

# Director's Report September 2023

# Special Highlights

# Unofficial Battle of the Books (UBOB)

August saw the final push for Summer Reading promotion with the advertising season winding down. Before turning attention fully to Rogue Reads, however, the Marketing team was excited to work on a new reading initiative and challenge developed by the JCLS Outreach department: the Unofficial Battle of the Books (UBOB).

Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB) is a statewide voluntary reading motivation and comprehension program sponsored by the Oregon Association of School Libraries in conjunction with a Library Services and Technology Act grant. In past years, JCLS has engaged with OBOB through the generosity of the Ashland Library Friends at the Ashland Library. This year, with support across the organization including the Ashland Library staff, Marketing Department, Education Services, Collection Development, Technical Services, and IT – JCLS is excited to announce The JCLS Unofficial Battle of the Books.

The program officially launched this month, already surpassing its target metric of 100 sign-ups. UBOB includes a Beanstack Challenge, promotional materials, and prizes for readers. Education Services worked closely with Marketing to redesign the JCLS Education Services webpage, adding in a digital Educator's Request Form and UBOB book highlights for educators.

The Marketing team developed a wealth of promotional materials as well as a guidebook and passport for patrons to use to track their progress. Like Summer Reading and Rogue Reads, the challenge also utilizes the Beanstack platform for tracking. Three different UBOB challenges launched in Beanstack on August 15 (one for each booklist). Optional physical guides/passports are available at branches, giving





readers another fun way to track their progress. When a reader has finished a book, they can bring their passport to any branch to get it stamped. This program for individual readers runs for the whole school year — from August 15, 2023 to May 15, 2024. UBOB uses the current book lists provided through Oregon Battle of the Books and encourages patrons of all ages to read 5 books from any one booklist to earn an exclusive UBOB pin.

Collection Development has made sure to purchase ample copies of all the titles, in physical and digital formats, so that more Jackson County students can participate. Patrons can also request OBOB Book kits, which contain copies of each title for each grade level, and there are bags for each of the grade categories; 3-5, 6-9, and 9-12.

JCLS UBOB blog post: https://jcls.org/2023/09/05/oregon-battle-of-the-books/

JCLS UBOB website page: <a href="https://jcls.org/battle/">https://jcls.org/battle/</a>

Other Press Releases:

September Big Ideas Discussion Series: https://jcls.org/2023/08/29/big-ideas/







# **Public Services**

#### Summer Reading Wrap Up

Summer Reading invited Jackson County residents to "level up" this summer, and the community met the challenge. Many of the programs took the concept of gaming and incorporated the many ways in which games – whether in video, board, tabletop, or any other format — can increase learning opportunities through fun. This tied in nicely with the addition of the video game collection that strategically launched at the start of the summer.

JCLS took the concept of "leveling up" one step further, though. Participants were challenged to gain new skills in the areas of arts and crafts, storytelling, music, STEM, and career development. This summer, patrons – especially school-aged patrons – took full advantage of the opportunity to learn and grow, setting them up for success in the months to come.

August saw the last of SRP programming, and branches did their best to end things on a high note. Tyler Spencer's Australian Didgeridoo Performances educated and entertained audiences in Central Point, Ruch, Talent, Eagle Point and Shady Cove. In addition to performing, Spencer taught patrons the instrument's history, how they are made, the symbols used in decoration, and how he became interested in playing the didgeridoo. Audiences loved the program and had fun playing their own didgeridoos made from PVC pipe.

Wildlife Images wrapped up their tour of JCLS branches in August. Animal lovers in Central Point and Rogue River met a wallaby, a turkey vulture, and a great horned owl, and Gold Hill patrons took turns feeding a llama. In Butte Falls, so many people attended that they could not fit everyone inside. Branch Manager Shone Ellis got creative and took the program outside in the shade, where attendees learned about the possum and skunk ambassadors in their natural habitat.

Ashland Children's has been focusing on STEM programming throughout the summer with their Level Up Club. In August, a program encouraged young

patrons to design and test their own parachutes. The science fun continued, as a partnership with ScienceWorks brought several STEM programs to older kids. Ashland Children's hosted the *Be a Physicist!* Program, which gave children the opportunity to take on the role of a scientist and investigate different forms of energy. They put that knowledge to the test by using principles of physics to solve real-world problems. ScienceWorks then visited Medford to present the first in a quartet of Mission2Mars programs. Kids who attended learned about NASA's Project Artemis, made scale models of the solar system, engaged in an experiment on gravitational pulls on objects in space, and made their own paper Mars helicopters.













#### **Bear Creek**

Branches throughout the Bear Creek region are busy implementing strategies to foster progress towards the systemwide goal of increasing physical circulation. In Ashland, Adult Services staff added shelf markers to the beginning of each Dewey decade in Adult Nonfiction. Many patrons, especially those who are not frequent library users, are confused by the Dewey Decimal System and sometimes give up before they find what they're looking for. These graphic signs make browsing more intuitive and help to demystify the library's organizational systems. Ashland joins several other branches in adding these shelf talkers.

In Phoenix, Library Associate Parsina Dias bundled together children's books focused around popular themes such as cars, animals, and fairytales. This allows young patrons and their families to easily check out several books on one topic – an at-home storytime ready to go!

Talent focused their efforts on creating intentional book displays for each section of the library. Library Associate Erica Rische-Baird created a Summer Display, which included books, photos from earlier programs held this summer, and pictures that young patrons drew, using the theme of "A Portrait of Me in Summer." Library Specialist Athena Allemand curated an adult section entitled "Destination Reads," with each book set in a different locale. Library Associate Andrew Grimsby curated a kid's section which highlighted books about soccer in honor of the Women's World Cup. The final two sections on Australia and Legos were both curated by branch manager Patrick Mathewes to coincide with the programming offered in the branch that month. These displays in particular have been very popular, with patrons expressing gratitude that they are easily able to find materials to delve deeper into the subjects introduced in the programs.

#### **Central Area**

The Medford Teen department offered a couple of different programs to end out the summer with a high dose of fun. First, they offered a Mario Kart Tournament, which was a massive success. Two tournaments were run, and there was a full bracket system to determine the winners. After battling it out on the gaming systems, the winners each received a golden race car to take home as a trophy. Later, the department hosted a Perler Bead Keychain program, where teens created video game character keychains to take with them as the school year begins.

In Adult Services, Librarians Kayla Samnath and Spencer Ellis continued to take programming on the road at the Rogue River Estates. This month, they brought paint, pens, sharpies, ribbon, foam shapes, and stickers for the patrons to design and decorate personalized picture frames. Attendees expressed an interest in doing rock painting or luminary crafts at future outreach events, and staff look forward to preparing activities based on these suggestions.

At their monthly visit to the Jackson County Juvenile Detention Center to meet with youth in the Barriers 2 Bridges program, Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence and Adult Services Librarian Kayla Samnath wrapped up their summer programing. This month's project allowed the kids to get creative designing postcards from their favorite fictional world. The assignment required them to design the photo on the front, address the postcard correctly, and to write a short friendly letter to whomever they liked. Afterward, Lorence and Samnath awarded











prizes to the winners of the Summer Reading Program. One of the students was about to graduate from the program and was very excited to end his time on such a positive note.

Staff from the Central Point and White City Libraries met with representatives from ScienceWorks to discuss a possible collaboration in the library Spark Spaces. Library staff may soon take a field trip to the museum to learn about some of their STEM programming, and there will likely be exhibits and programming from ScienceWorks presented in the Spark Spaces soon.

#### Lower Rogue

Many of Applegate's young patrons started school on August 28<sup>th</sup>, and staff decided to have the end of SRP party a week early to celebrate the end of summer. Winners of the program were awarded prizes while patrons snacked on cake and ice cream served by Friends president Diana Coogle.

Veggie enthusiasts flocked to the Gold Hill Library to attend the Hearty Summer Salad program offered by Sarah Lemon on August 5<sup>th</sup>. Sarah demonstrated how to make three different salads with fresh seasonal produce, and all the participants got a taste before heading home with the recipes, which are sure to be in their kitchen rotations soon.

Continuing the Jacksonville branch's tradition of encouraging local organizations to use its large display area, the local chapter of the Scouts installed their treasures during the month of August. The exhibit has a little bit of everything — ranging from camping gear they use on their outdoor adventures to objects representing their recent service projects.

Inside the branch, staff welcomed local Larry Smith to discuss his newly published book *Jacksonville's Emerald Necklace*. Smith is a minor celebrity in Jacksonville, having taught at Jacksonville Elementary School for 40 years, initiating the creation of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, and even having taken a pivotal role in the siting and construction of the current library building. Attendees, many of whom were former students and trail crew workers, enjoyed reconnecting with their teacher and friend.

Yoga instructor Lori Sours concluded a 5-week long Chair Yoga class at the Jacksonville Library. Throughout the series, participants have approached branch staff to ask if the class could be ongoing at the Library. It clearly has filled a need for folks who are looking for a gentle way to move their bodies.

Rogue River celebrated "Read a Romance Month" and "What Will Be Your Legacy Month," with two displays that were very well received by patrons and staff.

#### **Upper Rogue**

On August 12, the Butte Falls team participated in an outreach event for the Butte Falls Fire Department's Annual Fireman's BBQ Fundraiser, where they enjoyed connecting with patrons both familiar and new. During the event, eight community members signed up for new library cards, and staff look forward to seeing them in the branch soon.

Branch Manager Shone Ellis and Library Associate Katie Misfeldt rose to the occasion when they received a last-minute invitation to join in the Butte Falls Charter School in-service day. They introduced themselves to the approximately 50 staff members in attendance, and presented an overview of the services and

resources JCLS has available. The event gave the Butte Falls team an opportunity set up storytimes, a monthly arts/crafts program at the elementary school, and a weekly Storytime with the Learning Tree Preschool.

Eagle Point has seen an increase in the numbers of patrons attending the weekly Babies and Wobblers Storytimes. Library Specialist Jenna Steigleder and Library Associate Hailey Graybill travelled to Central Point, where the program has been wellestablished for a while. They observed the program and then collaborated with branch staff to receive some additional Storytime training and brainstormed ideas they could bring to the programs in Eagle Point.

Prospect staff provided two Take & Make crafts this month: a Friendly Firefly and a Bigfoot Library Card Lanyard. One of the eager young crafting patrons decided to skip the "take" and sat down to make a cute firefly right in the library with the assistance of Branch Manager April Bozada-Armstrong. While they crafted, they discussed facts about fireflies. This included the fact that they are not actually flies, but beetles, and go by many different names, depending on the region. Many patrons who came to pick up the crafts also browsed the titles about insects on display nearby.

Shady Cove patrons leveled up their Archaeology and Paleontology skills with Library Associate Sydney Salisburg. They learned about the tools and techniques used by experts, and at the end of the presentation, kids put their learning to use by carefully chipping away at a model dinosaur fossil using a chisel and brush. As a special surprise, the patrons got to meet a living dinosaur: Ivy the tortoise. Resource Specialist Anna Rands introduced Ivy to the attendees, and adults and kids all enjoyed seeing and learning about her.

The White City Spanish Conversations group kicked off their first meeting and played a game of Monopoly in Spanish, which gave them a fun way to brush up on their vocabulary skills. They chose to play Monopoly because it gave opportunities to practice words and phrases related to numbers and purchasing, as well as making change and describing place names.

#### **Social Services**

The Social Services Team has been spending time in August planning programs that are both interesting and useful to the patrons. In addition to hosting programs in partnership with local organizations, they have also been working on various art programs and other events centered around mental health and wellness.

While the department looks to connect with more locally-based care agencies, the team is also expanding upon established partnerships. Staff have been working closely with Asante Medical, which is helping to strengthen patrons' access to medical referrals and provider resources.

A highlight for this month has been helping a veteran who was at risk of homelessness. Social Services staff helped him to connect with resources to supplement his rent so that he was able to stay in his home of 20 years. The Veteran was astonished at the amount of help and resources that are available for those who have served

their country and has found a great primary care provider and access to mental health care.

#### Outreach

The vehicle used by the Outreach department has been transformed from a boring white into an eye-catching bigfoot-emblazoned mint green masterpiece! JCLS Marketing Manager Ryan Bradley designed the wrapping, and staff are ready to hit the road bringing library services in style.





#### **Business Librarian**

One notable event this month was the Rogue River Chamber Greeters held at Rogue River Library. Thirty attendees made for a very full house in the library's meeting room, including Business Librarian Roslyn Donald, Area Manager David Haywood, and Library Director Kari May. Several attendees said they did not know the library had a meeting room and at least one person signed up for a card.

The Upper Rogue Chamber of Commerce had an evening social event at the Eagle Point Branch. Donald attended, along with Specialist Jenna Steigleder and Library Associate Sam Caredig. Caredig has been representing the Eagle Point Branch at the monthly Chamber meetings, and the event provided a good opportunity for staff to meet and make contacts with local community members at their own branch.

### DART

Despite having to cancel some events due to smoky conditions, DART still had 281 attendees at regular visits and two special events, including the Rogue Community College Open House at the Riverside Campus in Medford.

DART joined Prospect Library staff at the annual Prospect Jamboree and Timber Carnival. Jamboree vendors were grateful to have access to the free wi-fi the van provides. Staff took the opportunity to greet familiar faces, meet new folks, and highlight some of the quirkier local finds on the library shelves, including two locally compiled cookbooks from past Jamborees.

### **Digital Services**

While the weather saw in-person Digital Services requests decline slightly in August, staff still stayed plenty busy with other programming. They presented a course on iPhone and iPad basics to a packed room at the Ashland Senior Center, and later received a warm thank-you note from ASC Coordinator Natalie Mettler: "We love collaborating with you

on offering digital education for older adults and look forward to many more successful sessions!"

## **Education Services**

Education Services staff are busy with back-to-school outreach. Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence and Education Services Specialist Stephanie Polendey participated in Maslow's Back-to-School event, bringing library resources and homework help packets to families and teens experiencing housing instability. They also attended Back to School Night at Ruch Outdoor Community School with Ruch Branch Manager Megan Pinder, focusing on Ruch specific programming and UBOB.

The team created an Introduction to Education Services presentation, intended to educate library staff about the programming modules that Education Services offers during the school year, and highlight the <u>Education</u> <u>Resources webpage</u> and Educator Request Form. This presentation was given to two branches who are already engaged in active conversation with schools, and staff are looking forward to further collaboration while serving their local schools.

### **Outreach to Child Care**

Library Specialists Emily Hawks and Kateri Warnick attended the Head Start Pre-Service event to distribute information about OCC services. While there, they were presented with an appreciation award for being outstanding community partners. They continue to serve nearly 1,000 children at 34 sites throughout the month.



# Finance

The audit process is going well and has provided the new team with many great opportunities to dive deeper into the District's accounts and systems while performing fieldwork selections and the other necessary reports. The fiscal year is off to a good start, and the department is working on streamlining internal processes.

# Human Resources

Staff Day will be held on Friday, September 15th, at Southern Oregon University. The Staff Day Committee spent the past six month putting together a full day of programming built around the theme of "Watershed Moments." Keynote Speaker Bobbi Newman's presentation will focus on workplace wellness. In the afternoon, staff will disperse into two breakout sessions. Swag bags with appreciation items funded by the Jackson County Library Foundation will be given out at the event, along with a JCLS t-shirt.

Volunteer Coordinator Asela Kemper updated and relaunched the volunteer web page. She sent a form to supervisors to gauge the need for new volunteers throughout the system. Those new opportunities were posted on the web page, and any interested patrons are encouraged to apply. After volunteers have been recruited, they will go through a brief interview followed by assignment, orientation, and training.

# Support Services

## **Collection Development**

Collection Development staff have continued to visit branches on a regular basis. The team presented their State of the Collection Report to Library Director Kari May, and Assistant Directors Kelda Vath and Joan Vigil. This report synthesized what they learned from their branch visits and included collection data analysis. Their goal for the report was to elicit input from leadership on next steps to address their findings.

The Library of Things Task Force wrapped up their major project, which was to create guidelines for accepting donations, general selection, weeding, and maintenance of the collection. These guidelines have been finalized and will be used moving forward as the Library of Things collection evolves.

JCLS received a generous donation of children's board books from the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe that teach the Takelma language. These new titles are currently being cataloged and will soon be on library shelves.

## **Technical Services**

Increased efficiencies abound in the Technical Services Department. In August, the Acquisitions Team reviewed procedures for handling the cleanup of vendor-cancelled orders with patron holds. Several new processes have been put into place to provide better customer service to patrons who have been waiting unduly long for their requested print materials.

The Circulation Committee and Technical Services Manager Ashley Johnson launched new procedures to check for missing items. The new and improved Systemwide Shelf Checks report is now sent weekly to every branch, and procedures have been updated to maintain the records for items that have been missing from the collection for many months. These new procedures will help to keep the ILS database tidy and improve customer service for patrons who are waiting for an item that is missing.