

Director's Report

January 2025

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

Spotlight

AHML Officially Certified as a Family Place Library

Members of the Family Place Libraries (FPL) initiative completed their site visit to confirm that the library meets all aspects of the initiative's seven core components. Since staff attended a multi-day FPL Training Institute in October 2018, they've worked to transform the library into a welcoming, developmentally appropriate early learning environment for very young children, their parents and caregivers. This included the addition of a five-week parent child workshop held twice annually, a parent collection adjacent to areas designed for our youngest customers and a focus on specially designed spaces for interactive early learning. AHML was presented with a Family Place Libraries banner in December, designating the library's certification.



Community Members Participate in Tiny Art Show



More than 200 community members of all ages received 4x4" canvases in November and more than 150 returned finished art pieces for display in the library's display cases. Artists used many different mediums to create a big impact with limited space. Paint, fabric, collage and even sticks and leaves were used in pieces that explored the community's favorite things, places and inspirations.

The Tiny Art Show continues to be a way to celebrate Arlington Heights' creativity and is a delightful surprise to customers. Emily, Programs & Exhibits Specialist, coordinated the program with Eunice, Info Services Advisor, Michele, Info Services Assistant, and Kate, Makerplace Specialist, collaborating to distribute art kits, with the lively design by Colleen, Graphic Designer, brought the final polish that made the show pop.



Makerplace: Year in Review Snapshot

More than 18,000 people visited the Makerplace in 2024, which is a 15% increase from 2023. The Makerplace staff increased program sessions by 15.5% and saw a 16% increase in program attendance. Likewise, there's been an increase in volunteer hours by 16.2% to support these initiatives.

Culinary programming made impressive strides in 2024, notably seeing increases in the number of programs designed by Chef Brian and a wider variety of classes for kids, tweens and teens, including the popular summer Lemonade Pop-ups, plus new ESL culinary experiences. Chef-delivered classes for adults continue to connect community members and build skills through hands-on instruction from culinary experts across a variety of specialty areas. Some innovative additions in 2024 included popular Blue Zones classes and a successful Arlington Heights Chopped! competition (with more of both coming in 2025).

In 2024, 117 culinary classes were hosted in the Makerplace Kitchen, up from 95 in 2023 and 74 in 2022. The busiest months were March with 14 programs, followed by June (13), February (12) and December (11). Demand continues to be measured through wait lists, the highest numbers in February (581) and December (458). The average monthly attendance was 141 customers.

GOAL

Strengthen the library's service outside its walls

AHML Continues to Build Upon Partnerships

Rolling Green Country Club

AHML was thanked in the acknowledgements of the publication *100 Years of the Rolling Green Country Club*, due to Genealogy & Local History Librarian Eddie Kristan's assistance with research and access to archival materials for the process. In a letter of thanks to Eddie, they wrote, ***"We are proud of the finished product and recognize it was not possible without the wonderful help of many people, like you, who graciously lent a helping hand."***



Mount Prospect Library

Info Advisors partnered with the Mount Prospect Library to host a Favorite Things: Best of 2024 on Zoom which had 67 attendees. Four Info Advisors and two Mount Prospect Library advisors shared their favorite books of 2024. The discussion was very organic and flowed nicely with each presenter sharing five titles.

Journeys | The Road Home

Neal, Programs & Exhibits Specialist, and Catalina, Community Engagement Liaison, facilitated the final PADS Meal Prep session of the year (but not the season!). It was another great success, with 10 participants preparing lunch and dinner for 45 individuals at Journeys. In total this year, AHML coordinated six Meal Prep sessions in the Makerplace Kitchen, engaging 79 attendees, volunteering their time to assist their community. In total, more than 400 individual meals were prepared and delivered through this year's program.

Program Attendance Increase During Inclusion Awareness Month

Inclusion Awareness Month (October) featured 12 programs for both adults and youth with total attendance of 315, a 91% increase over 2022. Some of the programs included Active Sensory Fun, Developmental Playgroup, an Assistive Tools Kit Demo, Accessible Kitchen Tech and a Monster Mash Costume Party. More than 30 people attended the Monster Mash Costume Party in the Hendrickson Room.





Writer's Ink Program Thrives on Zoom

The Writer's Ink program has maintained a strong group of regulars on Zoom thanks to the consistent relationship building by Neal, Programs & Exhibits Specialist. Last month's session had 13 attendees, who workshopped six diverse pieces from fantasy and memoir to espionage and poetry. One long-time attendee shared exciting news with the group—with their help, she has just published her first novel! She shared a personal note of thanks and a copy for AHML with Neal:

"I want to thank you [Neal] on behalf of the library for sponsoring the Writer's Ink program which was so helpful for me in completing my book. The interactive nature of the program and active criticism and/or suggestions given by yourself, participants, and Jacob as program leader was invaluable."

Staff Highlights from Outside the Library Walls

- As part of her work on the Illinois Library Association's (ILA) Intellectual Freedom Committee, Info Services Manager Jolie Duncan co-facilitated an ILA Noon Network webinar titled *Soft Censorship, Self-Censorship, and the Chilling Effect in Libraries*. Librarians from public, academic and school libraries had a thoughtful discussion on the issues they are facing in their jobs.



Illinois Libraries Present

- The Illinois Libraries Present (ILP) program will be transitioning to the ILA after the conclusion of its fourth season. As a co-founding library, Programs & Exhibits Manager Jennifer Czajka has continued work on the ILP Steering Committee and has been working on this transition with ILA staff since summer 2024. The transition will offer sustainability of the ILP program for many years to come. Thank you, Board of Trustees, for your support of this initiative, since the very beginning.



Grow the use of our services and resources

AHML Engages the Community Through Programs & Experiences at the Library

Mozart's Women: His Family, His Friends, His Music

Eighty customers attended a dramatization of Constanze Mozart's life with Wolfgang Amadeus, performed by Jenny Riddle and accompanied by classical pianist Jeffrey Panko. Customers were impressed with the program's artists and enjoyed the *"merging of story and music with a beautiful costume and piano accompaniment."*



Louise Penny Party

Louise Penny fans gathered for a fun night celebrating the newest release of the series. The program included a presentation about the beloved series and then attendees played a creative locked room mystery game created by Info Services Advisors. Attendees also completed a craft and had snacks while meeting other avid readers.

Music in the Stacks

Neal, Programs & Exhibits Specialist, continued the Music in the Stacks series with another weekend performance on the library's first floor. Cellist Lilianna Wosko returned to perform and drew a diverse crowd of more than 70 while she performed a mix of jazz and classical pieces with some holiday classics mixed in to set the perfect tone for a December Sunday.

Winter Wonders

Preschoolers enjoyed exploring several winter-themed sensory activities, including ice painting, winter seed inspection, freeing animals frozen in ice and more.





Paint a Recipe Box

Emily, Programs & Exhibits Specialist, welcomed 19 artists who took a simple wooden box and turned it into their own individual art piece, and all with a \$0 budget. The program utilized only materials left over from past programs.

Sunday Musicale

Jay, Programs & Exhibits Assistant, welcomed 56 attendees for the final Sunday Musicale of the year featuring vocalist Keri Johnsrud and pianist Kevin Bales performing songs from their album *Beyond the Neighborhood: The Music of Fred Rogers*. In 2024, Sunday Musicale welcomed a total of 1,630 music lovers over 12 diverse performances—the highest attendance in 10 years! Thanks to Friends of the Library for their continued support.



More Than 160 Tote Bags for Babies Distributed in 2024

In 2024, Youth Services distributed more than 160 tote bags for new baby cardholder signups. Funded by the Friends of the Library, these bags are stocked with a new book that encourages bonding between caregivers and their children, as well as an early literacy calendar offering fun and accessible ideas for growing children's skills every day of the year. The library currently provides 918 library cards to children under the age of 5! The baby library cards themselves, complete with charming art designed in-house, further communicate the value of books and libraries even to the youngest members of our community.





New Online Resource for Kids

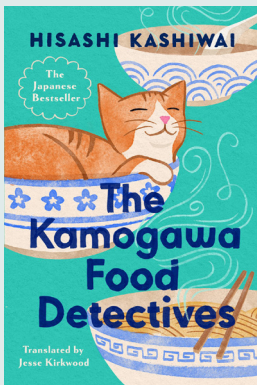
From the makers of ABCmouse, Adventure Academy is a fun, PC/Mac/app-based educational multi-player game for kids 8-13. Users can create and customize a character, and then embark upon special quests based on science, reading, math, geography, US history and more. Access Adventure Academy on the library's website at ahml.info/kids/learn.



AHML Continues to Strengthen Service to Multilingual Families & English Language Learners

ELL Students Visit the Hub

Youth and Community & Circulation Services staff hosted two classes of English Language Learners (ELL) from Buffalo Grove High School (BGHS). Amy, Youth Outreach Specialist, worked with the BGHS librarian to distribute translated library card applications to Arlington Heights residents ahead of the visit. Catalina, Community Engagement Liaison, led a Spanish-language tour of the library for the Spanish-speaking students. In addition to a services overview and library tours, ELL students had time to explore the Hub and take advantage of the teen offerings at the library.



Good Books, New Friends

Info Advisors collaborated with ESL staff to host a cross-over book discussion called Good Books, New Friends. This discussion was targeted to ESL students and native English speakers to meet and discuss a book together. Ten attendees enjoyed discussing *Kamogawa Food Detectives*. The following day, some of the same attendees (plus many new attendees) made one of the recipes featured in the book at the Makerplace Kitchen. The program was a great success and for several of the participants it was their first time in the Makerplace.

ESL & Literacy Programs

In December, ESL & Literacy staff hosted 33 programs with 364 people in attendance before shuttering the office for winter break.





Enhance the library's role in the everyday lives of the Arlington Heights community



Senior & Accessible Services Manager Retires

After 22 years of service to AHML, Mary Jo Lepo, Senior & Accessible Services Manager, retired last month. Her dedicated and thoughtful development of diverse services, programs and classes made a lasting impact on the lives of our customers, staff and volunteers. Her tenure was celebrated by staff and the many volunteers who worked with the department.

New Shelves Allow for Easier Browsing of Collection

Browsing video games in Kids' World is now easier with the addition of new shelves. The shelves now match the rest of the Kids' World audiovisual shelving, where games are spine out to make it easier to see the titles.



More Than 740 Books Donated for Library's Holiday Book Drive

Thank you to all of our customers, staff and community groups who helped contribute to the library's 2024 Holiday Book Drive. More than 740 books were generously donated for infants, children and teens for Wheeling Township's Adopt-a-Family program. Special thanks to the library staff and volunteers, the Rolling Green Country Club Women's Golf Association and the Lakeshore Circle Book Club for their very generous donations.

Kudos to the Communications & Marketing Department for coordinating the drive, the Administration, Finance and IT Departments on working together to add an online credit card portal option for staff and customers to make monetary donations and the Collection Services Department for ordering 92 books funded by the monetary donations.





Makerplace Fosters Community Connection & Inspires Creativity Through Experiences

Holiday Gifts

Last month, customers were actively engaged in customizing gifts at the Makerplace. Inspired by the December newsletter's feature on easy gift-making ideas, nearly 140 mugs were sold for onsite design and customization. Unique projects supported through one-on-one appointments included completing a vintage Christmas stocking with a tricky sewing pattern, etching designs on wood ornaments, and personalizing a leather wallet and wooden photo album, all leading to happy outcomes.



Cookiefest

Chef Brian continued to explore different hands-on programming models for the Makerplace Kitchen, piloting Cookiefest for the holidays. He hosted three 90-minute sessions where registered customers could bring their ingredients and helpers to use the kitchen's equipment and ovens to mass-produce cookies. There was also a station for decorating cookie boxes while the treats cooled. This model has piqued everyone's interest, and Chef Brian looks forward to evolving this approach in 2025.

Culinary Programs


December saw culinary attendees enjoying winter favorites in four culinary classes planned by the Programs & Exhibits Department including two sessions on making homemade cinnamon rolls with 24 attendees and two sessions on making gourmet hot chocolate with Chef Grace with 24 attendees.



Community Blood Drives Helped Save Over 400 Lives


Last month, 22 attendees donated blood at the library's Community Blood Drive. In 2024, AHML partnered with Versiti Blood and held five blood drives that collected 135 units that helped save 405 lives in our community!

What Customers Are Saying




"I liked learning about books that I wouldn't have picked up to read. The reviewers gave more information than you can read on the covers."

-Favorite Things: Best of 2024 Virtual Attendee




"I enjoyed seeing all the creativity and meeting neighbors. Emily is always GREAT!"

-Paint a Recipe Box Attendee




"Your staff is incredibly creative and it was a delightful evening. Truly was blown away...loved it all."

-Louise Penny Party Attendee




"AHML is an outstanding source of so many resources to so many people!"

- Guided Meditation Attendee



"I have enjoyed my participation with the Current Events group over many years and thank you and the library for the opportunity to not only voice my views, but to listen and learn from others."

-Current Events at the Senior Center Attendee



"We truly appreciate the convenience of having these offices in one location, allowing us to learn and connect without spending endless hours on the phone with multiple offices. Having a representative ready to assist us in person at the library is invaluable."

- Get Help, Connect with Local Government Attendee

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

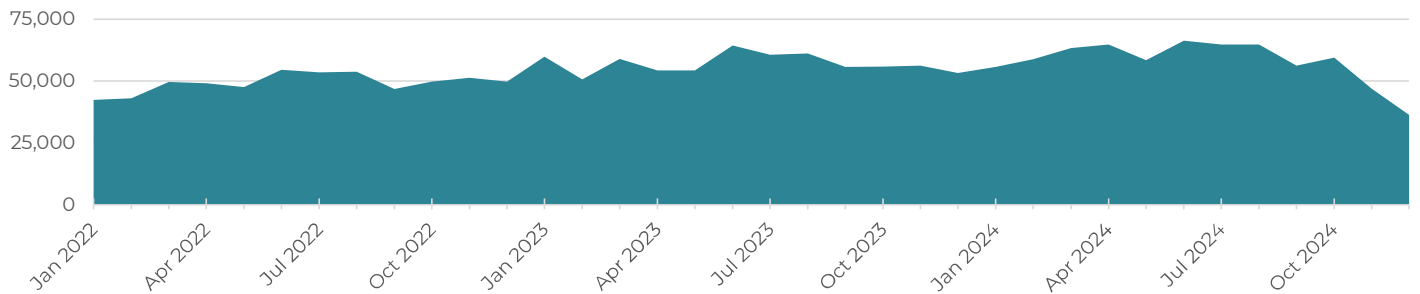
December 2024 Dashboard

Library Visits

75% of library customers in December visited the Main Library. Year to date, library visits are up 4.5%.

	December			2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Main Library	27,196	75.0%		552,021	552,232	0.0%
Drive-Up	4,590	12.7%		61,106	60,899	0.3%
Bookmobile	1,100	3.0%		25,781	24,374	5.8%
Makerplace	1,231	3.4%		18,248	15,854	15.1%
Senior Center	1,402	3.9%		15,324	12,494	22.7%
Outreach	720	2.0%		23,156	N/A	
Total	36,239	100%		695,636	665,853	4.5%

Total Visits



Room Use	December	2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change	Trend
Hendrickson Room	13	124	131	-5.3%	<p>January 2024-December 2024</p>
Conference Rooms	1,315	15,087	14,320	5.4%	
Total	1,328	15,211	14,451	5.3%	

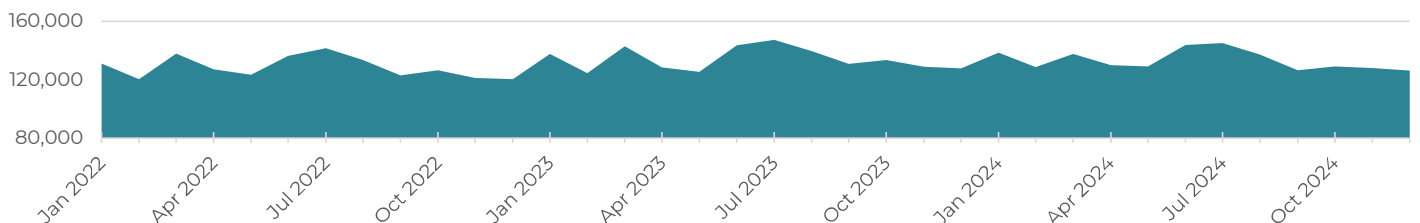
Library Cards ¹	December	2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change	Trend
Resident	220	4,615	4,984	-7.4%	<p>January 2024-December 2024</p>
Reciprocal	101	1,360	1,467	-7.3%	
Purchased	2	9	8	12.5%	
Total	323	5,984	6,459	-7.4%	

Circulation

18.9% of checkouts in December were Downloadable items. Year to date, total checkouts are down -0.64%.

	December			2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Print	68,315	54.1%		917,486	931,228	-1.5%
Downloadable	23,849	18.9%		279,318	260,926	7.0%
Audiovisual	24,408	19.3%		286,650	306,351	-6.4%
Other	9,409	7.5%		112,001	107,101	4.6%
ILL	221	0.2%		4,231	4,353	-2.8%
Total	126,202	100%		1,599,686	1,609,959	-0.64%

Total Checkouts



¹ New cards only. Does not include renewals.

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

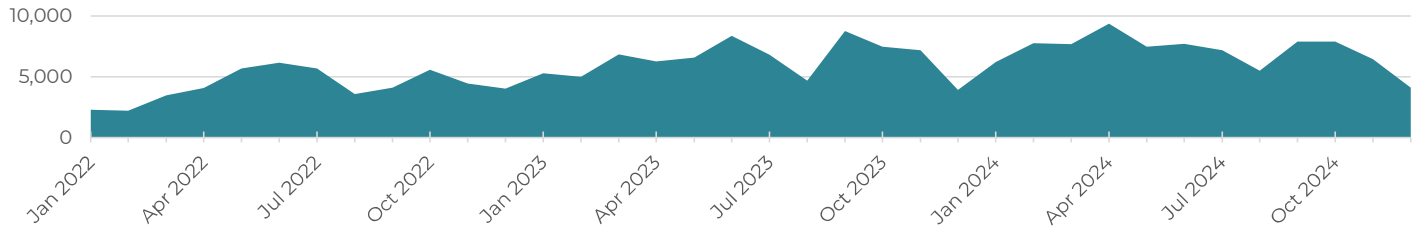
December 2024 Dashboard

Programs

1,669 customers attended Children programs in December, which represents 40.4% of all program attendees. Year to date, program attendance is up 10.4% across all audiences and program sessions are up 5.6%.

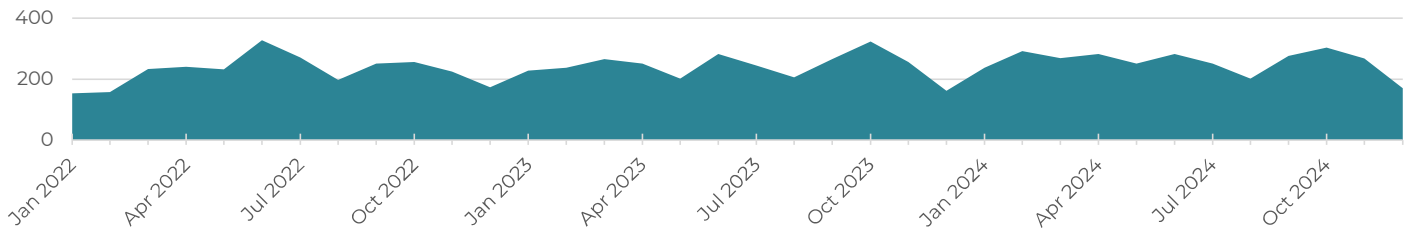
	Attendance	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Children	1,669	40.4%	<div><div></div></div>	43,108	36,064	19.5%
Adult	1,419	34.4%	<div><div></div></div>	37,604	35,423	6.2%
Teen	1,042	25.2%	<div><div></div></div>	4,553	5,764	-21.0%
	4,130	100%		85,265	77,251	10.4%

Attendance



	Sessions	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Adult	110	64.3%	<div><div></div></div>	2,036	1,897	7.3%
Children	42	24.6%	<div><div></div></div>	860	841	2.3%
Teen	19	11.1%	<div><div></div></div>	194	188	3.2%
	171	100%		3,090	2,926	5.6%

Sessions



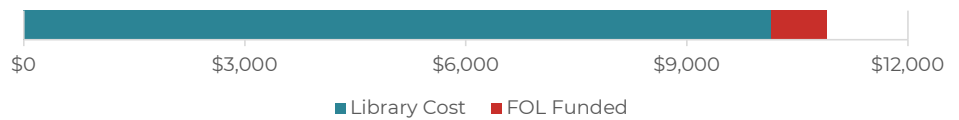
Total Program Cost

\$10,895.74

FOL Funded

\$750.00

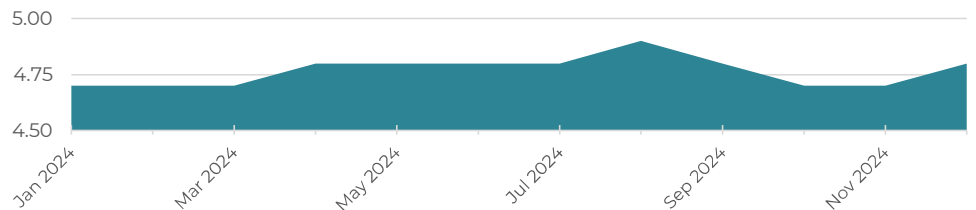
6.9%



Program Satisfaction

4.8 / 5

out of 31 programs



Supplementary Programs and Activities²

	December	Trend	2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Attendance	4,999	<div><div></div></div>	45,340	48,407	-6.3%
Sessions	24	<div><div></div></div>	259	263	-1.5%

January 2024-December 2024

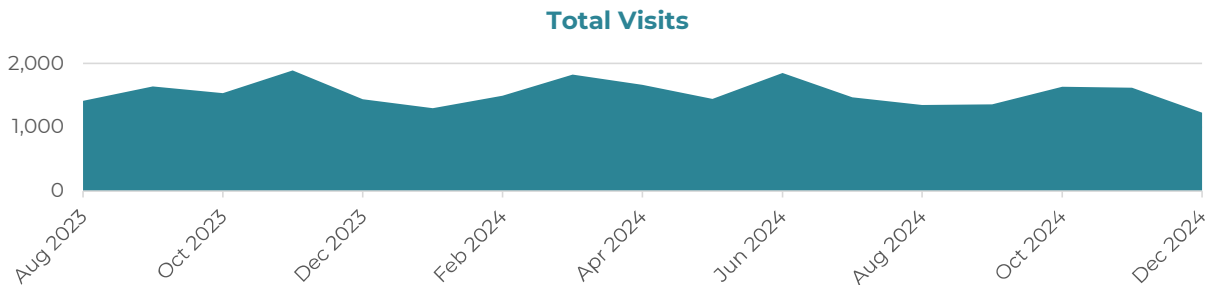
²Supplementary programs and activities are planned events where customers participate on their own, instead of at a designated time with a group. Registration is not required.

Arlington Heights Memorial Library Makerplace

December 2024 Dashboard

	December	% New Users	2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Makerplace Visits	1,231	6.3%	18,248	15,854	15.1%

	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
New Users³					
Makerplace	46	59.7%	705	717	-1.7%
Kitchen	18	23.4%	207	227	-8.8%
Makerplace & Kitchen	13	16.9%	158	170	-7.1%
Total	77	100%	1,070	1,114	-3.9%



	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Equipment Usage⁴					
Fabrication	309	60.2%	2,591	2,306	12.4%
Small Tools	80	15.6%	857	697	23.0%
Sewing	81	15.8%	840	620	35.5%
Technology	37	7.2%	456	468	-2.6%
Art	6	1.2%	47	61	-23.0%
Total	513	100%	4,791	4,152	15.4%

	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
Program Attendance⁵					
Culinary	85	100.0%	1,386	1,469	-5.7%
Maker	0	0.0%	1,508	1,060	42.3%
Tour	0	0.0%	93	175	-46.9%
Other	0	0.0%	515	313	64.5%
Total	85	100%	3,502	3,017	16.1%

	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
3D Print Jobs	177		1,834	1,765	4%

	December		2024 YTD	2023 YTD	Change
eLearning⁶	337		3,099	3,465	-11%

³ Measured by number of waivers signed for maker/fabrication, kitchen, or both

⁴ **Fabrication**: all fabrication room equipment except 3D printers; **Small Tools**: soldering irons, hand tools; **Technology**: design computers

⁵ **Culinary**: kitchen programming; **Maker**: hands on making programs (3D printing, laser cutting, sewing); **Tour**: attendance of facility tours prescheduled or drop-in

⁶ Niche Academy views of Makerplace resources