

Executive Director’s Report

January 2021

What’s New @ AHML

AHML Goes Fine Free!

The library’s Fines Free and Auto-Renew policy went into effect January 2. Circulation Assistants shared details with customers who had questions regarding the new policies at drive-up, the Dunton walk-up station and the checkout desk. Customers have expressed their gratitude upon discovering that no fines had been charged to their accounts.

Explore the Collection from Home

To allow customers to browse many of our most popular collections from home, including picture books and audiobooks, staff have created a new webpage, titled [Explore the Collection](#). The page shows available items from popular collections and is divided by format and age, and within each page by collection.

Another section on the page is a carousel for a featured collection. This carousel will change on a regular basis and will be used to highlight different collections. The first collection to be featured is our adult music CDs, in a carousel called *New Year, New Tunes*.

The page can be found under the Borrow tab on the library website’s home page or from the *Books, Movies, Music & More* page.

Vaccine Information Page

Info Services Librarian Barb Powers worked with IT and Communications & Marketing to create and promote a *COVID-19*

Vaccine Information page. The link will also be on the public computers for easy customer access: https://www.ahml.info/vaccine_information



Digital Services Library of Things Additions

Digital Media Specialist Chris Smith added several items to the Library of Things collection in January. Due to high demand for the projectors, three projector screens were added. An additional *VHS to Digital Conversion Kit* was added to offer this service while the library is closed.

Outreach and Community Engagement

Pen Pal Program Expands to Home Delivery Customers

Senior and Accessibility (SAS) staff members, Elcin Akdeniz and Renee Witt, collaborated with Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Begich to expand the Pen Pal program. Volunteer pen pals now write to participants of the Library Delivery Services program. This program connects people who are homebound in our community with a pen pal.

Bookmobile Outreach

The bookmobile has been vital to many customers with challenges getting to the library's drive-up window. While the main library building was closed, the bookmobile continued bringing materials to the community, visiting regular stops since June 15, 2020.

In January over 20 inches of snow fell in the area, more than ten inches above normal. Bookmobile staff shoveled paths for customers, with customers thanking Ron Moravec and Al Garcia for still making it out with materials on an extra snowy day!



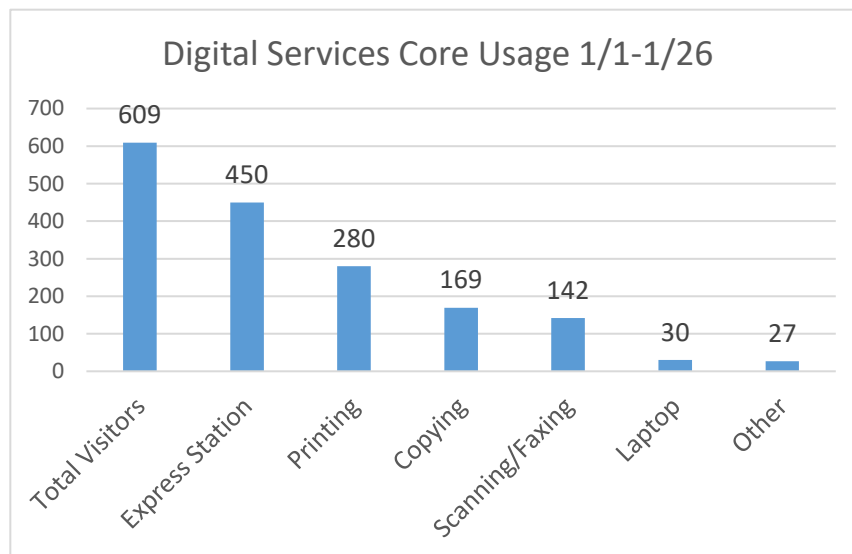
St. Viator Research and Database Presentations

In January and early February, the library connected with English teachers at Saint Viator High School to visit classes and present on research best practices. Presenting on 10 different Zoom classes, Teen Services staff along with Info Services Librarian Alison Lowery highlighted the library’s research resources and databases to about 200 high school students. Teen Services staff visit these classes annually to help foster information literacy skills. Many of the library’s resources are accessible online for the new educational landscape.

Serving our Community

North Core Vestibule Digital Services

Though the “Tech Stop” was only open through January 26 and the weather was colder, 609 customers used the services (increase of 89 from December). Printing and express station use continued to be the most popular services and many customers used multiple services at once.



Tax Forms

Digital Services Manager Jack Bower worked with Info Services staff to ensure that customers looking to get an early start on their 2020 taxes could retrieve their desired forms from the library. While the building was closed to the public, Info Services staff printed tax forms for pickup at the drive-up window. The 1040 and 1040-SR booklet was available at the “Tech Stop” and Dunton Entrance, and links to the tax forms were added to the “Tech Stop’s” Express Computer station for ease of printing.

Dunton Walkup and Drive-thru

From January 2-26, Circulation Assistants helped 1,171 customers at the Dunton walk-up station. The purpose of this service point was to give customers without a vehicle an option for hold pickup during the building closure. With the help of a variety of staff from Youth Services, activity kits, themed children's book bundles, and New and Popular adult items were on display for checkout. Staff also took requests at the door to pull items on the spot while the customer waited.

We saw 11,122 cars at drive-up in January to pick up holds, program supplies, print jobs, activity kits, etc., a 75% increase from 2020. During peak times, up to 70 cars visited the window per hour! Circulation assistants have shown incredible dedication and teamwork during these remarkably busy times while maintaining the high-level of customer service visitors have come to expect from AHML.

In January staff filled 37,183 customer holds, an increase of 55% over last January. Of these, Material Handling staff, along with helpers from multiple departments library-wide, searched for 24,172 in-library items on hold. In comparison, staff searched for 11,311 in-library items in January 2020. While there is normally an increase in holds after a holiday, about 1,400 of those holds were pulled on January 2, compared to 468 last January 2.



Reopening the Public Computer Lab



On January 27, the library building reopened to the public. Digital Services Manager Jack Bower and Supervisor Gregory Berger reconfigured the public computer lab. Four stations were moved to the tables just north of the Tech Learning Center Desk to provide more distance between computer stations. A total of 15 stations are available for up to one hour of use.

Autodesk Software Donation

In January, after soliciting *Autodesk Software*, Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger procured confirmation that they will be donating twenty three-year licenses of their *Product Design & Manufacturing Software Collection*. This collection of industry-standard software contains:

- *Autodesk Fusion 360*
- *Autodesk Recap Pro*
- *Autodesk AutoCAD*
- *Autodesk Inventor*
- *Autodesk 3Ds Max*

These software packages will be an extremely valuable resource to the makerspace, both for customer and instructional use. The skills learned using this software are directly applicable to careers in engineering, industrial design and 3D art. Additionally, *Fusion 360* can generate files for use on the 3D printers, laser cutters and CNC machine. This software collection retails at \$2,720/year which puts the twenty seat, three-year license donation at a value of \$163,200!

Large Makerspace Donation from Praxis AEC – TAKE TWO!

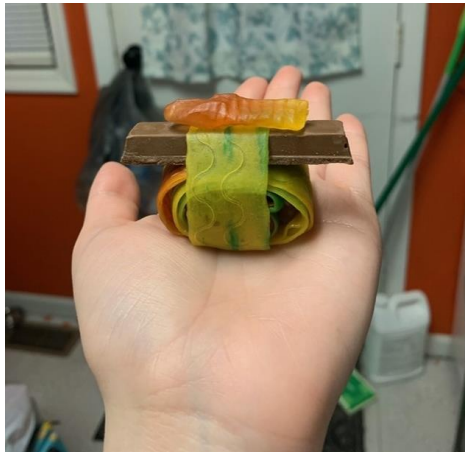
Praxis AEC made a furniture donation in December and invited the library to return for more items as they moved out of their offices. In January, Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger lead a team of library staff back to the Praxis offices to retrieve the second, much larger, donation from Praxis.

Over the course of 8-hours of moving furniture between the Praxis offices and the Belmont building, the makerspace took possession of office desks, storage cabinets, white boards, a color copy machine, a rolling tool chest, decorative wall art and much more. In all, Lauree Harp, Founder and Chair of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library Foundation, estimated this donation at a value of \$57,372.06!



Program Highlights

Teens Show Off their Candy Sushi Skills



On January 25, Teen Services Advisor Mariel Fechik led two sessions of *Candy Sushi Showdown* for teens. Since registration for the first session filled quickly, staff added a second session to accommodate all 14 teens who competed in this hands-on virtual program. Participants picked up the essential ingredients (*Rice Krispies Treats*, *Fruit by the Foot*, and *Swedish Fish*) at the library or the bookmobile. During the program, teens competed in three rounds of sushi-making: 1) include a mystery ingredient from their home kitchen, 2) create sushi



inspired by a book, and 3) make their best sushi with impeccable plating. Teens presented their creations and voted for each round's winner. While on Zoom, teens were engaged and excitedly turned on their videos to proudly display their creations!

Career Programs Resonate in January

January is usually a month with high demand for career programs with new job losses and a focus on improving careers. Info Services Librarian Alison Lowery addressed this need with two outstanding programs. *Better Resumes for Applying Online* on January 13 saw 160 attendees, with a speaker addressing the ins and outs of the *Applicant Tracking System*, a common tool employers use to screen resumes. The audience was highly engaged, with over 50 questions coming in by the end of the presentation.

Thirty-four customers attended the program *Job Search During the Pandemic* on January 20. In addition to planning tips, the program highlighted something few career programs do; the physical and mental health challenges of job searching.

Tech Classes

Digital Media Specialist Chris Smith taught the virtual program *Selling Online Overview* on January 13. The class instructed participants where to start selling items online. It taught tips when it comes to selling items on sites such as *Craigslist, eBay, Facebook Marketplace, OfferUp* and *Etsy*. The class had 39 attendees.

Digital Services Supervisor Gregory Berger taught the virtual program *Cord Cutting 101* on January 26. Participants learned how to potentially save hundreds of dollars annually by cutting their cable and phone cord. The program explored cost-effective alternatives to cable (*Netflix, Roku, Sling, Roku, Apple TV, Hoopla*) and traditional land line phones (mobile, *Google Voice*). The class had 82 attendees, the largest number of participants that this very popular class has ever had!

Digital Services Advisor Dan Johnson taught the virtual program *Free Alternatives to Adobe Creative Cloud* on January 18. The class covered free software options that allow participants to edit photos and videos, design fliers, create animations, record audio and more from their home computers. The class had 17 attendees.

SCORE Mentoring More Popular Than Ever

The ongoing partnership with *SCORE* (Service Corps of Retired Executives) offering small business mentoring appointments remains strong. In January, community members utilized the service for 13 appointments—a spectacular start to the year! The combination of virtual appointments and willingness of the mentors to assist customers beyond the scheduled times has allowed us to meet the increased demand. Businesses need guidance in the current business climate of the pandemic era, and offering this service is of great value to our customers.

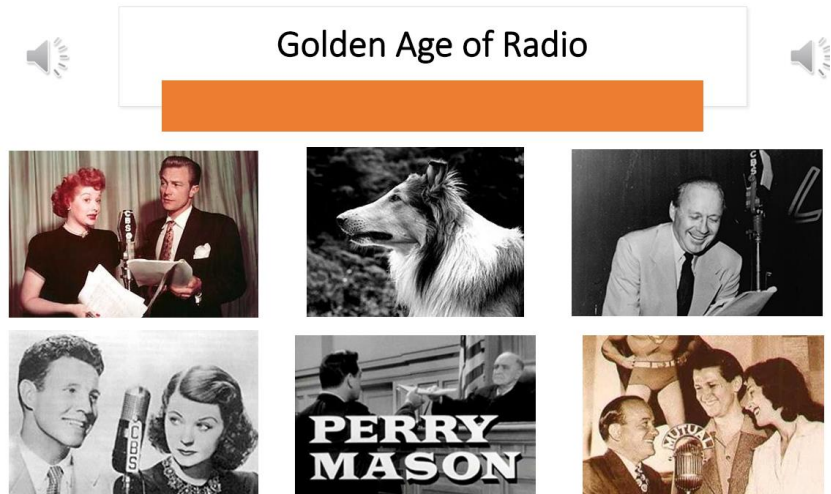
Author Claire Lombardo Visits a Book Discussion

On January 12, the *Novel Experience* book group included a Zoom discussion with Claire Lombardo, the author of *The Most Fun We Ever Had*. She discussed her writing process and provided insights into the novel with 29 attendees. For the second half of the event Claire Lombardo participated in an open discussion about the book. One customer noted, “*I loved the Zoom conference last night! The author was endearing!*”

Radio Days at the Memory Café

It was a very successful debut of the reminiscences program for the January *Memory Café*. Our new *Golden Age of Radio* program featured both images and radio recordings, including clips of Bob Hope, popular ads and theme songs, Jack Benny and the Grand Ole Opry. Participants shared and discussed throughout the program, prompting a lively discussion about popular radio shows that went on to become television shows, such as *Gunsmoke* and *Lassie*.

The program was researched by SAS staff Elcin Akdeniz and Renee Witt and presented by Mary Jo Lepo and Katie Myers. It will be offered in the future for our community partners at senior healthcare sites and as a phone in program.



Book Me and Booklist

In January, 18 *Book Me* requests were completed. Advisors curated reading lists based on customers' reading preferences. The *Book Me* service was promoted in the January newsletter which continues to drive increased usage of the service. Customer feedback included:

"I was in a book rut when I saw the Book Me service in the monthly booklet that is mailed out so it was perfect timing. The quiz was easy and fun to fill out. I think this is a really great service for the library to offer and enjoyed the experience."

"Great job, timely and quick response. What a creative and fun service to keep your library attendees engaged, pre and post COVID times. I already have two of the books on the list, I'm on wait list for a couple and I'm picking up more this week!"

In January, Info Advisors created 11 Booklists on the Readers' Services page so that customers can access these recommended items from home. These lists included:

[If you Loved Bridgerton, You Should Watch](#) and [Books on Racial Justice in Honor of MLK Day](#).

Virtual Bingo

Programs & Exhibits staff Tracy Recklaus, Megan Young and Jennifer Czajka hosted two sessions of virtual *Bingo* in January. Registered customers picked up their *Bingo* cards and daubers at drive-up ahead of the event. Both events saw a combined 90 people of all ages socializing, seeing friendly faces on Zoom and winning prizes! Five prizes were awarded per session and every prize gift certificate purchased supported Arlington Heights restaurants and bakeries. Attendees found the programs fun and well run.

- *It was a blast and I don't even like bingo! Tracy made it soooo much fun. She had us laughing through the whole thing. Wasn't thinking about the pandemic one bit!*
- *It was a great experience, my mother-in-law is an ESL learner and was able to participate.*

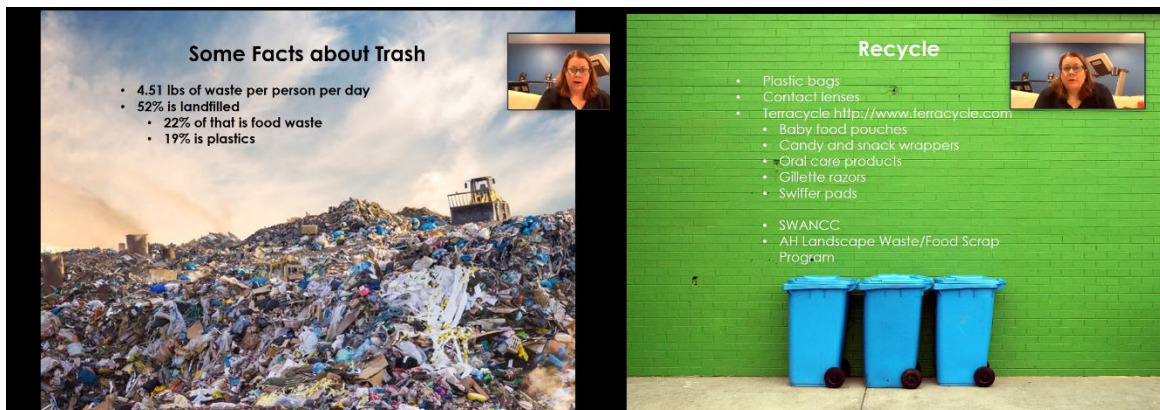
350 attend Jim Gibbons 1918 Pandemic presentation!

On Sunday, January 17, Programs and Exhibits Specialist Tracy Recklaus welcomed 350 customers on Zoom for another energetic historical presentation by Jim Gibbons – *The 1918 Pandemic*. Customers reported enjoying Jim's great visuals, humor and the enthusiasm he infuses into every program. Chat was active with questions throughout the program, with Jim fielding the most relevant ones. *Live Closed Captioning* was once again offered during this program and many customers let us know they were appreciative for the option. Customers shared the impact of the event via the post-event survey:

- *Great presentation and education especially...learned profound facts regarding history and its impact and its influence on our current crisis. "If the majority knew of the root of this evil, then the road to its cure would not be long" Albert Einstein.*
- *Very enlightening and Jim Gibbons showed enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject matter. Will likely pick up a book about it now.*
- *Jim Gibbons was outstanding in his research and presentation, even adding some humor. Very, Very interesting. Could of listened to him and ask questions all afternoon. Thank you!*
- *It was a learning experience; history does indeed repeat itself.*

Zero-Waste Mindset

Starting with a video showing the damage plastic water bottles create for the environment, Monica Chavez immediately had the attention of all 67 customers attending her *Zero-Waste Mindset* program on January 15. The presentation, planned with Programs & Exhibits Specialist Megan Young, discussed environmentally friendly alternatives to everyday tasks and products. Ranging from grocery shopping to toiletries, Monica covered it all with personality, compelling facts and stand-out visuals. Attendees kept her busy with questions and suggestions in the chat for the duration of the one-hour program. Monica provided product links to websites, books and videos to help educate. While becoming *Zero Waste* can be daunting, Monica assured everyone that it is not about some people doing everything 100% perfectly, but about everyone doing a little bit imperfectly.

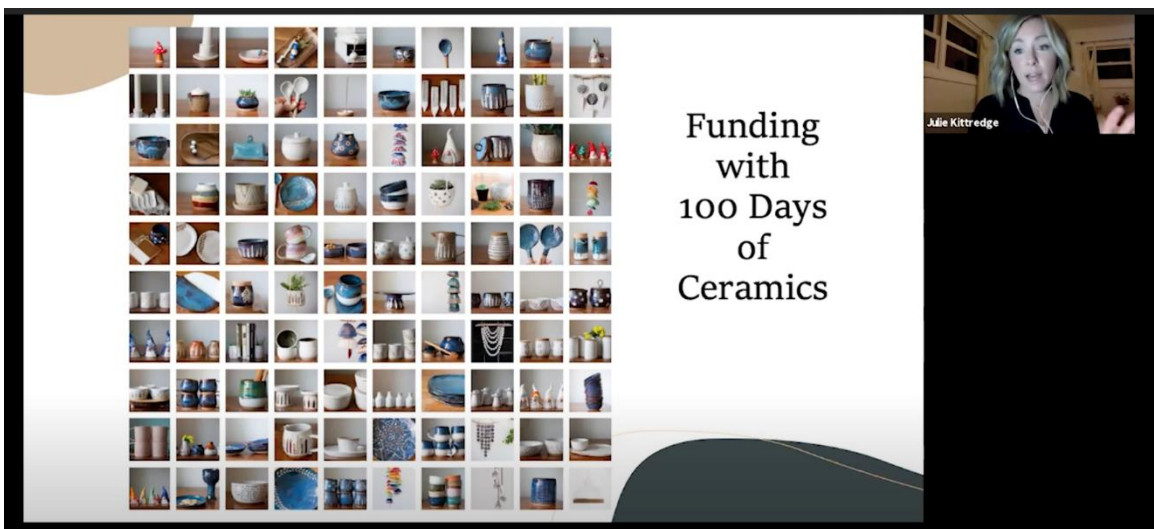


A sample of feedback from *Zero-Waste Mindset* attendees:

- *This was a wonderful program, full of information and most importantly, what actions we can take to try and help the environment. When I saw the water bottle video, it made me never want to buy one again. The presenter was excellent. Gave so many new ideas and tips I didn't know.*
- *Very easy to understand, and I love that we could access the info and websites later so I could pay attention to the presentation. I really enjoyed it. Thank you.*
- *The presentation was smooth, give a lot of useful information and practical ideas to start making changes. The content was easy to understand.*
- *She was really good. She used slides and visuals. She was animated and the audience contributed a lot. It was a very interactive presentation.*

Meet the Maker continues with Ceramicist Julie Kittredge

The new *Meet the Maker* series continued with a familiar face in January. On January 25, Maker Julie Kittredge, formerly the library's Business Services Advisor, joined Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger and Exhibits Coordinator Carol Ng-He to share her ceramics process, work and her journey to become a working artist. She shared her story with 42 attendees through short videos pre-recorded in her studio, along with stunning visuals and tips on some technical skills. Julie answered audience questions throughout the presentation. The variety of questions posed by attendees makes it clear our community is excited about the possibilities of making at the coming makerspace. The videorecording of the event is available on the library's YouTube page and has garnered an additional 40 views in one week.

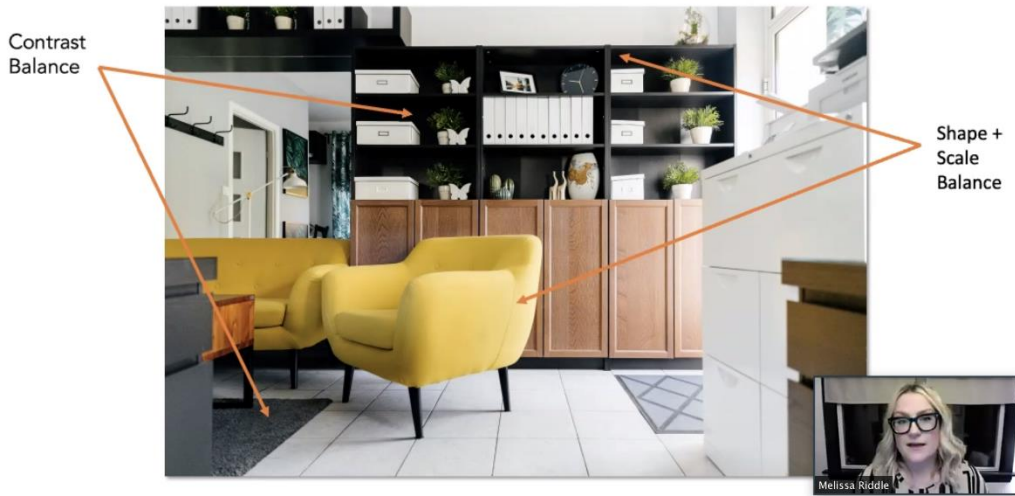


Surveys revealed that people attended for Julie's work as well as for the new *Meet the Maker* series:

- *It was a marvelous presentation. Julie Kittredge was real and engaging and inspiring. I wished it could have gone on longer!*
- *I really appreciated her openness and was thrilled to see her sweet studio and hear about her process.*
- *The Meet the Maker concept is interesting. Enjoy learning about art and the talented people behind the work.*
- *I have been joining most of the Meet the Maker programs and thought this one would be interesting and informative like previous ones I attended. Very enjoyable!*

So You Want to Redecorate?

It turns out a lot of people do in Arlington Heights! 195 customers registered for the January 19 presentation by self-employed designer Melissa Riddle. Because satisfaction with our homes is more important than ever during the pandemic while we school and work from home, Programs & Exhibits Manager Jennifer Czajka worked with Melissa to bring inspiration and pro tips to community members looking for a little push. 127 attended the live event and another 57 have viewed the recorded event, found on the library's YouTube page. The variety of information offered something for everybody.



Some accolades:

- *Great program. Full of very useful and helps info. Especially the part about the paint and its reflective properties. I never knew about that. Also replacing my light bulbs!!!*
- *I gained helpful info on how to strategize my own home decor overhauls.*
- *Learned a lot about making a room feel right and types of paint finishes.*
- *Guest speaker Melissa Riddle is clearly an expert in her field. Very informative, visually attractive and engaging presentation.*

Winter Cooking Demo with Chef Maddox

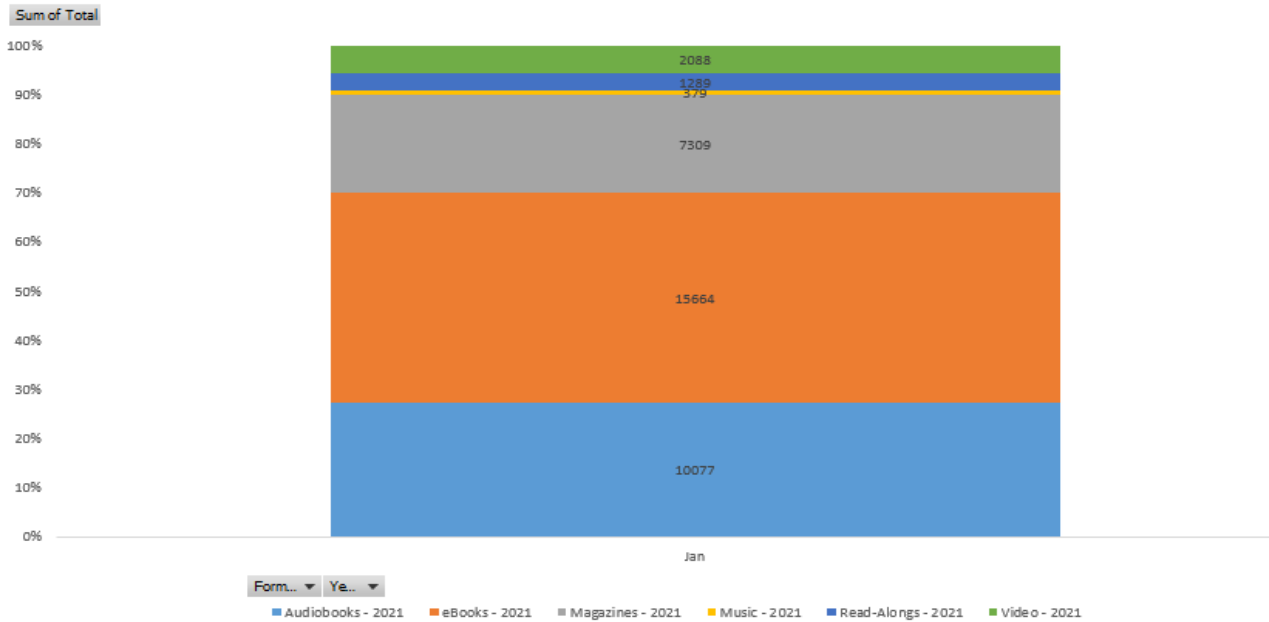
Former Restaurateur and culinary educator Chef Susan Maddox presented a seasonal cooking program on January 28 to 186 cooking enthusiasts. Susan is an excellent instructor with tons of experience, providing tips for the provided recipes. A Q&A session followed, facilitated by Programs & Exhibits Specialist Tracy Recklaus. Feedback after the program was positive. When asked why customers registered for the program, attendees shared:

- *The chance to learn some new cooking techniques*
- *Love to cook. Always looking for new recipes.*
- *I was interested to watch how a chef cooks.*
- *Looking for new recipes and cooking tips*
- *I need creative outlets, I like to cook, and I have always enjoyed the library programs.*

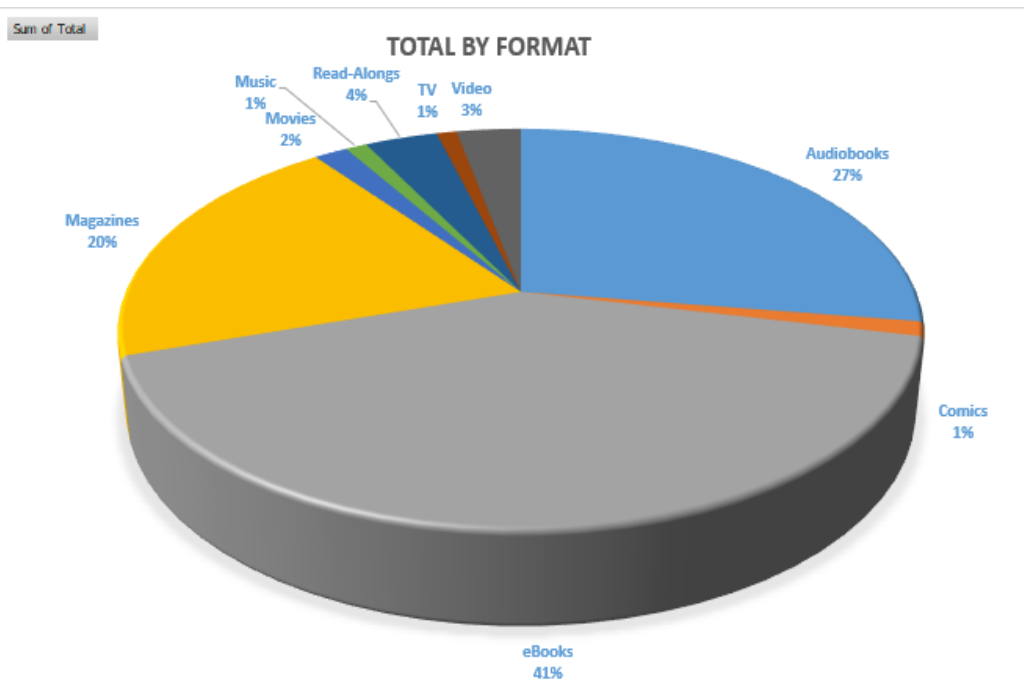
January eResource overview

eLibrary 2020/2021	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21
eBook checkouts	10,969	11,785	11,375	10,463	11,839	10,852	11,271	10,870	11,746	15,237
eAudio checkouts	4,011	4,415	4,338	3,893	6,391	6,308	6,381	6,325	6,562	10,077

Formats by Month (Percentages)



Row Labels	Sum of Total
Audiobooks	10077
Comics	427
eBooks	15237
Magazines	7309
Movies	595
Music	379
Read-Alongs	1289
TV	357
Video	1136
Grand Total	36806



Social Media Engagement – January 2021

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Facebook													
Posts	25	22	56	60	47	41	56	15	40	33	42	38	28
Followers ¹	5,067	5,113	5,217	5,291	5,376	5,436	5,469	5,501	5,613	5,664	5,695	5,703	5,727
Engagement	1,164	1,723	3,531	3,642	2,725	3,148	1,886	861	2,581	2,850	1,677	2,295	1,733
Twitter													
Tweets	65	51	111	139	148	143	137	100	127	120	118	101	117
Followers ¹	4,313	4,324	4,362	4,388	4,404	4,410	4,424	4,446	4,444	4,442	4,461	4,474	4,462
Engagement	247	203	534	394	399	387	283	240	366	324	340	322	262
Instagram													
Posts ¹	n/a	n/a	859	875	898	922	978	1,002	1,027	1,055	1,080	1,112	1,141
Followers ¹	1,767	1,802	1,852	1,904	1,947	2,006	2,081	2,106	2,129	2,154	2,179	2,210	2,231
Average Reach	n/a	286	485	451	435	459	560	344	389	318	425	502	502
Constant Contact													
Campaigns	20	19	22	27	26	27	21	17	15	18	16	13	14
Sends	46,572	44,518	127,872	85,980	43,351	110,385	52,314	39,158	63,951	47,932	92,920	46,325	94,378
Open rate	24%	28%	45%	36%	28%	34%	24%	27%	31%	26%	39%	32%	34%
Total contacts ¹	31,770	31,790	32,650	32,957	33,157	33,594	33,721	33,889	33,897	33,989	34,044	35,274	36,083
LinkedIn													
Followers ¹	655	657	659	660	672	684	685	689	693	696	707	712	716
Posts	7	1	5	1	1	8	0	7	4	8	0	1	9
Impressions	2,335	308	839	620	235	738	352	1,100	749	992	298	313	1,000
YouTube													
Subscribers ¹	397	402	456	514	585	603	627	658	691	723	747	765	796
Videos added ²	0	3	6	23	34	33	30	15	21	19	18	14	12
Views	1,601	1,821	2,875	5,102	5,053	3,202	3,086	2,900	3,159	3,763	2,859	2,443	2,803
Watch time (hrs)	56	64	83	452	437	293	306	131	258	418	275	230	338

¹Cumulative

²September – January includes unlisted videos

Professional Engagement

Pura Belpré Award

Youth Services Supervisor Rebecca King completed her term with the Pura Belpré Award selection committee, sponsored by *ALSC*, Association for Library Service to Children. The committee reviewed more than 100 books and discussed plots, character development, page texture, choice of font, artistic styles, use of colors for skin tones, and most importantly, how the piece best “portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience.” After much deliberation, three winners and five honor books were selected. Please consider reading any of the [Pura Belpré winning titles](#).

ALL Learners Welcome

Kids’ World Librarian Christina Giovannelli-Caputo founded and moderates the Facebook group [Librarians Serving At Home Learners and Homeschoolers](#). Leveraging her knowledge and experience, she advocated for and launched the RAILS group known as *ALL* ([All Learners Welcome - Librarians Serving At Home Learners and Homeschoolers](#)). Christina recently accepted a lecturer position for the *iSchool at University of Wisconsin Madison*. She will be teaching *Strategic Communications Planning* in the MLIS program.

ServSafe Food Protection Manger Certification

In January, Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger passed the two-hour *ServSafe Food Protection Manger* exam after ten hours of training and preparation. This certification is required to be held by at least one staff member of the makerspace when it begins renting out the kitchen commercially.

Customer Comments

- *We just wanted to take a minute to thank Ms. Rebecca for all the work she does to continue story time on YouTube. My son Ryan misses her greatly and loves watching these videos. It is his birthday soon and thinks her recent birthday themed one is just for him! It’s so nice to have a sense of normalcy during a time where he gets to do so little of what he used to enjoy. We hope you are well! Thank you!*

- *Arlington Heights. Additionally, my child participated in the Countdown to Noon on New Year's Eve and had so much fun! The crafts were fun (thank you for sending them on the Bookmobile for us!) and he liked the songs, story, and activities. One of our friends was in the program too and it was fun to see them and feel like we were interacting with them as well! Wishing everyone at AHML a healthy 2021!"*
- *"The service you provide is amazing. All the people I have seen on the bookmobile, you two are just killin' it."*
- *"I'd just like to express my appreciation for the library. Thank you for staying open and for all the awesome things you do."*
- *"Thanks for being open. We've added the library as a regular stop on our morning walks. I enjoy the books and he enjoys the treat."* Circulation always has a stock of dog treats at drive-up and walk-up for our furry visitors.
- *"Je tiens a vous mercié pour la classe d'aujourd'hui. C'était très utile. J'ai hâte au prochain."* (I want to thank you for today's class. It was very helpful. I can't wait for the next one) - from a French Conversation Group participant
- From grateful and creative ESL students:

