

## Executive Director's Report April 2023

### What's New @ AHML

#### Makerplace Takeover



At the first Kids' World Makerplace Takeover, Makerplace and Kids' World staff joined forces to host an unprecedented event at the Makerplace on Monday, March 27. Kicking off their Spring Break, 27 children aged 8-10 years old were welcomed for an afternoon of collaboration, discovery and creativity. Small groups engaged in laser engraving and decorating laser cut birdhouses. In the Arts Room,

kids participated in a mini version of the popular "Inspired by..." art nights program with Youth Services Librarian Ellie Richardson. In the Flex space, kids enjoyed problem solving with robotics with a series of relay races and challenges using modular robotics pieces called Cubelets.



## **Outreach and Community Engagement**

### **“Todo Sobre el Credito” (All about Credit) Spanish Program**

Info Services Librarian Barbara Powers and Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin collaborated in a financial/Spanish program targeted strategically to District 214 General Education Development (GED) Spanish Adult Learners. The program was in partnership with The Village Bank and Trust and delivered in Spanish. Credit is a relevant topic for all, but especially to those starting a new life in the United States as adults. Seventeen Spanish speakers participated in the program. After the presentation participants toured the library, ESL & Literacy office, and the library’s Spanish Language collection including GED preparation materials in Spanish.



## **Serving Our Community**

### **District 25 and District 214 Board of Education Virtual Forums**

In partnership with the League of Women Voters (LWV), the library hosted a virtual candidate forum for two local school board races. The forum was moderated by the League of Women Voters, and each candidate had a chance to answer questions sent in beforehand from the community. Library staff worked with the LWV, their volunteers and candidates to prepare for these live events, which attracted 97 and 91 live attendees respectively. All candidates were extraordinarily grateful to the library for hosting, and a custom survey implemented after the event assured us that the duo of events overwhelmingly left attendees feeling more prepared for the election.

Each forum was recorded and posted to the League’s YouTube page where the District 25 forum had an impressive 660 views, and the District 214 forum had 914 views.

## Teen Job Fair

On Tuesday, March 7, teens leveraged what they learned the week before at the Get a Job! Workshop for Teens at the Teen Job Fair. Developed and co-presented by the Arlington Heights Youth Commission and the Arlington Heights Park District, this event provides an opportunity for teens to meet with businesses who employ people their age. Arlington Heights Memorial Library and eighteen local businesses connected with 237 attendees at the fair hosted at the Arlington Ridge Center. This year, the event also featured a Parents' Lounge so caregivers could be nearby while providing their teen space, and a warm-up station hosted by Teen Librarian Alejandria Galarza to help prep teens before they visited businesses. A binder of employer information is currently available in the Hub for teens who were unable to attend the event.



## Adult Movie Night for All

On Friday March 10, 14 attendees enjoyed a showing of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* for adults of all abilities, especially suited for those who could benefit from a supported environment. Some lights remained on during the showing and coloring activities were available.

*“Thank you for hosting supportive programs for adults, my son was excited to come out for the movie tonight.”*

## The Weird and Wonderful World with Mary Roach

On Thursday, March 1, Illinois Libraries Present welcomed *New York Times* best-selling author Mary Roach in conversation with journalist and author Analee Newitz. Co-founding member of Illinois Libraries Present, Programs and Exhibits Manager Jennifer Czajka, had the opportunity to introduce this discussion. More than 2,600 people across the state registered to attend and more than 2,000 viewed live! 95 attendees identified Arlington Heights as their home library – the highest number of 209 participating libraries. A recording of the live event was available for 30 days keeping the content accessible to those who could not attend live. An additional 688 viewed asynchronously.

## An Afternoon with Agatha Christie



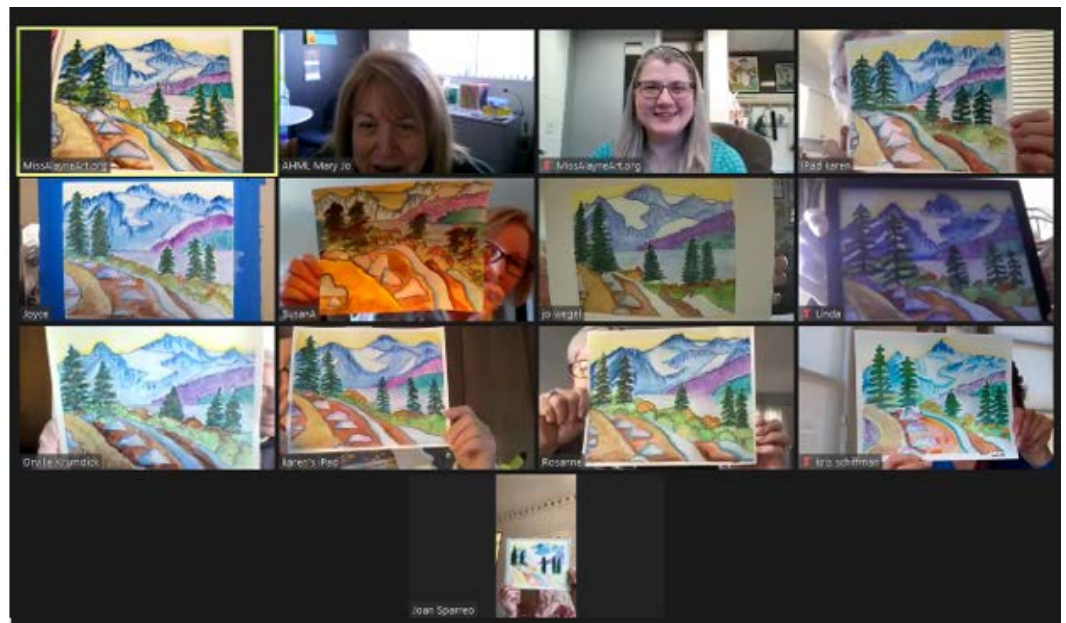
Chicago actor Betsey Means charmed an audience of 60 when she visited the library as the world’s most famous mystery writer, Agatha Christie. “Agatha” shared stories about her life and fielded questions from the audience. The afternoon program hosted by Senior and Accessible Services Advisor Renee Witt included tea and refreshments and a display of books by and about Christie.



## Art With Alayne

Students in the popular Art with Alayne class enjoyed March’s Rocky Mountain watercolor landscape class. Seventeen participants took time to share their comments, all giving the program the highest rating. Participants shared how much they appreciate Alayne’s teaching skills, the program format and the camaraderie of sharing their projects with one another.

*“This program is good medicine for the soul.”*

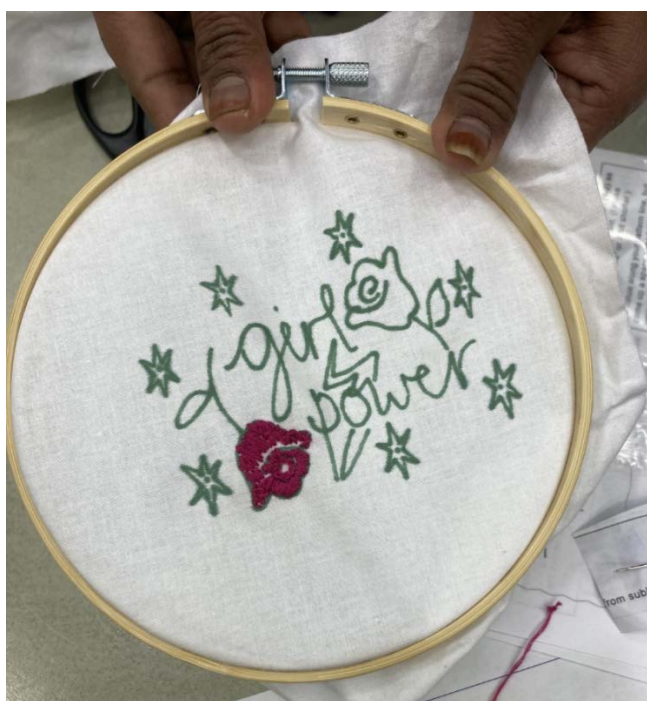


## **Guided Meditation**

Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal Parker, hosted Mark Zelkowitz for the first evening session of Guided Meditation. Forty-five attendees ranging in age from 20s-70s attended. Mark was excellent and started off with Qigong, light movements and breathing, and then invited everyone to sit and begin the guided meditation. After leading the meditation, he brought everyone back with the gong bowl and shared a few stories about his experience with meditation.

## **Feminist Embroidery**

Programs and Exhibits staff led two embroidery workshops to celebrate Women's History Month with a crafty bent. The first was Sunday, March 26 in the Makerplace Art space with 16 participants. The second was Thursday, March 20 in the Cardinal Room and 14 participated. The fiber artists of all levels learned new stitches and chose from a variety of uplifting embroidery patterns with feminist messages while meeting and connecting with neighbors.



## **Hit Girls – Women of Punk in the USA, 1977-1983**

In partnership with the Glenview Public Library (GPL) and in recognition of Women's History Month, the library and GPL hosted author Jen B. Larson in conversation with Todd Novak of Hozac Records in a wide-ranging program discussing the origins of her book, *Hit Girls: Women of Punk in the USA, 1977-1983*. Fifty attended the virtual discussion (35 from Arlington Heights). This program was hosted on Zoom and recorded for YouTube, where it has been viewed more than 40 times at time of reporting.

## **Author Maria Scrivan School Visits**

*New York Times* bestselling author and cartoonist Maria Scrivan had lunch with 25 sixth and seventh grade students at Thomas Middle School on March 2. Students asked thoughtful questions about her inspiration and writing/drawing process. One student even shared how much they related to the characters in the Nat series and how seeing themselves represented in a book had a positive impact on their life. Later in the afternoon, Maria presented to all of the sixth-grade students at South Middle School. Maria's message of self-acceptance clearly resonated with the students (and adults!) in the audience.



## **Singer-Songwriter Angela James shines at Sunday Musicale**

Jay Semla invited and hosted Angela James, a talented singer-songwriter who performs well-crafted, almost exclusively original material. She performed to an audience of 66 on Sunday, March 12. She was joined onstage by Jordan Martins, an excellent pedal steel player, and the duo achieved a robust yet simple and complete sound. The audience was very engaged and appreciative of the intimate performance.

## **Inspired by Art Night**

Eighteen artists joined Makerplace Specialist Kate Henry and Programs and Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski for a relaxing night of oil painting. After a discussion on the artist of the night, Bob Ross, artists painted happy little trees and sipped on green-themed drinks. Inspired by Art Night has been a fun way for participants to try out new art mediums, and many in the group were trying oil paints for the first time.



## **Pie Dough with Emily Paster**

Programs and Exhibits Coordinator Nikki Camp welcomed cookbook author and pie contest winner Emily Paster to the Makerplace kitchen to teach participants how to make flaky, delicious pastry dough and the pie crusts of their dreams. The newly developed class of seven began with a hands-on demonstration on how to make the perfect short-crust pastry by mixing the ingredients by hand until the right consistency is reached. Emily put a sour cheery filling that she made prior to class in her example crust and put it in the oven to bake. The class learned that the pie should be left to completely cool before slicing into it. Since pie dough requires time to rest before being rolled out, Emily graciously made each student a pie crust of their own to practice rolling out the crust and making a lattice to cover the top of a pie. After learning how to make and roll the crust, the participants each tasted the pie Emily made prior to class.

## Bavarian Soft Pretzels a Hit!



Manager Jennifer Czajka and Programs and Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski welcomed back Andrea Pracht of My Kitchen Clatter for a new class – Bavarian Pretzels. Throughout back-to-back classes, a total of twenty student chefs learned how to twist perfect Bavarian soft pretzels. During this very hands-on class, participants learned every step of the recipe with their own pretzel dough. Each attendee made some to eat in class and some to take home.

Everybody was excited to find that while pretzels may seem intimidating, they are easy to make at home, evidenced by attendees sharing photos of their pretzels made at home following the live classes (as seen below right, courtesy staff member Jennifer Nitch who shared the activity with her nephews).



## Beer on the Wall Returns!

Programs and Exhibits Specialist Neal Parker assisted Matt Geary, Cicerone at Beer on the Wall, during two back-to-back beer tasting sessions in the Makerplace kitchen. Back by popular demand, Matt offered an information packed, educational and enjoyable tasting experience. He had a PowerPoint specific to each session and started off talking about basic beer tasting lingo. Every beer had a PowerPoint slide that showed its brewery, style, and taste profiles. While talking about the beers, Matt also discussed types of foods that might pair well with the beer. There was a total of 30 attendees across sessions.



## All For One

A Makerplace customer came in to embroider a set of bath robes as a gift. Her friend's daughter is going through chemotherapy, so she is treating her to a getaway weekend with friends. They are each getting a matching robe. She was so excited about her work and just kept telling herself "I can do this."



## A Family Affair

Mom, Grandma, and two brothers joined forces to create a big project for upcoming birthday parties. They designed, cut, and applied vinyl stickers to glass party favor jars. The lettering was created using adhesive vinyl from the Makerplace and the Cricut Maker craft cutting machine.



## Heard at the Makerplace

*"My Mom is never going to leave your sewing room!"*

*"I think I'm going to be living here."*

## Staff Highlights

### **C2E2**

Makerspace Branch Assistant Manager Chris Krueger, Makerspace Specialist Lisa Hale and Makerspace Advisor Alle Volz, attended the C2E2 Professional day. C2E2 celebrates comics and entertainment, with a specific focus on making and cosplay. The group attended sessions on running library comic cons, mold making, resin pouring and Dungeons and Dragons meetups in libraries.



### **Illinois Library Presents**

Programs and Exhibits Manager Jennifer Czajka recorded an Illinois Libraries Present (ILP) episode of the RAILS Spark Podcast. This long-running podcast is now hosted by RAILS Executive Director Monica Harris and features conversations about innovative services, programs and ideas being implemented throughout Illinois libraries. Jennifer was joined by peer co-founder Kate Hall of Northbrook Public Library, and Mara Barbel of Shorewood-Troy Public Library District. The three members of ILP shared the story of ILP's genesis, program successes, how certain elements of planning and delivery work, the opportunity for library staff at all levels to participate in ILP for rich professional development and more about the perks of delivering high-quality events to a statewide audience, sharing resources as libraries do best.

### **Morningstar Investment Newsletter**

The Arlington Heights Memorial Library was highlighted in the January newsletter for Morningstar Investment Research Center (MIRC). Info Services Librarian Barb Powers was interviewed by the financial database vendor and the article outlined how the library promotes the use of the database to customers. This was an excellent opportunity for Barb to share successes the library has seen with a ZOOM class about Morningstar and marketing the database.

### **A Note of Thanks**

“The Arlington Heights Garden Club is quite grateful to have staff in our community library that can assist and make all of us function at a higher technology level to improve the quality of our websites and Facebook for the benefit of our community.”

### **Shelter in a Storm**

On Friday, March 31 at 8:45 p.m. while staff and customers were sheltering in the Studio due to a tornado warning, Digital Services Advisor Mini Radhakrishnan continued to assist a customer with important needs. From the studio space, Mini helped the customer prepare documents she needed for an interview the next day. On her way out, Mini wished her luck and the customer thanked Mini and told her she was her angel.