

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

February 2024

Karol Kennedy – Library System Director

Annual Reports: I spent many hours answering questions about and reviewing library annual reports. I offered a virtual walk-through of the annual report for any interested directors, as well as virtual office hours. Reports are due Thursday, February 29th. Several library reports have already been completed. The system annual report is due on March 31st. This will be on the Bridges board agenda in March.

Jefferson County Library Contracts: In November, I prepared and distributed the 2024 contracts to Jefferson County libraries. These were due to the Jefferson County by February 1st. All have been successfully completed and submitted.

Library Legislative Day 2024: We had a great day in Madison on February 6th. Thank you to everyone who joined us! I was proud to see that 34 of the 182 registered attendees were from Bridges Library System, nearly 1/5 of all those registered. We are fortunate to have such engaged individuals in our library system! All attendees are encouraged to send handwritten thank you notes to the legislators and aides they met.

Director Search: The Irvin L. Young Memorial Library (Whitewater) Board has officially appointed Interim Director Diane Jaroch as their Library Director. Diane has been the Assistant Director/Reference and Adult Services Librarian at the library for nearly 14 years. Prior to that, she was the Library Director at the Watertown Public Library.

Continuing Education: I attended several sessions of the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference: *Neutrality Is Not an Option: Book Bans, "Culture Wars," and Advocating for the Library; Board Support for Success; and Effective Email Etiquette*. I also watched a recorded webinar, *How to Write Effective Survey Questions to Get Useful Data*, to help in the process of developing an upcoming member survey. I attended WLA Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group meeting.

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

Collection Analysis Tool: On February 1st access began to the collection analysis tool from CollectionHQ began. Staff were trained on February 9th.

New Internet Circuits: Over the last 6-8 months our libraries have been moving over to new Internet circuits as the state has a new contract. We have one library remaining to be moved, and that should be completed by the end of April.

Residency Tracking: We are working with the GIS people at Waukesha County to help us verify the coding in the Café database on where residents live. I have reached out to Jefferson County, but I do not know if they can do the same for us. I'm waiting to see how the process works with Waukesha County and will then reach out to them again.

Data Dashboard: Waukesha County IT is nearing completion of phase one of the data dashboard and we have begun talking about phase two. Recently two new reports on libraries collections were added, new

materials that have circulated one or less times and items that have been circulated more than 100 times.

MessageBee: The MessageBee texting solution was rolled out early December and after a few bugs, its working well. In December we sent 20,006 texts and in January we sent 24,747.

Laurie Freund – Coordinator of Library Development

SEWI Adult Public Programming (hybrid) Meetings 2024: We have two annual meetups where library staff involved in library public programming get together to discuss common issues and share program ideas. Be sure to mark your calendar for these dates:

- 1-4pm, Monday, March 4th (details and registration coming soon)
Physical location: Franklin Public Library. Online option will be available
- 1-4 pm, Monday, October 7th
Physical location: New Berlin Public Library. Online option will be available.

Workforce in-Person Meetings: The WOW (Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Counties) Workforce region will be providing an in-person meeting for interested library staff on Thursday, April 11th in the afternoon at the new Workforce Center location in Waukesha. I will be working with the South Central Workforce region to schedule an in-person meeting at the Jefferson Workforce Center location. More information and registration for library staff will be coming soon.

Bridges Friends Morning Coffee 2024: This year we will hold just one meeting more centrally located for Library Friends leaders and library directors from our Bridges member libraries to meet, network, gather information, discuss common issues, and share experiences. We'll celebrate the contributions of Library Friends and enable them to more effectively help support their libraries. Be sure to mark your calendar and notify your Friends leadership that this year's date for our Morning Coffee gathering will be the morning of Thursday, October 24th. This date coincides with National Friends of Libraries Week. More information will come as we get closer to fall.

My CE Activities: I attended the ALA LibLearnX Conference virtually over the weekend of January 20th. Sessions I attended revolved around digital equity, artificial intelligence (AI) uses in libraries, ideas for libraries addressing food insecurity, and Chatbots.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services.

Library Memory Project: In 2023, the Library Memory Project offered 72 memory cafes with nearly 1,000 attendees across 21 libraries. We also hosted Family Day in Waukesha County with a record 140 in attendance.

This year, we are adding three new libraries to the Library Memory Project rotation. Johnson Creek will join Watertown, Waterloo, and Lake Mills. And New Berlin and Muskego will join Eagle and Mukwonago to offer memory cafes. Memory café onboarding for these libraries is underway. New this year is

Jefferson County Family Day which will be held on Sunday April 21st from 1-4pm at Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson. More details at

www.librarymemoryproject.org/events

Portable Hearing Loops: Fourteen member libraries requested portable hearing loops to add to their library service desks last year. While Bridges received the hearing loops late last year, I am delivering them to libraries early this year, along with brief staff training, as needed.

Kids' Choice: The Kids' Choice voting period is open from Jan. 22nd to Feb. 12th. The winner of the Kids' Choice Award for 2023-24 will be announced on Feb. 14th. A new voting system has been put in place with the support of Waukesha County. A PowerBI Dashboard will be installed on the Staff Resources page of the Bridges website, enabling youth services staff and myself to easily run reports.

Library Legislative Day: I attended Library Legislative Day in Madison on February 6th. I met with Senator Kapenga's aide as well as Representative Duchow's aide. I appreciated the opportunity to thank our legislators for the increased aid to public library systems in Wisconsin.

Professional Development: I attended a webinar hosted by the Wisconsin ADA Coordinators called "Digital Access Basics," attended two sessions hosted by the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference titled "Get to 'Why': Stop Taking Orders and Become a Marketing Guide" & "Effective Email Etiquette," and a UW-Milwaukee hosted webinar titled "Understanding Where Your Time Goes: Lessons Learned from Project Management and Agile."



Participants enjoy Family Day at Retzer Nature Center

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings: A few Bridges libraries have new catalogers, and it has been wonderful to visit them to talk through CAFÉ cataloging practices. In the last month, I went to Watertown, Lake Mills, Elm Grove, Waterloo, and Mukwonago for cataloging consultation.

In January's virtual cataloger meetup, we discussed codes for audio-enabled books. These are print books with a ready-to-play audiobook inside the cover, so the reader can listen along as they read the book. This new format is primarily for children's books from two vendors—Wonderbooks and Vox books--and many of our libraries have added them to their collections.

I participated in WLA's Library Legislative Day at the capitol in Madison. It was a pleasure to talk with my representatives about the great services provided by Wisconsin libraries.

In January, the statewide cooperative cataloging group met virtually. A main topic was the creation of a new website where we can all share cataloging documentation. In the statewide bibliographic standards group meeting, we talked about cataloging for large print materials and how titles are displayed in the WISCAT interlibrary loan sharing platform.

Continuing Education: This month I attended three webinars. Two of them were from OCLC and related to cataloging. In *WorldShare Record Manager: Authority Control*, the presenter explained how to find

and use authority records in OCLC's WorldShare cataloging tool. In the *OCLC Cataloging Community Meeting*, panelists described their initiatives to improve catalog data. The third webinar was *Writing Effective Survey Questions to Get Useful Data* presented by Kathy Dempsey.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Library Lover's Month: We are celebrating throughout the month on social media with some "love letters" to libraries from their patrons. Look for these on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



In the news: We had some more media coverage from our news release on January 10 about the 2024 Memory Café Schedule and adding three new library locations to the Library Memory Project this year.

- [CBS 58 Article](#)
- [WisBusiness Article](#)
- [Daily Union Article](#)

Udemy: Working with Waukesha County HR, we sent out some dedicated messaging to staff to highlight Udemy courses for their professional development.

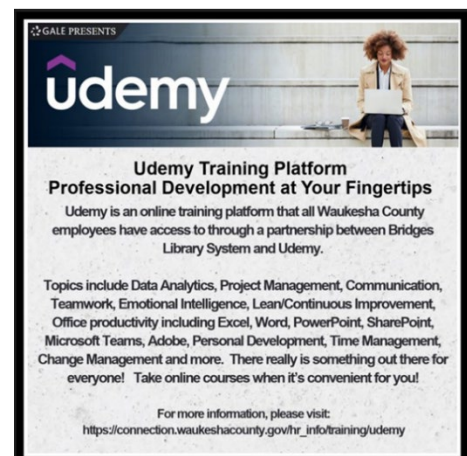
- Jan. 12: Insider Employee Newsletter from County Executive
- Feb. 5: Dedicated Email from HR



Professional Development with Free Udemy Classes

All employees in Waukesha County have access to Udemy's on-demand online video learning courses. Topics cover a wide range, including data analytics, project management, communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, software (including Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Microsoft Teams, Adobe), personal development, time management, change oversight, and much more.

[Learn more and register](#)



Consulting: I compiled a short video for Alice Baker Library in Eagle about the benefits of a Café Library Card. It was a great team building exercise for the staff and they have added new library card sign-ups in response (over 10 according to Alli).

Watch the video on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alli.chase.39/videos/421246196917662>

Professional Development: I participated in the Wisconsin Winter Web Conference on January 24 and attended all three of the sessions in the marketing track: “Color Me Digital: Color Theory in Online Marketing and Social Media”, “Storytelling for Impact”, and “Get to “Why”: Stop Taking Orders and Become a Marketing Guide”. The storytelling for nonprofits session had some actionable takeaways I can share with member libraries.

I also attended a webinar about “2024 Content Marketing Predictions (And How to Navigate Them)” on February 1 through Hubilo. It covered AI, Social Media evolution, changes in audience preferences, and their predictions for how all marketing channels can be streamlined.

Library Legislative Day: I attended my first Library Legislative Day on February 6 in Madison. I visited my legislators with other staff and trustees to share some inspiring stories. We also were able to leave some flyers with them from Bridges Library System about the impact of our libraries in our communities.

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Bridges Library System
Supporting Communities**



Waukesha Public Library summer storytime with 253.3 Readers

About Us
Serving public libraries in Jefferson and Waukesha counties.

- 24 Member Libraries
- 113,294 Active Library Card Holders
- 5.87 Million Items Circulated in 2023 (Physical and Digital Formats)

Lifelong Learning
Libraries play a crucial role in the lives of families and individuals. From early childhood through higher education pursuits and into retirement. We welcome people in all stages of life to continue learning and socializing in their communities.

When my children were very small, we were [at the library] several times a week, and it was perfect for them. As they grew, they continued to go to programs and to use the library as a resource. Now that I am empty nesting, I use it in person and virtually for so many things. And yes, I still go to a lot of the programs.

For a personal win... I used the library as my first choice location for working on and earning my master's degree.

Sheila B.
Brookfield Public Library

Bridges Library System
Serving Libraries in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties, Wisconsin
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Library patron, Laura C., with her completed passport at Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson.

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Laura's experience during the Library Passport Challenge program this summer of visiting all the libraries in the system, and seeing all the interesting books she wants to read and all the new subjects she wants to learn about, has convinced her to go back to school.

She was so excited to share her plan with me, and when she heard that she was the first to complete the passport program, she was over the moon with joy.

Sandy W., Librarian
Dwight Foster Public Library, Fort Atkinson

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Supporting Communities**



Library patrons, Rosie S. and Peter S., reading with the Libby app on their devices at home in Brookfield.

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With aging eyes and arthritic hands, I was losing my enjoyment of books. Then I discovered the amazing collection of audiobooks in the library system. I can listen while I cook, drive or walk the dog! It's a wonderful way to enjoy books.

Jayne A.
Delafield Public Library

We are avid readers on a fixed retirement income, and the cost of books adds up. It is great to be able to access e-books for my tablet and my husband's Kindle for free with our library cards.

Rosie S.
Brookfield Public Library

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January/February Newsletters:

Marketing Magic - resources for library staff:

- Jan 19: 48.45% Open Rate
- Feb. 2: 56.70% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- Jan. 10: 33.94% Open Rate

Legislators:

- Jan. 10: 16.67% Open Rate