

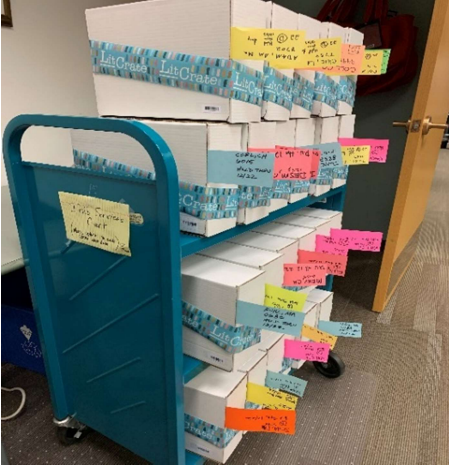
Executive Director’s Report

December 2020

What’s New @ AHML

LitCrates Launch

In December, the library launched *LitCrates*, a subscription book service for adult and teen customers. For adult readers, Info Services staff, led by Info Services Advisor Joan Lasky, selected titles and prepared a box for pickup which includes a personalized book selection and treats/goodies for each customer. All 25 adult subscriptions were filled within days. Based on the popularity of the adult response, we will look at expanding the service in the future.



Teen subscriptions filled to capacity with 30 subscriptions. During a recent program a teen exclaimed, *“I’m going to advertise for the library here and tell everyone to get a LitCrate, they’re super great...I may or may not have finished my book in 4 hours!”* and another teen chimed in, saying *“Yeah, my book was awesome!”*

Diversity and Inclusion

Pick-up Printing

In December, Digital Services Manager Jack Bower developed a new pick-up printing service as an alternative to in-person printing at the core service point (internally referred to as “the Tech Stop”). Arlington Heights cardholders and reciprocal borrowers can send print jobs to ahml.info/print and then call the library to arrange payment and confirm receipt for pick-up at the drive-up window and Dunton entrance. This is a safe alternative for customers who are unable or uncomfortable printing at the self-service station.

Outreach and Community Engagement

Pop-ups at North School Park and Drive-up



On December 22 and 23, Bookmobile Supervisor Teri Scallon and Youth Services staff Emily Koch, Emily Muszynski and Justin Ashley conducted a series of pop-ups at North School Park. Residents browsed a selection of Kids' World materials to check out and received activity kits to take home. Staff connected with 60 customers during three pop-up sessions.

Beginning on December 18 and continuing daily through the end of student winter break, Youth Services staff presented a Kids' World pop-up in the Dunton lower-level entrance. As cars came to pick up materials at the drive-up window, they could check out grab-and-go bundles or puzzles/games/toys and pick up activity kits. Upon arriving at the drive-up, one caregiver commented, *"It was nice to have my kids entertained during the few minutes we were in line! We enjoyed seeing the unicorn very much!"* Besides spreading holiday cheer, staff circulated about 200 items and distributed over 300 kid, tween, teen and adult activity kits.



Versiti Blood Drive Success

In response to an urgent need for blood donations during the pandemic, the library partnered with Versiti Blood Centers to host a socially distanced blood drive in the Hendrickson Room on Wednesday, December 2. The blood drive exceeded goals, thirty-six people donated 34 units of blood during the drive, while in compliance with COVID-safety measures. Versiti will return to Hendrickson Room for another Covid-safe Blood Drive (by appointment) on February 3.

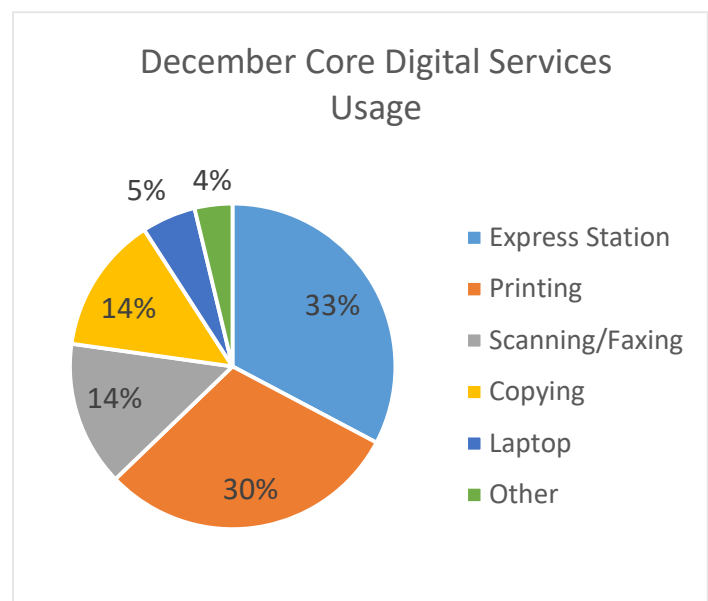
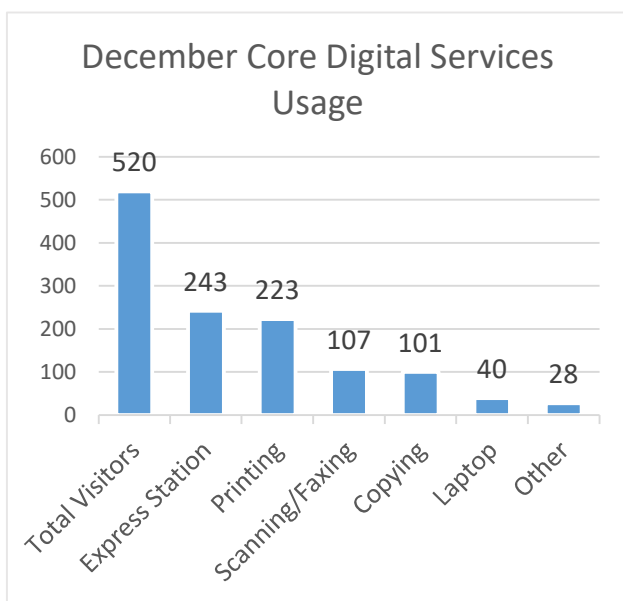
Serving our Community

North Core Vestibule Tech Stop

December is the first full month for Digital Services to offer the copying, printing, faxing, scanning and laptop checkout services out of the core entrance vestibule while the library building is closed to the public.



In December, 520 customers took advantage of the services, with printing and express station use being the most popular. Many customers used multiple services per visit.



Increase in Health and Medical Reference Questions

Librarians have stepped in to fill an information gap regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine. Half of all questions referred to librarians in December were related to health and medical questions. This is a significant increase in this topic from previous months. Info Librarians were able to provide up to date, reliable information to assist customers with their questions.

Program Highlights

Streaming with Twitch

Digital Media Specialist Chris Smith taught the virtual program Streaming with Twitch on December 16. This class covered the basics of streaming content and required equipment, how to use Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) and how to set up a Twitch channel. The class had nine attendees.

Birthday Greetings and Winter Cheer Dispatch

Youth Services staff LOVE birthdays, especially kids' birthdays! In order to connect with some of our younger customers during this isolated time, staff sent out handwritten birthday greetings to kindergarten through 2nd grade youth. Youth Services staff selected from a variety of original cards made by the loyal *Teen Advisory Board* (TAB).

TAB designed additional cards for other Arlington Heights teens through our *Winter Cheer Dispatch* program. To stave off the winter blues, teens can fill out a form and receive a custom-designed card from their peer to gain some winter cheer. This teen program will continue through February.



High School intern and Tween Crafternoon: Awesome Greeting Cards

Nine tweens joined the Tween *Crafternoon* program on December 7, learning multiple art techniques to create unique greeting cards. The program was conceived, planned, and led by high school intern Alexandra. Since October, Alexandra has worked under the guidance of Teen Services staff on several projects. This art-focused program was her largest endeavor. She discussed programming philosophies and the library’s mission with library staff during her planning, researched and tested numerous techniques, budgeted and helped make purchase requests, packed supply kits to be distributed, and then led tween attendees through all the different steps in making their holiday cards.



Farmyard Friends

On December 14, Teen Librarian Evan Mather hosted a YouTube Live feed on a video call with the staff and animals at Lambs Farm in Libertyville. A panel of *Teen Advisory Board* (TAB) volunteers asked questions about the animals on screen while all other viewers asked questions in a chat answered by Lambs Farm staff. The video currently has 76 views on the Hub’s YouTube channel. Teens watching the livestream commented: “nice thing to relax to while studying for exams” and “Thanks for this amazing break! Much needed!!!”

Books n' Bites with Author Dan Gemeinhart

Finishing out a series of 13 virtual visits with local schools, author Dan Gemeinhart presented during *Books n' Bites* on Tuesday, December 8. Twenty-one tweens joined Kids' World Advisor Amy Belford and Youth Outreach Librarian Emily Koch to hear Dan give an exclusive presentation about his inspiration and writing process for *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*. A book discussion with participants and memory box craft followed.



Facebook Page Turners Group Increases Membership

Eighteen new members joined the Facebook Group in December, for a total of 159. Facebook administrators from the library created 24 posts, received 141 comments and 504 reactions/likes.

“I don't know where I would be without books and stories and the library. And during this pandemic the ability to get things from the cloud is tremendous and the only way I am surviving. For me books are like oxygen. “

“Just have to say, this group is going to be so wonderful to be a part of. How lucky we are to have such an amazing library!”

Ring in the New Year

On Thursday, December 31, twenty-one customers participated in Kids' World annual *Almost New Year's* virtual celebration. With their home New Year's decorations in the background and donning fancy clothes, participants opened goody bags containing a crown, a star noisemaker craft and bubbles. Led by Kids' World Advisors Amy Belford and Sara Prince, children and their families said goodbye to 2020 and hello to 2021 with stories, songs and dancing. The event culminated with a balloon countdown to noon.



Book Me

In December, Info Services Advisors completed 32 Book Me requests, more than quadruple the number of requests in previous months. All advisors curated reading lists based on customers reading preferences. The Book Me service was promoted in the December newsletter and led to this large increase in usage. Customer feedback included:

“This is awesome and excellent. Many great suggestions here. Although I have already read and enjoyed a few of them, which is basically confirmation that we were in sync. Thank you for your time, thoughtful considerations, communication, and service. I'm now a solid fan of Book Me.”

Holiday Cooking Fiesta

On Thursday, December 3, one hundred and five customers expanded their holiday food repertoire by learning to prepare tamales, Spanish rice and Tres Leches cake. Kristyn Slick returned to share recipes and cooking inspiration with her accessible methods and easy-going communication style. Kristyn instructs from her home kitchen studio – a space dedicated to virtual cooking classes - and utilizes camera angles that give customers a great, up-close view of the process.

Internet and Computer Safety

Digital Media Specialist Chris Smith taught the virtual program *Internet and Computer Safety* on December 8. Twenty-three participants learned skills to navigate the internet safely. Examples include how to create strong passwords, avoiding phishing scams and steps to take when a child begins using the internet.

Virtual Jane Austen Tea Celebration

On Sunday, December 13, thirty-eight attendees connected on Zoom to watch a performance from *Chicago's Lifeline Theatre* production of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This was followed by a question-and-answer session with the Director and Artistic Director. Info Service Advisors then book talked their favorite Jane Austen works. Customers picked up treat bags ahead of time to sit back and enjoy the performance from home.

Praxis Architecture Furniture Donation for the Makerspace

Arlington Heights Memorial Foundation Chair Lauree Harp connected Makerspace Assistant Manager Chris Krueger with Lew Neuman of Praxis Architecture. Mr. Neuman is closing an office location in Arlington Heights and generously donated office furniture and equipment to the library's makerspace. Donations include: four 60"x 60" tables for the fine arts space, several rolling white boards and storage racks.



Meet the Makers Series



Generating excitement for the library's makerspace, a new program series, [Meet the Makers](#), kicked off December 1 with a presentation from [Tanner Woodford](#), designer and founder of the [Design Museum of Chicago](#). The series was developed collaboratively by Digital Services with Programs and Exhibits staff Carol Ng-He, Megan Young and Jennifer Czajka. Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger served as the lead host of each event, offering great insights into what's to come at the makerspace. All programs are available for viewing on YouTube or Instagram.

Library customers were able to see well-respected Chicagoland artists in their workspaces creating and talking about their craft, with the chance to ask questions about their process and the thought that goes into their work.

As the series continues in 2021, all makers, photos of their work and resources recommendations will be compiled at a new custom webpage: www.ahml.info/makers

Below is an overview of what the first five Makers offered, all presented in December 2020.

Tanner Woodford



Twenty-six customers attended Tanner’s live presentation, as he discussed what making means to him, showed several of his art installations around Chicago and the Midwest and his experience opening the *Chicago Design Museum*. The video recording of Tanner’s presentation has been viewed 248 times since posted to the library’s YouTube channel.

Nastasiya Marusyk



Thirty-eight customers attended the live Zoom demonstration by Ukrainian folk artist Nastasiya Marusyk. Her personal moderator, Helen Pryma, assisted as Nastasiya showed several of her bead artworks in progress, techniques and materials. She talked about the inspiration she finds in Ukrainian folk art and traditions.

Shenequa Brooks



Thirty-nine customers participated in this Instagram Live event facilitated by Programs and Exhibits Manager Jennifer Czajka. Total video views reached 334 at the two-day mark. Shenequa discussed the origin of her work, stories of current pieces and what she will be creating in 2021. The event reached locally and beyond as evidenced by attendees from Shenequa’s peer group of artists joined the conversation.

Laurie Freivogel



Twenty-nine customers watched glass artist Laurie Freivogel demonstrate from her home studio on Instagram Live. Total video views have reached 372 at the two-day mark. Laurie took the audience through the process of making one of her decorative glass pieces. She pointed out details of her workstation, her own processes and the unique tools she uses. She also shared a look at a variety of projects and pieces while discussing what inspires her.

William Estrada



Twenty-three attendees joined Chicago-based artist and educator William Estrada for this live Zoom workshop. Estrada invited viewers to create a poster for screen printing with him in real-time. He pre-recorded part of his presentation which included sharing his personal practice and local art affiliations, as well as the steps of screen printing. He incorporated student work examples as he emphasized the themes of empathy and social justice as part of his work.

Social Media Engagement – December 2020

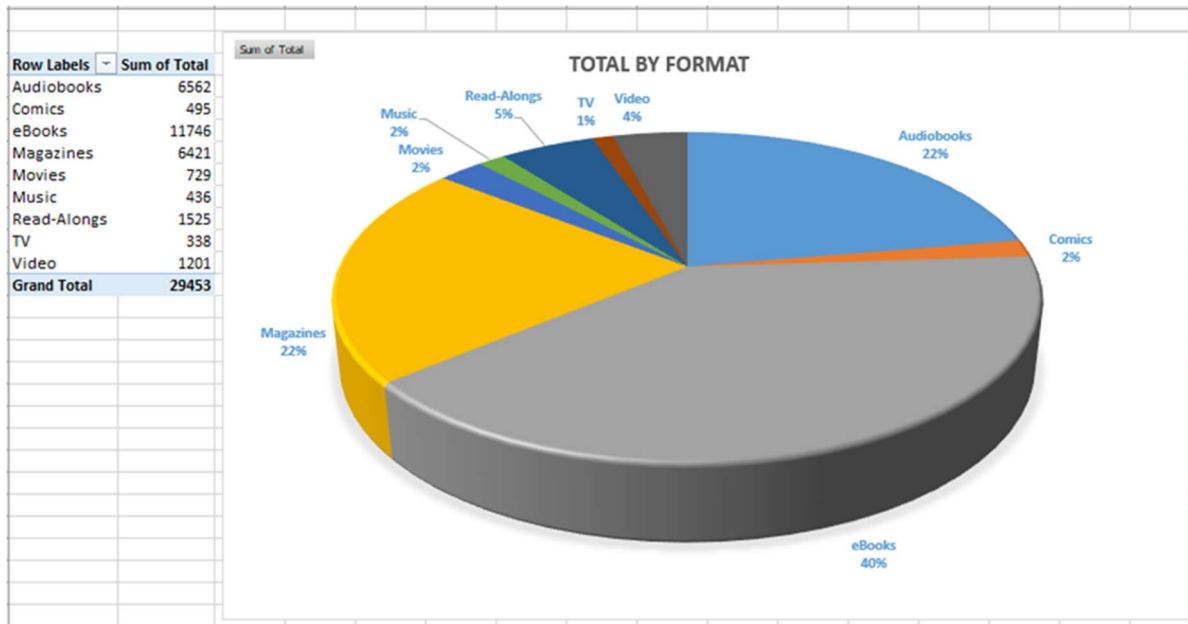
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Facebook												
Posts	25	22	56	60	47	41	56	15	40	33	42	38
Followers ¹	5,067	5,113	5,217	5,291	5,376	5,436	5,469	5,501	5,613	5,664	5,695	5,703
Engagement	1,164	1,723	3,531	3,642	2,725	3,148	1,886	861	2,581	2,850	1,677	2,295
Twitter												
Tweets	65	51	111	139	148	143	137	100	127	120	118	101
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
Engagement	247	203	534	394	399	387	283	240	366	324	340	322
Instagram												
Posts ¹	n/a	n/a	859	875	898	922	978	1,002	1,027	1,055	1,080	1,112
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
Average Reach	n/a	286	485	451	435	459	560	344	389	318	425	502
Constant Contact												
Campaigns	20	19	22	27	26	27	21	17	15	18	16	13
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
Open rate	24%	28%	45%	36%	28%	34%	24%	27%	31%	26%	39%	32%
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
LinkedIn												
Followers ¹	655	657	659	660	672	684	685	689	693	696	707	712
Posts	7	1	5	1	1	8	0	7	4	8	0	1
Impressions	2335	308	839	620	235	738	352	1,100	749	992	298	313
YouTube												
Subscribers ¹	397	402	456	514	585	603	627	658	691	723	747	765
Videos added ²	0	3	6	23	34	33	30	15	21	19	18	14
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
Watch time (hrs)	55.6	63.8	83.3	452.2	437	292.7	306.4	130.6	257.5	418	274.9	229.5

¹Cumulative

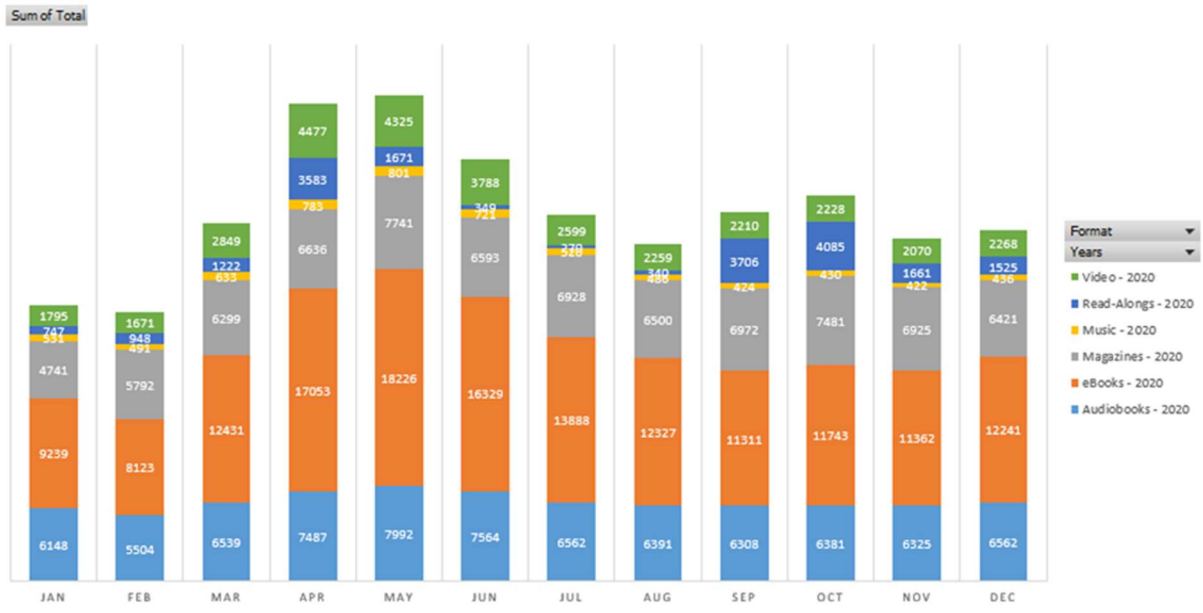
²September – December includes unlisted videos

December eResource overview

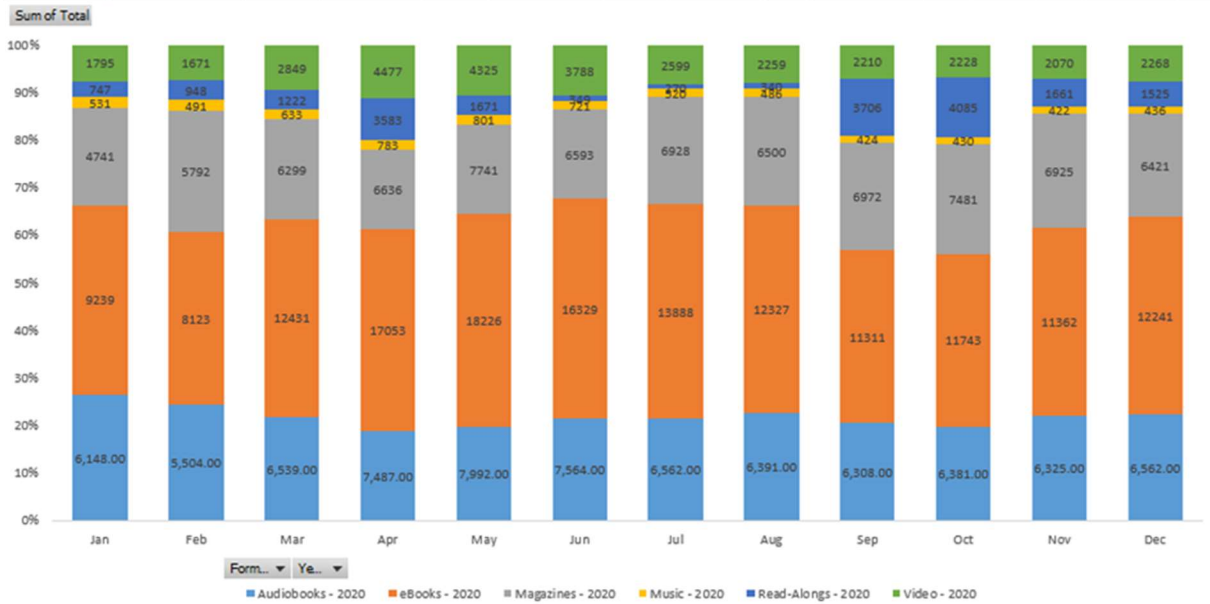
eLibrary 2020	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Total
Total eBook checkouts	8,308	10,969	11,785	11,375	10,463	11,839	10,852	11,271	10,870	11,746	65,574
Total eAudio checkouts	3,377	4,011	4,415	4,338	3,893	6,391	6,308	6,381	6,325	6562	26,186



Formats by Month (Totals)



Formats by Month (Percentages)



Targeted Marketing for Business Services

During a challenging year for entrepreneurs and small businesses, it was more important than ever to reach the business community as the library continues to be a source of information. Business Services Advisor Diane Malik used targeted marketing and outreach efforts throughout 2020.

- Special attention was paid to members of the Arlington Heights Chamber of Commerce by using email blasts, targeted emails and taking a role in the *Chamber's Connection Team* to increase opportunities for outreach discussions with local business owners.
- The library added promotions for business programs at *alignable.com*, a small business social networking site. Since July, there have been 7,988 impressions and 26 visits from the promoted events and an additional 1600+ impressions, visits and referrals within the site, indicating significant exposure of our business services and programs to our local business community.
- Partnering with the Village of Arlington Heights Business & Economic Development Office, the library business program information was included in the Village's e-newsletter four times over the year. Each e-newsletter reaches 900 local business community members.



Professional Engagement

Cyndi Hamann accepted a position on Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA) *Great Graphic Novel Blogging Team* for 2021. She will read, evaluate and blog about graphic novels this year culminating in creating YALSA's *Great Graphic Novel List 2022*.

Sharing Innovation

On December 9, ESL/Literacy Advisors Amy Duffey, Allie Gourley and Brigitte Nohra presented at the regional *World Languages Networking Group* meeting to share information about how the Arlington Heights Memorial Library adapted programs and services to meet the needs of English language learners virtually.

Customer Comments

- *Just a quick note to say thank you for wonderful programs and book discussions; the library has been a godsend during the pandemic. Wishing you all very happy holidays!*
- *“I really have good practice for my English at your ESL class. I will try to speak more!”*
- *“I would like to mention the ESL sessions are not only beneficial to learn English rather they are educative, and I get to enhance my knowledge.”*
- *“Thank you for your time and teaching. I do appreciate you that you are able to know how I could prove how to use English. Thank you so much!”*
- *“I just want to commend the always helpful library staff. I am disappointed that the library is closed once again. But, the staff remains as helpful as ever. I forgot to get the name of the gentleman who when through a lot of extra effort to help me get my print job in the underground print center. Someone inside was taking long. So, this staff member took my info, ran up and down the stairs TWICE, and gave me my copies. I’m sorry I didn’t get his name. Thank you, and Merry Christmas to all the library staff!”*
- *“I have lived in Arlington Heights since 1975 and we moved here in part because of the library...which has been and will always be the crown jewel of the Village. Moving the scanning, faxing and copying equipment to the exit area so citizens could use them is thoughtful and a wonderful gesture to keep the library up and running. It is beyond expectations to have done this. I use these services frequently and I am appreciative of the effort that went into making this happen. THANK YOU for this service and for the resources of the library. I have always voted for bond issues to support your efforts and will continue to do. THANK YOU again on behalf of those of us who use the library...”*