

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

April 2026

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

New Director Boot Camp: On March 19th I presented at the New Director Boot Camp along with two other System Directors, to provide knowledge and answer questions for new library directors across the state.

Waukesha County Act 150 Meetings: The Waukesha County Act 150 Committee met on March 25th and April 6th (along with a public hearing). Library Boards will now consider the revised standards in the month of April at their regularly scheduled board meetings.

Database Management Librarian Search: We said farewell to Beth Bechtel after many years of service to the Bridges Library System! She was well loved by member libraries and we are so happy for her as she explores her next adventure in retirement. The recruitment process is underway but there is a position coverage gap. I arranged an MOU with the Waukesha Public Library and they are answering cataloging questions on behalf of the system as they are able until a new hire is in place.

Reports: A variety of reports are in progress in March-April. The 2025 System Annual Report was a large endeavor and is submitted. Adjacent County reimbursement process for libraries is occurring between now and July 1st. This involves preparing forms for member libraries and for adjacent counties and receiving/checking forms submitted to me both within our system and outside our system. The process for gathering financial data from libraries for the Waukesha County levy calculation has also begun. I am also participating in the Mobile App RFP along with Mellanie, Shawn, and the member library technology committee.

Library Visits: I visited the Powers Memorial Library (Palmyra) and met with the director and received a tour of the library. I also visited the Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson) to attend the Jefferson County Library Services Meeting on April 2nd.

Library Waukesha County Board Appointments: I helped facilitate communication between Waukesha County and the libraries of Waukesha County regarding eligible county library board appointments (terms come up every three years).

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Library Visits – In March I resumed visiting libraries in Waukesha County that I haven't been to yet in this role. I visited Oconomowoc Public Library and Town Hall Library in Merton. I shared what I do and learned a little more about their libraries.

SEWI Maker Meetup – A SEWI Libraries Maker Meetup was held at the Whitewater Public Library on March 19 for library staff doing maker programming. Attendees saw the Library's new space, including the Makerspace and discussed management of their spaces as well as tools they use. 15 people attended from around the SEWI Libraries Region.

SEWI Social-Emotional Learning Storytimes – Mandy O’Brien, Skokie Public Library, brought enthusiasm to a social-emotional learning workshop for youth services staff. 17 library staff members from the region attended this event.



Youth services staff from the region practice a puppet rhyme with silly bird pens.

SEWI Partners Meeting – I met with SEWI Libraries system directors to give an update on what offerings were held last year, the plans for 2026, and an update on LSTA professional development grant funds.

OSRT Webinar – This year, I am the Vice Chair/Chair Elect for the Wisconsin Library Association’s Outreach Services Round Table. We provide educational offerings on the topic of outreach services to WLA members. This month we held a webinar showcasing the Wisconsin Talking Books and Braille Library and what libraries can do to help promote their services.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **Access for All: A Day of Learning** – Bridges Inclusive/Adult Services professional development; April 17 – Journey21, Oconomowoc
- **SEWI Libraries Intergenerational & All Ages Programming Meetups**
 - **April 20** – Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson)
 - **April 23** – Cedarburg Public Library

Professional Development

Programming With Your Library of Things Webinar from WebJunction

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Youth Services

Four youth services staff from three libraries visited [The Community Space](#) in Whitewater for book browsing. The Community Space is a local nonprofit that receives many like-new books and they have offered to let our libraries come browse for books to be used for giveaways or to add to their collections. 588 materials were selected for public library use! Afterwards we toured the newly renovated and expanded Whitewater Public Library.

Youth Services Consultants from around the state gathered for a virtual meeting for the first time in 15 months. This meeting was led by Jeni Schomber with the WI Bureau of Libraries. It was great to connect with others that work in similar roles to mine in other library systems.

Upcoming Meeting: Teen Think Tank (geared toward library staff serving tweens and teens)
Wednesday, April 15 1:00-3:00pm, Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson) [Registration](#) preferred.

Inclusive Services

After many months of coordination, we have launched a new web site for the Library Memory Project (www.librarymemoryproject.org). The new web site has a modern look and feel, is accessible per ADA guidelines, and is easier to update.

We have some library staff that are joining the Library Memory Project as facilitators from Whitewater and Menomonee Falls libraries. This includes attending a memory café alongside the new staff to answer any questions that arise as well as meeting with them to review the Facilitators Guide and plan their first memory café.

The 3rd Annual [Spring Family Day](#) will be offered by the Library Memory Project at Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson on Sunday, May 17. This is a partnership event between the Jefferson County libraries and the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jefferson County.

The Community Space



book browsing for library staff

Tina (pictured right) from Watertown Public Library selected 372 books to bring back to the library for Summer Reading Program prizes!

Upcoming Meeting: Access for All: A day of learning
Friday, April 17 8:30am-4:00pm, Journey21 (Oconomowoc) [Register](#) by April 13 to save your seat.

Professional Development

Beyond Bilingual: Making Storytime ELL Friendly (Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy), *Social-Emotional Learning Storytime Workshop* (SEWI Libraries), *Engagement Strategies for Library Memory Project Facilitators* (Waukesha County ADRC).

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

National Library Week: April 19-25, 2026

This year's honorary chair is Mychal Threets and the theme is "Find Your Joy." It is the perfect phrase to celebrate libraries! I have solicited short videos from member library and will be creating a "24 Libraries. 24 Joys." reel to post on social media that week!

Outreach

Bridges will host an outreach table at Retzer's Annual [Earth Day Celebration](#) event on Saturday, April 25. We will promote the Story Hike and 1 Card, 24 Libraries perks for National Library Week.

AM 620 - "What's on Tap" Radio Interview

The "What's on Tap" Spotlight Interview about the Library Memory Project in March had to be rescheduled. It will be on April 23 with Angela Meyers in the studio.

Web Accessibility Project

I am continuing to scan and remediate all the webpages to meet the April 24, 2026, due date. Greenleaf Media also continues to make updates from the scan report.

I will be hosting a Virtual Spring Marketing Meetup on May 20 to talk about digital accessibility for social media platforms for the Digital ADA Compliance deadline in April 2026/2027.

Consulting

I will be presenting at two library staff in-service days on April 17.

- Brookfield: In the morning, I will be training staff on Canva and LibraryAware tools. I will also discuss accessible graphic design that can easily translate into digital files for website and social media.
- Pewaukee: In the afternoon, I will be training staff on making accessible designs for use in the library and considerations how to meet the new ADA digital accessibility standards.

In the news:

- Waukesha Public Library's Carnegie Room Featured: [Milwaukee Magazine Article](#)
- Menomonee Falls Public Library First-Floor Renovation: [Give Butter Campaign News Archives](#)

Newsletter Data: Industry standard/goal is 44% Open Rate

- Marketing Magic:
 - April 3: 44.71% Open Rate
 - March 20: 63.86% Open Rate
 - March 6: 55.29% Open Rate

- Monthly Bridges:
 - March: 44.44% Open Rate
- Monthly Legislators:
 - March: Legislators – 5.56% Open Rate / Staff – 38.46% Open Rate