

Executive Director's Report

July 2022

What's New @ AHML

Service Project: Letters for Ukrainian Youth



Working with an Arlington Heights resident that volunteers for [Ukraine TrustChain](#), Youth Services staff developed a letter writing service project, bringing messages of hope and support from the library's young customers to Ukrainian children evacuated from active war zones.

Letter writing stations for kids, tweens and teens can be found in Kids' World, the Hub and online through our Volunteer in Place program. Interested teens can earn service hours for this project, including the library's Teen Advisory Board (TAB) who created the designs for the cards found in Kids' World. TAB's card designs allow our youngest customers to color in cards and contribute to the project even while they're still learning to read and write.

First In-Person Favorite Things

Info Services Advisors Jon Frier and Joan Lasky hosted the first in-person Favorite Things: Breezy Summer Fiction. Favorite Things is a series of virtual programs that became popular during COVID and garnered a loyal following. Each month Info Advisors showcase books around a specific topic and ask participants to share their favorites. There were 13 very engaged attendees who were excited to interact with other book lovers.



Arlington Heights Historical Hunt

Genealogy and Local History Librarian Nikki Camp partnered with the Arlington Heights Historical Museum to bring a village scavenger hunt to Arlington Heights. Sixty-five customers picked up a brochure from the library, the museum or the farmer's market to begin the hunt. The locations on the scavenger hunt were places of historical significance to Arlington Heights and included Arlington High School, Dunton Park, Wheeling Township Cemetery, Horath Fountain, The Muller House, Memorial Park, Courtland's Garage, Arlington Lakes Golf Course and the Makerplace! Once participants visited all nine places they could return to the library or museum for a prize, a bottle of pop and a scoop of ice cream from Kilwins.



Makerplace at Frontier Days

Makerplace and Circulation staff members took advantage of the prime location and set up a tent outside the Makerplace building during the Frontier Days Festival. The many resources and services offered at Makerplace were promoted along with craft demonstrations and giveaways. Staff interacted with over 200 visitors enjoying Frontier Days. The Makerplace's bike racks were in high demand during the festivities. Riders used the bike repair stand and pump as they tuned up their bikes and refilled their tires for their rides.



Outreach and Engagement

Mision San Juan Diego Festival

It has been almost three years since the last time the library visited the Hispanic community of Mision San Juan Diego Catholic Church of Arlington Heights. In partnership with Palatine Public Library, Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin, Circulation Assistant Mary Weber and Bookmobile Interim Supervisor Ron Moravec interacted with 94 people during their annual festival. Many customers used their library cards to check-out items, take ESL class schedules and said “¡Muchas Gracias!” for the fun giveaways. Bookmarks were in Spanish and offered a detailed description of library services.



Out and About at the Farmer's Market

Community Engagement Liaison, Catalina Shin, and Info Services Advisor, Jon Frier, joined the bookmobile and staff at the Farmer's Market for a fun pop-up outreach table. During this collaboration, they interacted with 102 people who learned more about book discussions and our readers' advisors' personalized book recommendations.



During another fun collaboration Digital Services Advisors, Mini Radhakrishnan and Chris Smith and Community Engagement Liaison, Catalina Shin hosted a pop-up table at the Farmer's Market on July 23. They interacted with 65 people, who learned more about our library of things, the studio and many of our digital services.



Serving Our Community

FanCon Returns!

On Saturday, July 16, FanCon was back in person for the first time since 2019. More than 650 people of all ages celebrated fandoms and pop culture during this library-wide event. Attendees made magic wands, Baby Yodas, sci-fi terrariums and more in the Hub and Kids' World craft areas.



In the Hendrickson Room, attendees shopped for art and books from local artists in the Artists Alley, watched performances from Raks Geek, and won prizes with Harry Potter and video game trivia. The Cardinal Room featured video games all day, including a Tetris High Score challenge and a Super Smash Bros Tournament.



New this year was registered sessions, where customers pre-registered for select small-group activities, including an Artemis Spaceship Simulator, Princess Tea Party, drawing workshops, and the always-popular Jedi Training, which was held outdoors at the Arlington Heights Historical Museum.



The festivities were captured on the library’s social media pages by social media takeover partner Sam of Black Zero Cosplay with Communications and Marketing Specialist William Tolan and Graphic Designer Stephanie Battista, who led production of this year’s video, now on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/FanCon2022>

Attendees received a custom event survey, providing a great snapshot of who attended: 55% were attending for the first time, 17% had attended once before and **28% of families and individuals attending have been to 3 or more FanCons!** Most participants spend their whole day with us and participated in as many activities as they can squeeze in. We saw as many tweens and younger teens (7th/8th graders) as younger children through 3rd grade. Survey respondents shared:



“Best 5-6 hours I’ve ever spent in one day. Would recommend.”

“Our family had a blast. Props to the organizers and staff!”

“Our family is not into video games, comic books, or superheroes, but my kids had a BLAST. They loved Jedi training and tea party. The crafts were engaging. We skipped nap time to stay and explore everything...I appreciated that we didn’t need to be super into comic-book stuff or have any video gaming knowledge to have a great time.”

Embroidery Workshops

Programs and Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski worked with returning artist Katie Vota to offer two hands-on embroidery workshops for adults. The two back-to-back sessions reached 32 stitchers of varying levels.

History of Chicago Taverns

Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal Parker welcomed back historian and urbanologist Max Grinnell for a local history program focused on the history of taverns in Chicago. Twenty-

eight attended his interactive presentation tracing the history of taverns in Chicago from the first bar, the Sauganash Hotel, through the present.

Summer Volunteer Squads

This summer, 125 Arlington Heights teens grades 7-12 gave back through our Summer Volunteer Squads (SVS) program. In 2022, SVS was comprised of nine different squads that met weekly to focus on various service projects. In total, teen volunteers clocked around 989 service hours in June and July, presented 25 library programs, and completed other projects to support the library and our community.

This year's SVS lineup included the Maker Squad, a new Squad that focused on ways to introduce our community's teens to the Makerplace by creating project guides throughout the summer and leading interactive tours of the space on July 20 specifically for teens. Another new Squad was the Cemetery Sleuths who used library genealogy resources to discover more about notable figures buried



at Wheeling Township Arlington Heights Cemetery, including William Dunton – the namesake of the street on which the library resides. Their research was compiled into an informational pamphlet, which will be offered in the Shackley Room once finalized. Returning this year for the first time since 2019, the Reading Table Team Squad volunteers managed the Summer Reading Desk in Kids' World each day throughout the week. These teen volunteers helped register the 2,918 youth who signed up for Summer Reading through the end of July and are a



key component to the success of Summer Reading! Staff and 49 teen volunteers celebrated the end of the SVS season on July 27 at a fun picnic held at North School Park.

Sunday Musicale in the Park

After a long Covid hiatus, Sunday Musicale returned this year. New this season, the library will be offering a full twelve months of live performances. The series is being hosted and curated by Programs and Exhibits Assistant Jay Semla. Jay worked with the Arlington Heights Park District to prepare for the June and July concerts -- the first in the history of this long-running program to have been held outdoors! One-hundred and forty music lovers came to see Arlington Heights' own Big Brother's Vinyl on June 12 and 52 came for Chicago genre blenders Mar Caribe on July 24. Sunday Musicale continues to be generously sponsored by Friends of the Library. Attendees and performers alike appreciated the opportunity to enjoy an outdoor show in the summer.



Fresh Fruit Preserves

Culinary instructor Andrea Pracht of My Kitchen Clatter returned to the Makerplace kitchen to instruct two classes on making fresh fruit preserves. Andrea provided raspberries freshly picked at a local farm and baked loaves of fresh bread during each session so attendees could enjoy it with their preserves. Each attendee was able to take home a jar of preserves.

Cryptocurrency Basics Class

Info Services Librarian Lev Kalmens created and taught a “Basics of Cryptocurrency Investing” class. A hot topic in the tech and investing worlds, Lev’s class concentrated on introducing the concept of cryptocurrency and several different platforms to explore investing.

Staff Highlights

Congratulations to Collection Services Manager Lisa Bobis for winning the 2022 Illinois Library Association TBS, Inc. Technical Services Award. This annual citation is awarded “to an individual who has made a substantial contribution in the area of library technical services.” The press release can be found [here](#).



Setting the Standard for Safety

The Arlington Heights Memorial Library’s security department was recommended to the Director of the Oswego library by the Department of Homeland Security when she reached out to them for assistance with establishing security procedures and protocols. A copy of the library’s procedures and emergency flip charts were shared with Oswego library. Other libraries have and are reaching out to AHML’s security department for help and advice on building an effective security strategy and team.

PLA Committee Appointment

Info Services Supervisor Elizabeth Ludemann was appointed to the [Public Library Association Continuing Education Advisory Group](#). In this role, Elizabeth will serve for two years, contributing to the Public Library Association’s (PLA) continuing education offerings by reviewing webinar proposals and seeking out professional development programming for public library professionals.