



Director's Report August 2024

Special Highlights

District 10th Anniversary Party



Library staff, supporters, friends, and honored guests came to the Medford Library to mark the 10th Anniversary of Jackson County forming a Library District. Individuals who were instrumental in the formation of the District in 2014 were invited, and many of them attended. Board member Susan Kiefer, who has served on the Board since its creation, gave some remarks, and Library Director Kari May thanked the attendees for their support of library services in Jackson County over the past ten years. The planning committee did a wonderful job, and there was plentiful food, with multimedia presentations and themed music put together by Digital Services. Everyone commented on the amazing centerpieces on display; staff outdid themselves! Each centerpiece was crafted to represent their branch or department, and from Rogue River to Collection Development, all were full of artistic touches and incredible detail.

Public Services



With Summer Reading in full swing, each branch offered a wide variety of programs for patrons of all ages. From edible bugs to recycled art, learning and creativity were interwoven with fun and friendship. Here are a few highlights that captivated audiences at multiple locations.

John Jackson of Bugs R Us is always popular, and his programs encompass a wide variety of scientific topics. In Ashland, he wowed crowds of children and families with his presentation on worms and composting. Attendees learned how to welcome these friendly invertebrates into their garden to make their soil richer and their harvests more prolific. In Central Point, the theme focused on dinosaurs. In Shady Cove and Ruch, participants learned how bugs can be useful to humans and even sampled a few crunchy-crawlies as snacks.



Award-winning Oregon author Valerie Coulman visited Central Point, Gold Hill, Prospect, and Shady Cove, where she read stories and shared her own experiences. Attendees then got a chance at the authoring process themselves. Coulman shared with audiences the many steps that are in between an idea for a story and holding the final published book in your hands. The kids drafted their own story, going through editing and illustration processes guided by Coulman before ending the program with a final draft.

Several amazing programs were presented though Rogue Art Gallery at Talent, Medford, Ashland, Jacksonville, Prospect and Central Point. Attendees made beautiful mobiles from recycled materials, incorporating everything from leftover art supplies to natural materials to byproducts and broken pieces of other items.

Professional Organizer Susan Chester visited many branches to give patrons a course on How to Renew Your Space. Chester shared information and statistics related to the importance of decluttering and organization, followed by hands-on demonstrations for best practices with folding clothes, organizing drawers, and creating emotional distance from items that need to be donated or disposed of elsewhere.

As JCLS enters the final month of the Summer Reading Program, 2,053 people have registered and have logged 20,177 books and 266,268 minutes (about 6 months) so far. Right now, the book that is leading the “most logged” category is *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt.

Cultivating Companions

Throughout the Summer, several branches participated in the Cultivating Companions programs in partnership with the Oregon State University Extension and Southern Oregon Master Gardeners. The goal of this program was to combat loneliness by creating an opportunity for older adults to meet people in their community who share a common interest in gardening.

As the program draws to a close in some locations, there has been tremendous positive feedback from staff and patrons. One of the attendees in Medford wrote in to say, “I have made a new best friend [because of this program]. We talk on the phone nearly every day. I’ve been going to bed with a smile on my face for the first time in a long time because I no longer feel so lonely.”

Butte Falls Branch Manager Shone Ellis noted: “We have had 10-12 different people join in, not every week, but a mix and match. The time goes by so fast, and everyone is having a great time and learning stuff too. I would love to offer more things like this if they come up.” Programs Coordinator Brystan Strong also expressed interest in getting this type of programming into more branches and is already working with the facilitators, who are eager to come back and partner with JCLS in the future.

Impact Stories

Library staff work hard to build connections with the community every day. The following stories show how much the community appreciates the library's services.

Adult Services staff assisted a Ukrainian-speaking patron who needed help sending her unemployment paperwork via fax. Patrons often expect a charge associated with this service and are surprised when the Library provides it without cost. It is difficult to convey how powerful such a simple thing can be.

Adult Services Librarian Brianna Levesque recently helped a patron looking for information about a ranch that was once in the Applegate area. Levesque referenced census records, obituaries, city directories, birth, marriage, divorce, and death records, the Historical Society's digitized photo collection, the Historic Oregon Newspapers website, Metsker Atlases, and Jackson County Property Data Online to sketch out the history of the family who lived there and how long the ranch was in existence. The patron shared the following appreciation: "Thank you, thank you, thank you, for all your kindness and attention to detail. Your skills as a detective rival those of Nancy Drew, but you're even better because you're a real person! If I ever have to research a similar question in the future, now I'll have a better idea of how to do it on my own."

Adult Services Librarian Ken Lodgers helped a patron find information and resources about how to retire abroad to support a class they will be teaching for SOU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Lodgers met with the Ashland Branch patron, offering him books from the JCLS collection on retiring abroad and an overview of websites that might be helpful. Lodgers also introduced him to the library's online subscription service 'Gale General OneFile' and showed him how to search for full text articles on the topic within that database.

Longtime patrons had this to say about the staff at the Talent Library: “We have lived in this area for more than 45 years. In that time there have been many changes. However, what has not changed is the excellent service of



the library personnel. The Talent Library should be noted as an example of very fine, efficient and respectful people. We feel that they ought to be acknowledged for their outstanding service.”

Digital Services recorded several positive patron reactions over the month as indicators of the appreciation in the community for this service. From the End-of-Life Online Accounts class at Ashland Senior Center: “I heard nothing but amazing feedback and how they wanted their own children to take this class... Nicole was a fabulous teacher. Thank you for all you do there at the Library. It is just so great what you all offer.”



Bear Creek

Ashland

Local Ashland author Blake Romney lead a special storytime for Ashland audiences. After reading her book *Ember's Magical Journey*, Romney guided the children through some meditation techniques and gentle yoga movements.

Teen Specialist Miki Hocker led a popular "Ruin It Art Night" where teens took a thrifted piece of art and altered it to make it their own. It was a fun and accessible way to make new art pieces out of ones that were old and unwanted, and parents and tweens alike enjoyed themselves immensely.



July's Music in the Library performer was Lucas Bower, a rising 12th grader at Ashland High School who recently won the Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon's Concerto Competition. Rogue Valley Symphony continues to send the library excellent local musicians each month, and to have such a young and accomplished cello performer was a special treat.



Librarian Ethan Craft facilitated a new program in collaboration with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in which they bring an OSF artist to the library to present workshops on theater arts and other Shakespeare-related programs. July's program focused on how to use physicality to deepen the understanding of Shakespearean texts.

Phoenix

The Phoenix Branch hosted a popular Lego Day in July. Bricks were spread out on tables and patrons were encouraged to let their creativity go wild. Attendees chatted with one another while they worked, and one patron gave Library Associate Lori Wilson a meaningful compliment when they commented “thank you for having a fun event that doesn't cost \$60.” Afterwards, many of the creations

were put on display in the library.

Branch Manager Jody Fleming visited eleven classes at Phoenix Elementary Summer School each week in July. She read the book *Whose Tails Are These?* and taught students about bird eggs, rocks, and minerals. Many of the kids remembered Fleming from library visits in the Spring. Each child signed up for the Summer Reading Program and received a free book at the end of three weeks.

Talent

The Make Your Own Stuffie Take and Make program was a gigantic success, with all fifty kits claimed in just under five hours. Patrons could choose from a sea horse, clown fish, shark, dolphin or seal, and some kids were so excited about making a new friend they got to work right away in the library instead of waiting until they got home. Throughout the day, the branch was full of kids sewing and stuffing their cuddly creatures, and staff suspect they might see several return for a special animal sleepover program later in August.



Central Area



Medford

Patrons got a welcome reprieve from the heat while using their artistic skills to decorate a reusable bag to take home with them at the Customize Your Own Canvas Bag program. Some used puff paint, some used stencils, and others simply drew whatever sprang to mind.

In collaboration with Business Librarian Roslyn Donald, Medford Teen Librarian Andrea Leone had the opportunity to present to a group of middle school kids participating in Southern Oregon University's *Academica Latina*, a program for Latinx kids in southern Oregon. Over two days, a group of teenagers were presented with information about

what libraries can bring to their lives, how to create their own business plans, and how finding the right book can change your outlook.



Patrons turned tragedy to triumph in a program called *No Fear Shakespeare: Uncursing the Cursed Play*. Leone presented patrons with copies of *Macbeth*, and the teens broke the play down into manageable parts to act out and discuss. Once they had gotten a handle on the material, they were asked to re-interpret the story and put their own spin on the text. Writing it in their own words helps to show that while the original language might

occasionally be difficult or intimidating to understand and read, the concepts and stories stand the test of time.

In celebration of National Friendship Day, patrons came together to create a Friendship Rock Garden. Using stones carefully selected from around the community, children painted rocks that represented what friendship means to them, their community, and other individuals in their lives that are important to them. They then had the option to take their rocks home or place them as a decorative piece in the Children's Garden.



Central Point

Central Point's newest Kid Librarian, Oliver, had a particularly fun idea for the library. Oliver created a scavenger hunt to go with a display themed around his favorite series of books: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He hid characters from the books around the children's area, and if a child found all five characters, they were rewarded with a specially-designed bookmark. Central Point staff continue to be amazed and inspired by the incredible passion and creativity that these kids come up with. Many aspire to be authors and librarians, and the staff were happy to give them an endless supply of inspiration through the collection. They all have great taste in literature, and they are well on their way.



Patrons young and old learned all about lavender when Marcy Rustad from Applegate River Lavender Farm visited the library. They learned about the culinary aspects of lavender and sampled lavender lemonade and lavender shortbread. Part of the fun was making their own lavender wreath with fresh lavender to take home and enjoy.



During Spark Space Hours, kids learned about Michelangelo and then proceeded to paint their own masterpieces while lying down, just like he did. Installed under tables, they carefully painted on paper that had been taped there, along with reference photos. They loved the experience, and their paintings turned out great.

Lower Rogue

Applegate

On some of the hottest days in southern Oregon, the Applegate Library was one of the few places that did not lose power and air conditioning. Patrons flocked to the library for comfort and clean air, and many found fun

and friendship as well. The Folded Book Art program on one of the days was particularly popular: a great way to recycle old books is also a great way to while away an hour or two away from the heat.



Gold Hill

Library Associate Amy Fann led young patrons in a sing-along during the Stuffie Storytime and Slumber Party at the Gold Hill Library before bidding them good night and letting the stuffed animals run wild in the branch. Away from their owners for the night, the cuddly toys browsed the library and took advantage of the extensive JCLS collection. They were returned the next day, and kids got to hear all about what they had gotten up to during the sleepover.



Jacksonville

Branch Manager Rina Pryor led a special storytime on seeds, culminating with a lesson on planting and a rock-painting craft. The kids really loved decorating the rocks – giving their planters colorful decoration even before the planted seeds sprouted.



Adults came to the Jacksonville branch to enjoy the classical and flamenco music of Grant Ruiz, a local professional guitarist. Grant offered a historical and musical background to his pieces and played with precision and grace. The audience even got to join in when he taught them how to add percussive elements to some pieces.

The Southern Oregon Miniaturists donated a tiny replica of the Jacksonville Mercantile, circa 1910, to the Jacksonville branch. The little building has historically accurate signs, clothing, mail bags, and laundering equipment. The miniature was also the perfect centerpiece to represent the branch at the party for the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Jackson County Library District.



Rogue River

Rogue River patrons let their creativity and emotions flow making art at the 'Let "Rage Art" Renew Your Spirit!' program. These collages combined nature imagery with personal words and phrases of anything the patrons needed to get out of their heads and onto the paper. Though the intent of the program was to have attendees destroy their art at the end, they all chose to keep theirs as a reminder of growth and strength.



Ruch

Displays for all ages celebrated Disability Pride Month. Staff also dedicated a space next to the Staff Picks for a Recent Returns display. Patrons have enjoyed seeing and conversing about what their neighbors are reading, and several titles have been circulated and recommended from one to another.



Upper Rogue

White City

Spark Space Hours and Lego Hours have been a huge hit with the young patrons of White City. They have enjoyed learning to code, assembling simple robots, and building challenges.

Shady Cove



Branch Manager Marion Mensing met with Monarch butterfly enthusiasts and experts from Native Plant Nursery Consulting to set up a butterfly rearing station at the library. A special glass case was delivered, along with fresh milkweed and newly hatched eggs. The larvae are doing great and have grown quite a bit in just one week, generating a lot of excitement from kids and adults alike.

Shady Cove also had several summer school class visits in July. Students attend school for the first half of the day, and when it works out, they attend the summer reading programs. If their visit does not occur on the same day as a program, staff put together a storytime for them, and the students check out books afterwards.

Prospect

Thursday's open Game Time has proven to be a popular recurring program. Not even a Thursday with a brief power outage could slow the fun. Gamers went analog, playing games like Jenga and Word Fishing. One enterprising young patron even used the Prospect circuit set to fashion a battery powered light and fan.

The Bottlecap Flowers program demonstrated how to transform the everyday into something beautiful. Attendees pinched bottlecaps into petal shapes and used assorted craft supplies to make unique flowers mounted on wood board.



Eagle Point

Parents and kids alike came to the Make Your Own Bookbag program. Staff provided blank canvas bags, paint, markers, sparkles, and much more for patrons to decorate their bags. Once they dried, patrons were eager to take those bags into the library and fill them with books. It has been fun for staff to see those bags come back to the branch again and again as patrons use them to carry the items they borrow from JCLS.



This 4th of July, the Eagle Point Branch once again had a presence at the Star Spangled Everything Fair. This annual parade and fair takes place right in front of the library, so staff were able to set up a booth and put out some lawn games from the Library of Things. Staff had a great time seeing regular patrons and signing up new ones.

In celebration of National Ice Cream Day, Library Specialist Jenna Steigleder coordinated with local vendor Violets and Cream to host a special storytime in the library's front yard. The ice cream kept everyone cool on a hot and smoky Saturday. This is the second in a series of special storytimes

Steigleder has put together to celebrate National Donut, Ice Cream, and Cupcake Days during the months of June, July, and August, respectively.

Butte Falls

The Independence Day Celebration was held on Saturday, July 6th, which allowed staff the opportunity to set up a table and join in on the fun. The library table offered a prize wheel, which was a huge draw with adults and children. Additionally, there were library card sign-ups, SRP information and sign-up forms, Library of Things display items, candy, water bottles, and balloons. This event brought a large group to the library table, including several new patrons who have recently moved to the area.

The Butte Falls Volunteer Fire Department combined fun with bringing education on fire safety to the branch. This program helped community members learn and be reminded of the many aspects of fire safety. Toy fire helmets, activity sheets, and coloring materials were available for kids to take home, too. This program also gave patrons the opportunity to handle a fire hose and experience what it feels like to try to control the power of its force. This kicked off a wet and wild group water fight using large squirt guns. Afterward, popsicles and bottled water were handed out to the happy patrons.

Community Resources

Resource Specialist Leigh Madsen has been building a collaboration with RVTD and a community member who restores bicycles. Madsen has arranged for multiple patrons to receive repaired bicycles, which greatly empowers them to transport themselves to work and appointments.

Also in July, the department hosted a program focused on art as a form of stress management and mental health. The program has proved popular for the team members that hosted it and the patrons who participated.

Outreach and Digital Services

Outreach

At Home Services

Two new patrons started receiving regular deliveries this month. Library Specialists Mackenzie Pollock and Kateri Warnick prioritized promoting the service and received ten applications. They are actively working on getting everyone on the schedule for next month. Thanks to At Home Service's wonderful volunteers, the team has been steadily shifting patrons to in-person deliveries. Pollock and Warnick have been creating new routes for AHS's volunteers to increase the number of in-person deliveries.

Staff also gave a presentation promoting At Home Services at a meeting of the Ashland Senior Advisory Committee. Committee members expressed their thanks and enthusiasm for spreading the word to community members.

DART

DART was busy this month with at least four visits scheduled each week, including the Ashland 4th of July Parade. Despite the heat wave, DART was able to go to each scheduled visit and only had to cancel two visits due to poor air quality.

Education Services

Two programs were held for Shady Cove School's middle school summer class: Mindful Minutes and Book Speed Dating. During Mindful Minutes, the students happily crafted their own recycled tote bags to go along with summer's "Read, Renew, Repeat" theme as they listened to the audio of *Solimar*, which is an upcoming Battle of the Books pick for 3rd to 5th graders. At the start of the program, two students who were set to be picked up by their parents begged to stay because they were so excited to participate. Later, another student was overheard stating that they were choosing to write about the visit as their favorite memory of the week for an assignment they had to complete. During Book Speed Dating, all the kids were matched with books to help reach their summer reading goals. One student was heard saying, "There are so many books here I want, and I don't even like to read!"

Education Services Specialists Bella Silva attended the Jackson County Fair for tabling and was recognized by a student at Eagle Rock Elementary School who had a class visit from Education Services in June for SRP. The student was very excited to see her again and stated they loved the story that was read.

Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence continued her monthly visit to the Housing Authority location. Lorence and Teen Librarian Andrea Leone brought the Recycled Tote Bags craft to teens and tweens at the site and promoted the Summer Reading Program.

Education Services also collaborated with the Ruch branch to create a roadmap of weekly class visits to the branch from the local school. They have been focusing on walking the team through JCLS's new database TeachingBooks, highlighting areas that will be especially beneficial for these library visits.

Digital Services

Patrons continue to be appreciative of the help received during their appointments with Digital Services Specialists. A patron was assisted who had photos of their late spouse on an old phone. Unfortunately, the phone had a broken screen, and so the patron wasn't sure the photos could be saved. They were able to be walked through saving them to their Google account in the cloud. They were so happy they could be saved, since they had resigned themselves to probably losing those photos. A comment card was left at Medford for a DS team member that said "thank you for all the time spent helping me to get legal documents printed. You're the best."



Human Resources and Finance

HR and Finance teams ran the first payroll through the new HR and Payroll system, Paylocity. The teams worked with staff to ensure that communication went out about what to expect and that any questions were answered promptly. Thanks to their hard work and preparation, the payroll was a success and went relatively smoothly. Both teams continue to make adjustments and implement other modules and features over the next several months.

Marketing

In July the Marketing Department unveiled the second swag item of the summer, a planter kit, as well as the second Fernsworth trading card. The latest JCLS documentary, *Same Old Train*, was released and the summer partnership with OSF concluded with a special discount on ticket prices for library card holders. With SRP in full swing, much of Marketing's efforts have turned to launching year two of the successful Unofficial Battle of the Books program, which starts on August 26.

Press Releases:

Windows in Time: <https://bit.ly/3VTUcKl>

Partnership with OSF: <https://bit.ly/3YIs7Jf>

Media Coverage:

RV Times on Partnership with OSF: <https://bit.ly/3xwZ9Rr>

KOBI on Eagle Point/SCA Program: <https://bit.ly/4cvfdv2>



Notable Videos:

Same Old Train: <https://youtu.be/ZSh3aWaszeo>

Anti-Beach Reads - Read This!: <https://youtu.be/jYTeC-LQBNE>

Support Services

Collection Development

There's a unique new variety of material coming soon. Based on patron and staff input, Adult Selection Librarian Felishia Jenkins has begun adding more Hi-Lo books to the JCLS adult fiction collection. These are titles of high interest to adults that are at a lower reading level, making them perfect for adults who need to improve their reading skills. Whether they are language learners, struggle with comprehension, or have other barriers, Hi-Lo books make it easy to find something that interests them in a section that is appropriate for their age group. Staff can assist patrons in finding these titles by searching the catalog or referring to booklists.

The Collection Development team has prioritized making visits to all branches throughout the year and recently received this nice comment from Julie Doty, Branch Manager at Gold Hill, when Jenkins reached out to schedule

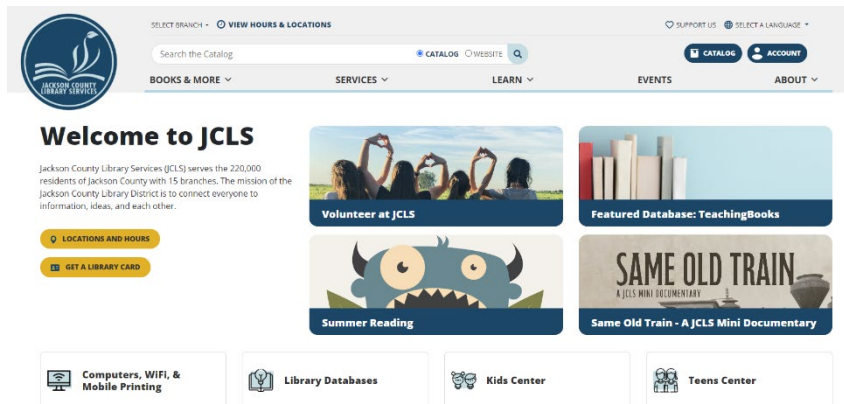
an upcoming visit: "I'm so excited for your visit! Monica and Laurin both made many positive changes here, and their visits were very fruitful. I have only been Branch Manager for a little over a year now, but so far, the visits from CD have been my favorite."

Technical Services

The Courier team, part of Technical Services, launched a new internal supply request process to deliver operating supplies more efficiently to JCLS branches. This new process streamlines and clarifies which supplies may be requested for delivery and provides a one-stop shop for fulfilling these branch needs. Thanks to the creativity and help from Network Administrator Jason Whyte in IT, who created the web-based system, requests now flow into the existing Support Services internal ticketing system for efficient response times. Feedback from staff was immediate and positive.

Information Technology

The JCLS homepage received a significant makeover in July. While content remains in roughly the same locations as before, the site now boasts an updated and more user-friendly design. Website Specialist Michael Stanfield collaborated with website host Stirling to ensure a seamless transition to the new homepage.



Facilities

Operations Coordinator Crystal Zastera attended an ALA training called "Bite-Sized Improvements: How to Make Small, Meaningful Changes to Library Spaces." Of interest was a presentation from Nevada State University, who shared how they conducted a space study at their library to learn how patrons used it. Zastera already has put some of what she learned to use, ordering a decorative and functional soundproofing product made from recycled materials. She will be assessing its suitability for future potential JCLS applications.

Upcoming Events

VIEW CALENDAR →