

Columbia Heights Public Library

Library Board Report – August 2026

COLLECTION

- New titles were selected from reviews in the February, March or April issues of *Booklist* and *Library Journal*. Requests included books about interoception, classic fairy tales, and *Pokémon Ecology*. Replacements included *Big Nate* titles and various youth graphic novels.
- Weeding was finished in adult fiction C-I and large print.
- Adult displays included national wellness month, Pride, archeology and paleontology fiction, music memoirs, Hollywood fiction, and “river” books. Youth displays celebrated American artists, musicians, poets, and illustrators and books about the first day of school.
- The MN Pollution Control Agency’s “Food and Climate Change” interactive display was featured.



PROGRAMS AND SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES	DATE	AUDIENCE	ATTENDANCE
Family Storytime	8/3	Children (0-5)	73
English Language Conversation Circle	8/3	Adult	4
Carve a Stamp for Teens	8/5	Teen (12-18)	6
EL Conversation Circle	8/5	Adult	5
Daycare Storytime	8/7	Children (0-5)	20
Fun with Fresh Indigo	8/8	All Ages	16
EL Conversation Circle	8/8	Adult	2
Family Storytime	8/10	Children (0-5)	52
EL Conversation Circle	8/10	Adult	6
Mystery Book Club: <i>The Passengers</i> by John Marrs	8/11	Adult	3
Garbage Friends with Now. Make.Art	8/12	Children (6-11)	13
EL Conversation Circle	8/12	Adult	6
Mini Adventure Club (Offsite)	8/13	Children (0-5)	25
Adventure Club – 2 classes (Offsite)	8/13	Children (6-11)	55
EL Conversation Circle	8/17	Adult	4
Science in Summer: Be a Chemist with the Bakken	8/18	Children (6-11)	28
Library Book Club: <i>The Rose Code</i>	8/19	Adult	10
EL Conversation Circle	8/19	Adult	3
Science in Summer: Be a Chemist with the Bakken Part 2	8/20	Children (6-11)	14
EL Conversation Circle	8/24	Adult	3
LEGO Brick Builders	8/25	Children (6-11)	34
EL Conversation Circle	8/26	Adult	4
Preschool Yoga with Yogilli	8/27	Children (0-5)	5
EL Conversation Circle	8/31	Adult	4

STAFF

Elizabeth Ripley, Adult Services Librarian:

- Contracted with the Textile Center for a “Fun with Fresh Indigo” program. Participants tried various indigo dying methods including botanical plant pounding, tie-dyeing, and fabric painting.

- Assisted three patrons with Tech Help.
- Made two At-Home deliveries.
- Provided outreach at the city's Art and Information Fair with Library Board members Theresa and Beth.
- Increased adult participation in the Summer Adventures reading program. Fifty-two adults



participated in the program (13 registered on Beanstack, and 39 with paper trackers.) Thirty-nine completed at least 10 hours with 15 reading at least 20 hours! MELSA provided Twins tickets for prizes and the Friends of the Library offered a Heights Theater gift basket.

Renee Dougherty, Library Director:

- Met with city division heads, the Library Foundation, Minnesota Library Association Executive Committee and Board, and the Anoka County Library Public Service Team.
- The Library Foundation reviewed a preliminary layout for Gail Olson's history of Columbia Heights.
- Met with the city Communications and Engagement Coordinator and new Recreation Director.
- Facilitated the adult book club discussion of *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn.
- Met with Library Associate Farrah Briest for her annual performance evaluation.
- Met with Mike from Tech Logic for information on self-check equipment.
- Attended refresher training on the NovelList readers' advisory database.
- Attended a meet and greet with State Senator Mary Kunesh

Eliza Pope, Youth Services Librarian:

- Attended an English Language Learner Family Night at the CH High School where she distributed September library event calendars and a flyer with QR codes to apply for a library card or link to library e-resources.
- Visited Summer Mini Adventures and two classes of Adventure Club. She saw many of the same kids from the Summer Encore visit in July, so focused on fun books, games, and activities rather than library cards or resources.

- Hosted Columbia Heights firefighters for a giant storytime crowd, including a preschool group from Immaculate Conception School. The firefighters read books, talked about age-appropriate fire safety, and let families explore a fire truck.
- Engaged with a smaller group of teens to carve stamps using erasers and carving tools. A parent was excited to participate, as space was available. Each participant printed 6 editions of their prints and exchanged them with others.
- Now.Make.Art. artists led a drop-in program inviting kids and families to make “Garbage Friends,” characters or creatures from recycled objects. The artists took a polaroid picture of the completed character to add to a family album. Attendance at this program was significantly smaller than similar programs due to to accommodate the Primary Election in the community room.



- The Bakken Museum returned with another grant-funded Science in the Summer program. “Be a Chemist” was presented in two parts, with each session offering 1.5 hours of chemistry experiments and career exploration. Participants conducted a variety of experiments, including combining liquids to observe fizzing reactions and grinding butterfly pea flowers in a mortar and pestle to create paint and then changing the original purple color by adjusting acidity or alkalinity.
- Lego Brick Builders were challenged to construct the tallest possible tower without standing on tables or chairs, experimenting with different structural bases to figure out which could support the tallest. While some focused on making their towers as tall as possible, others designed



elaborate buildings and homes. After the program, the LEGO creations were placed in the display case for a week, drawing many participants back to view their builds.

- Summer Adventures Reading Challenge:
 - 176 youth completed the challenge this year. Completion was defined as reading at least 10 books or for 10 hours. Youth participants received a free book after completing 5 hours or 5 books and tickets for the grand prize drawings at 10, 15, and 20 hours/books.
 - Of the 176 youth that completed the challenge: 44 were Birth to Kindergarten, 105 were grades 1-6, and 27 were grades 7-12.
 - 608 trackers were distributed over the summer.
 - There were 30 onsite summer programs with 1030 attendees.
 - Eliza presented 13 offsite programs to 812 attendees.
 - Ten teen volunteers donated 144 hours.



MISCELLANEOUS

- Staff attended a city employee recognition breakfast.
- On August 3, one patron attempted to steal another's backpack. The victim chased the perpetrator and was able to recover his property. The police and social worker took statements.
- On August 31, staff de-escalated a confrontation with an agitated elderly woman. She was warned about racist language but eventually left the building voluntarily.
- Anoka County Law Librarian John Murphy held office hours on August 27.
- Nine adult volunteers donated 35.75 hours; teens volunteered for 42 hours this month.