



Director's Report April 2024

Public Services

As most schools around the district took a week off for Spring Break, branches went full STEAM ahead; calendars were packed with programs featuring science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Jacksonville and Shady Cove held a storytime and craft program based around the book *Boxitects* by Kim Smith. After the story, the children were encouraged to use their imaginations to reimagine the boxes in the room, which led to some truly impressive corrugated creations. One child at Shady Cove crafted an entire knight's ensemble of a cardboard helmet, shield and a sword.



Older kids in Ashland and Butte Falls had their engineering and aim put to the test with a program comparing trebuchets to catapults. Once they had crafted their miniature siege machines, they were given munitions of cotton balls, marshmallows, pom poms, Styrofoam, Easter eggs, and even a few Peeps. These were soon thick in the air as participants competed to see which flew farthest, most accurately, and perhaps most importantly – which was the most satisfying to throw.

Board Member and Rogue Community College Chemistry Professor Marissa Barrientos-Shepherd generously lent some of her time and expertise around the District leading a program on polymers. The program began with a discussion on the science of plastics, how they are made, and why they take so long to degrade, participants then got to watch as a polymerization process took place in their hands to create a silicone bouncy ball. The tweens and teens (and even a couple of parents) had a blast creating their balls and then competing to see whose ball bounced highest. For a couple of kids in Talent who expressed dismay when they learned that they had missed the program, Branch Manager Patrick Mathewes was glad to tell them the good news that the program would continue to travel to branches throughout the upcoming months. The *Grants Pass Daily Courier* made a surprise visit to the Rogue River library to attend and document the program Chemistry Magic Show with Shepherd. The article was featured on the front page of the March 26th issue.



On March 14 (3.14), patrons came together to celebrate pi and pie. There was something for everyone at Ashland's Pi Day. Librarian Brianna Levesque coordinated a variety of math games that soon had everyone engaged, from small children playing cooperative counting games, to teens learning new games that build pattern recognition skills, to grandparents and grandchildren doing logic puzzles together, and adults who had just met playing a spirited game of Sorry.



When they had worked up an appetite, pizza (pie) and fruit pies were served. In White City, staff and participants had a fun time making Pi suncatchers with colorful beads. Using principles guided by the number, three circles were made that were then layered inside of each other to make a suncatcher.



Medford's Pi Day activities were a rounding success. There were activities spread throughout the branch, including a scavenger hunt that travelled throughout the library noting circular architecture as well as teaching patrons how to use the Library catalog, which proved very useful for at least one new patron. A teen who had never been to the library before was overheard saying, "I had no idea the library would have so much to do!" and that he would be making more trips to the library.

The new Computer Classroom debuted as a location for an interactive trivia challenge where participants chose names like Sir Cumference and bantered with each other throughout the game. In the Children's and Teen Departments, there were art stations and play dough take-and-makes, and by the end of the two-hour event, several teens wrote pi-themed Haikus and made spirograph art; families had added to the colored-paper pi chain; and all the mini-pie awards were claimed. By the next morning, all of the pudding pie take-and-make kits at the Reference Desk were gone. A parent was "blown away" by what the local libraries offer her and her children: "You guys are doing awesome in the children's department! I just want to live here." Her family visits multiple branches throughout the valley to access various resources and programs, including storytime sessions.

JCLS Seed Libraries

Spring has sprung at JCLS, and seeds were plentiful throughout the District in March. Shady Cove held their annual seed giveaway on March 2. Tables were set up, and patrons browsed the selections while asking questions about what would make them the best choices for their future gardens. While there were plenty of flowers and herbs such as California poppies, lupines, milkweed, mules ears, cilantro, basil, parsley, and dill, the largest category of seeds available were vegetables. Tomatoes, broccoli, corn, beans, cucumbers, squash and many more varieties abounded. It is clear families enjoy the idea of growing their own food and sharing it with others! During this 2-hour event there were 118 new signups to the seed library and about 154 people attended the event from different areas around the Valley. A huge thank you to Laura and Kurt Brubaker and all the volunteers who made this event possible!



The Ruch Branch of the JCLS Seed Library opened on March 6. The collection is aligned with the existing Seed Library in Shady Cove and offers up to twenty seed packets per family per visit. The Friends of the Ruch Library funded the initial costs, and the seeds were donated by Siskiyou Seeds, Klamath Siskiyou Native Seeds, the Winona Grange along with many local patron seed savers. The collection includes many locally adapted heirloom varieties and native seeds from the Applegate Valley. In just a few weeks, over two hundred seed packets have been distributed. Two nonprofits, the Holly Street Community Garden and the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council have also taken seeds that will benefit the estimated 1,000 community members they serve. In addition to offering seeds, the branch has been coordinating programming related to gardening, including a discussion on Wildflowers and Rare Plants of the Applegate, presented by the co-owners of Klamath Siskiyou Native Seeds, and Seed Saving for Gardeners with Don Tipping of Siskiyou Seeds.



Eagle Point also hosted a seed swapping event in early March. Many people came in, swapping seeds and stories, and one patron went above and beyond, bringing over 500 tomato seeds to share with their neighbors.



Bear Creek

Ashland

On March 27 staff offered a repeat of their Finding the Fae Folk event. This program combined science, literature and art and was supposed to take place at North Mountain Nature Park. Unfortunately, due to weather, the program was moved to the library. The team did a great job adapting plant identification, stories and craft to the new venue.



On March 5th, the Teen Department partnered with Children's to put on a fun Children & Teen Robotics Extreme! The program had robotic toys for younger patrons to explore and dive into and pizza for them to enjoy. It was a great test for programming to wider age ranges, and multiple patrons asked if this would be a regular program. Afterwards, they got this wonderful response from a grateful patron: "The kids loved the Robotics program! My son has been really interested in learning about this, and I haven't really known where to start helping him. We're so appreciative of you guys running this! And since I have to get the kids straight from the bus, having pizza available really made it doable for us."

Teen Librarian Katie Fischer and Teen Specialist Miki Hocker visited Ashland Middle School to lead a fun combination of sand art and clay art. It seems the word is spreading about how cool the library is: Fischer and Hocker had one of their highest-attended outreach events yet.



Ashland hosted the monthly Windows in Time Program, "A Corset Won't Kill You: Demystifying the 19th century Woman's Wardrobe." Attendance at Windows in Time is slowly growing, and this engaging topic and presenter drew in community members who had not come to a local history talk before.

Author Caroline Paul, in conversation with her twin sister, Alexandra Paul, drew a large group to the library to discuss Caroline's new book, *Tough Broads: From Boogie Boarding to Wing Walking – How Outdoor Adventure Improves Our Lives*

As We Age. Their program featured interviews with many older women, including the author's mother, Ashland resident Sarah Paul, on how keeping active and maintaining a sense of wonder keeps a person vital as they get older.

Talent

The Talent library celebrated Spring with storytimes, crafts, and scavenger hunts throughout the library. Patrons of all ages enjoyed the programs, and others received a take and make kit with materials to paint their own wooden Easter eggs at home.

Central Area

Central Point

To celebrate Spring, Central Point hid eggs throughout the Children's section. Inside each egg is a little bunny with a message, "I'm your reading bunny. Name me and take me home and read to me every day." The team hopes this will be a source of joy for children and encourage them to read, or be read to, every day.

Kid Librarian continues to be a huge hit. Each of the four so far has been extremely proud of being selected, and their parents, grandparents, and siblings have been supportive and enthusiastic of their efforts.





Branch Manager Erin Ulrich received great feedback from a participant at the birding walk in March. The patron commented on the variety of programming that the library system offers. She mentioned that she attended the cheese pairing workshop at Ashland, went to the book group at Medford, and then tried the bird watching at Central Point. She said that she appreciated that the staff, having such a wide variety of personal interests, makes the library so wonderful.

Medford

Patrons of all ages joined in for a variety of Ghostbusters-themed activities to celebrate the newest film in the Ghostbusters franchise. Patrons watched the 1984 and 2021 films to catch up on lore, and then put their knowledge to the test at a trivia game. Throughout the day there were crafts in the Large Meeting Room to create slime, DIY ghost catchers, edible versions of the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man, and more.



The Children's Department has participated for the first time in In-N-Out's Cover to Cover spring reading program, which partnered with the restaurant chain to award one free hamburger or cheeseburger for every five books or 300 minutes read. Families were very interested in this program, with staff giving out all 50 of the reading logs provided within two weeks of the program's launch. The department is already seeing families return with their completed logs to receive their Achievement Rewards.



The Children's Department has been hosting ten extra-special guests to help families watch the science behind how insects grow and change in real time. The caterpillar librarians have enticed families to come in and watch their development's progress, which sparked conversation of how the metamorphosis process takes place. Currently, the caterpillars are in the chrysalids phase and are predicted to hatch by the first week of April, when Children's staff hope to release them as a part of preschool story time.



Teens came to the library to make Duct Tape creations in early March. The response was enthusiastic and inventive, with teens making wallets, pouches, and more. Since these teens showed so much interest in science and inventions, Medford Teen celebrated Spring Break with a series of programs based on the manga series *Dr. Stone* and the inventions and tools that are featured throughout that series. Telescopes, basket weaving, and compasses were featured in programs in late March, and the teens are already excited to try their hand at traditional techniques.



Lower Rogue

Applegate

Applegate Library Associate Ann Nguyen decorated Applegate's window with a beautiful handmade dried flower wreath featuring flowers she grew and dried herself.

Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Branch hosted the Southwest Chapter of the American Red Cross when they held a blood drive in their efforts to reach a wider audience in the Rogue Valley. In a different sort of science in action, Branch Manager Rina Pryor took the opportunity to donate blood, and made a new friend with the dancing blood drop.



The Guitar Society of Southern Oregon presented local musicians Neil and Elizabeth Holland, who played their original Celtic-inspired music for guitar and flute. The two master musicians charmed and educated the audience about the eleven different flutes and five guitars they played at the concert.

Rogue River

March saw the return of the Paws to Read program at the Rogue River Library, which was immediately popular with some of the branch's youngest readers. Pictured is Annie, one of the two regular registered therapy dog reading buddies. This program aims to improve children's literacy skills and lead them to enjoy reading by offering a calm and welcoming environment and a furry friend. For younger kids, volunteers read dog-themed stories, while older children can practice reading to the pups and develop confidence in their abilities. Therapy dogs soothe anxious readers and listen without judgement or criticism. Good girl, Annie!



Upper Rogue

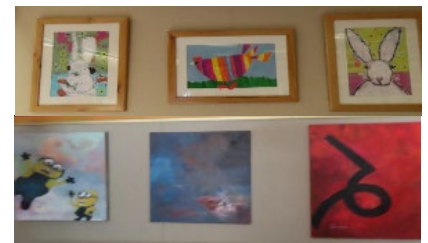
White City

White City welcomed a new attendee to the Spanish Conversations group. The team is excited to see more patrons attend the program who are interested in practicing their Spanish. To celebrate Spring, the branch hosted a craft program of pressed flower bookmarks. The patrons had a wonderful time making these bookmarks and were ready to read.



Shady Cove

Students visiting Shady Cove were treated to something special in March. In honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday, the Friends of the Library gifted each student a new book during their tour. There was a lot of excitement around this activity and smiles on every face. The classes ranged from Kindergartners to 2nd grade students, and 86 books were given away, including books for the students who could not attend. The Kindergarten class also brought new art to display in the children's area for Spring, which featured colorful birds and bunnies. Continuing the fun, artwork by Sandra Barber has been installed in the meeting room. This display truly has something for everyone and exposed people to creative designs and out of the box thinking, featuring paintings, uniquely painted furniture, and more.

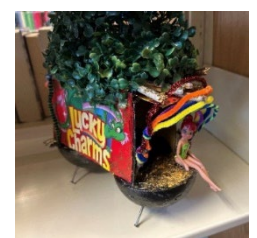


Prospect

In celebration of the March tradition of predicting and busting brackets, the Prospect Branch built one with favorite children's characters and series. Brackets were filled out and turned in early in the month. Patrons voted in head-to-head competitions each week to determine which series will advance. Everyone was excited about the display, and the matchups are fierce.



During their weekly library visits, Prospect 5th graders received assistance locating resources in the collection to help students find facts about their assigned states. Branch Manager April Bozada-Armstrong also provided one student with some inside tips about her home state, Missouri. When the second-grade class visited, they brought a special treat – a leprechaun house! Branch staff have yet to spot any evidence of leprechaun activity but are on the lookout for any unusual luck.



Eagle Point

Eagle Point focused on emergency preparedness in March. First, the local Red Cross came and put on a children's program focusing on the Pillowcase Project, which started when the Red Cross learned that university students in New Orleans used their pillowcases as luggage when they had to evacuate from Hurricane Katrina. Red Cross volunteers gave a presentation on how to be prepared for disasters and emergencies in your homes.



Attendees were then given a pillowcase to decorate and were instructed to take them home and fill them with items they may need in a disaster situation. The pillowcase could act as a bag that they could quickly grab and take with them in an emergency.



Later in the month, Jackson County Fire District 3, Jackson County Emergency Management, and the Fire Marshall's office came and talked to patrons about fire mitigation and the importance of creating defensible space around their properties. This program will be available at multiple JCLS branches this spring.

To celebrate World Marbles Day on March 28, Library Associate Sam Caredig hosted a Marbles Party with classic marbles games, a plinko game, races, table-top bowling, and challenges to craft mazes and runs out of cardboard.



In addition to their in-branch programs, Eagle Point staff have been participating in local school outreach. With assistance from Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence and Education Services Specialist Bella Silva, Library Specialist Jenna Steigleder and Library Associate Sam Caredig participated in literacy nights at Hillside Elementary School, Sacred Heart Middle School, Eagle Point Head Start, and Crater Lake Academy.

Butte Falls



On March 7, several kids and parents participated in the LEGO Zipline event. It was a lot of fun, and kids made several different variations of carts to transport their LEGO miniatures down the zipline. For younger patrons, there were large Duplo Legos and magnet blocks were available for building as well.

Community Resources

March was a wonderful month for the Community Resource Department. As the weather warmed, patrons also saw more joy and happiness. There were several success stories in March, which the team is grateful for. An expectant mother who is homeless connected with the Jackson County Maternal Child Program and will now have access to shelter, prenatal care, and other educational resources to benefit her health and her baby's. Additionally, the department helped two veterans wounded in combat sign up for Supplemental Security Disability Income. They were notified the last week of March that



they had been successful and that the patrons would have access to funding.

Outreach & Programming

Outreach

Spring has sprung in Outreach with new team members in place and planting seeds for a glorious summer through new partnerships, participating in meetings with SOESD and Jackson County Community Long-Term Recovery Group (JCCLTRG), which organized in the wake of the 2020 fires and is focused on continued disaster recovery and survivor support. Outreach also worked on finalizing the department's role with the returning Rogue Comic Con in May and the upcoming ACCESS Senior Fair in April. From large to small, fun to formal, there are always plenty of events to be excited about in Outreach!

At Home Services

At Home Services added one new patron in the month of March. Currently, 118 patrons are served on the program. Library Specialist Kateri Warnick tabled at Rogue River Estates' monthly event and presented a craft to residents there. These crafts are always well received.

Business Librarian

JCLS participated in the Women Entrepreneurs of Southern Oregon (WESO) Expo on March 9. This trade show featured 49 vendors and 10 local nonprofits. The library table featured a slideshow about the library's benefits for small businesses, and this outreach resulted in twenty-six people adding their names to the business newsletter list.

DART

Mobile Services Specialists Leah Finney and Maddy Tuttle visited eleven locations in March, including the Kelly Shelter, the ACCESS food pantry in White City, the ACCESS food pantry in Prospect, and the Landing at Butte Falls. One of the visits to the Housing Authority sites was a special resources event featuring the Medford Police department and JCLS.

Digital Services

Digital Services launched a kick-off event with Golden Rule ReEntry, called "Apps & Apps," where Digital Services Specialists Christopher Davis and Ryan Murphy showcased the Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy apps, and served appetizers to attendees. Participants were happy to learn new ways of learning and connecting and enjoyed some fun snacks while doing so.

Digital Specialists Nicole Vukcevic and Laurel Bucher led the Preparing Your Digital Estate Plan in several libraries in March. This program focuses on what happens to digital accounts after death and how people can be prepared for this event to save precious data, such as photos and videos. They address many important facets such as: taking inventory of digital accounts, documenting multi-factor authentication types for accounts and passwords, creating legacy contacts and inactive account managers, which type of accounts should be closed first and last, the need for a post-death directive for how an executor should handle these accounts, and more. This program helps patrons take practical steps to prepare their digital legacy and has proved to be very popular with patrons. This program will continue to tour branches throughout the upcoming months.

Education Services

Education Services Specialist Bella Silva and Outreach Coordinator Katrina Ehrnman-Newton hosted a listening session for homeschool families at Willow Wind. They were able to gain insight from patrons as to how JCLS can better support their specific educational and community goals.

Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence, Area Manager Carrie Turney Ross, and Specialist Silva attended Creating Connections & Building Engagement, hosted by SOESD & OregonASK, in which members of the educational community were invited to hear directly from highschoolers about the struggles they face, opportunities they are seeking, and how to support them further. Participants learned about Career Connected learning opportunities available for high school students in the region.

Additionally, in preparation for April's School Library Symposium, Education Services and Collection Development staff teamed up to be able to offer JCLS's Overdrive Advantage collection to all students within Jackson County via Overdrive's Public Library CONNECT feature on the Sora app. Sora allows school districts and students to access, for free and without the need of a library card, the digital collections owned by their local public library. Schools within Jackson County have to contact Overdrive, and JCLS will confirm their presence in the county before granting access. This agreement between JCLS and Overdrive will remove barriers for thousands of students currently without public library cards to provide them with access to eBooks on all their school devices. This partnership gets more books into the hands of local schools, and the District is excited to build this partnership



Human Resources

The HR team has been preparing for evaluation season. Supervisors received training for the employee evaluation process. which will stretch between of April and May. Employees will be trained on how to complete

Data and Analytics

Data & Analytics Coordinator Regina Mannino continues to utilize her special skillset to provide data support to multiple JCLS departments. Her collaborative accomplishments over the past month include the design of multiple visualizations to showcase patrons' higher demand for newer versus older materials to support collection development efforts. She also identified specific circulation of materials written by a specific author for use by the Marketing Department, created Trello boards for the Admin Team and Program Optimization Project (POP) Task Force, and created a KPI Dashboard for Library Director, Kari May (pictured below). And finally, in preparation for State reporting, Mannino developed a spreadsheet to track Branch Open Hours.

