



Director's Report December 2023

Public Services

Bear Creek

Ashland

November 8th was the 400th Anniversary of the publication of Shakespeare's First Folio, which seemed like a natural cause for celebration in Ashland. Head of Adult Services Ellie Anderson executed a full lineup of Shakespeare-themed programs throughout the month, including a talk from local actor and dramaturg Barry Kraft on the significance of the First Folio, and a presentation from Oregon Shakespeare Festival Cultural and Community Liaison Tara Houston on designing Shakespeare's plays. There was also a hands-on program learning to make Commedia dell'arte masks, and a Shakespeare Open Mic, where amateur thespians delivered their favorite soliloquies, sonnets, and speeches from the Bard's body of work. For patrons who might experience a bit more stage-fright, staff placed baskets holding slips of paper printed with selected insults from Shakespeare's plays around the library. Shakespeare can be intimidating, and this is a playful, low-stakes way to make his work feel more accessible to everyone. The series of popular programs wrapped up with a concert of Renaissance music played on period instruments from local historical music consort Musica Matrix.

As a fun Halloween Chemistry Treat, Library specialists Cody Walburn and Ellen Werner, along with Children's Librarian Lyn Heerema, demonstrated the explosive power found in common household goods. Colorful baking soda foam and other reactions spewed from the mouths (and sometimes noses and eyes) of carved pumpkins, much to the delight of the children.

The Children's staff later received an email from a grateful parent, who thanked them for helping her young patron find exactly the right books. *"I meant to send an update last Sunday to thank you and your staff for all your recommendations for silly animal books,"* she wrote. *"We immediately took the whole stack to the Lithia Park duck pond and read them all... he had me read the interactive Bruce the bear book twice more at bedtime that night, so I think that one was the biggest hit. :) Thank you all for being so wonderful at the library; we appreciate you!!"*

Teen Librarian Katie Fischer visited Ashland Middle School and led a macrame lunchtime program at the school library with School Librarian Karl Pryor's assistance. Many middle schoolers participated across the two lunch periods, with more participation than Fischer and Pryor expected for the first outreach event of the school year. The response was extremely positive, and students were excited



about future visits. They were interested in learning about upcoming teen events, and staff look forward to connecting with the teens throughout the school year.

Phoenix

Branch Manager Jody Fleming attended the second annual Día de los Muertos event at Phoenix Elementary School. She met and spoke with more than one hundred parents, kids, and teachers and promoted the library and its services. Many folks affirmed how much they loved the Phoenix library, specifically Library Associate Lori Wilson's story time and the value of the take and make craft kits.

Talent

The big event at the Talent library in November was the Thankfulness-themed Storytime and craft. Preschool-age patrons attended a special storytime that featured books focused on being mindful of others. Then they participated in a craft where they constructed a gratitude tree. They wrote what they were thankful for on the leaves and branches, and it was heartwarming to see what meant the most to the kids and their families. For those who could not attend in person, there were take and make kits available so that children could make the craft at home. There was also a display of books related to thankfulness and gratitude that were available for check-out.

Central Area

Medford Adult Services Librarian Jonathan Ulrich finished the fall series of adventure movie programs for adults. *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* (2023) and *Jungle Cruise* (2021) were both well-attended. The films engaged the patrons, and one patron commented that *Jungle Cruise* was better than he expected.

A few months ago, a young adult experiencing homelessness expressed interest to Medford Adult Services staff in completing his GED, and they helped him access some print and online test prep resources that JCLS offers. He just shared with Adult Services staff that he passed all three exams and is now considering junior college classes.

The Children's Department took part in Mcloughlin Middle School's downtown walking tour field trip, where students learned about the many ways the library contributes to the community, both locally and at large. Students learned the history of the library system and what services the library offers, and many showed interest in volunteer opportunities.

Medford Teen Librarian Andrea Leone attended an outreach event with Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence at one of the Housing Authority properties in South Medford. The event focused on making seasonal Perler bead creations. This event was very popular with teens (and some younger patrons as well) and will be repeated in December at a different Housing Authority location.

Central Point

Dinosaurs were celebrated in November. At S.O. Fun: Cool Kids Read, kids combined their efforts to make a large and intricate dinosaur diorama. They constructed fossils alongside leaves, water features, mountains, and clouds and had a great time creating the prehistoric environment.

Spark Space Specialist Kayla Adamiec curated a program celebrating the magical world of fungi. Attendees crafted mushrooms out of clay and were challenged to try some truffle potato chips and various flavors of mushroom jerky. "Those who came to the Mushroom Mania program really enjoyed the novelty of exploring weird mushroom foods while making art," Adameic wrote. "They were pretty timid about trying something new at first, but once they started, they really liked it. It was cute to see the kids leave their comfort zones a little."



Lower Rogue

Applegate

A patron requested fun math books for her neurodivergent grandson who has been struggling in school. Staff worked to collect a few books at his reading level that were entertaining while being educational. She later reported that he was engaged with the books and really loved them, and she is grateful for the thoughtful selections.

Gold Hill

In celebration of Native American Heritage month, Gold Hill staff worked with Native American patrons Teri Hansen and Jessica Bochart Leusch to display their personal collection of artifacts. Alongside the display were copies of the *Travel Guide to Oregon Indian Country* that Library Associate Amy Fann requested from TravelOregon.com.

Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Branch had the great pleasure of hosting Phoenix Branch Manager Jody Fleming at the branch for a historical presentation on Olive Oatman, a fascinating figure who was connected with the Rogue Valley.

The Jacksonville staff created a wide variety of displays to help increase circulation, and it looks like it paid off, as circulation increased 9% over last year. Some of the November displays included children's mermaid books and movies (which were very popular), biographies, holiday movies, the Blue Zone way of life, and autumnal crafting books to accompany a take and make.

After the success of a similar program during the summer, Library Associate Betsy Schiller has offered sessions of Qigong this fall for Jacksonville patrons. Most of the attendees came to the whole series and commented that they want to have an ongoing class at the library. There will be another series in February, and ongoing program planning will try to include some sort of movement-based classes.

Rogue River

Rogue River purchased a light table for the branch, and the second it was assembled, kids and their parents were playing with it.

Library Associate Jax Gordon led the program "Exploring Japan Through Manga, Anime & Language." Gordon lived and taught in Japan for over a decade, and their experience was invaluable to this program, which drew a very enthusiastic crowd, who are already asking for a follow up program.

Library Associate Laurel Mills, put on a *Make Your Own Slime* program that was expected to draw mostly children and their parents or caretakers, but it turned out that slime appeals to older kids, too! Staff were happy to engage with the teens who attended and hope to see them at more programs soon.

Ruch

One of the most successful programs this month was "Unearthing the Past," which introduced kids to the science of archaeology and what it can reveal about the past. Archaeologist Katie Johnson of Southern Oregon University led participants in some fun, hands-on activities and taught them how to use tools of the trade to unearth artifacts and explore their significance.





Upper Rogue

Butte Falls

The recently-formed Butte Falls Art Adventure Club had fun this month using leftover craft materials from the Autumnal Door Hangers to create new art. They ended up creating a colorful and festive display of artwork around the branch. Patrons added messages of gratitude, and the leaves were hung in the windows so they could be shared with everyone visiting the branch.

Both Butte Falls and Eagle Point offered the “Live Action Oregon Trail” program in November. The event drew a big crowd at both branches, and the high-energy attendees kept the staff on their toes and rollicking along with the fun. The most popular activity was the tin foil boat challenge. Patrons loved seeing which designs worked, but discovering which ones were not as effective and sent their cargo down to the bottom of the river was, perhaps, the most fun.

Eagle Point

As part of an effort by the Community Resources Team, Eagle Point hosted some members of the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department in a program that combined a safety lesson with some more lighthearted fun. The first half of the event focused on firearm safety, and a deputy led attendees in a discussion about what they should do if they find a firearm. He taught them the seriousness of firearm safety and gave parents some pointers on how to practice it in their homes. Kids asked questions and interacted with the deputy. The educational portion of the event wrapped up just as the branch closed, and then it was time for the kids and parents (and the deputy) to have a NERF battle all throughout the Eagle Point library. It was a fun and informative time for all, and even weeks later, Eagle Point staff are still finding darts under shelves.



Prospect

An ongoing program on Gratitude Journaling was popular with patrons this month. Packets included research showing the benefits of gratitude practice, along with a few writing prompts and a fresh new notebook for folks to get started. Staff had meaningful discussions all month with gratitude practice newcomers and pros and provided a curated selection of items for patrons to take home to further their studies.



White City

Branch staff kicked off the month with a community celebration of Día de los Muertos. Staff set up a traditional ofrenda with photos of Latinx/o/a historical members; sweet treats; and marigolds, sugar skulls, and cards explaining the significance of each of the items. Program attendees learned about Día de los Muertos and painted and decorated their own sugar skulls. The next day, the branch held a screening of the movie *Coco*, which takes place over Día de los Muertos, and staff engaged with young patrons and taught them more about the celebration.

Outreach and Programs

Outreach

One of the highlights in Outreach this month was *Project Cozy*, a joint effort between Educations Services and At Home Services to combat feelings of loneliness in homebound patrons and foster intergenerational connection.

The Education Services team provided kits with cards and customizable wooden bookmarks to Innovation Academy in Medford and South Medford High School. More than 100 *Project Cozy* bundles were delivered to the At Home Services patrons. They were helped by two volunteers who had completed their training and were eager to help the At Home Services team.

The Outreach Department participated in Unete's Día de los Muertos event, where Library Specialist Nick Rementeria and Outreach Coordinator Katrina Ehrnman-Newton interacted with attendees and registered new library cards, most of whom use Spanish as their primary language.

Business Librarian

Business Librarian Roslyn Donald had her hands full this month focusing on the Downtown Quest promotion. This partnership with Downtown Medford Association recruited 23 businesses to participate in a scavenger hunt promotion centered around Small Business Saturday on November 25. The program ran through December 4. Media attention and community feedback was extremely positive. Donald was also invited to present at a meeting of the Eagle Point Rotary Club, where she spoke about the library's role in economic development.

Education Services

In addition to facilitating Project Cozy with the local schools, November also included visits to the Juvenile Detention Center, a visit to a local Housing Authority, and an additional visit to Orchard Hill Elementary's fourth grade class to kick-off Rogue Reads. Before leaving the classroom at Orchard Hill, one fourth grade student asked, "Why are you guys the funnest ever?" to which staff responded, "Because we're the library!"

Outreach to Child Care

The department participated in LISTO's preschool welcome event, hosted at the Medford Library. Rementeria read a story at the event and presented a craft. He was assisted by Evelyn Lorence and Stephanie Polendey from the Education Services team, Children's Librarian Nancy Nightingale, and White City Library Associate Milagros Morales, who led a tour of the Children's Department in Spanish.

Digital Services

As patrons become more aware of Digital Services' monthly visits to Butte Falls and Prospect, they have been reaching out to schedule appointments. The growth in those locations has led staff to explore ideas for expanding the services in the Upper Rogue.

The Digital Services team conducted a Cybersecurity Basics class at Rogue Valley Manor. It was set up in two sessions over two days, and 24 residents attended each session. The class covered passwords, secure and non-secure websites, online fraud, and device management for safety. It was part of the Digital Learn series of tutorials in connection with a Public Library Association (PLA) grant. At the classes, the team also shared information on how to set up appointments with the team and promoted Rogue Reads programs.



Community Resources

As the weather gets colder and wetter, the Community Resources Department has seen an increase in patrons seeking information and referrals. Staff helped three patrons who have been chronically unhoused for more than nine years each get into stable housing through the Rapid Rehousing Program. Their health has significantly improved, and they regularly come into the library to see staff and enjoy reading in the Grand Reading Room.

The team has been working to develop fun and informational programming throughout the system. In partnership with the local Sheriff's department, branches offered a "Learn and Play" program that focused on children learning safety around weapons. November's Art in the Afternoon program used watercolors to

balance mental health. The department is excited to see a steady number of patrons enjoying a space for art and mental health within the library.

During November, Community Resources took over one of the entryway cases in Medford and put together a display honoring veterans using retired gear leant by library staff who are former servicemembers. The Department hopes to plan further collaborative displays.

Finance

Internally, October was a period of renewed focus on organization and efficiency. The department successfully implemented a set of comprehensive accounts payable procedures, ensuring greater clarity and control over the payable processes. Additionally, the audit has been finalized, solidifying the District's financial standing and ensuring adherence to relevant regulations.

Human Resources

With a robust benefits package comes the duty for continuous education and reminders about those staff benefits. Benefit Coordinator Kaya Courtrol is planning seminars to remind staff of fringe benefits such as Employee Assistance Programs, the District's retirement match, and the discounted bus pass program. Along with the benefit education, Courtrol recently completed the annual audit of the 401a and 457 retirement programs. These audits ensure that contributions were made appropriately.

The Supervisor Series for the month of November focused on creating emotional safety in the workplace. This bimonthly training is given to JCLS supervisors, managers and the Admin Team. The topic was in response to feedback received in the Climate Survey results, and the training focused on ways to improve department culture and create space for feedback, questions, and positive response for when mistakes happen.

Marketing

In November the Marketing Department led efforts to promote the release of the JCLS app, the Folio 400 celebrations in Ashland, and the Downtown Quest in Medford. The Rogue Reads Event Guide also came out in November and has been distributed to all branches and inserted into the print edition of the Rogue Valley Times; several local businesses have also agreed to display copies. In celebration of the Folio, the Beanstack challenge for the month of November focused on Shakespeare retellings, and readers could earn customized achievement badges. The department also produced and released a promotional video for the Downtown Quest event.

Press Releases:

Folio 400: <https://bit.ly/481qKq9>

Downtown Quest: <https://bit.ly/3RudqUX>

Windows in Time: <https://bit.ly/46SluU0>

Media Coverage:

KOBI on Folio 400: <https://bit.ly/3spwJWG>

RV Times on Downtown Quest: <https://bit.ly/3sM2OZ1>

KDRV on Downtown Quest: <https://bit.ly/3t5TaRc>

Notable Videos:

Downtown Quest Promo: https://youtu.be/JTx6k_QYj1s



Support Services

Collection Development

The Collection Development Department is experimenting with a new way to boost awareness of JCLS digital offerings among both staff and library patrons by highlighting a Database of the Month, starting with Udemy in December. Udemy is an online learning platform with on-demand video courses for adults who want to improve work-related or technology skills, or further develop a personal interest. Collection Development Manager Laurin Arnold collaborated with Staff Development Coordinator Loren Clupny to help prepare staff by setting up trainings with the service vendor and submitting articles in the staff newsletter to familiarize employees with the databases and its features.

Technical Services

The Technical Services Department has been adjusting to a variety of factors that impact workflow. The Courier Department has been responding to changing patterns in materials usage and routing because of the service hours increase in April 2023. Additionally, the whole team have noticed the increases in new materials shipments. Late summer saw a particularly high influx of new materials, which caused some slowdowns in box-to-shelf turnaround. But by November, thanks to the attention of Technical Services Manager Ashley Johnson and the hard work of the entire team, the workload has been balanced and is now being handled more efficiently than ever.

Information Technology

Network Administrator Jason Whyte recently deployed a faster Wi-Fi 6 for the Public Network at all branches. This network is identical to the current public Wi-Fi in terms of gaining access to the internet but provides staff and patrons the option to connect devices to a faster and more secure network. The previous branch Wi-Fi network will remain in operation for older devices that are incompatible with Wi-Fi 6.

As part of JCLS's ongoing efforts to improve cybersecurity, the IT department has deployed NinjaOne, a Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM) software, on all staff desktop and laptop computers. RMM allows continuous monitoring and automated deployment of software updates and patches to ensure that all JCLS computers are up to date and secure. NinjaOne will also help with tracking and managing hardware and software assets across the District. It provides remote desktop access and control capabilities, allowing IT staff to troubleshoot and resolve issues after gaining permission from staff.

Facilities

December will see some new office spaces and staff re-arrangement to better support and accommodate JCLS's growing needs. The Admin Conference Room, an internal staff meeting room adjacent to the Administrative Offices, is being converted into four new cubicle spaces to be occupied by the 3-person Finance Team, and the Data and Analytics Coordinator. Finance Manager Thomas McLanahan will be relocating to the vacant office in the Administrative Offices. This will allow for the HR Team and Facilities Assistant to occupy the existing cubicle spaces in the Business Office. A new cubicle will be installed in the Adult Services office area in Medford to accommodate additional staff on that team.

Also in December, Central Point Library will be getting new carpet. The branch will be closed to the public beginning Monday, December 11th with plans to re-open the following week. Central Point Staff will be offering Front Door Services out of the back door for holds pick-up during the closure.