

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

December 2023

Karol Kennedy – Library System Director

Jefferson County Contracts:

The Jefferson County Board approved the 2024 budget request in November. After the approval, we prepared the 2024 library contracts and sent them to the Jefferson County libraries for their approval. These contracts need to be signed by the library and municipal officials and returned to Jefferson County by February 1st.

Annual Evaluations:

I worked on performance evaluations for staff. Individual meetings are being held with each staff member in December to complete this process. I also met with Bridges Board President Linda Ager and Vice-President Betsy Forrest to review information from my own evaluation process and developed goals for 2024 based on feedback received from staff, directors, and the Bridges Board. These goals will be presented to the Bridges Board for approval in December.

Director Search:

The hiring process for a director at the Irvin L. Young Memorial Library (Whitewater) continues. Applications have been received and interviews are underway.

Closed Border Meeting:

Wisconsin statute 43.17 (11)(e) requires that any library that does not serve residents across a library system boundary meet at least once a year to discuss the situation. A meeting between Menomonee Falls and the Village of Germantown will be held on November 20th. The Menomonee Falls Public Library doesn't serve the residents of the Village of Germantown (Monarch Library System) since they don't receive any reimbursement for providing services. Because counties only fund use by residents who live in municipalities without libraries (TNR), this situation is not addressed by cross-county funding requirements. As a result, libraries are allowed to deny service to those residents across a library system border if they don't receive reimbursement.

Professional Development:

I attended the WI Libraries Talk About Race series session *Understanding & Challenging Implicit Bias in Decision Making*. This was an excellent presentation given by Anne Phibbs, founder and president of Strategic Diversity Initiatives. I also attended a meeting of the WLA Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group that included discussion of some of the challenges going on in the state.

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

Professional Development:

I attended the Wisconsin Digital Government Summit at the Monona Terrace on November 30th and went to sessions on AI and data.

MessageBee:

Tuesday, December 5th we began sending text notifications for holds, overdues, etc. through MessageBee and staff had training on the dashboard. So far things are working smoothly.

Laurie Freund – Coordinator of Library Development

SEWI CCBC Great New Books:

Staff from the Children's Cooperative Book Center (CCBC), located in Madison, came to Franklin Public Library on November 29th so library staff from libraries in the SEWI region could attend to hear and view the top new books for youth for 2024. The morning session focused on books for younger children, birth through Grade 5. The afternoon session concentrated on books for older children and teens (grades 6 through 12). Both sessions had time set aside for attendees to browse through all the books. We had 23 attendees for the morning session and 25 for the afternoon session.

Writing Effective Survey Questions (on-demand):

The SEWI Libraries region sponsored a "Writing Effective Survey Questions to Get Useful Data" video recording with nationally recognized library marketing consultant, Kathy Dempsey, that is now available on-demand for library staff. Information can be found on the [SEWI Libraries Learning Opportunities](#) web page.

SEWI LSTA Library Conference Scholarships, Fall 2023:

We received a total of 22 library submissions for staff attending fall state and national library conferences and for the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference that will be held in April 2024. Seven of those submissions were from Bridges member libraries. All submissions were approved. Reimbursement checks will be sent from our SEWI LSTA grant fiscal agent, Prairie Lakes Library System.

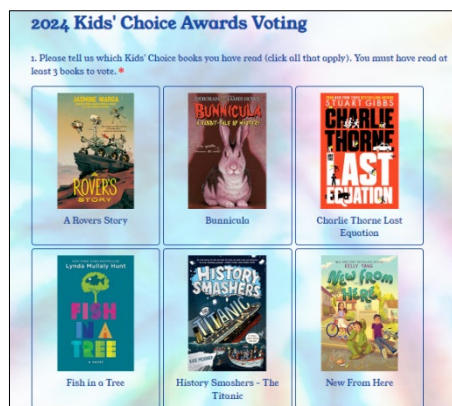
Bridges Adult Services Meeting:

Our final meeting for 2023 is on Wednesday, December 13th. This hybrid meeting allows interested library staff to attend either in person at Oconomowoc Public Library or online. The focus of the discussions is on library collections weeding practices. Resources, lists and other items from the meeting will be compiled and shared with member libraries.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services.

Youth Services:

In the fall and winter months, I shift into planning mode for youth services. Mellanie Mercier and I have been working with Waukesha County's IT and project management team to develop a [new voting tool](#) for the Kids' Choice Awards. The tool is in its final development stages and will be ready when we open voting in January for kids in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties. We are excited that this tool will be hosted on the Bridges Library System web site and will be able to be managed internally, saving time and money. I am also starting to book performers for Summer Library Programs at all 24 libraries. I also met with Bambi, the new youth services librarian, at Hartland Public Library, to share what Bridges has to offer.



Inclusive Services:

I attended a Dementia Friendly Waukesha County meeting coordinated by the Aging and Disability Resource Center. I was able to network with a number of organizations (for profit and not-for-profit) serving those living with dementia. I followed up with contacts at Aurora and ProHealth, both offering to distribute memory café brochures to their patients. Having the clinicians provide our memory café information to patients directly is called social prescribing. We believe this will lead to more families learning about library memory cafes as a resource sooner in their healthcare journey.

Professional Development:

I was unable to attend the LEAD (Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability) conference this year so I attended a virtual re-cap session coordinated by MACA (Michigan Alliance for Cultural Accessibility).

**Anniversary:**

I celebrated working 10 years for Waukesha County. Karol Kennedy accompanied me at the annual breakfast that Waukesha County hosts to honor employees with 10 to 45 years of service.

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits:

My library visits this month included New Berlin for a first meeting with the new main cataloger, and Whitewater to pick up local history books for original cataloging as well as to attend the director's retirement party. At Waukesha Public Library, I met with the cataloging librarians about adding library materials to OCLC's WorldCat database with the online WorldShare cataloging tool.

Meetings:

At the November in-person CAFÉ Cats meeting, agenda items included clarifying mass market paperbacks in the public catalog, removing an unnecessary field from catalog records that can cause confusion about formats, and keeping 4K Ultra HD Blu-rays distinct from Blu-rays in the catalog. In the online state Bibliographic Standards Committee meeting, the discussion centered on common terms used to describe library materials in Wisconsin's public libraries' catalogs and preparation for comparing selected titles from each system's catalog.

Catalog Maintenance:

Vox and Wonderbooks are books with an attached audio player, allowing the user to listen along while reading the text. This month, new CAFÉ codes were added for these audio-enabled books so they can be searched more easily and statistics can be kept on their use. I standardized more than 350 Wonderbook bib record edition statements.

CAFÉ catalogers agreed to remove the “additional physical form” field from CAFÉ bib records because that line of data caused confusion in the public catalog. I bulk-edited manageable batches of more than 75,000 titles to remove the unnecessary field.

I removed the Gale Courses bib records from the catalog. Patrons currently enrolled in courses may finish them, but new enrollment was not accepted in December because the service is being discontinued at the end of the year.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Library Memory Project:

I worked on an end-of-the-year campaign to help promote and celebrate the success of the Library Memory Project’s Memory Cafés and announce the [2024 schedule](#).

- Sent out a news release on Dec. 12
- Fox 6 News plans to do a report on Dec. 18 at Sussex on Memory Cafés
- Ran an ad in the NOW Communities West newspaper on Dec. 13
- Ran an ad in the Lake Mills Leader newspapers on Dec. 14
- Submitted the story with images and an ad to the ADRC newsletters in Waukesha and Jefferson counties.
- Submitted the events to [104.5 WSLD Radio](#) in Whitewater to help increase attendance in Jefferson.



In the News:

Pewaukee Public Library offers StoryCorps recording opportunities: https://waukeshafreeman-wi.newsmemory.com/?publink=05ded459d_134ae45

Johnson Creek Public Library’s Summer Learning Program participants received free shirts from an anonymous donor: https://www.hngnews.com/lake_mills_leader/anonymous-donor-gives-shirts-to-graduates-of-johnson-creek-librarys-summer-learning-program/article_0c13b129-3b5e-5f8b-a0db-94fb939da025.html

Consulting:

On November 15th, I held a Marketing Meetup at Brookfield Public Library. We had 18 library staff members attend and had a great discussion and brainstorming session on social media best practices and content strategies.

On November 28th, I had a Marketing Review Meeting with Brittany at Muskego Public Library to learn about their current promotions, plans and where I can best assist their team.

On December 8th, I did a brief Marketing Presentation with the Alice Baker Library Staff in Eagle. Then, I assisted them with a video project they had prepared to promote the benefits of a Café library card. We did a brief brainstorm and shot video interviews.

On December 12th, I scheduled an exclusive training about LibraryAware for Bridges member libraries staff to attend virtually. Caleigh Haworth, NoveList Engagement Consultant, did an overview of the software and answered questions. The recording of the session will be shared with the marketing email list for anyone that was not able to attend.

Continuing Education:

I attended the Library Marketing and Communications Conference (LMCC) from Nov. 6-8 in Indianapolis. It was an excellent conference with a lot of usable information and content. Some of the best sessions were on internal communication strategies, streamlining workflows and designs, and using Google to grow libraries through Business Profiles and online tours. Melissa from Delafield Library did a great presentation on email marketing using LibraryAware, and Pewaukee Public Library was recognized by Angela Hursh of NoveList during the keynote for their emails the teens.

November/December Newsletters:

Marketing Magic - resources for library staff:

- Dec. 1: 55.21% Open Rate
- Nov. 17: 61.46% Open Rate
- Nov. 3: 58.95% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- Dec. 6: 46.9% Open Rate
- Nov. 9: 44.8% Open Rate

Legislators:

- Dec. 4: 11.11% Open Rate
- Nov. 6: 33.33% Open Rate