

Executive Director’s Report

June 2023

What’s New @ AHML

Safe Space Recognition



Youth Services staff were honored to accept an award recognizing the Hub and library as a safe space. Awarded by Kenneth Young Center’s Youth Advisory Councils, the recognition is especially meaningful since the nomination and recognition comes directly from the teens we serve every day. Students were asked to nominate an organization, club, or business that they see as exceptionally affirming, encouraging and, of course, safe. Youth Services Supervisor Lynne Priest and Teen Librarian Alejandria

Galarza attended the Communities for Positive Youth Development Coalition Town Hall to accept the award. Out of the ten “safe spaces” selected after the nomination process, AHML was one of two libraries honored.

Junie B. Jones the Musical: Top-Secret Personal Beeswax & Touch Tour

On Friday, May 12, Youth Services hosted Junie B. Jones the Musical: Top-Secret Personal Beeswax performed by St. Viator High School. The musical is an adaptation of four of Barbara Park’s best-selling books. In addition to the performance, we offered a “touch tour” designed for any blind/low vision individuals, or anyone that could benefit from this preshow event the opportunity to touch props, costumes, and get a description of the set. Two people attended the touch tour, and 119 attended the theatre performance.



Inspired by Chef Night – Ree Drummond

On May 18, Programs & Exhibits Coordinator Nikki Camp kicked off our new culinary series -- “Inspired By” chef nights. She created and instructed a night dedicated to The Pioneer Woman, Ree Drummond. P&E Specialist Emily Muszynski assisted to welcomed 17 Pioneer Woman fans into Kitchen to make and taste a variety of Ree’s recipes. The night began with info about Ree, her life in Oklahoma, and how Pioneer Woman got started. The atmosphere in the kitchen was lively and collaborative, as each table worked together while swapping stories and ideas. Inspired By chef nights will be offered monthly, with a different chef highlighted each month. In June, the Makerplace’s Chef Brian Bassegio leads Inspired By and Jamie Oliver, with P&E’s Jennifer Czajka, leading Inspired By Smitten Kitchen in July.

Outreach and Community Engagement

District 25 Art Show celebrates student creativity!

The Arlington Heights School District 25 Art Show beautified the first floor of the library from May 1 to May 25. This year's annual spring art show featured 2D and 3D art from elementary and middle school students from the entire district. The art that was displayed was selected by the student's art teachers. Staff welcomed just over 1,000 artists and their family members to celebrate student creativity at two bustling receptions on May 3rd and 10th. Guests munched on cookies while Graphics' Stephanie Battista captured group photos of artists with their teachers while parents happily snapped away too! More than 5,900 library customers and staff enjoyed the art show during its stay at the library.



World of Work

Circulation welcomed students from Windsor Elementary School for World of Work (WoW). The WoW program gives students the opportunity to visit a local business that interests them and see what goes on behind the scenes. The students visited the circulation workroom, drive up, and the bookmobile, and got to try their hand at checking in and out materials. (Pictured, Windsor students, parent chaperone and Circulation Assistants Somya Goswami, Mary Weber, and Denise Kalka)



End of the School Year visit to D214's Women and Children Center in Forestview

ESL adult education classes for the spring term have concluded and our library services continue to thrive! During the last week of classes, Catalina Shin, Community Engagement Liaison, Kim McGuire, Youth Services Specialist, and Ron Moravec, Bookmobile Supervisor, visited the D214 Women and Children Center at Forestview. Their purpose of this visit was to highlight our Summer Reading initiative and invite the attendees to consider all various exciting community events offered this summer season.



Swing Into Spring!

Library staff enthusiastically embraced the arrival of spring at Arlington Heights' newest festival, Swing into Spring! Youth Services Specialist Kerry Bailey, Programs and Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski, Digital Services Advisor Mini Radhakrishnan, Community Engagement Liaison Catalina Shin, and Bookmobile Supervisor Ron Moravec set up interactive outreach tables and welcomed a total of 590 individuals. Together, they engaged with visitors who wanted to hear about library happenings and explored the bookmobile for checkouts, returns, and library card services.

Staff members took the opportunity to highlight an array of diverse offerings, ranging from our Summer Reading Program to the promotion of our extensive Library of Things collection. While promoting Beach Boogie and other upcoming programs in June, staff developed meaningful connections with the community during a vibrant and enjoyable event.



Jars of Joy - an ESL & Literacy program at the Makerplace

To provide an engaging and creative experience, our ESL & Literacy office team members hosted the new Jars of Joy program in the Makerplace – the perfect opportunity to get crafty while learning to chit-chat in English. Participants had the opportunity to decorate their own jars and write powerful words of encouragement while actively engaging in English conversations with their peers. This program not only fostered creativity but also offered an immersive language learning environment. For many of the participants, it was their first time visiting the Makerplace building, adding an extra layer of excitement and exploration to this experience.



Outreach & Summer Reading Promotion

The month of May and early-June was busy for Youth Service staff. Besides preparing for summer reading and Summer Volunteer Squad, we visited 13 local schools to promote the library's summer reading program. We interacted with about 2,300 students, and this was in addition to regular monthly and seasonal outreach visits where we also highlighted the upcoming summer reading program.

Serving Our Community

Get Help, Connect with Local Government

Through our "Get Help" program, we strive to connect library customers with the offices and services of local elected officials to assist them with various needs, paperwork matters, case management, and more. During our most recent event, 16 customers took advantage of this service and visited different tables staffed by staff representatives from county, state, and federal entities. They had the opportunity to discuss their specific needs and concerns with knowledgeable staff members who were able to provide guidance and support. This event serves as a valuable platform for fostering direct communication between community members and government agencies, facilitating the resolution of issues, and ensuring that customers receive the assistance they require.



Police Department Partnership Program

Info Services Librarian Barb Powers partnered with Officer Tyler Masnovi from the Arlington Heights Police Department, to present a program about Identity Theft for the community. The police department is a new partner for Info Services. The 27 attendees were very engaged in the topic, asking questions throughout the presentation, and staying after it was over to talk to one another, to Barb, and to the officer.

Professional Headshots Program

Business Services Advisor Diane Malik and Info Services Librarian Brittany Coleman partnered to create and host a professional headshots program for customers. Catered to the local small business and job seeker audience, they hired a professional photographer and coordinated sessions for 26 individuals to have their photographs taken. Pursuing this kind of service on one's own can cost upwards of \$300 per person and offering it free of charge to our customers was a major benefit.

Beyond Birds & Bees

Dr. Heidi Croatt, founder of Beyond Birds and Bees, shared information with parents/caregivers on how to communicate with their child on topics related to sex and sexual development. She joined registered guests via Zoom every Tuesday, four weeks in a row and tailored her presentation focusing on different age groups. The goal was to help parents feel more confident communicating with their children about topics that are often taboo or uncomfortable. The live sessions were well-received, and many more customers were able to benefit from the recordings available on the library's YouTube channel based on the positive feedback customers shared with staff. As of June 1, the four sessions total 355 views.

We also received a very kind thank you letter from a customer who plans to share what she learned in the presentations when she returns to Japan and resumes teaching sex education to children and their parents. AHML definitely has an international influence.

Genealogy and Local History Makes the News

Genealogy and Local History Librarian Eddie Kristan assisted a group of individuals from out of the country with research. They are relatives of an Arlington Heights Civil War Veteran John Sieburg and were seeking documentation and burial information about him. Eddie used the library's online resources and print materials in the Shackley Room to contribute to their project, and this veteran is now honored at Memorial Park. The efforts of these relatives were shared by the Daily Herald and demonstrate the importance of genealogy in civic heritage

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20230526/how-a-woman-in-switzerland-got-a-civil-war-veteran-from-arlington-heights-his-long-overdue-honor>.



National Senior Health & Fitness Day

In collaboration with other Senior Center partner agencies, the library's Senior and Accessible Services staff hosted a busy morning of health and fitness-related activities for older adults and their family members. Over 150 seniors visited to attend demos, lectures, connect with resources and get free health screenings. A special shout-out to the library's graphics staff who provided all the directional signage for the event.



The Senior Center's Health & Fitness Day included a Reading Room display and hands-on demonstration of the library's assistive devices that residents can borrow from our Library of Things collection. Staff also provided information and demonstrations for the Digital Talking Book player from the Talking Book and Braille Service and the iBill Currency Reader from the U.S. Currency Reader Program.



Teen Finals

We supported 192 students during finals weeks, providing them with a collaborative space to study.

Adult Science Fair

Programs & Exhibits Coordinator Nikki Camp and Specialist Emily Muszynski welcomed 14 scientists to the Hendrickson Room on May 30 for a hands on and retro fun Adult Science Fair. Set up like a traditional fair, participants walked through each station doing science experiments, some that brought back memories of childhood and some that were new and improved. A favorite among the group was the Makey Makey, a circuit programming kit that allows you to turn potatoes and bananas into touchpads for the computer. We ended our fair with a classic – everyone got the chance to cause an eruption in our papier mâché volcano!



Introduction to Chinese Paper Cutting

On Tuesday, May 16, Programs & Exhibits Specialist Emily Muszynski welcomed educator Yvonne Wolf back to the library for Introduction into Chinese Papercutting, a cultural program with educational and hands-on elements. Yvonne first presented on the history and significance of paper cutting in Chinese culture and showed some intricate examples. 24 attendees joined in practicing papercutting using three styles of templates that celebrated this year's Chinese zodiac sign – the rabbit - with their beautifully cut tableaus.



Volunteer Fair returns!

Nikki Camp and Jay Semla of Programs & Exhibits planned and hosted the return of the Volunteer Fair on Sunday, May 7. More than 130 attendees, teen through adult, joined the event in Hendrickson Room to meet 24 community organizations representing their volunteer opportunities. This year's event, the first since 2018, was dubbed "How Can I Help?" and featured a mix of new and returning organizations, including Lemons of Love, Honor Flight Chicago, the Buddy Foundation, and our own library volunteer opportunities, represented by AHML Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Begich. Attendees received a brochure with all participating organizations, their missions and web address. The organizations provided a warm welcome and wealth of information to customers eager to find their next volunteer opportunity. Attendees enjoyed conveniently exploring opportunities from such a diverse range of local organizations in one place while organizations had great things to say and indicated they received a lot of signups. The event yielded meaningful connections between the organization reps and fair visitors.

Thanks from our organizations:

"This was an amazing event! Thank you for putting it on. It was very well advertised and put together. It was very successful for our organization!"

"It was a delightful location -- and the library staff was exceptionally welcoming and helpful. (Loved the TLC treats & water! Thank you.)"

"Well organized, engaged event."

"My volunteers spoke very highly of the event and shared there was a lot of traffic flow."

Garden & Produce Swap

An impressive 42 gardeners stopped by the May 28 Garden & Produce Swap. It was a beautiful day outside the Makerplace and participants swapped plants, seeds, and gardening knowledge. A couple of swappers stayed for the better part of an hour chatting and meeting each other. We had an abundance of plants and seeds, and we were happy to see them go home with families who stopped by on their way to Rec Park. Swaps are a great casual way for gardeners of all skill levels to connect and share and will continue through September on the fourth Sunday of each month.

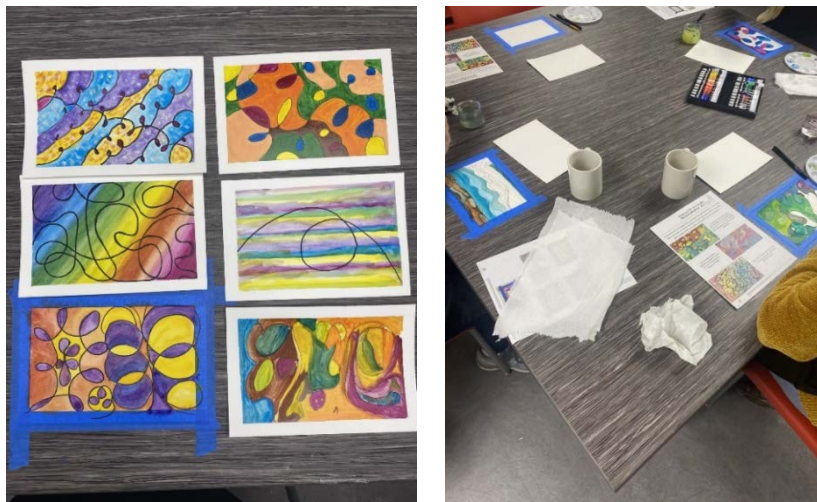
Spectacular Sushi

On Saturday, May 6, chef Jen Paleracio was back in the Makerplace Kitchen to teach two sessions of Spectacular Sushi. A total of 28 student chefs learned the ins and outs of making sushi— including how to make rice, cut vegetables, and of course, roll the sushi like experts. It was amazing to see people realize that something which seems complicated can be easily made at home! Chef Jen will be back by popular demand later this summer.



Inspiring Art

This month's "Inspired By" Art Night focused on the mental health benefits of art through Neurographic Art as a tie into Mental Health Awareness Month. Each participant got to create two watercolor paintings while reflecting on their emotions and current stresses. Paintings were as varied as the participants, ranging from abstract rainbow pieces to more figurative and landscape pieces. Participants loved the program, saying "Love everything about Inspire Art Nights" and that the program was "casual, comfortable, [with] wonderful hostesses."



Seasoning with Salt

Emily Paster returned to the Makerplace Kitchen to teach 17 aspiring chefs all about Salt. Different kinds of salt added to our cooking enhances the flavor and texture of a dish. Emily brought a variety of salts from her travels around the world for the attendees to try on tomatoes and hard-boiled eggs. She made a few different dishes with different types of salt including Miso butterscotch cookies with sea salt on top, pasta in salted water vs unsalted water (the difference is crazy!), and potatoes boiled in a pot with ½ cup of salt and water. The potatoes came out tasting like the butteriest mashed potatoes you've ever had, except there was nothing on them -- the amazing taste came just from being in the salt water. Attendees then assembled preserved lemons for future tangy recipes to take home – a simple recipe of six lemons, and salt.

Makerplace Stories



A customer wanted to make a 6-foot stencil of Michael Jordan for a basket court that he was working on for his kids. The staff helped him turn the PNG image into a cut file for the laser using 15 sheets of 12 x 20 inch cardboard. He started the project in a one-on-one appointment at the Makerplace and then later came back and independently finished the rest of the stencil.

It Is About Fun & Games

One of our regulars is an illustrator and recently finished illustrating a children's book. He put his illustration on mousepads as gifts using sublimation. His Instagram account is @billytokyo, which is a pen name.



Staff Highlights

Committee Appointments

Info Services Manager Jolie Duncan was appointed to serve on the Illinois Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee. The committee works to resist all attempts to censor library materials or to restrict public access to information. This is a three-year appointment.

Info Services Librarian Megan Buttera was appointed to the American Library Association (ALA) Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) BRASS committee for Business Reference in Public Libraries. This group promotes professional development on the topic for librarians and library staff nationwide.

Executive Director, Mike Driskell, was appointed to serve on the Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee. The committee provides the association's focus on legislative matters, recommends studies on projects designed to advance the development of all types of libraries and advocates legislative action which advances library service for all residents of Illinois. This is a three-year appointment.

ILA Proposal Accepted

Katie Meyers and Chris Krueger prepared a session proposal for ILA 2023 focusing on the success of our 3D printed assistive tool kit, technology accessibility, and the collaboration between our departments. The session titled "Making Technology Accessible: Creative and Assistive Tools Kit" will be presented at the October 2023 ILA conference.

AHML Staff Leads ILA Discussion Series

Info Services Librarian Brittany Coleman is an active member of the Illinois Library Association's Diversity Committee, and this month, she moderated a discussion series for library professionals. The ILA Diversity Committee hosts the United Shades Discussion Series to foster a culture of inclusivity and discussion. This series is inspired by the CNN show United Shades of America, where W. Kamau Bell explores different communities in the US and their unique challenges. Each discussion is framed around a single episode of the television series. Attendees are encouraged to share their thoughts and participate in the discussion.

The participants discussed a variety of topics, including their experience with the police, recruiting and training, and the positives of community policing. Brittany facilitated the conversation, helping to ensure that all the participants had a chance to share their views and asking follow-up questions to help the participants to explore their ideas in more depth. The discussion was lively and engaging, and several AHML staff attended the discussion. The discussion was a valuable opportunity for library professionals to have a safe space to discuss timely topics and to share their own lived experiences.



Congratulations Graduates!

Sarah Dunton in Materials Handling has earned her Bachelor's degree.

Madelyn Stevens in Materials Handling has earned her Bachelor's degree.