

GRAL Director's Report

APRIL 2022

ADVOCACY

-Civic Center Update

At the 3/14 regular meeting, the City Council authorized resolutions (two) ordering the improvement and authorizing Phase 1, Best Value Procurement for a truss/roof system at the IRA Civic Center. City Council will give residents the chance to consider funding Civic Center improvement via a local option sales tax.

-Capital Projects Fund (American Rescue Plan) I am in contact with the Governor's Office regarding this potential funding source. At this time, there is not a clear process on how these funds will be allocated or spent.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

-2021 Minnesota Public Library Annual Report

Submitted.

-Public Services Clerk I

With direction from the Library Board, we started the process of filling this Public Services Clerk I position – applications are due April 15 with interviews to follow. I anticipate bringing a recommendation to the May Library Board meeting.

-RiverFest update

I will have the latest update at the 4/13 meeting.

FACILITIES MAINTAINANCE / SPACE

-Library Roof Leaking

During the week of 3/14 there were several steady drips inside the building in the public area of the Library. At the worst point, we had 10 buckets collecting water. I responded with the Fire Department the night of 3/15 when water intrusion interfered with one of the smoke detectors. The Facilities Maintenance Manager is monitoring the issue and plans to inspect the room when it is safe to do so. UPDATE: a temporary fix is in place and the roof will be inspected when the weather improves.

-Book Drop Repair

We are looking at options for repairing the book drop. The Facilities Maintenance Manager has obtained a quote from a mason – and new book drop hardware. I am investigating a grant opportunity specific to libraries through the Catholic Community Foundation.

-Quiet Study upgrades

The Facilities Maintenance Manager is planning / working on upgrades to the quiet study rooms to make them sound proof. Rapids Plumbing completed phase 1 – reroute the air ducting. This project is funded by the Library Foundation.

-Window Treatments in the Community Room

I anticipate bringing quotes from local businesses to the April Library Board Meeting. This project is funded by the Library Foundation.

FIRE RESPONSE

I responded to 11 calls during March with 3 responses from the Library.

END OF REPORT

March in Children's

Today, April 1, 2022, we put the toys back out in the Children's Library. The sun is shining, the snow is, once again, melting, and the toys are out. It is a good day. I have been weighing the toy decision for a couple of months, and had always hoped that our youngest patrons would be eligible for a Covid vaccine before the toys went back out. However, our Covid numbers in Itasca County have dropped dramatically, and I'm using that metric to drive my decision. For us, it is a welcome step into the sunshine, out of the storm.

We had an exciting visit from Duluth's WDIO TV station. They did a piece highlighting our Artastic programming, and the wonderful volunteer work of Nancy Mike-Johnson. They also included Online Storytime in the piece. It was well done, and not only are we very grateful for Nancy's volunteerism, but we are also proud of the work that was showcased. (And, station anchor Renee Passal complimented Dion on her editing work!) Oh! We are now on You Tube! Please subscribe to our channel...we are up to 25 subscribers!! Only a couple hundred thousand more and we can make some money off this gig... ☺

There is a new collection in town! In the past, when patrons would make the reading shift from beginner readers to early chapter books, they were faced with, literally, a wall of choices. Finding a book that both interested them and they felt they could read was a daunting job. I've been toying with the idea of an additional step for those readers. I didn't take the decision lightly, however, because as soon as a book is labeled, the audience for that book is limited. (For example, if I put a "Science Fiction" label on a book, there is absolutely no way that a reader who doesn't enjoy that genre will pick up that book, regardless of how hard I sell it.) Erring on the side of keeping kids reading, though, we developed our "Level Up" collection. These books were already on the shelves, we just put them together, to make them easier to find. (We also found really cool magnetic sheets to back the shelves. We can now direct patrons to the "blue shelves.") We were careful to not put any judgement labels on the collection. (A struggling 3rd grade reader doesn't need to look at the "beginner" or "early" chapter book section.) Rather, they are described as "short chapter books with pictures," exactly what they are. As usual, Nicole knocked the ball out of the park with the graphics. I am grateful for her every day. Come down and check it out!

This month we also made significant progress on our Discovery Kits. I think nearly every single staff member has worked on them. I hope they debut by the end of April. Until then, mum's the word! Happy Reading!