

Wilmette Public Library Board of Trustees Strategic Plan Timeline 2022

Date	Task	Participants	Responsibility
March 10, 2022	Strategic Planning Kickoff Meeting: Community Overview, Library Industry and WPL Trends, Leadership Team Department Overviews (including 3 Pain Points), Aspiration Exercise	Leadership Team and Trustees	WPL
March/April	Distributed summary of Kickoff Meeting		WPL
Mid-April - early May	Developed and distributed community survey online and in library addressing the following areas: Where do you live? • Do you have a library card? • What are the primary reasons you use your library? • What experiences or resources would you like the library to add or improve? • If you could add one resource or experience to your community, what would you add?	558 Patron Responses	WPL
June	Published survey results online, identifying three major trends: 1) Spaces in the Building 2) Services for Children & Families 3) Accessing the Collections		WPL
August	Summarize current strategic plan with objectives and strategies that are completed, still relevant, etc.		Director Auston

Date	Task	Participants	Responsibility
August/September	Further explore and prioritize the types of spaces patrons desire via online survey, in-person and virtual discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online Survey ● Trustees available for individual interviews with patrons in vestibule ● Leadership Team Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WPL ● Trustees
September/October	Review input, data, trends, Capital Reserve planning, update long range financial planning tool, and draft Strategic Plan		Trustees and Select Leadership Team Members
October/November	Gather community and staff input on the draft plan	Patrons, Staff, Stakeholders	Trustees and Select Leadership Team Members
November	Incorporate feedback and draft final plan	Trustees and Select Leadership Team Members	
December	Approve Strategic Plan		Trustees



Community Survey Summary

Spring 2022

This spring, library leadership began a strategic planning process to help guide the library for the next three to five years. At the end of April, we surveyed the community to learn how you use the library and what you'd like to see from the library, and our community, in the future. We made the survey available on our website and in the library, and sent it out to the community in our email newsletter and on our facebook page. Over the course of two weeks, nearly 600 community members shared their ideas and aspirations for the library with us.

We surveyed the community on five questions:

- Where do you live?
- Do you have a library card?
- What are the primary reasons you use your library?
- What experiences or resources would you like the library to add or improve?
- If you could add one resource or experience to your community, what would you add?

We identified three major trends, which are explored on the following pages.

Spaces in the Building | Services for Children & Families | Accessing the Collections

What are the primary reasons you use your library?

558 respondents chose all applicable responses.



Spaces in the Building

The building is one of the most important facets of the Wilmette library experience. Community interest in the building is wide ranging, from prioritizing the collection to improving comfortable seating to the availability of spaces for groups to meet.

What you're looking for:

- A building that can accommodate multiple library activities and needs under one roof
- More seating options and comfortable quiet spaces to read and browse materials
- Shelving that makes browsing easier
- A creative space with tools like a 3D printer and laser cutter
- Quiet rooms for meetings and remote work
- A community outdoor space

What you can already find:

- Maker equipment for all ages available by appointment, including a 3D printer and vinyl cutters
- Four reserveable study rooms on the second floor and workstations and tables throughout the first floor and lower level
- Programs on the Library Lawn for adults and children
- Seating restored throughout the building at pre-pandemic levels
- Comfortable seating in the Periodicals Room
- Zoned areas including quiet study spaces, teen spaces, group work areas, and a snack area



422 Respondents enjoy library programs

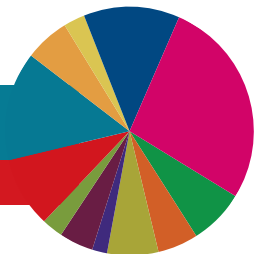
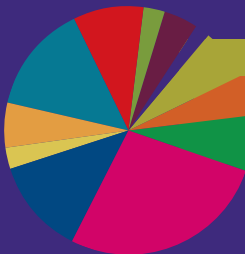
138 Prefer in-person programs; 52 Prefer virtual programs;

232 Enjoy both virtual and in-person programs

240 Respondents listed library spaces as a priority:

49 Seeking a quiet place to read; 37 seeking a place to work or study

65 Looking for a place to be with the community; 89 some combination





"It's time to bring back the energy for kids activities at the library!"

Services for Children & Families

Finding resources and activities for children is one of your top priorities. Whether you're looking for a storytime, a STEAM activity, or a few hours to browse books, you are looking forward to engaging with our librarians at the library building with your family.

What you're looking for:

- Kid friendly furnishings and shelving
- Readers advisory for tweens and middle grades
- Areas for unstructured play
- In-person programs for children of all ages
- Programs on weekends and afternoons for families with working parents
- Initiatives to foster year-round reading engagement

What you can already find:

- Resumption of on-site programs for children
- Book groups for elementary and middle grade students
- STEAM resources for children in programs and in the Library of Things
- Summer and Winter Reading Clubs to encourage reading and engagement with books
- Interactive toys in the children's area
- Curated reading lists for differing interests and abilities from Youth Services librarians



“Clearer way to find books on my own”

“More books!”

“STEAM devices like 3D printers”

“More and more ebooks”

Accessing the Collection

The survey results are clear: you are looking for more ways to access and explore our deep collections. Whether that's finding the latest bestseller, doing research with our online resources, or loading up your ereader, ease of access and availability of items is a top priority to the Wilmette community.

What you're looking for:

- Even more availability on Libby
- Expand the teen selection
- More online resources, such as access to news and entertainment media for card holders
- Lending libraries of equipment and STEAM resources
- Methods to quickly pick up holds
- Easier browsing and promotion of the collection

What you can already find:

- A library app that gives you access to your card, the catalog, and calendar of events
- Permanent availability of Parking Lot Pickup
- Access to collections across the Chicago area and beyond with interlibrary loan
- A variety of specialized collections, including business resources, local history, and expansive non-fiction resources, with librarians to help navigate your access
- Massively expanded ebook and downloadable audiobook collections
- The Library of Things, featuring tech tools and other non-traditional items that can be borrowed for home use



512 Respondents check out physical or digital items;

197 Borrow from both;

291 Physical only; 25 Digital Only

Shaping Our Future: Wilmette Public Library Strategic Plan, 2018-2021

GOAL 1: GROWING COMMUNITY

Focus library services to promote strong connections in our community.

OBJECTIVES		COMPLETED	ONGOING
1.1	Beginning October 2018, expand provision of library materials and programs outside of the established library facility.	X	X
1.2	By February 2019, establish a committee to explore new outreach opportunities and deepen existing partnerships.	X	X
1.3	By April 2020, host public forums for residents to explore and discuss community-wide issues or topics.	X	X
1.4	By November 2020, explore ways to connect local government, non-profits, businesses, and individuals with relevant community resources.	X	X
1.5	By February 2021, establish and implement a library volunteer program.	X	X

GOAL 2: KNOWLEDGE & DISCOVERY

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

OBJECTIVES		COMPLETED	ONGOING
2.1	By July 2018, create a “Library of Things” that circulates non-traditional library items.	X	X
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.	X	X
2.3	Beginning June 2019, adjust current practices to increase ease of use of physical and digital collections, e.g., fines, wait time, holds.	X	X
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.	X	X

GOAL 3: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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

OBJECTIVES		COMPLETED	ONGOING
3.1	By December 2018, develop and maintain a database of library staff and volunteers who have language skills and cultural knowledge in order to reach diverse audiences.	X	X
3.2	Beginning January 2019, create and adapt library services to accommodate the needs of people living with disabilities.	X	X
3.3	Beginning April 2019, develop intergenerational opportunities for youth and adults to work together on a shared goal.	X	X
3.4	By August 2019, develop a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff.	X	X

Shaping Our Future:
Wilmette Public Library Strategic Plan, 2018-2021

GOAL 4: SHARING RESOURCES			
<i>Allocate staff, facilities, and other resources effectively to provide outstanding library services.</i>			
OBJECTIVES		COMPLETED	ONGOING
4.1	By December 2018, improve the library's outdoor space to provide an attractive, environmentally friendly space that maximizes safety, accessibility, and enjoyment.	X	X
4.2	By February 2019, refine personnel and compensation policies to equitably recruit, retain, and recognize talented staff.	X	X
4.3	Beginning October 2019, implement emerging technologies and provide curated digital resources to improve the user experience.	X	X
4.4	By December 2019, equip staff with professional development tools and leadership opportunities, and support individual paths for career growth.	X	X
4.5	By January 2021, implement the interior space plan referenced in Objective 2.2 with a commitment to sustainable practices.	X	X

GOAL 5: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS			
<i>Increase visibility and awareness of the library's value to you and to your community.</i>			
OBJECTIVES		COMPLETED	ONGOING
5.1	By September 2018, create a marketing plan and tool kit to guide staff in creating library communications that are consistent, creative, and flexible.	X	X
5.2	Beginning November 2018, improve internal library communications and interactions across the organization.	X	X
5.3	By March 2019, develop a set of tools to evaluate how the Library's services, collections, and programs are meeting the needs of the community.	X	X
5.4	Beginning July 2020, identify and reach out to people who are not currently aware of library services.	X	X

Wilmette Public Library District

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Strategic Plan Goal Progress Summary

Thursday, August 15, 2019

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 review of staff's specific activities in fulfillment of the plan's goals and objectives in the following 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.

Preschool book & STEM kit Delivery Program

This 2018-2019 school year we offered all Wilmette and Kenilworth preschools a monthly delivery of books & STEM kits to be used in their classrooms. The nine participating preschools were each issued a library card. 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 1495 books and 42 STEM kits to the nine preschools over the nine month period.

Participating schools:

Wilmette Park District Early Childhood Center

Trinity Church Nursery School

Sprouted Child Care & Early Education

BJE Early Childhood Center

About All Things Bright & Beautiful
Rose Hall Montessori
A Joyful Noise Preschool
St. Francis Xavier School
Connecting Kids Preschool – Romona Elementary

Summer Reading Club Outreach

Youth Services librarian Alice Joseph visits all of our schools in May and June to promote the program. From late May through early June she visited Marie Murphy Middle School to talk to 150 6th and 7th grade students, and Romona Elementary to present to all 535 students (including the early childhood program) in six auditorium presentations. At Romona she was joined by the Glenview Library school liaison librarian. She delivered 460 summer brochures to Avoca Elementary School and 480 summer brochures to the Sears School to be distributed to students. Her audiences in June totaled over 1700 students and teachers.

Professor Plum Book Bike

Jill McKeown, Martha Birkhold, Joan Olson, and Professor Plum represented WPL at the French Market in Wilmette on June 8. The Library had books, stickers, and sunglasses to give to adults and children who visited the table. Summer Reading Club was promoted and approximately 30 children, 25 adults, and 10 teens signed up for the clubs. Staff members also promoted the ebook collections and answered questions about the Outdoor Renovation Project.

Going Green Matters Fair

Go Green Wilmette hosted the annual Going Green Matters Fair on March 10, 2019. Adult Services and Youth Services librarians hosted a table at the fair to promote Library programs and services, especially those that relate to “green matters.” Friends of the Wilmette Public Library also hosted a table including a pop-up book sale with carefully curated titles related to the range of subjects presented at the event.

Youth Services Outreach

Following the establishment of the Community Engagement Committee in February 2019, Youth Services staff began reporting outreach efforts in the Director’s Monthly Report.

Youth Services conducted 20 community engagement visits in March 2019. A highlight was an event coordinated by librarians Ruth Bell and Diane dos Santos. They co-organized the Wilmette Park District event “Celebrate Screen Break Week with Knuffle Bunny, Pigeon and More” on March 4 at the Community Recreation Center. As part of WPD’s Screen Break Week, the all-ages event offered nine activity stations celebrating the books of Mo Willems. Families read books together, did crafts, and played games. The Library also brought books to look at and check out, and signed people up for library cards.

Youth Services conducted 21 community engagement visits in April 2019. Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell conducted 17 outreach visits to preschools and daycares in April 2019, presenting storytime and STEM activities and delivering collections of picture books. On April 17, Alice Joseph and Andrea Vaughn Johnson visited Romona Elementary School to present a storytime and promote the Library to students with disabilities. On April 24, Andrea Vaughn Johnson visited the school library at Highcrest Middle School to meet the librarian and discuss opportunities to partner. On April 27, at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Youth and Adult Services staff hosted a table at the WK Living Expo, sponsored by the Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce, promoting Library services. On May 8, Andrea Vaughn Johnson and Janet Piehl

visited the Learning Commons at Central Elementary School to get a tour of their library and makerspace and learn how Library maker and tech programs will intersect with student activities.

Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell conducted 21 outreach visits to preschools and daycares in May 2019, presenting storytime and STEM activities to 352 people. On Wednesday, May 15, Youth Services hosted the Wilmette Park District's Youth Improv performance.

Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell conducted 8 outreach visits to preschools and daycares in June 2019, presenting storytime and STEM activities to 165 people. On Monday, June 3, two kindergarten classes from St. Joseph School's visited the Library for a tour of Youth Services and a story time.

Pride Picnic

On June 9, Youth Services Librarian Laura Antolin and Teen and Adult Librarian Krista Hutley promoted books and Library services at a family event called the Pride Picnic, sponsored by a Glenview organization called Youth Services. The annual picnic is open to those in the North Shore community who identify as LGBTQ+ or an ally, mostly youth and their families. We had a rainbow bookmark craft, coloring sheets, and various giveaways including bookmarks of LGBTQ+ fiction and nonfiction for teens and tweens (the largest audience of the Pride Picnic outside of parents). The Pride Picnic was a great way to connect with YSGN staff, the other organizations at tables (one was the Glenview Public Library), and some local LGBTQ+ community members who may not have thought about the Wilmette Public Library as a resource. WPL staff had interesting conversations with transgender teenagers, and teachers and parents. Staff hopes those who attended the picnic will remember Wilmette Library being a supportive place in the future.

Mather Place Visiting Librarian

This year, in addition to conducting a monthly book discussion series at Mather Place, a rental community for those age 62 and better, the Library will send a visiting librarian once a month, beginning in August, to assist residents in using digital library materials and services. Adult Services Librarian Jenny Klein will staff the visiting librarian service in August and will continue on the third Tuesdays of the month. This pilot program is intended to assist residents in making full use of library services and programs. Reference services, help with the online catalog, and instruction on the downloadable and streaming collections will be provided.

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

The Community Engagement Committee was established in February 2019. The committee created and piloted an online form for staff to record Outreach, Advocacy, and Partnership activities. Reports of these activities were included as a regular supplement to the Director's Monthly Report in the Board Packet. Staff submits a new Community Engagement online form for every outreach visit and class visit to the library.

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

The American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office named the Library as one of 50 sites to be selected to participate in the *American Creed: Community Conversations* project. The grant supports events and activities to engage patrons with the idea of a unifying American

creed, especially in relation to local history, challenges, and opportunities. Programming took place in March and April 2019. Adult Services staff facilitated the programming in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Wilmette, including coordination of invitation-based *Living Room Conversations*. Formal programming in the series included a screening of the PBS film *American Creed* on April 17; a book discussion of *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good* by Colin Woodard led by Mary Abroe, of the College of Lake County, on April 24; and a lecture on immigration by Jack Doppelt on April 30, attended by 70 participants, entitled *Are We Becoming a Nation of Enough Immigrants?* Congratulations and gratitude to Adult Services Assistant Manager Nancy Wagner for drafting the grant application and coordinating the project.

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

Adult Services staff established a deeper relationship with the Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce and SCORE to provide more mentoring and learning opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs. On May 15, this partnership yielded the co-sponsored lecture, *Grow Your Revenue*. In June, the Chamber added a link to SCORE from their website. Chamber Director Julie Yusim highlighted the webinars SCORE produces on various business topics and reached out to the SCORE northern area manager Al Blitz to talk about having SCORE present at some of their morning meetings. Mark Lieberman will present at the fall kickoff monthly breakfast meeting and Nancy Wagner will demonstrate the links to the Library's resources, which should increase awareness of both these services.

2. Knowledge & Discovery:

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.

Michael Boone, Manager of Human Resources, met with Wilmette Fire Inspector Bob Reichert to review fire safety procedures in advance of the safety drill on Staff Institute Day (March 1). Staff evaluated our evacuation procedures and maps, defined our meeting place, and ensured that we have someone in charge of accounting for everyone who is scheduled to work on a given day in the event of an emergency. Inspector Reichert observed our safety drill, made suggestions, and answered staff's questions and concerns on Staff Institute Day.

Director Anthony Auston and Michael Boone met with Wilmette Police Commander Michael Robinson and Officer Raimond Pavely to evaluate the Library's building and procedures for safety and security improvement opportunities. Officer Pavely presented a personal safety and active shooter response training program on Staff Institute Day.

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) devices were installed in March. The AED devices and cabinets are located to the right of Elevator B on all 4 floors of the Library. The kits are equipped with everything one would need to help save a life from cardiac arrest. The Library partnered with Wilmette Fire Department in February to offer 2 training classes on CPR/AEDs, and will continue to offer more training in the future.

As we move towards a revitalization plan for the lower level and first floor we will want to start accumulating ideas for future plans without holding back on small changes that may be made in existing layouts. In support of this planning effort, Betty Giorgi, Head of Adult Services, attended a day-long workshop on May 15 at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin on Space Planning: Reinventing Your Library Space conducted by David Vinjamuri of Third Way Brand Trainers.

In the spring, staff began shelving books face-out on the lower level to increase visibility and promote circulation. Staff began cross-promoting digital resources in the World Languages collection, including promotion of Mango Languages as a world language study and an ELL (English Language Learner) platform. Adult Services collaborated with Community Services on two programs to provide a display of materials of interest for checkout at select programs and events.

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.

In the fall, staff established 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.”

3. Diversity & Inclusion:

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

In light of what we learned in the presentation by JJ’s List at the March 1 Staff Institute, 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.”

Staff conducted a study of the audio equipment used for programming in the Auditorium. As a result of the study, overhead speakers were shifted back to provide better sound coverage in the room and reduce microphone feedback caused by presenters standing directly beneath overhead speakers at the front of the room. Current microphones will also be upgraded to newer, professional-grade models. Use of the microphones and amplification system for all programs and book discussions held in the Auditorium will better serve individuals with hearing impairments, including those who rely on the hearing loop system.

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

The Library hosted its inaugural Maker Fest event on Saturday, February 23 from 10:30am-2:30pm. Over 400 people attended the event. 12 employees from several departments staffed the event with the committee team of Janet Piehl, Ruth Bell, Krista Hutley, Suzanne Arist, and Jennifer Bartel. 12 student volunteers from the local junior high and high schools supported the staff. We hosted 43 exhibitors. Local businesses, organizations & individuals brought hands-on activities for patrons, including: Codeverse, REB Records, Treeplay, Drake Baskets, BinaryHeart, Sew on Central, Fiber Arts Group, Evanston Art Center, Wilmette Park District, Winnetka Public Library Studio, and Signe Mason's Girl Scout Gold Award project's geodesic dome planetarium. Activities for the event included: interactive video games and music, basket weaving, coding, snap circuits, light-up origami, knitting and fiber arts, collages, electronics deconstruction, collaborative building, button making, and vinyl cutter stickers. The event received resounding positive feedback with over 90% of those surveyed reporting that they would use a space in the library dedicated to arts, technology, and design (Maker) projects, and 47% reporting that they had attended maker programming at WPL in the past. Survey respondents expressed interest in future maker programs, including equipment requests for a 3D printer, t-shirt press, sewing machine, and laser cutter. The event garnered positive press with articles in the Wilmette Beacon and a front page feature in Wilmette Life.

Beginning in May 2019, our Drop-In Chess program, which meets twice a month on Sunday afternoons, welcomed both adult and teen chess players.

Youth Services librarian Lisa Bigelow hosted our first all-ages folk jam on Saturday, April 6. *Sing, Sing, Together* was attended by 8 adults and 7 children.

In April, Youth Services staff presented three intergenerational programs: Everyone Makes, Sing Together, and Drop-In Chess. In May and June we continued to offer monthly intergenerational programs Everyone Makes and Drop-In Chess. This summer Youth Services scheduled Family Tech Playground and Sing Together programs. On August 9, families are invited to join us when we bring Sing Together to the residents of Mather Place of Wilmette.

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

On Staff Institute Day, March 1, 2019, ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services provided an overview of their Cultural Competence and social justice framework for all staff in an effort to help staff create more inclusive spaces in the Library. Their presentation offered skills to develop knowledge and awareness of oneself in interacting with our diverse community of users and recognizing how we can more effectively meet the needs of those users. This program is part of our overall Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategic plan initiatives. Learn more about ALA/PLA's goals to support and promote EDI here: <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/edi>

To meet a growing demand from Chinese-speaking families with young children, staff created a new shelf of bilingual Chinese-English picture books in the picture book area. The bilingual books

meet the needs of both English language learners and Chinese language learners, and have been increasingly popular with our patrons. Librarians Yvonne Chang and Jennifer Lee helped with selection and translations for signage, Rosemarie Hohol in Technical Services helped with processing, and Sarah Rose in Community Services created new signage.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee convened in June. It consists of Anthony Auston, Mike Boone, Rebecca Vrana-Naquin, Patsy DeVuono, Krista Hutley, Christine Hightower, Rosemarie Hohol, and Stephen Koebel (chair). The committee is developing a Diversity Statement and discussing a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff.

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.

The Library's Outdoor Renovation Project design, materials, finishes, and plant material selections were approved by the Board of Library Trustees in January 2019. The Board subsequently approved posting the project for public bid, and approved the contract with Shales-McNutt Construction for the project's construction management. The Board awarded bids for project contractors in March, with the project ground breaking taking place in mid-April. The Library remained open throughout construction, and was phased to ensure safe and consistent public access to the facility despite complete reconstruction of the entry plaza. The final punchlist was established in late July and the construction fences finally came down, welcoming the community back to the front lawn. In August we celebrated the grand re-opening of the Library's grounds after 3 months of construction and nearly 2 years of planning. As a result of the renovation project, we've expanded the entry plaza and improved access to the Library's entrance. Our new concrete surfaces will be cleaner, safer, and easier to maintain thanks to our new snowmelt system. We've expanded and beautified our butterfly garden with an accessible walking path and all-native plants, shrubs, and trees (complete with botanical signage to help inform patrons about the species on our site and maybe consider adding these plants in their own home gardens). We've added over a dozen new seating options throughout the site. We've repaired cracked sidewalks and added new and expanded bike racks. We've improved our irrigation system and enhanced our lawn to help support outdoor events and performances. An overview and timeline of the project is available online at: <https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/about/about-us/projects>

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

Fiscal year 2018-2019 began with a national search for a new Director. Bradbury Miller Associates was retained as the consultant, and returned 23 applicants. Following interviews, review, and consideration of the applicants in the summer of 2018, the Board selected Anthony Auston, former Director of Palatine Public Library District (IL), to begin in late October 2018.

In fall 2018, recruitment began for a new Head of Youth Services. We received 10 qualified applicants for the position. Following interviews, review, and consideration of the applicants, the search committee selected Andrea Vaughn Johnson, formerly of Brooklyn Public Library (NY), to begin in late November 2018.

The Leadership Team conducted 2018 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 2019 goals.

Staff is developing a Remote Work/Telecommuting Policy and Agreement to formalize our Work from Home practice and procedures. Formalizing the request and agreement process is designed help staff clearly define remote work schedules, work expectations, check-in and communication processes, as well as to set a timeframe for remote work privilege. The new procedures will take effect in FY2019-2020.

Libraries in the region are bracing for the impact of the gradual increase to the state minimum wage over the next 6 years. The minimum wage will increase incrementally from \$8.25 to \$15 by Jan 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 began preparing a plan for implementing this initiative with peer 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. Minimum wage will be established at \$10/hour on July 1, 2020. WPL currently does not have any positions that start at less than \$10/hour. Manager of Human Resources Michael Boone participated in a seminar in June through HR Source to explore ways to prepare for the incremental increase(s). Staff continues to evaluate these trends to ensure our compensation plan and pay grades are appropriately aligned to accept the increases.

The Library participated in the 2019 LACONI Salary & Fringe Benefits survey. 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.

The passage of the FY2019-2020 Working Budget included 3 strategic increases to support human resources: 1) 25% increase to continuing education registrations to promote staff attendance in workshops, events, and the biannual Public Library Association conference in February 2020 in Nashville; 2) 75% increase in travel/mileage reimbursement to support staff attendance in remote continuing education workshops, events, and the biannual Public Library Association conference in February 2020 in Nashville; and 3) 5% increase in total salaries. The Board and staff recognize that Wilmette Public Library District is a service organization. In our efforts to provide our community with quality resources, collections, and services, the Library relies on the strength, qualifications, and training of our staff to achieve our mission. To this end and related to the Library's compensation plan, in spring 2018, the Library conducted a benchmarking study for its workforce, formally comparing compensation with job descriptions

and matching this data to our local industry to ensure that our compensation is appropriate and keeping pace with the market. The study resulted in an updated salary schedule. The first phase of progressive adjustments to compensation, in an effort to meet the market, was completed with the lowest salaried positions in summer 2018. The next phase of adjustments is due to take effect presently, concurrent with planned cost-of-living adjustments which took effect on July 1, 2019. To accomplish this, the Library planned a 3% increase across all positions to meet market and limit compression. Additionally, since the recent passage of the \$15 minimum wage bill has a slight cascading effect over the Library's compensation structure, the salary schedule will need to be regularly reviewed and realigned. Further, as our strategic direction and service model evolves, departments will review all open positions and roles of current positions to determine needs in fulfilling our mission going forward. Each of these objectives align with our plan to evaluate, and refine the Library's personnel and compensation strategies to equitably recruit, retain, and recognize talented staff.

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

Assistant Head of Adult Services Jill McKeown is midway through the year-long Charrm'd Foundation Leadership Academy, a development program assisting those who are new to leadership, are being considered for a leadership role within the next couple of years, or are looking for fundamental training on the people-side of leadership.

Adult Services librarian Rachel Garcia attended the Reaching Forward conference on May 3, and was inspired to develop a learning circle at the library on an art/architecture subject after attending the *Learning Circles at Your Library: Creating Life Empowering Adult Programming for Free* workshop.

Teen and Adult librarian Krista Hutley attended *Takes on Teen Programming: Tales of Teen Advisory Boards and Pop-Up Programming that Works* on May 16. As a result she's exploring ways of using "casual interactive" programs to provide a more interactive environment in the teen space without relying on dedicated programs, and is considering doing them more frequently, along with using the digital monitor slideshow in the Teen Room in more creative ways, and is developing new display and readers' advisory ideas for teens.

Selectors in Adult and Youth Services attended training sessions on CollectionHQ in June. CollectionHQ is a software product that uses an Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) approach to collection development. The product gives libraries data management tools that help to effectively analyze collections. Selectors can use the data to efficiently manage the collection development process with the ultimate goal of making the collection more patron focused.

Librarians in Adult and Youth Services attended a two hour workshop on LEAP presented by Meiko Landers, Member Services Librarian from CCS, on June 17. This advanced workshop focused on using LEAP features to search the library's collection efficiently and effectively, and gave attendees the opportunity to save individualized power searchers to their own profiles resulting in quicker and more tailored responses to patron requests.

Head of Youth Services Andrea Vaughn Johnson and Assistant Head of Adult Services Jill McKeown attended the annual American Library Association Conference in Washington, DC on June 20-25.

5. Marketing & Communications:

Objective 5.3: By March 2019, develop a set of tools to evaluate how the Library's services, collections, and programs are meeting the needs of the community.

Following evaluation of collection usage, performance, and patron feedback, the FY2019-2020 Working Budget included responsive increases to support programs and collections, including a 17% increase to electronic resources (including streaming and downloadable collections), and a 7% increase in support of Library-wide programming. This funding increase aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 1: Focus library services to promote connections in our community; Objective 2.3: Beginning in June 2019, adjust current practices to increase ease of use of physical and digital collections; Objective 3.3: Beginning in April 2019, develop intergenerational opportunities for youth and adults to work together on a shared goal; Objective 3.4: Beginning in August 2019, develop a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff; as well as Objective 5.3: By March 2019, develop a set of tools to evaluate how the Library's services, collections, and programs are meeting the needs of the community.

Staff launched our Program Evaluation pilot program in March. The initial round of evaluations will use both in-house surveys as well as those created by PLA's Project Outcome toolkit to begin evaluating library programs and services. The first 6 month phase will evaluate Summer Reading Club and Digital Universe classes using Project Outcome surveys, and will evaluate Money Smart Week, One Book Everybody Reads, and American Creed programming using either in-house surveys or those provided by the sponsoring organization.

Adult Services staff has been reviewing their program feedback from our Death Cafés, Cookbook Club, and One Book, and are inspired by the narrative responses they're receiving.

Gayle Rosenberg Justman, Head of IT and Technical Services, implemented our new material analytics product CollectionHQ, and began training librarian staff with a series of detailed workshops in early June. This collection analytics and reporting software will help staff to better study trending and usage statistics for our collections. All of the full-time librarians who select materials as well as the Director and Head of IT/TS have been set up as users.

Wilmette Public Library District

Fiscal Year 2019-2020+ Strategic Plan Goal Progress Summary

Thursday, November 5, 2020

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 review of staff's specific activities in fulfillment of the plan's goals and objectives in the following 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.

Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell conducted 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.

Youth Services staff promoted Library services and signed up families for library cards at three August 28, 2019 back-to-school events at McKenzie, Central, and Romona. They talked to 100 parents and children and registered 24 residents for library cards. Librarian Alice Joseph also worked an outreach table at Marie Murphy School's Open House on September 4. Most parents she spoke to already had library cards except for a family of three who all signed up for cards at this event.

Jenny Klein and Betty Giorgi began the Mather Place Visiting Librarian project. This is a once a month outreach visit to the residents of Mather Place to increase awareness and access to library services and programs.

The Library promoted Library Card Signup Month 2019 at the Library, throughout the community, and via social media. YS librarians coordinated four pop-up activity stations on our lawn and in Vattmann Park. These four events were visited by 78 people who received WPL promotional items, made WPL buttons to wear, and posed for photos with an oversized library card. Many of the photos were shared on our social media feeds. Staff also promoted the Library at the French Market on Saturdays during September; staff participants include Martha Birkhold, David Bliss, Sheri Reda, Susan Zonia, Joan Blecher, Marti Bellefontaine, and Luciano Ward, as well as Trustee Stuart Wolf.

Preschool book & STEM kit Delivery Program

This 2018-2019 school year we offered all Wilmette and Kenilworth preschools a monthly delivery of books & STEM kits to be used in their classrooms. The nine participating preschools were each issued a library card. 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 1495 books and 42 STEM kits to the nine preschools over the nine month period.

Participating schools:

Wilmette Park District Early Childhood Center
Trinity Church Nursery School
Sprouted Child Care & Early Education
BJE Early Childhood Center
About All Things Bright & Beautiful
Rose Hall Montessori
A Joyful Noise Preschool
St. Francis Xavier School
Connecting Kids Preschool – Romona Elementary

Summer Reading Club Outreach

Youth Services librarian Alice Joseph visits all of our schools in May and June to promote the program. From late May through early June she visited Marie Murphy Middle School to talk to 150 6th and 7th grade students, and Romona Elementary to present to all 535 students (including the early childhood program) in six auditorium presentations. At Romona she was joined by the Glenview Library school liaison librarian. She delivered 460 summer brochures to Avoca Elementary School and 480 summer brochures to the Sears School to be distributed to students. Her audiences in June totaled over 1700 students and teachers.

Meet The Author

Susan Orlean, best-selling author of *The Library Book* spoke to an audience of approximately 200 people at Wilmette Junior High School on October 19, 2019. This was the Library's 7th *Meet the Author* event, bringing nationally recognized authors to speak and participate in conversation with the community through a Q&A session that follow the presentations. Ms. Orlean regaled the audience with her love of libraries and detailed how this particular story became a consuming research project for her. Her presentation was followed by a lively Q&A, and a book signing in partnership with The Book Stall.

Youth Services Outreach

Following the establishment of the Community Engagement Committee in February 2019, Youth Services staff began reporting outreach efforts in the Director's Monthly Report.

- Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell conducted 23 outreach visits to preschools and daycares in July, presenting storytime and STEM activities to 377 people. Ruth Bell also expanded her Summer Reading Club visits to six preschool summer day camps this year. She loaned a collection of picture books perfect for reading aloud to preschoolers to the camp counselors, to support them in reading to campers. Ruth performed storytimes, signed up the children as a group, tracked their reading on a leaderboard, and gave every child a free prize book and the end of the program.
- Ruth Bell conducted seven outreach visits to preschools, daycares, and park district camps in August, presenting storytime, STEM activities, and Summer Reading Club to 133 children. Youth Services staff promoted Library services and signed up families for library cards at three August 28 back to school events at McKenzie, Central, and Romona. They talked to 100 parents and children and registered 24 residents for library cards. Librarian Alice Joseph also worked an outreach table at Marie Murphy School's Open House on September 4. Most parents she spoke to already had library cards except for a family of three who all signed up for cards at this event.
- Youth Services conducted 22 outreach and community engagement events in October, including two first grade field trips from Harper School, a book presentation given to area preschool teachers for the annual Alliance for Early Childhood, and 19 visits to area preschools to perform programs and deliver books and STEM kits.
- Youth Services conducted 22 outreach and community engagement events in November and 9 in December. These visits included outreach to St. Francis Xavier School's Family Reading Night on November 21, which was attended by 100 people. Ruth Bell also conducted 14 visits in November and 9 visits in December to area preschools to perform programs and deliver books and STEM kits. Youth Services librarians brought the Sing Together program back to Mather Place senior living community on December 19 for a festive winter sing-along attended by 20 residents and families with 5 children from the community.
- Ruth Bell represented the Library at the annual Alliance for Early Childhood Preschool-Kindergarten Summit at Chicago Botanic Garden February 6. She collaborated with area libraries on a recommended reading booklist and brought books for checkout for the 200 teachers that attended. Youth Services conducted seven outreach and community engagement events in February. Ruth Bell performed storytime programs during six visits to area preschools and returned to deliver books and STEM kits.
- On March 3, Ruth Bell participated in Fairytale Fest at the Community Recreation Center, attended by 78 people. The Library and the Wilmette Park District celebrated ScreenBreak Week with fun and games related to fairy tales from around the world. On March 11, Janet Piehl visited Highcrest Middle School where she read scary stories to 105 students to mark Friday the 13th.
- Preschool Outreach Librarian Ruth Bell made two virtual visits to Joyful Noise Preschool in early May, reaching 20 children and their teachers. Ruth is also sending virtual STEAM kits to area preschools.

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 was interviewed by Cindy Shutts from *School Library Journal* about our virtual Dungeons and Dragons program; the article was posted on the Teen Librarian Toolbox: <http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2020/05/cindy-crushes-programming-running-a-virtual-dungeons-and-dragons-program/>. Krista's programming was also featured *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. 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.

Mather Place Visiting Librarian

This year, in addition to conducting a monthly book discussion series at Mather Place, a rental community for those age 62 and better, the Library will send a visiting librarian once a month, beginning in August, to assist residents in using digital library materials and services. Adult Services Librarian Jenny Klein will staff the visiting librarian service in August and will continue on the third Tuesdays of the month. This pilot program is intended to assist residents in making full use of library services and programs. Reference services, help with the online catalog, and instruction on the downloadable and streaming collections will be provided.

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

The Community Engagement Committee was established in February 2019. The committee created and piloted an online form for staff to record Outreach, Advocacy, and Partnership activities. Reports of these activities were included as a regular supplement to the Director's Monthly Report in the Board Packet. Staff submits a new Community Engagement online form for every outreach visit and class visit to the library.

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

On Saturday, November 9, 2019, approximately 40 community members participated in a skills workshop "How to Talk Across the Political Divide" presented by the nationally recognized non-partisan organization, Better Angels. Attendees expressed appreciation for how the workshop that was designed to help participants effectively and respectfully communicate with others who may be on the opposite of the political spectrum.

On February 18, 2020, Pace Suburban Bus Service held a public hearing at the Library as part of a series of public hearings in 5 north shore communities. According to a statement: "Pace has proposed making a second phase of changes (as part of the North Shore Transit Service Coordination Plan and Market Analysis) in August 2020. The proposal was guided by input from transportation professionals and community stakeholders and includes streamlined routes,

increased frequency on arterial roads, reduced waiting times, better connections to CTA trains, and an overall improvement to the public transportation network in North Cook County. The proposal includes changes to Routes 215, 225, 226, 422, and 423; the addition of a new Route 424; and the discontinuation of Routes 210 and 421. Public hearings were held in Chicago, Glenview, Niles, Northbrook, Evanston, and Wilmette to solicit public input on the proposed changes; riders can also provide feedback via our Public Hearing Comment Form:

http://www.pacebus.com/sub/news_events/public_hearings_comments.asp.”

Of immediate impact to the Library, Route 421 is slated to be discontinued altogether. Route 421 runs along Wilmette Avenue and connects Wilmette Library to Linden CTA, Edens Plaza, Loyola Academy, New Trier West, and the Northfield branch of the Winnetka-Northfield Library. Route 422, which currently stops a block east of Wilmette Library at Green Bay Road and Wilmette Avenue, is being restructured and absorbing “productive school trips” from route 421, however the proposed changes made no mention of accessibility to the Library. Director Auston attended the hearing at Wilmette Public Library and advocated for patrons and staff who rely on Pace for access to the Library.

The Wilmette Writers Group meets weekly in the Small Meeting Room with Julie Johnson as facilitator. This group holds peer reviews in a supportive environment for aspiring writers. Some recent successes include:

a. “Theft of Air” by member Colby Vargas was published in Flash Fiction Magazine this month. Colby credited the group for their support saying, “The Wilmette group gave me great feedback! Thanks!”

<https://flashfictionmagazine.com/blog/2020/01/07/theft-of-air/#more-32778>

b. Member Doug MacDonald, had a translation (from the German) of a Rainer Maria Rilke poem published in the anthology "Nocturne: Poetry of the Night" from CultureCult press, and the British publication, HCE, published his piece “The Flies at the Pool in D.C.”

<http://herecomeseveryone.me/2019/08/31/flies-at-the-pool-douglas-macdonald/>

On Saturday, October 5, 2019, Rachel Garcia and Jill McKeown invited area book lovers to our Book Club Open House. Over 30 attendees learned how the Library can help them select and acquire titles for themselves and/or their book groups. The open house provided a casual meet and greet environment, complete with snacks. Attendees visited tables featuring different topics like how to do research on authors and how to find reviews on books. The Book Stall delivered a “book buzz” talk on new titles that would be good for book groups.

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 Census 2020 with the Village of Wilmette. The committee coordinated efforts with village stakeholders to achieve as complete as possible Census count of the Village. The Library scheduled an informational program for the community presented by Rep. Jan Schakowsky and other elected officials on Saturday, February 8. 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 established a deeper relationship with the Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce and SCORE to provide more mentoring and learning opportunities for small

businesses and entrepreneurs. On September 12, with a turnout of over 40 attendees, the Chamber hosted an event focused on "Problems Every Business Owner Should/Can Avoid." SCORE was the featured presenter. Librarian Nancy Wagner described library services and resources that would be useful for business owners. The Library, Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce, and SCORE partnered to host a special workshop on January 9 to help Wilmette business owners reach their sales goals in 2020. Over 70 participants heard a panel discussion of SCORE experts discuss how to devise a strategy to increase their customer base, including such topics as marketing, advertising, and networking. Library staff introduced and reviewed resources available to business owners.

On February 24, 2020, Director Auston and Youth Services Manager Andrea Johnson attended the Regular Meeting of Wilmette Public Schools District 39. Superintendent Dr. Kari Cremascoli announced that the school district was expanding its partnerships with Wilmette Public Library and Glenview Public Library through a collaboration for the purpose of increasing the number of students with library cards. Tony DeMonte, School Administrator for Technology, Information, and Safety, explained to the District 39 Board how both public libraries have historically partnered with the school's librarians in many ways, and that they are excited to expand the partnership to meet the needs of our shared constituents. Together we share the goal for every child in our community to obtain a public library card. He noted that opening up public libraries to students encourages reading outside of the school day and allows access to the library database for research.

Objective 1.5: By February 2021, establish and implement a library volunteer program.

HR Manager Michael Boone presented a draft universal Volunteer Application to the Leadership Team; all departments will use this form for potential volunteer candidates. Staff is developing a Task Force to identify volunteer needs in each department and to develop a volunteer job bank, as well as establish procedures for recruitment and on-boarding. The next goal is to create a Volunteer Handbook that will outline expected conduct for our volunteers, and help them get acclimated to our procedures and work culture.

Shelving and Switchboard Manager Patsy DeVuono continues to coordinate volunteers in her department. We have students from three area schools doing some form of work experience with us: Sophie and Quinn have worked for us each weekday morning shelving books. Eloise and Will work weekday afternoons straightening the shelves in Youth Services. They are from New Trier High School. Dylan, from Cove School, has been shelving DVDs for us every Tuesday afternoon. Alex and Will, from Arlyn School, have recently started shelving DVDs on Thursday mornings. Each of the students have a teacher working along with them, and are all doing a great job. We're grateful for their support and for the opportunity to work with them.

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)
Portable DVD player (x7)
Magnifiers (x7)
iPad 2 (x2)
Merge cube (x5)
Merge headset (x5)
Nintendo 2DS (x7)
NOOK (x4)
Ozobot (x6)
Kill A Watt meter (x2)
Portable CD player (x7)
Sphero (x6)
Mini projector (x2)
Telescope (x2)
Mobile hotspot (x12)

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

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 on the south side of the room. Current efforts to right-size and relocate select reference books and the back periodical collections will help to free up additional space.

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.

To promote ease of access and circulation, staff began barcoding individual issues of all periodicals beginning with the September 2019 issue of our magazine collections.

Responding to the pandemic gave us an opportunity to test our preparedness “to be more nimble and creative in how we provide services” and demonstrate our responsiveness in “creating an adaptive environment.” Given the circumstances of this limited environment, staff did a remarkable job increasing accessibility and promoting ease of use our library card.

Coordinating with CCS, we extended all due dates. We suspended accrual of overdue fines. We renewed all recently expired and soon-to-be expired cards through the FY20-21, and unblocked all accounts with fines and other blocks, so every cardholder has access to our online resources during the closure. Any holds currently on the hold shelf at the time of the closure in March 2020 were held and made available for pick up after we resumed physical material circulation in June.

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.”

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.”

The Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA) scheduled two field trips to the Library and Youth Services: one self-guided visit in October and one librarian-led visit with a tour and guided activities in January. Staff highlighted our accessible technology and sensory-friendly events.

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.

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

Our second annual Maker Fest (Saturday, February 29) was attended by nearly 700 people, almost twice our attendance from last year. The event featured twenty local makers demonstrating art, technology, and design projects throughout the building and gave attendees the chance to experience hands-on learning. These included Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse who helped attendees make artistic creations from discarded building materials. Drake Baskets returned to demonstrate basket weaving and chair caning. Northwestern’s Robotics Club showcased their student-produced machines. Sew On Central taught beginning sewing. Other activities included collage-making, beading, circuitry, knitting, and crocheting. Maker Fest is planned by an interdepartmental team led by Youth Services Maker Librarian Janet Piehl and Youth Services librarian Ruth Bell. The event received resounding positive feedback with over

90% of those surveyed reporting that they would use a space in the library dedicated to arts, technology, and design (Maker) projects, and 47% reporting that they had attended maker programming at WPL in the past. Survey respondents expressed interest in future maker programs, including equipment requests for a 3D printer, t-shirt press, sewing machine, and laser cutter.

On August 9, 2019, families joined us for a sing-along of traditional songs with the residents Mather Place of Wilmette. Seniors and children played tambourines and shakers and sang favorite songs from childhood. 35 adults and 5 children participated, and many of the residents expressed that the program stirred up happy memories of childhood and parenthood. Mather Place would like us to bring the program back in the future.

Monthly intergenerational programs Everyone Makes, Drop-In Chess, and Sing Together continued throughout the year. Youth Services hosted Family Tech Playground programs. The Library's new all-ages drop-in Maker Lab program, spearheaded by YS librarians, debuted on Saturday, October 5.

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

Civil rights activist and south side luminary Timuel Black 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* recounts his life within the context of the struggle for civil rights. Mr. Black elaborated on his experience as an African American negotiating the turbulent times of the last 100 years in Chicago. A lively Q & A followed with a book signing. His popularity was further evidenced by the fact that The Book Stall sold out of the author's book at the event. Two Wilmette residents and former students of Mr. Black's from his years as a high school teacher in Hyde Park introduced themselves to him after the presentation and had a mini reunion.

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”

Our Place and the Library have restarted their book discussion group after a summer hiatus. Our Place (<https://www.ourplaceofnewtrier.org/>) is a community organization serving teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. One of their goals is to engage their members in the larger community. This book discussion group is held at the library to encourage their familiarity with this resource and to encourage group activities that are part of the larger community’s aspirations.

After attending a Reaching Forward Conference in 2019, Librarian Rachel Garcia came back inspired to test out a “learning circle” at Wilmette Public Library. A learning circle is a study group for adults in a community who want to complete online course together, in-person. Learning circles are intended to be a comfortable, low-pressure environment to learn a new skill. Rachel chose a popular four week course that teaches basic signs and hand parameters in American Sign Language (ASL). Students practiced visual comprehension, signing, and basic expressive and receptive skills. Course materials were provided by Sign School. Rachel attended as a student and coordinated logistics including support services to make these virtual classrooms work. This series ran on Tuesdays in February 2020. Suzanne Symanietz from the Shelving Department visited at the end of each class to answer questions about signing and the deaf community.”

In October 2019, we began offering an English Language Learners (ELL) Conversation Café facilitated by Susan Zonia. These informal gatherings provide non-native speakers an opportunity to practice their English in a relaxed setting. We reached out to community members who attended a Chinese language story time and asked them to fill out a short questionnaire to determine interest. In January, we began holding the café twice a month.

Teen Librarian Krista Hutley continues her American Sign Language classes through a six week program via Gale Courses that began as a public program at the library. She also listened to a TED talk called “The Urgency of Intersectionality” by Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw, and an NPR podcast called “When Xenophobia Spreads Like A Virus” with a corresponding article, all of which will aid her knowledge on the EDI committee going forward.

Krista also coordinated with her contact at Our Place of New Trier (teens and adults with disabilities) and with Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook (social & support group for teens, especially involved in LGBTQ support) to find and share resources with their members. Brittany of Our Place asked Krista for help looking for digital audiobooks she could use for their Next Chapter book club virtually, and Lizzy from YSGN asked about running virtual D&D and Krista was able to provide her with useful resources.

Before the pandemic closure, Youth Services librarian Sheri Reda attended a meeting of the newly formed RAILS Youth Services Equity Diversity and Inclusion group. They discussed the book How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi and discussed ways to promote equity through programming.

The library planned a screening and discussion of *Intelligent Lives* on Saturday, March 14. The documentary follows three young adults with intellectual disabilities as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. As soon as we can reschedule or offer access to this or similar films remotely we'll promote the opportunity.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee continues to meet and evaluate operations with a lens toward equity. It consists of Anthony Auston, Mike Boone, Rebecca Vrana-Naquin, Patsy DeVuono, Krista Hutley, Christine Hightower, Rosemarie Hohol, and Stephen Koebel (chair). The committee is developing a Diversity Statement and discussing a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff.

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.

The final construction item of the 2019 Outdoor Renovation Project was installed on October 7. The custom wooden bench comprising the entire back side of the monument sign at the corner of Wilmette and Park avenues is quickly becoming a popular destination for patrons and a highlight of the recent site improvements as a result of the project. With this last step complete, the Library submitted its final payments and updated our total costs for the project. In February, following the award of contracts to our successful subcontractor bidders, our total estimated project cost was \$858,195. With the final payments complete in October, the actual project cost was \$777,876; a difference of \$80,319. Despite additional concrete work, bluestone, and revised ventilation of the snow-melt boiler, the project didn't require a penny of the \$64,211 construction contingency and saved an additional \$16,108. The Library credits both the quality of the results and the value-savings of this project to our partnership with Shales-McNutt Construction (SMC). SMC was instrumental in ensuring that the goals of the project were achieved while also helping the Library to sustain normal operations throughout the construction phases. As a result of the renovation project, we've expanded the entry plaza and improved access to the Library's entrance. Our new concrete surfaces will be cleaner, safer, and easier to maintain thanks to our new snowmelt system. We've expanded and beautified our butterfly garden with an accessible walking path and all-native plants, shrubs, and trees (complete with botanical signage to help inform patrons about the species on our site and maybe consider adding these plants in their own home gardens). We've added over a dozen new seating options throughout the site. We've repaired cracked sidewalks and added new and expanded bike racks. We've improved our irrigation system and enhanced our lawn to help support outdoor events and performances. An overview and timeline of the project is available online at: <https://www.wilmettelibrary.info/about/about-us/projects>

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

The Leadership Team conducted 2019 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 2020 goals.

Staff developed a Remote Work/Telecommuting Policy and Agreement to formalize our Work from Home practice and procedures in 2019. Formalizing the request and agreement process helped staff clearly define remote work schedules, work expectations, check-in and communication processes, as well as to set a timeframe for remote work privilege. We were grateful to have completed this foundation work prior to the shelter-in-place order following the 2020 pandemic, when all staff scaled their duties/tasks to the remote work environment for at least a period of 3 months.

Libraries in the region are bracing for the impact of the gradual increase to the state minimum wage over the next 6 years. The minimum wage will increase incrementally from \$8.25 to \$15 by Jan 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 began preparing a plan for implementing this initiative with peer 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. Minimum wage will be established at \$10/hour on July 1, 2020. WPL currently does not have any positions that start at less than \$10/hour. Manager of Human Resources Michael Boone participated in a seminar in June through HR Source to explore ways to prepare for the incremental increase(s). Staff continues to evaluate these trends to ensure our compensation plan and pay grades are appropriately aligned to accept the increases.

The Library participated in the 2019 LACONI Salary & Fringe Benefits survey. 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.

The passage of the FY2020-2021 Working Budget included 3 strategic increases to support human resources: 1) 25% increase to continuing education registrations to promote staff attendance in workshops, events, and the biannual Public Library Association conference in February 2020 in Nashville; 2) 75% increase in travel/mileage reimbursement to support staff attendance in remote continuing education workshops, events, and the biannual Public Library Association conference in February 2020 in Nashville; and 3) 5% increase in total salaries. The Board and staff recognize that Wilmette Public Library District is a service organization. In our efforts to provide our community with quality resources, collections, and services, the Library relies on the strength, qualifications, and training of our staff to achieve our mission. To this end and related to the Library's compensation plan, in spring 2018, the Library conducted a benchmarking study for its workforce, formally comparing compensation with job descriptions and matching this data to our local industry to ensure that our compensation is appropriate and keeping pace with the market. The study resulted in an updated salary schedule. The first phase of progressive adjustments to compensation, in an effort to meet the market, was completed with the lowest salaried positions in summer 2018. The next phase of adjustments is due to take effect presently, concurrent with planned cost-of-living adjustments which took effect on July 1, 2019. To accomplish this, the Library planned a 3% increase across all positions to meet market

and limit compression. Additionally, since the recent passage of the \$15 minimum wage bill has a slight cascading effect over the Library's compensation structure, the salary schedule will need to be regularly reviewed and realigned. Further, as our strategic direction and service model evolves, departments will review all open positions and roles of current positions to determine needs in fulfilling our mission going forward. Each of these objectives align with our plan to evaluate, and refine the Library's personnel and compensation strategies to equitably recruit, retain, and recognize talented staff.

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

Adult Services librarians recently launched 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.

Our full-time and part-time staff have been consistently communicating as we assign tasks for our staff to perform from home to better promote our resources and serve our patrons. Managers have been exploring each staff member's strengths and will continue to assign appropriate tasks. For example, part-time librarian Suzanne Arist has been using Creative Bug to make macramé wall hangings which helps to highlight the outcomes of this database for patrons.

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 2019, Adult Services Manager Jill McKeown completed the Charmm'd Leadership Academy first 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 2020, 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 2019 session.

Andrea Vaughn Johnson attended the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, PA January 24-26. She attended the Leadership and Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) meeting in which association news and announcements were presented. Attendees were walked through exercises and discussions about successfully dealing with change in an organization. She also attended the first meeting of the 2021 Sibert Medal committee. This national team of librarians will evaluate and select the most distinguished informational books for children published for children in 2020.

Ruth Bell attended the Opening Minds: Early Childhood Education Conference in Chicago 1/29-1/31. She attended presentations on current practices in early childhood development including social justice, mindfulness, tinkering/STEM, nature play, and dialogic reading.

Director Auston attended the Public Library Association Conference in Nashville, TN February 25-29. For staff who were interested in attending but couldn't go, PLA offered members the ability to listen and view some of their programming sessions via live teleconference. On February 27 and 28, staff met in the Board Room where they could watch sessions on the TV throughout the day. Some of the topics covered included: "Bringing Technology & Arts Programming to Senior Adults" and "Creating a Diverse, Patron-Driven Collection". We had approximately 12 employees attend sessions throughout both days. Feedback was very positive and despite a few technical issues, both days ran smoothly. We are hoping that PLA continues this option in the future.

Diane dos Santos, Susan Kaplan-Toch, and Andrea Vaughn Johnson attended webinars during the Public Library Association Virtual Conference on February 27 and 28, 2020. Diane attended a stimulating program Part Playground, Part Laboratory: Building New Ideas at Your Library, about "concept libraries" and how they test new concepts in library service. Andrea attended the Programming for All Abilities program which described several program ideas that welcome and accommodate people with disabilities. Topics covered included visual schedules, appropriate language, and activity ideas. Susan attended Bringing Technology and Arts Programming to Senior Adults and brought back several ideas for serving seniors in our adult and intergenerational programs.

Jennifer Lee attended the Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo at McCormick Place on February 28. She saw presentations on anime, cosplay, comics in librarianship, graphic novels that support social emotional learning, and new books in the Star Wars franchise.

5. Marketing & Communications:

Objective 5.3: By March 2019, develop a set of tools to evaluate how the Library's services, collections, and programs are meeting the needs of the community.

Following evaluation of collection usage, performance, and patron feedback, the FY2020-2021 Working Budget included responsive increases to support programs and collections, including a 17% increase to electronic resources (including streaming and downloadable collections), and a 7% increase in support of Library-wide programming. This funding increase aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 1: Focus library services to promote connections in our community; Objective 2.3: Beginning in June 2019, adjust current practices to increase ease of use of physical and digital collections; Objective 3.3: Beginning in April 2019, develop intergenerational opportunities for youth and adults to work together on a shared goal; Objective 3.4: Beginning in August 2019, develop a comprehensive plan to integrate diversity into library programming, services, and staff; as well as Objective 5.3: By March 2019, develop a set of tools to evaluate how the Library's services, collections, and programs are meeting the needs of the community.

Staff launched our Program Evaluation pilot program in March. The initial round of evaluations will use both in-house surveys as well as those created by PLA's Project Outcome toolkit to begin evaluating library programs and services. The first 6 month phase will evaluate Summer Reading Club and Digital Universe classes using Project Outcome surveys, and will evaluate Money Smart

Week, One Book Everybody Reads, and American Creed programming using either in-house surveys or those provided by the sponsoring organization.

Adult Services staff has been reviewing their program feedback from our Death Cafés, Cookbook Club, and One Book, and are inspired by the narrative responses they're receiving.

Gayle Rosenberg Justman, Head of IT and Technical Services, implemented our new material analytics product CollectionHQ, and began training librarian staff with a series of detailed workshops in early June. This collection analytics and reporting software will help staff to better study trending and usage statistics for our collections. All of the full-time librarians who select materials as well as the Director and Head of IT/TS have been set up as users.

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

On March 11, Director Auston was the guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Wilmette's Regular Lunch 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 unfamiliar 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 just days away.

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Capital Reserve study
Document digitization
Building work (see 5/20 DR)

Our social media accounts have continued to grow, with a total of 1,031 Facebook followers on April 30 and 1,150 followers on Instagram. The growth has spiked when we have shared our accounts in our weekly emails, a practice we will continue to do going forward. We have had more engagement with our posts as well.

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.