



LINCOLN  
City Libraries

## Director's Report May 2024

The Summer Reading Challenge kicked off this month with a lot of activity across LCL. I'm very thankful for our team members in all locations who—as normal—contribute with great ideas and programs and possess a love for making a positive difference in people's lives every summer. Signup and participation numbers early on were looking great. We're also excited to see an outstanding group of new employees (23!)—permanent, temporary and summer interns who are already contributing to their library locations and adding to the summer fun at LCL.

LTU is soon to coordinate the installation of two accessible parking stalls at Bennett Martin Library on 14<sup>th</sup> St, near the library main entrance and I expect that to be completed by this summer. This is a much-needed enhancement and will aid library patrons tremendously.

Circulation for the year has been flat with only negligible growth overall (1.09%). Print circulation is down 3.85%, while digital is up 14%. Circ is down at all branches except Williams and Bennett Martin, while visits have increased at most branches at a cumulative 6%. Program attendance has increased 6%, while overall usage is up 2%. New library card registrations are 4% higher than this time last year, and we've had nearly 1,000 online registrations alone.

A special program on August 17 at Bennett Martin will introduce the new Local History area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The area has been reorganized for several months with Lincoln and Nebraska history books and is the location of the digital microfilm reader. Photographic art will be installed prior to the opening and a display case has been purchased for the "room."

The library provides summer outreach activities for students at 20 different locations in the city and county. We've been doing this for many years and rely tremendously on the talents of summer employees hired specifically for this work. They bring the joy of the Summer Reading Challenge to kids all over the county who may not have the opportunity to visit with their families.

The Foundation's annual One Book One Lincoln event at the Telegraph District Mill Coffee on Memorial Day attracted roughly 200 people who were eager to see friends and fellow OBOL-lovers and get the scoop on the three finalists. This is always a great day for LCL and we appreciate our partners at the Mill and Foundation, and for the staff and OBOL committee members who worked hard from January forward to select titles, order and process books, and keep secrets!

### Examples of Monthly Activities at LCL Libraries Interactions

- Maddie O. at Eiseley shared this story about a young patron: I was at the youth service desk when I saw a six year old walk by the Star Wars display, stop, and say "wow!" He then enthusiastically went to get his mom to show her the Star Wars display. The mom said that she was sorry but that he wasn't able to check out any of the adult books because he was too young.

I happened to be walking by at the same time and suggested that they check out one of the first reader Star Wars books that was on display. The six-year old turned to his mom and politely asked if he could check out his first book on his brand-new library card and they went to the self-checkout and checked out his books. Yoel S. put together this engaging display.

- Courtney S. (Eiseley-Williams) shared this story about school-age programming at Williams: “Our After-School Special: School's Out party was a lot of fun! We had several families come, and everyone enjoyed music, ice pops, and chalk drawing on the patio. We had a chance to use the chalkboard wall for the first time, and the kids loved getting to draw on it. Many of the families said they were excited for the summer reading challenge, and especially all the programs we have planned at Williams this summer. It was a great way to kick off summer break.
- Aubrey S. (Gere-South) shared: “A woman hugged me after I helped her print some banking documents using her phone – this shocked me at first since it’s such a regular part of what we do every day, but she explained to me that she had been having a terrible time trying to get them printed and that she needed physical copies for a legal process she was going through. She had been to her phone provider, FedEx, and UPS and they were unable to help her get the documents on her phone printed. She told me she had finally decided to the library because she ‘knew the library would be able to figure it out when all of those people couldn’t.’”
- Leanne D. (Gere-South) shared this interaction: “A boy and his mother were perusing the J fiction section—he was about 9 years old---and he was intimidated by the size of the Harry Potter books. He wanted to read them but didn’t feel ready to tackle a series of books that size. I showed them our Harry Potter on compact disc collection and suggested that he check those out along with the books, and he loved the idea of listening to the story while following along.”

### **Collaboration**

- Community Crops Garden at Gere is going well – with plants already coming up, and a shed placed in the northeast corner of lot for storing tools. Looks great and customers and staff are enjoying seeing the progress of a well-maintained garden space.

### **Community Engagement**

- Gere Library circulated 223 Book Bundles this month with a total of 669 books. South Library had 16 volunteers give 187.1 hours of service this month.
- On Friday, May 10, Christina S. and Kim S. of NESU represented Lincoln City Libraries at the Norwood Park Elementary end-of-year Block Party. They distributed free books and library swag balls to attendees, and they shared information with 125 people about Lincoln City Libraries and the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Pat S. at Gere-South processed all the books received for the Final 3 One Book One Lincoln selections on the 28<sup>th</sup> and got them out on display. She noted that most were checked out within the first hour after opening with lots of customer excitement.
- Liz C. (Walt), along with Susan S. (Eiseley-Williams), staffed the LCL booth at the Peter Pan Park party. Liz reported speaking with at least 150 people. She said the color changing cups were what drew the teens to the table. The party was a lot of fun and a good way to interact with the neighborhood community members.

### **Programming**

- At the Northeast Service Unit [NESU] at the end of May, 1,543 individuals were registered for the 2024 Summer Reading Challenge. This was 200 more registrants than last year at the end of May (1,347).
- On May 12, I hosted a "Surrealist Games" event, which started with a PowerPoint presentation of the games that the Dada and Surrealist movements introduced to the world, followed by participants trying out visual, literary, and musical versions of the games themselves. We had 10 attendees who had a ton of fun, and I think this is an event that has the potential to happen once or twice a year in the future as a catalyst for creativity and collaboration.
- Mindful Movements had 20 total guests this month at Walt. For National Pizza Party Day Meagan M. talked about how sharing a slice with a friend is twice as nice. Pete the Cat had a pizza party with all sorts of fun toppings which encouraged everyone to try new things and the children pretended to be pizzas during the led meditation portion of the program. Everyone stretched out their dough on the mat, ladled on sauce and when Meagan asked them if they could feel the cheese being sprinkled on one attendee said, "I can!"

### **Outreach**

- Cally O. (Gere-South) visited Standing Bear High School during their lunch hour on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Cally set up a table in the library and brought flyers with information about resources students could access using their Library OneCard accounts and upcoming teen events at Gere. She also brought supplies to make beaded friendship bracelets. Cally spoke with 20 students while there and the school librarian about possible future lunch time activities.
- Ronda H. and Cally O. (Gere-South) visited Pyrtle Elementary 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms on the 14<sup>th</sup> and talked to 400 students. They were able to share information on summer reading, OneCard, and the variety of items available to check out at the library. Ronda included information on video games to check out and a couple of weeks later a mother and son approached her to see where the video games were located. Ronda asked the young man if he'd been in one of her sessions, and he just looked up and beamed a beautiful smile.

### **Early Childhood**

- LSAs Celeste Wright and Pam Cuttlers continued to provide outreach story times to both of Project Future's sites: Air Park and Highlands. These are biweekly story times. Celeste reached 30 children and Pam reached 45 children at these sites in May.
- Two groups of Pre-Kindergarten children from Primrose Schools attended two special story times at Walt led by Andrea C. The children, who will be attending Kindergarten next year, used this experience to practice going on a field trip! The children enjoyed two picture books and a felt story about farm animals.
- Librarian Susan S. (Eiseley-Williams) provided biweekly story times to the Belmont Preschool in May, reaching 60 children.
- Eiseley-Williams monthly totals for in-house story times: Family Storytime at Williams = 36 (Pam C.) Wee Workouts at Eiseley = 53 (Maddie O.); Preschool Storytime at Eiseley = 287 (Tami B.); Toddler Storytime at Eiseley = 276 (Susan S.) Stay and Play at Eiseley = 427; Stay and Play at Williams = 36.

### **Technology**

- Virtual Services staff responded to and resolved 50 trouble tickets.
- Members of the OverDrive Support Team assisted at least 51 patrons with OverDrive and Hoopla issues in October, and there were record numbers of circulations for OverDrive eBooks.
- Scott Clark reports that overall subscriptions to the BookLetters newsletters saw a significant jump (+85) in comparison to April; and the video tutorial on the basic use of the Libraries' newer ScanPro3000 microfilm scanner which was posted to the libraries' YouTube feed in early July, had another 143 views in May.
- The Gere Tech Time Staff helped twelve unique patrons during an equivalent of 19 half-hour appointments. Of these, six needed assistance with digital library services, including Ancestry.

## **Building up the Culture of Lincoln**

### **All Students**

- Kim S. (NESU) reports: "Two weeks ago, I checked out a ukulele to a middle school aged girl. She is one of the girls who visits the library every night after school. As I checked her out, I asked if she was going to learn to play the instrument. She responded that she already knew how to play and has been playing the ukulele since she was five years old. The next Monday, the man who runs the ukulele group that meets in Anderson's meeting room came into the library, and we visited about the ukuleles his group donated to the library. I mentioned that just the day before a young lady checked one out and said she knew how to play. He told me to invite her to the next jam session they had at the library. I gave her the message, and she did indeed attend the music session. Today the man came back in to give us a package of sheet music for the girl to keep. I am so excited that one of our after-school teens has found another activity to participate in at the library. I am also excited that the donated ukuleles are available to so many people who do not have the resources to purchase their own."
- Jessica S. conducted a tour of Walt Library for Acton Academy's learners. They took in a presentation of the library, then went on a tour, then independently looked for books to check out. Including teachers, there were a total of 27 people. Many were already card holders, but we did make new limited use cards for 9 of their learners.
- Courtney S. [Eiseley/Williams] provided an Animal Origami program at Williams as part of the Afterschool Special programming.
- From Karrie S.: "On April 29, Anderson hosted a Norwood Park School Night. Twenty-one people came for crafts and a story time. They enjoyed taking home free books and eating cookies. Two kids got new library cards, and most families checked out. After the event, Pam Hale, long-time Norwood Principal, who is retiring this year, said "I just want to thank you for all you've done for us and everything you've done for this community!"
- Walt hosted a Family School Night for the Blessed Sacrament School (K-8) this month. Fifty-five people attended. Vicki Clarke created a Bluey scavenger hunt which led children on a tour of the youth services area (30 children completed).

### **Celebrating Diversity**

- Brenda E., with assistance from Diane V. (Gere-South), provided a tour for a Lincoln Literacy high beginning English class at South Library on the 8<sup>th</sup>. All six of the students present registered for library cards and we heard back from Cheryl, their tutor, who said: "Thank you again for a most memorable tour of South Street Library. I certainly learned about new resources that could assist me in learning another language!"
- Jodene G. (Walt) assisted a patron who is an ESL teacher for elementary aged children. She said the school has many bilingual books in Spanish, but not all of her children speak Spanish. She was thrilled to find we had children's books in Pasto and other languages, and said it means her students will know they have a place here.
- Leanne D. [Gere-South] shared this interaction: "Helped a patron who did not speak English well print documents from his email; he was very grateful to have been assisted by someone who understood what he was trying to communicate. He expressed that it made him nervous to ask questions when the other person seemed impatient with him and was glad that I took the time to understand him and not rush him."

#### **Low-Income Families**

- Aubrey S. at Gere-South shared: "I helped a woman print quite the stack of documents at South one afternoon. The woman explained that her and her young son were both having intense medical issues in addition to housing uncertainty. She needed several documents copied and even more printed from her phone, all for various health care providers, lawyers, case workers, etc. She told me several times how grateful she was for my help, for the printing and copying services, and also for having a space she could bring her young autistic child where he could play, color, and read while she occasionally stepped away for a moment to print and copy things."

#### **Services to our Aging Population**

- The Air Park Community Center's weekly Senior Coffee program has moved to Williams' meeting room for the summer. The Center has day camp, and the seniors typically don't have their meetings in the summer. We've invited them to use Williams's meeting room each Friday until school starts in the fall.

Ryan Wieber, Library Director  
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