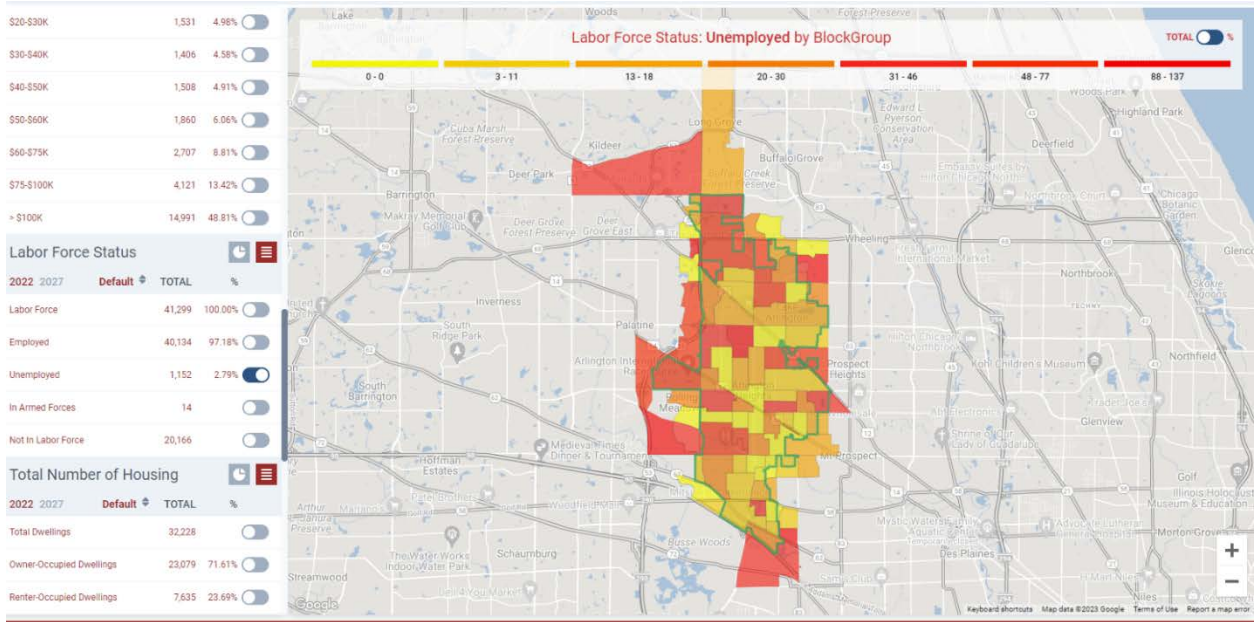


Executive Director’s Report February 2023

What’s New @ AHML

Size Up Database Launches

In January, the library’s new subscription to “Size Up Arlington Heights” launched. Business Services’ Diane Malik coordinated staff training from the vendor representative and included numerous stakeholders: staff from various library departments as well as Village of Arlington Heights staff and Chamber of Commerce representatives. The database gives small business owners the tools to benchmark their own performance against competitors in the area, as well as delve into demographic information specific to Arlington Heights in order to optimize their outputs.



ABC Mouse



The newly launched electronic resource, ABC Mouse, has been discovered by customers! In the first month, there have been over 1,600 activities, representing 148 visits and over 80 hours of engagement. ABCmouse.com helps kids, aged 2 to kindergarten, learn to read through phonics, and teaches lessons in math, social studies, art, music, and more.

New Friends' Network

English as a Second Language (ESL) volunteers hosted their first meeting of the New Friends' Network with 18 people in attendance. This group was created to welcome newcomers in the community and give them a space to connect with one another, while also learning about library programs and services.



Outreach and Community Engagement

Mini Free Library



To continue honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King, Community and Circulation Services partnered with the Friends of the Library (FOL) to donate and maintain a mini free library for the PADS site inside of First Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights. The Friends donated books and magazines for guests to read, keep, or bring back.

Hersey Student Volunteers

Circulation welcomed student volunteers from John Hersey High School, along with Hersey Administrative Assistant/Job Coach for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program who will be assisting with basic circulation tasks. Circulation previously had student volunteers prior to 2014 and it is very exciting to resume this partnership.

MLK Day of Service (Meals Programs and Mini Free Library)

P&E Specialist, Neal Parker, and Catalina Shin, Community Engagement Liaison, organized this year's MLK Day of Service on January 16, partnering with First Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights to donate lunch and dinner for their PADS site. Thirty members of the community participated in making and packing lunch and a warm dinner for up to 30 PADS clients.

During these two community culinary programs in the Makerspace kitchen, volunteers prepared sandwiches, mostaccioli pasta, salad, and dessert. Participants overwhelmingly expressed their gratitude to staff and to the library for hosting this and asked for more opportunities in the future.

The event was covered by two reporters, sharing the mission of the library and this creative use of our Makerplace Kitchen more widely.



Serving Our Community

Arcade Age



Sunday, January 15 marked the final day of *The Arcade Age* exhibit. Staff welcomed 328 arcade fans of all ages to the library for a 'Game Over' closing event. In addition to the arcade games, participants enjoyed button making, a video game scavenger hunt, trivia, a spaceship simulator, and real-life *Mario Kart*. The exhibit's curator Seamus Keane presented on the history of arcades and how to collect arcade cabinets. The event was the perfect wrap up to this popular exhibit.

Over its eight-week stay at AHML, *The Arcade Age* brought over 13,000 visitors of all ages to the library. During its stay, Programs & Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski led library staff in hosting 11 programs celebrating the exhibit, from gaming to films and crafts. The wonderful coverage across media outlets – biggest WGN and WBBM – drove traffic consistently upward across all ages as the exhibit continued. Social media interaction was high with visitors regularly tagging the library on Instagram, sharing photos of the games and themselves and their families enjoying them.

Total estimated visitors by month:

November 18-30: 2,276

December 1-31: 6,994

January 2-15: 3,138

Total: 13,205

Information on the exhibit, including links to media coverage, will remain archived on the library's "Exhibits" webpage, joining our variety of popular past exhibits: <https://www.ahml.info/exhibits>

Wider Lens presents ‘The Loyola Project’

P&E Specialist Neal Parker brought local sports history to 30 attendees, via a critically acclaimed documentary - The Loyola Project, which follows Loyola’s groundbreaking, championship-winning team, the Ramblers. Previously this film had only been screened at college campuses. Chuck Wood, 6th man on the Ramblers '63 championship team, and Jim O'Donnell, sports columnist for the Daily Herald, did an excellent job facilitating a discussion following the documentary. Jim started things off by asking Chuck hard hitting questions about the teams' experiences during their championship year, ranging from individual games to the racism his black teammates experienced. Chuck was wonderful and the star of the program. He had great stories and insights to share. The documentary was well-received, the audience had great questions and stuck around to chat with Chuck and Jim at the reception that followed.

8th Annual Readers Party

Info Advisors hosted their 8th Annual Readers Party and had 64 attendees gather to celebrate reading. Booklist Adult Editor Donna Seaman presented books she is looking forward to in 2023 including nonfiction, poetry and fiction. Following Donna’s presentation, attendees participated in a genre book fair where they visited different genre tables where Info Advisors spoke about upcoming titles within the specific genre. Advanced reader copies from various publishers were available for attendees to choose a title to keep at the end of the event.



Secretary of State Mobile Driver Services Facility



Staff partnered with the office of State Senator Ann Gillespie to bring back the Secretary of State to the library as a pop-up DMV service for customers on January 27. All driver services, with the exception of REAL ID services, were offered including driver's license renewal, state ID, voter registration, and other services. The popular event was hosted in the Hendrickson Room and served 22 customers.

Arlington Heights Loves to Hygge!

Info Services Librarian Brittany Coleman collaborated with Programs and Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski to launch a winter "Hygge with Us" challenge. Using the online platform Beanstack, customers registered for the program and were encouraged to complete various activities with the aid of a "Hygge Kit". The kits were inspired by the Danish concept of "Hygge," a way of living that welcomes feelings of contentment and well-being. On the first day of the Hygge challenge (January 2), the initial supply of 80 kits sold out! Staff created 80 additional kits. To date, the challenge has 241 participants, 138 Hygge kits have gone home with customers, and 53 individuals have completed the full challenge.



Stuffed Animal Beach Party

On Tuesday, January 3, over 80 customers enjoyed a Stuffed Animal Beach Party presented by Kids Librarian Ellie Richardson. Families and their stuffed animal friends were greeted with festive leis and then treated to tropical-inspired crafts, games, play, refreshments and music. Kids engaged their imagination and cooperation in the beach-themed dramatic play area, where they enjoyed a ball pit “pool” and pretended to build sandcastles with beach toys. Each child was able to make a jellyfish with decorative yarn tentacles, practicing their fine motor skills while creating a fun product.



Saint Viator Database Instruction

This January, Saint Viator High School contacted the library to help their junior English classes dive into their first big research papers. Teen Librarian Alejandria Galarza and Teen Advisor Nicole Brennan partnered with Info Services Supervisor Elizabeth Ludemann and Digital Services Librarian Bill Pardue to provide a presentation that introduced students to research concepts, walked through how to use databases, and helped familiarize students with the resources offered at their local libraries. Staff presented to 170 juniors across eight English classes over two days on January 19 and 20.

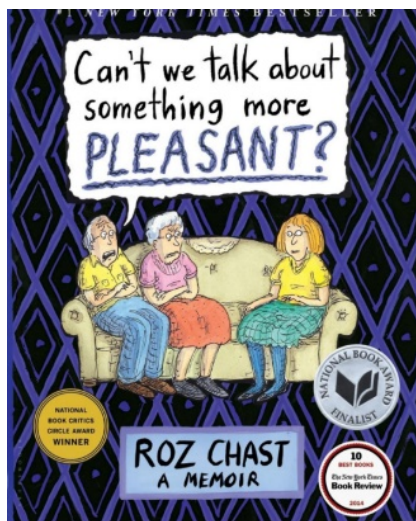
Tween Writing Workshop



Nineteen tweens attended a Tween Writing Workshop on Saturday, January 21 presented by Tween Librarian Kerry Bailey. The program was led by author and writing coach Rochelle Melander and 8th grade author and Arlington Heights resident Shivani Ganeshan. As a group, participants brainstormed different fantasy story elements like setting and antagonist. Using some of the same elements, they each wrote a short fantasy story. Even though everyone's story took place in a magical forest, not one story came out the same. Almost all the budding authors said they would like to write a book someday.



Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant Discussion



In response to regular inquiries from customers seeking assistance in supporting aging parents, Senior and Accessible Services (SAS) staff developed a two-part series on how to tackle difficult family conversations around often taboo topics like illness and end-of-life options. The first session, a discussion of cartoonist Roz Chast's memoir of the final years of her parents' lives, moderated by Debra Torres, L.C.S.W., took place on January 25 and was fully booked with a rare 100% attendance. Many of the 23 participants shared that they found the book an excellent way to open a discussion on difficult subjects and really appreciated the library organizing the series.

LitCrates

Staff created LitCrates for customers which included a sleep mask, deep breathing exercises bookmark and a specially selected book. Staff utilized the Makerplace to create “Resting My Reading Eyes” sleep masks.



No bones about it!

This is the most unique material used at the Makerplace to date. A customer brought in a bison jawbone and steak bones to make custom and unique gifts for her friends. After looking up the settings together, we worked with the Epilog to etch the bones. The jawbone is going to be a paintbrush holder and the steak bones are going to be candle holders.



Makerplace Display

Thanks to the Programs and Events Team, Makerplace customer and artist, Chizuko Yoshida's work is on display at the main library on the 2nd floor outside of the Hendrickson Room. She was inspired by the Makerplace's paint pouring classes and has integrated the methodology into her creations.



New Makerplace Giveaways

Makerplace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger worked with the Communications and Marketing department to identify new branded giveaway items for outreach, tours, and other library events. The selected items, a tape measure, screwdriver, and caliper pen have a great bit of utility for our community makers, along with being a great way to advertise our space. Makerplace staff and customers are thrilled with the new items.



Library Cards

In January, 399 new residents signed up for library cards. This is an increase of 49.4% over the same month last year (267). The increase may be due to the Arcade Age exhibit which brought in many additional community members who hadn't been to the library for a while.

Info Desk

Info staff answered 1,426 questions at the Info Desk during January 2023; this is the busiest the Info Desk has been since January of 2020.

Conference Rooms

In January, there were 1,153 completed reservations for conference rooms; this is the highest number since the conference rooms reopened in July 2021.

Staff and Volunteer Highlights

SAS Volunteer Paul Kochendorfer is Arlington Heights Hearts of Gold Winner



Senior and Accessible Services volunteer Paul Kochendorfer is the recipient of the Village of Arlington Heights Hearts of Gold / Young at Heart award. Paul was nominated on behalf of the library by SAS Manager Mary

Jo Lepo for his significant and ongoing contributions to the library's senior technology program. Paul joined the library as a volunteer in 1998, and over the 24 years and 4,300 hours he has contributed as a volunteer, he has taught thousands of senior students and played a critical role in developing classes that provide a foundation for seniors to develop skills essential to everyday life, helping them connect with family and friends, manage finances, shop, and get medical care.

ALA's LibLearnX Conference

Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin attended the LibLearnX (Midwinter) ALA Conference in New Orleans. During three days of sessions and speakers, Catalina connected with other library professionals, took seminars related to DEI, Community Engagement, and Outreach. Catalina will be presenting some of these topics to other colleagues at AHML.

Illinois Libraries Present

Programs & Exhibits Coordinator Nikki Camp has joined the Illinois Libraries Present Events Production team. On this team, Nikki will collaborate with members of all ILP committees and perform duties such as preparing questions for authors, speakers and facilitators, plus managing day-of event logistics, including back-end production and recording.