



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

March 2023

Staff and Volunteers:

Head of Adult Services Brian Jennings and Adult Services Librarian II Matthew Aull completed their Digital Navigator training. Adult Services Librarian II Karen Ostertag participated again in the program, this time as a mentor. The Library was awarded \$2,100 in grants due to their participation. We will try to have more librarian staff participate as the grant allows.

Karen Ostertag attended the Mid-Hudson Internet & Digital Equity Listening Session on March 24. It was a regional listening session to define the local needs and assets for digital inclusion and equity. Karen made a contact with Cheryl Baun, the new Economic Development Specialist in Rockland County's Department of Economic Development and Tourism. They met again to discuss our successful Digital Navigator experiences.

Much of the staff is attending a two-part webinar entitled, "Empowering Library Practice Through Effective Boundary Setting." This seemed a particularly appropriate theme for our staff members that work with the public and sometimes develop longstanding relationships with them.

Collections:

The Mango Language Learning database has gone live. It is a replacement for Rosetta Stone, which proved technologically incapable of delivering a satisfactory patron experience.

A new patron-facing catalog was launched. Named Aspen, it replaces Enterprise as the discovery layer that sits on top of the Symphony ILS. While this should greatly improve the patron experience of the catalog, it does nothing to enhance the staff side of it. Staff have actually been using Aspen for catalog searching because it is better than Symphony in terms of interface and searchability.

Aspen does have the improvement of being able to link directly to our other offerings: events, museum passes, and electronic resources. We are currently developing a children's version of the catalog, as well. Head of Community Relations Veronica Reynolds worked with Brian Jennings and the Adult Services team to customize the interface for our patrons.

We are replacing the over-5-year-old Kindles but only buying six instead of twelve. A trade-in program with Amazon gives a 20% discount on new as well as a \$15 gift card for each. The Kindles are popular with travelers and contain new bestsellers.

Programs:

A new children’s program, PlayDough Play Date, had an overwhelming response. Sessions are planned for April and May. Even with advance registration we find sometimes that attendance is excessive because patrons are bringing unregistered children. But the librarians deal with it professionally and equitably.

A Zoom Trivia Night brought in some new faces. The Hooley Shooters concert at Congers Community Center was well attended.

Building and Facilities:

The renovation presses on. Storefront windows, doors, and rulon ceilings have been installed. Painting is in progress. Sidewalks are being poured, and most new masonry is complete. We are still on target to be able to start moving back in during the month of July.

Staff tours will resume in April in an effort to get everyone comfortable with the new spaces.

Technology:

Multiple staff members, both Librarians and Library Assistants, attended a Sirsi/Dynix presentation to address the significant list of concerns that were submitted to them about their ILS product, Symphony. Currently, RCLS is exploring ILS alternatives. The presentation was profoundly discouraging, and it is our staff’s hope that the other 46 member libraries agree that it’s time for a change.

Miscellaneous:

Trustee Bob Axelrod, Finance and Facilities Manager Shibu Abraham, and the Director attended the Advocacy Day meeting with Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski on Thursday, March 2.

The directors from Pearl River, Stony Point, and Nanuet libraries visited our temporary location to get ideas for how they might operate if their respective construction projects move ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Gallagher, Director
NEW CITY LIBRARY
April 13, 2023