enable all of our new equipment and begin reaping the benefits of the system.

Meanwhile, Kim trained her team on the Circulation aspects of the new system, including new equipment, new procedures and labels for hold materials, and overall impacts on interlibrary circulation from agencies without RFID systems - a critical final step in launching the system to the public seamlessly. Jessica trained the Technical Services staff on their own equipment and new procedures in processing materials with tags, as well as withdrawing materials, as the new tags introduce an additional final step to that process now. Marcos Levy (Facilities Manager) and Fred Wallace (IT Manager) were instrumental in the placement and infrastructure necessary to access, install, and power the new equipment.

With the radio frequency identification hardware installed, staff trained on equipment, the collection tagged, and all of the patron-facing equipment ready, staff prepared for the next steps of the roll-out plan: implementation of the Automated Material Handling system. This final stage of the project was delayed due to supply chain issues, the scarcity of certain parts in the final system, and ultimately the shipping of the units from overseas. We took delivery and installation of the AMH in early December, and began training and using the equipment right away. We were excited to see the efficiency of the system: processes that took hours of manual handling and judgment were completed in minutes, and automatically sorted into bins for easier processing of the final steps. With the check-in system fully operational, staff has returned its attention to the introduction of one of the primary outcomes of the project: RFID checkout via both the staff stations and the self-checkouts throughout the building. We expect to launch our communications plan about this final step in late January 2022, which would bring this project to its final stage of completion.

2021 Website Redesign Project

The 2021 Website Redesign process began with our staff committee convening in early December 2020 to begin the past site's evaluation and the new site's development process. The team consisted of Chair Stephen Koebel (Digital Services), Christine Hightower (Digital Services), Lisa Bigelow (Youth Services), John Amundsen (Adult Services), Zoi Doehrer (Circulation), Sarah Beth Brown (Community Services), and Anthony Auston (Director).

The group's first meeting consisted of an introduction of the process and tasks designed to foster critical thinking when it comes to looking our website and library websites in general. The committee reviewed our website and neighboring library sites, and evaluated them based on design, content, user experience, and accessibility. With the group is rooted in a critical mindset, they moved into evaluating navigation and menu systems in January. The process continued in February with a SWOT analysis of the past site and reviewing the new site's development. In March, the group reviewed our menu system and information organization. We evaluated other library websites and trends in information seeking behavior in an effort to consolidate and restructure our menus.

In March, Digital Services Manager Stephen Koebel worked with Director Auston to review the website redesign bids from multiple vendors, and after interviews and evaluation of the results, we recommended Library Market to the Board for approval at the March 16 Regular Board meeting. Ben Bizzle, the proprietor of Library Market, has decades of web experience within a library setting; his business creates websites and calendars specifically for libraries. From the outset, we felt confident that we'd made a great choice with this vendor to provide a better interface for our digital resources and improve user experience.

The Website Redesign project work officially began in April with a productive introduction to our project manager Lindsay Sarin from Library Market. Lindsay explained what we can expect for our Discovery, Design, Development, and Launch phases of the project. Our staff Website Redesign Committee had already completed and discussed multiple elements of the Discovery phase, so we were well situated when the process officially began in May.

In May, the committee completed an evaluation of our library sites, neighboring library sites, and sites developed by Library Market. Additionally, we analyzed and began developing both the Staff and Patron surveys provided by Library Market to fit our community profile. We reviewed, edited, published, and promoted the Library Market-provided website evaluation surveys for both patrons and staff in an effort to gather feedback about our users' library experiences. Engaging our users directly in this process is key to developing a site that's responsive to user needs. Staff perspective is also valuable, as different staff members interface with and advocate for our digital branch in different ways.

The website redesign committee also completed a comprehensive site audit, including an evaluation of the pages on our site based on importance and popularity. We evaluated our most visited pages and ranked them along with pages we believe are important. Using our site audit, we've been able to identify priority content that we wish to display on our home page, in menus, or on interior web pages. Using the audit, we'll next move into creating a site map which will become the skeletal structure of our new digital branch.

The team spent June deciding on various elements to be included in the new website. We finalized our site map, which functions as the skeletal structure of our site. We've reconfigured

the hierarchy and organization of our web pages, consolidating several and enhancing the overall discoverability of content. Sarah Beth Brown and Stephen Koebel finalized our organizational Design Discovery document, noting our preferences for how information is displayed on our new site. Notably, we've got a forthcoming home page slideshow to display upcoming events and services of note in a new, attractive way. Additionally, we're instituting quick links and buttons to reduce the amount of clicks for patrons to access high interest content.

Staff reached the point in our redesign process where the bulk of the work has been turned over to our committee. We then got busy populating dynamic content templates. These templates collect information, like our list of databases or board documents, for display on various webpages. Additionally, we worked on completing our page templates which focus on transferring content from our existing web pages to new ones.

In July, Sarah Beth Brown trained with outgoing website administrator Stephen Koebel on maintenance of the current website as well as leadership tasks with the new site. Staff completed their dynamic content templates, collecting information such as our list of databases or board documents for display on various webpages.

In August, all staff who involved in future website content creation and maintenance received training on adding, creating, and editing content. Our contractor posted about half of the content on the site, and in August, staff created the remaining half. This process included:

- writing new copy
- creating graphics and taking photos
- making logistical decisions as a team
- editing dozens of webpages
- creating records for books, databases, and more

The final major pre-launch project was to conduct user testing on the site. The committee created surveys for both the public and staff to solicit feedback on how the new site works and where it could be tweaked. We received a great response in our call for participants; we got more than 80 replies with useful comments about design choices, page layouts, broken links, and more. We had not previously undertaken user testing in a website redesign project, and giving ourselves an extra week before launch to go through this process proved invaluable.

The new site launched in early October, and has received remarkably positive feedback to date. Staff continues to update content and implement various improvements. Overall, staff sees the site as being in "perpetual beta," meaning it will remain a work in progress that we can continuously develop.

Objective 4.4: By December 2019, equip staff with professional development tools and leadership opportunities, and support individual paths for career growth

In December of 2020, Adult Services Manager Jill McKeown completed the Charmm'd Leadership Academy second year series. This was a year-long program for up and coming leaders to learn leadership skills and techniques from others in nearby communities in leadership positions. The program utilizes the DISC method as a base for understanding communication styles. The training includes topics such as: Anatomy of Ethical Decision Making,

The Art of Authentic Communication, Crucial Conversations, and Putting Principles into Practice. In 2021, Jill continued the second year of the Academy. Participants meet every other month to discuss real-life situations of conflict in their own workplaces and how to resolve them using knowledge gained in the year-long session.

In January 2021, Several librarians attended the American Library Association's Midwinter Conference via Zoom. Staff attended a wide variety of programs that address current issues in librarianship, such as a discussion on internet accessibility disparity, racism in libraries, and fighting social isolation with gaming.

In February 2021, Facility Manager Marcos Levy coordinated a formal safety training event for the Monitors, Facilities staff, Adult Services Manager, Circulation Manager, Digital Services Manager, and Director. In total 14 staff members were in attendance for the training session conducted by Lynn Dunagan from JMD Defense Chicago. In her presentation, Ms. Dunagan explained and demonstrated how the safety team and staff can be better prepared to serve patrons, keep the library environment safe, and be consciously equipped to engage effectively with patrons through intuitive conversations to de-escalate challenging situations.

On April 15-16, staff across the Library participated in annual Reaching Forward spring state library conference, including: Mark Cegielski, Patsy DeVuono, Mary Dormin, Kim Hegelund, EvaAnne Johnson, Jillian McKeown, and Carly Stauss.

In April, EvaAnne Johnson participated in the RootsTech Genealogy virtual conference, with several programs and events throughout the month.

Youth Services librarians Alice Joseph, Susan Kaplan Toch, and Janet Piehl attended the annual Zena Sutherland Lecture hosted by Chicago Public Library. Author Jason Reynolds spoke about his life story, how he connected with young people through his books, and how to grow community and diversity and inclusion.

Alice Joseph attended Publishers Weekly's U.S. Book Show May 25-27. Publishers & authors promoted new books and attendees explored exhibits and heard guest speakers.

Several librarians in Youth Services attended School Library Journal's annual Day of Dialog event on May 20. Authors and publishers presented upcoming titles, many with a focus on EDI. Andrea Vaughn Johnson viewed Opening Keynote Conversation with Christina Soontornvat and Steve Sheinkin, authors of award-winning nonfiction books for children who compared notes on the inspiration and research behind their work.

Adult Services Librarian John Amundsen renewed his memberships to ALA and RUSA, and registered for Business Reference 101, an asynchronous, 3-week online course that is a deep dive into business research methods and resources that starts in May 2021.

Several staff from both Adult and Youth Services attended the American Library Association Annual Conference, which was held virtually this year June 23-29. Librarians attended various sessions including the Opening General Session with Nikole Hannah Jones, the Closing Session with Barack Obama, and Building Equity through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Attendees plan to view archived programs during the August closure. (Suzanne Arist, Lisa

Bigelow, Diane dos Santos, Andrea Vaughn Johnson, EvaAnne Johnson, Alice Joseph, Susan Kaplan-Toch, Jennifer Lee, and Sheri Reda)

In October, EvaAnne Johnson participated in the Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference virtual conference, with several programs and events throughout the month.

Several staff attended the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference online in October. Teen Librarian Krista Hutley presented two separate workshops at the event.

Objective 4.5: By January 2021, implement interior space plan with a commitment to sustainable practices.

2021 Capital Repair Project

The 2021 Capital Repairs Project represented the most extensive set of planned building repairs and system replacements during the 20 year cycle that was evaluated in the Capital Reserve Study. The total project costs for both bid packages for the 2021 Capital Repair Project is \$1,882,257 (about \$100,000 lower than was initially projected by Shales McNutt Construction prior to bidding). Further, the total project cost was able to include other planned work to reduce impacts to operations, including: repair of the west vestibule curtain wall, replacement of the carpeting in the entry vestibule, additional low voltage cabling, miscellaneous painting and finish work throughout the building, and repair and restriping of the existing permeable paver parking lot.

The project covered a coordinated set of priority work including:

1. Extensive roof repairs,
2. Complete building envelope cleaning and tuck-pointing,
3. Exterior sealant replacement,
4. Parking lot paver repair and restriping,
5. Water infiltration mediation in the lower level,
6. Update and replacement of electrical mains, feeders, and branch panels,
7. Update and replacement of the fire alarm system, and
8. Update and replacement of the access control and security systems.

The project began in March 2021, and was substantially complete in September 2021.

Following completion of the extensive roof and brick repairs from March-June, the repair project turned indoors in July. The water infiltration investigation and drain tile installation project was especially complex. Staff had previously shifted collections when Hallett Movers arrived to move loaded bookstacks to accommodate the crew. Shelving and walls in the southeast corner of the lower level were removed to the foundation, and the concrete floor was cut away to reveal the existing drain tile. Repairs were made and cleanouts were installed. The new drain tile was installed and wicking material was added to the foundation walls. The substantial storm events in July-August provided an opportunity to observe the site solution in progress, with the results appearing effective thus far.

The new exterior electrical main gear and cabinetry was delivered, the site prepared, and installed in August. The new main conduit cores and piping were installed in the Shelving

Room. The new electrical main and distribution gear was installed. Original cloth wiring circuits were removed. Breaker boxes were upgraded, relocated, and/or removed when abandoned. New data cable was installed, old/abandoned cables removed. Crews worked all around the interior of the building back-pulling abandoned cable and preparing new cabling for installation in the updated electrical, fire alarm, access control, and security camera systems. Door strikes, hardware, and other related equipment were installed. Much of the main electrical power distribution, gear, and breaker box work was completed during the August 15-31 building closure.

5. Marketing & Communications:

Objective 5.2: Beginning November 2018, improve internal library communications and interactions across the organization.

It's no surprise that our team's communication culture has been tested over the course of the pandemic. Yet that open, collaborative culture has not only been sustained through this crisis, it has improved. Both seasoned and recent managers have enhanced internal coordination and inspired staff engagement through frequent emails, calls, and Zoom meetings. Departments are hosting regular meetings, continuing cross-departmental cooperation, and promoting a spirit of togetherness despite the distance and challenges - and we're all learning along the way.

Staff continues to use and promote our relatively new Microsoft Teams software (which launched in June 2020). This platform, including a desktop and mobile app, features collaborative document sharing and editing (without requiring the Microsoft Office suite to be installed on a given device), live chat functionality, team meetings/calls, and more. So far, this has been a great way to coordinate our reopening plans and work on projects together in real time, facilitating more timely and improved communications across departments.

Since March 2020, the Director has hosted regular "Tea with Anthony" Zoom meetings, offering all staff an opportunity to engage with one another across the organization and connect directly with Library Administration for up-to-the-minute updates. Feedback from these meetings has been positive and demonstrates how dedicated and engaged the staff of Wilmette Library are to their team, their roles, and their community.

Objective 5.4: Beginning July 2020, identify and reach out to people who are not currently aware of library services.

In May 2021, we sent our first print newsletter to resident homes since March 2020. During the pandemic, we have kept in touch with our community regularly by mail with a Summer Mailer and a number of postcards, but this was the first newsletter in more than a year. Sarah Beth Brown used the time without a print newsletter cycle to redesign our print publication and feature a new production schedule. The new newsletter has a cleaner, bolder design, and will be sent to homes five times a year on this fiscal year cycle:

- June/July/August: focusing on Summer Reading Clubs
- September/October
- November/December
- January/February/March: focusing on Winter Reading Clubs

- April/May

In addition to the mailed newsletter, we will continue to send regular email newsletters, and will supplement the newsletter with mailed postcards for our major initiatives, such as One Book Everyone Reads.

On July 28, 2021, Director Auston was the guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Wilmette Harbor's Regular Breakfast Meeting. This was the first presentation of the library to this club in recent memory, and gave the Director an opportunity to introduce himself to a room of new and familiar faces, as well as reintroduce and update this community group's awareness of the Library's recent progress. It also afforded the opportunity for Director Auston to directly address the subject of the pandemic before a gathering of the community's elders and open the conversation about the cultural shift that was still shaping operations and impacting our residents.

Communications have been an essential part of our virtual strategy since March 2020, as we simultaneously promote and provide library access to patrons via our website, social media, and print communications. Staff managed a vastly improved virtual library experience with the introduction of our new website, and has greatly enhanced our connections with patrons who have come to rely on the virtual environment almost exclusively. Each facet of our operations has been balanced and shared on our website, social media, and email communications, as well as in the building itself.

We continued to manage our Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube accounts as a place for virtual programs, official communications, community connection, and fun. The website was regularly updated to reflect our current service models, with new pages created as needed, and graphics provided by Sarah Rose. Our social media accounts have continued to grow, with a total of 1,247 Facebook followers to date, and 1,452 followers on Instagram. Growth on these platforms spikes when we share our accounts in our weekly emails, we have had more engagement with our posts as well.

The Circulation Department continued its work in conjunction with Wilmette-Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce in connecting with new residents. Staff stuffed envelopes with welcome brochures giving new residents a brief glimpse into what the library collection, programs, services, and technology offerings we offer.

New Trier Township High School Librarian Julie Novak partnered with Teen Librarian Krista Hutley and Circulation Manager Kim Hegelund in signing up several students for library cards. By putting procedures in place for new students, similar to those used for D39, we are looking to create a stronger relationship with Wilmette and Kenilworth students that go to NTHS.