

Columbia Heights Public Library

Library Board Report – July 2026

BUILDING

Three chairs and one ottoman from teen area were reupholstered and returned. You may remember these chairs when they were a very sun-faded and dirty chartreuse.

TECHNOLOGY

Library phones were converted to soft phones on July 22, and staff were trained the week of July 27.

COLLECTION

- New books were selected from reviews in the January, February or March issues of *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, and *School Library Journal*. Requests and replacement purchases included *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, *Minecraft*, popular graphic novels and board books.
- Weeding was finished in adult nonfiction 940-958 and fiction J-M. Volunteers assisted with weeding juvenile and easy picture books that haven't circulated in two years.
- Adult displays highlighted canning and pickling, Summer Adventures! and gaming, titles related to *The Odyssey*, archaeology and paleontology fiction, and beach reads. Youth displays featured books about cooking and food.



PROGRAMS AND SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES	DATE	AUDIENCE	ATTENDANCE
English Language Conversation Circle	7/1	Adult	5
Family Storytime	7/6	Children (0-5)	47
EL Conversation Circle	7/6	Adult	6
Game On: Shrinky Dinks	7/7	Children (6-11)	32
Textiles for Teens	7/8	Teen (12-18)	16
EL Conversation Circle	7/8	Adult	4
EL Conversation Circle	7/11	Adult	5
Family Storytime	7/13	Children (0-5)	59
EL Conversation Circle	7/13	Adult	5
4-H First Aid Basics	7/14	Children (6-11)	22
Library Book Club: <i>How to Read a Book</i>	7/15	Adult	8
EL Conversation Circle	7/15	Adult	5
Friends of the Library: BINGO	7/16	Adult	9
Active Agers Bookclub @ Murzyn: <i>The Dry</i>	7/17	Adult	8
Family Storytime	7/20	Children (0-5)	55
EL Conversation Circle	7/20	Adult	5
Youth Librarian visit to Summer ENCORE (2 classes)	7/21	Children (6-11)	185
Youth Librarian visit to Summer ENCORE (3 classes)	7/21	Teen (12-18)	107
Clay Bugs for Kids	7/21	Children (6-11)	36
EL Conversation Circle	7/22	Adults	8
Meditation	7/22	Adult	2
Youth Librarian visit to Summer ENCORE (5 classes)	7/23	Children 6-11	440
Raptor Encounter	7/25	Children (6-11)	85
Family Storytime	7/27	Children (0-5)	53

EL Conversation Circle	7/27	Adult	3
LEGO Brick Builders	7/28	Children (6-11)	35
EL Conversation Circle	7/29	Adult	6
Embroider a Baseball Hat	7/29	Adult	12

STAFF

Elizabeth Ripley, Adult Services Librarian:

- Displayed items from the city's time capsule, buried in 1976, in the glass case. With the help of a volunteer, scanned the paper documents for preservation. The scanned and physical items will be delivered to the school district in August.
- Continued to exchange lead-based for lead-free fishing equipment at the Ask Me Desk. Many guests took information; the stickers and tattoos were particularly popular.
- Friends of the Library hosted a **BINGO!** event. Nine played BINGO and by the end everyone had won a prize!
- The Active Agers Book Club met to discuss *The Dry* by Jane Harper. They discussed the mystery and how the current Minnesota drought and hot weather impacted their reading.
- Contracted Arlene Samsel to lead a meditation workshop entitled **Meditation: A Priority in Today's World**. The workshop focused on introducing the importance of meditation as well as concepts and skills for new meditators.
- Hired Erin Holt, of E. Holt Art, to teach **Embroider a Baseball Hat** program where crafters embellished hats, learned embroidery techniques, and enjoyed an evening with fellow enthusiasts.
- Assisted one patron with Tech Help.
- Made four deliveries to At-Home Patrons and reinstated one At-Home patron.

Renee Dougherty, Library Director:

- Met with city division heads, the city communications committee, the Minnesota Library Association board, and the Anoka County Library Public Service Team.
- Met with the city Communications and Engagement Coordinator, the branch manager of ACL:Northtown, ACL technology staff, the new Human Resources director and the City Manager and Finance Staff about the 2027 proposed budget.
- Met with the adult book club for a discussion of *How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood.
- Met with Library Page Millie Onofre Giles and Library Associate Nick Olberding for their annual performance evaluations.
- Staffed a table with Winnie Coyne at the Police Department's Eat and Greet Picnic in Prestemon Park on July 22.
- Attended an introductory webinar to the Social Explorer database now available from Minitex.

Eliza Pope, Youth Services Librarian:

- Staffed a table at the city's Monarch Festival at Kordiak Park with library supervisor Ally Schauer.

- Invited Sarah from Anoka County Extension/4-H to teach kids basic **First Aid** for insect bites, scrapes, burns, and sprains. Each child assembled a first aid kit to take home and practiced what they learned on each other with extra supplies.



- Layl McDill led a very full program of families in creating **Clay Bugs**. She taught kids to create ropes of clay with intricate designs inside. Once the ropes are cut into slices, they are used to create stripes, polka dots, and other patterns for insect wings and bodies. The clay insects are then baked at home to harden. A lot of parents and guardians wanted to create clay bugs with their kids!

- Due to a mix-up with the Textile Center, the **Marbled Hats for Teens** program did not include hats but instead was learning to marble on paper and cards. A few teens were disappointed because there were no hats, so Eliza grabbed some leftover tote bags. The dye didn't adhere to the bags very well, but teens were happier and the marbled cards and paper turned out great.

- Thirty-five **LEGO Brick Builders** had a great time building boats. Participants added masts and sails before testing their boats in water. If they floated, a fan added wind to set them sailing across the tub. A lot of experimentation and creativity was required for a successful journey!



- There was an amazing turnout, 85 kids and adults, for the Saturday **Raptor Encounter**. The Raptor Center presented a hawk, a merlin, a great horned owl, and a bald eagle.

- The Youth Services Librarian visited grades **K-8 Summer Encore** plus **Adventure Club** at Columbia Heights Public Schools. After the visits, many kids brought their families to ask about Summer Reading and get library cards. One boy asked if he could listen to books for Summer Reading (yes!), so Eliza helped him log into **Bookflix** with his brand-new card. He diligently listened to 20 books so he could complete the Summer Reading tracker. Even a teacher stopped in and said she was inspired to update her library card!



MISCELLANEOUS

- On July 1, a woman using racist and anti-Semitic language to harass other patrons was trespassed. She returned on July 6, and police were called to remove her.
- Only July 13, an unlocked bicycle was stolen from a patron.
- On July 18 and 25, drug paraphernalia was found in the men's restroom.
- On July 27, police were called about an overnight campsite in the overflow parking lot.
- Anoka County Law Librarian John Murphy held office hours on July 16.
- Staff tracked reference interactions during the week of July 13-18, one of four annual counts to determine number and type of reference questions being asked by patrons. Staff addressed 216 requests for assistance with technology, 172 reference questions, and 126 miscellaneous inquiries.
- Nine adult volunteers donated 41.5 hours; ten teens volunteered for 64 hours.