



Monthly Report

January 2017

Adult Services: The Information Desk staff answered over 2,000 reference questions in the month of January! This was our busiest month in our recorded statistics history. Great work was done by all – the patience, professionalism, and dedication of the Information Desk Staff is a backbone to the library's success. A recent book display of past All Iowa Reads nominees and winners was popular with patrons; we restocked it several times every day! Our Technical Services staff is evaluating more efficient ways to process new Quick Pick books, which will save staff time and also result in more professional labels when Quick Picks are integrated into the general collection.

Children's Services: In January we had our second annual 1000 Books before Kindergarten graduation and Kickoff Party with special guest local story teller Darrin Crow. Several new families signed up and four of the graduates collected their certificates. We also partnered with the Parent Education Consortium to put on a 6 week Gearing Up for Kindergarten parenting workshop. They provide catered meals for families, a family activity, and then childcare for the kids as the parents learn about different aspects of parenting and child development. The registration filled up a few weeks before class began and we've had around 40 people attend each session. We've been weeding the outdated and grubby children's nonfiction, fiction and easy books to update our ever growing collection and to make room for new titles as we gear up for Summer Reading. We're also working on outreach programming for our local daycares and preschools. We also finished shelf-reading and shifting our children's nonfiction section to make room for our nonfiction reader section, which is already seeing a big boost in popularity and circulation!

Young Adult Services: In January the teens voted on favorite books, graphic novels, movies, subjects in school and other things. After the results were tallied up we made the results the display in the teen area for February and had a special after hours event in the library called MPL Teen Choice Awards Party. The teens had a lot of fun doing a costume design craft, playing games, watching videos, and having snacks. Teen Fandemonium's theme this month was YouTube and was very popular. Our reoccurring programs of Teen Space and our writing club RoughWriters are going very well. The teens seem to like the consistency of having those programs to depend on every week and are enjoying them and we are getting fairly consistent numbers.

Outreach Services: We continue to support the Friends group with their Homebound Books program and are pleased that it is slowly growing and attracting more attention. We are glad to continue to work with local home school families and to share information with them about our resources and ways we can help them meet their



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educational goals for their children. We are enjoying our involvement with the local assisted living facilities providing deposit collections for their residents.

Circulation Services: The management team is exploring ideas for doing some broad-based customer service training for staff working at the circulation desk. As our staff has grown, we don't think we've kept up as well as we need to with regards to making sure all staff understands our customer service expectations. We are also reviewing a scheduling app called When I Work to see if that might be a more efficient way to schedule shifts than using an Excel spreadsheet. Staff members Dawn Cline and Sandy Ransier continue their involvement in the metro-wide holds process committee that is investigating ways to streamline this process among all three libraries.

Library Programming: Adult programming kicked off to a great start in 2017 thanks to a cider class taught by Mike Edrington of Wilson's Hard Cider. The 25 attendees learned the history of cider, the process of cider making, and sampled four of the ciders Wilson's has on the market. We're looking forward to incorporating more local businesses and adult learning in future library programs. The Thursday night drop-in needlework program, the Knit Wits, continues to draw consistent attendance from both new and seasoned members, as does our Thursday afternoon Scrabble Club.

Building/Facilities Update: Foster's Heating & AC spent some time here this month exploring the ins and outs of our HVAC system in preparation for making some improvements. They are working at the behest of Ryan Miller at Public Services. Meanwhile, staff continues to manage the building's heat manually using the basement controls.

Technology Update: Late this month, the City split our public computer network and public wifi off from the City's staff network for security purposes. We are now evaluating the success of the move with regard to speed of online access for patrons. James continues his project to get our public laptops updated.

Personnel: Our search to fill our vacant Access Services Coordinator position is ongoing; we have decided to repost the position with an MLS degree required. The youth services department is interviewing for a full-time teen services library assistant. In January, part-time library assistant Mallory Mefferd began her work with us.

Metro Library Network Update: The Linn Area Reads title for 2017 will be announced on February 12 and programming will take place throughout March.



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Out Loud! Update: At this writing, we have secured contracts for two of our three summer authors; names will be announced at the Linn Area Reads author program near the end of March.

Librarian's Report:

A couple of professional involvement updates: Olivia Stoner has been appointed to the ILA Conference Planning Committee and Elsworth Carman has been appointed to the State Library Advisory Panel (G libraries). We both look forward to serving in these capacities.

We have heard from State Librarian Michael Scott that there will be a delay in Direct State Aid payments this year. The current state budget proposes a 4.25% cut to the State Library budget and the Enrich Iowa program for the next two fiscal years. This year's Direct Aid and Enrich Iowa funding may be cut as well; there is no timeline available yet for these changes. I will keep the board abreast of developments. In addition to direct impacts on our budget, we will need to be mindful of how changes to other area libraries could influence our service delivery.

Library leadership had a Skype meeting with Joe Huberty on January 12th. We had a chance to go over the general internal layout of the new building and talk through some concerns and ideas. Joe continues to be responsive to our needs and a pleasure to work with. I look forward to bringing him in—either in person or via Skype—for a conversation with the board soon.

I was in Atlanta for the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting from January 19th through the 22nd. I completed my final term on the Schneider Family Book Award Jury (an ALA committee charged with identifying the best books for children, tweens, and teens that include disability issues), had an opportunity to meet with some of the other members of the Voice of Youth Advocates Magazine Editorial Board, and participated in a number of discussions and events for library directors. I value the opportunity to connect with peers from around the country and am thankful for the support I receive to participate in ALA. It's always fun to come back to the library feeling inspired by the ideas presented.

Initial budgeting sessions with City Council were held January 20th and 21st. I am very grateful to Dawn Cline, Jo Pearson, and Susan Kling for attending these sessions while I was at ALA. Thus far, the budgeting process is going as expected for the library.



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For those of you who were not able to attend the “State of the City” luncheon on January 26th, the library was nicely represented throughout the event. Several photos of library programs were shown, a rendering of the new building was included in Nick AbouAssaly’s presentation slides, and there are multiple narratives about the library in the printed materials that were distributed. The event was very positive and I think all attendees left feeling proud of the accomplishments the City made in 2016 and eager to do great work in 2017.

I appreciate that several of you attended the Boards and Commissions Holiday Event at City Hall on February 2nd. It was a pleasure to see so many people gathered to celebrate the crucial work done by boards and commissions. The effort volunteers—like Library Board members—put in to the City is critical to our shared success, and I am proud to be part of an agency led by such an engaged, enthusiastic, and informed board. It is a privilege to work with each of you. Thank you for all you do!

The library opened two hours late on Monday, January 16th due to dangerous weather. Many other local agencies delayed opening or closed; the icy conditions made travel treacherous. Thanks to Sally Reck for helping me make the final call.

I had an opportunity to present an update on the new library project to a local Rotary group on January 24th. This was my first chance to show the external renderings as part of a presentation; having these visuals really helped focus the conversation and get people excited about the design. The group had excellent questions and the overall discussion was very positive.

The City Council approved the development of a financing plan for the library project at the January 26th meeting. Lon Pluckhahn, Susan Kling, Chris Lindell, Mark Ahlers and I met on January 31st to talk about financing options for the new building. We explored some nonprofit conduit bond models that could be a good choice for the project. I anticipate another meeting about this in the coming weeks.

I was pleased to attend the YMCA business community kick-off event on January 31st. It was fun to see another big project coming together in our community and learn more about their plans for fundraising and project promotion. A dynamic digital “fly through” view was shown that really got the audience interested in the design and layout.

On February 1st, we hosted a meeting with current Foundation members and community leaders to give an update on the building project. Susan Kling, Mark Ahlers, Chris Lindell and I gave a brief presentation, then participated in a question and answer session with the group. We had a great turnout of community stakeholders, and the



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conversation was positive. We will schedule a follow-up meeting once funding strategies are finalized.

Preliminary conversations about the plaza space outside the new library have begun. Mike Carolan (Director of Parks and Recreation) and I discussed some general ideas about restroom facilities and other shared library/park amenities two weeks ago, and we had a more formal meeting on February 6th with the City Manager and City Planner. We have another meeting scheduled for the 13th, and are working to develop a plan to maximize this opportunity to blend the park with the library through attractive, practical landscaping, hardscaping, and amenity design. I look forward to bringing our early design ideas to the board for discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elsworth Carman