



Director's Report November 2024



Special Highlights



Halloween festivities abounded across the system. Libraries held frightening programs, and ghoulish decorations were on full display. Pumpkin decorating was a very popular program in Medford, Central Point, Gold Hill, and Shady Cove. Ruch families not only carved pumpkins but also harvested the seeds. Ashland's Children's found a way to turn it into a STEM program called Puking Pumpkins, which involved elephant toothpaste.

Special ghostly story times were held in many branches. Children's Librarian Lyn Heerema organized trick or treating with the other Ashland departments, and the children's team dressed as the characters of the book *Room on a Broom* and offered a reading of the book before the parade. At Eagle Point on Hallow's Eve, Library Associate Nicole Shuey and Library Specialist Jenna Steigleder hosted a Spooky Special Storytime. They read seasonal books and sang songs, and then after the story time was over, patrons were able to make a special ghost craft with guest artist The Caffeinated Crafter. The kids liked doing a craft in addition to their story time, and they even kept the paint spills to a minimum.



The Medford Teen department hosted a Cemetery Terrarium crafting event. Teens created cemetery scenes and molded their own ghosts out of clay. Also, at Medford the Haunted Jackson County program presenters from Medford Paranormal Investigations showed attendees how their equipment worked. They showed everyone how they used an Electromagnetic Field (EMF) reader and a trigger object. The presenters shared evidence they had collected during their cases, including an example of an Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP). The audience shared some of their own paranormal experiences. Lastly, at Central Point, patrons had fun creating witches out of recycled books.



For the little ones, activities included decorating trick-or-treat bags at White City on All Hallow's Eve and receiving a little bit of candy to get them started. On Halloween, Eagle Point hosted its annual Boo Bash, a program that the staff and community look forward to every year. Staff and volunteers worked at multiple stations throughout the library doing crafts, playing games and watching movies. They also offered temporary tattoos, a selfie station, a costume contest, and more. It was a fun way to interact with the community in a different way than normal. Gold Hill's library parking lot held a trunk and treat sponsored by CanDo. Butte Falls did not want to miss the fun, so they also held a Fa-Boo-lous Halloween Spooktacular. This was a night of fun for all, with treats and activities for those who joined in before continuing to other activities in the community.

Public Services

Bear Creek

Ashland



The Ashland Library received the Community Partner award at the Annual Chamber Dinner from the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. The Ashland team's active participation in the annual MLK event and the Mystery Fest were cited as reasons for the award. During her acceptance speech, Bear Creek Area Manager Kristin Anderson thanked the Chamber for this unexpected award and plugged the upcoming book locker installation in partnership with the Ashland YMCA.



Teen Specialist Miki Hocker led a fun-filled event with the Cabinets of Curiosity program. Everyone was creative in different ways, and it was fun to see how they interacted with the materials and shared ideas with each other.



The popular monthly Big Ideas lecture series focused on "Freedom to Read: Book Banning and Other Challenges Facing Libraries." Library Director Kari May and Marie Felgentrager, a school librarian and member of the Oregon Association of School Librarians Intellectual Freedom Committee, provided different perspectives on how libraries select materials for their collections, based on policy and the community they serve, trends and changes they have seen to materials challenges, and how their libraries respond to materials challenges.



JCLS was a proud sponsor of the second annual Ashland Mystery Festival, featuring author panels and events all over town, including in the Ashland Branch's Gresham Room. Photo courtesy of <https://ashland.news/visitors-gather-in-ashland-under-mysterious-circumstances-the-ashland-mystery-festival/>

Librarian Brianna Levesque set up a display of voter information, including voter registration forms, in the weeks leading up to the deadline to register. Around 50 voter registration forms were taken by patrons. Library staff have also fielded questions on how to register and check registration status online, as well as when voters could expect their ballots and where they can be dropped off.

Phoenix

Branch Manager Jody Fleming and Friends of the Phoenix Library Board President Lee Gonnella participated in the annual Phoenix High School Homecoming Parade. They handed out 555 bookmarks and pieces of candy to enthusiastic residents and received many "shout outs" from adults and kids who love their local library.



Library Associate Lori Wilson brought in a GIANT zucchini from her garden so Phoenix patrons could guess its weight. Wilson has sponsored this wonderful contest several times over the years, and it is very popular with the many gardeners who reside in Phoenix.

Talent



The Talent Harvest Festival and Friends Book Sale got the Talent Library off to a very strong start in October, one of the biggest events for both the city and library. Over two hundred patrons visited the book sale and depleted the stock of donated items. Children helped out by claiming a free book from the Talent Library Club’s shelves. The book sale brought several new patrons to the library, and staff were busy issuing new library cards.



New carpet and tiling were installed at the end of October. The renovations required a two-week closure. Staff provided a “holds pick up” area near the employee entrance during the closure, and many grateful patrons picked up their books and movies. The team also saw many kids for Halloween and gave out treats and take and make kits. Other patrons replenished their reading supply from the free book carts located at the front entrance to the library.

Central Area

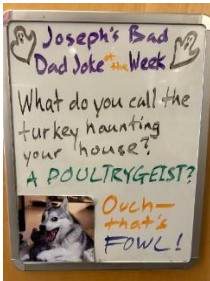
Medford

Medford Adult Services hosted its first Medford Open Mic program. Patrons read their original poetry and sang their own songs to the attendees. The program is held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday. Each Open Mic has a theme to inspire poets and songwriters, though following the theme is not required.



Medford hosted an all branch all ages Game Day program. Astral Games hosted their monthly Tabletop Gaming Day in the Large Meeting Room, Professor Edwin Battistella from SOU hosted a Chess Tournament in the Adams Room, and Library Specialists Natalie Kelly and Ari Shaneyfelt hosted D&D Family Day upstairs. Participants in all three areas connected with their peers, played games, and in some cases, won shiny medals.

Central Point



Library Associate Joseph Ritchie’s Bad Dad Joke of the Week keeps getting more and more popular. Patrons are calling the library to find out what the joke is. A woman was heard saying to a friend “And over here there’s a different joke every week. It’s so great!”

Lower Rogue

Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Friends sponsored a speaker from the Oregon Humanities Project who came from Portland to hold a community conversation titled, “Unpacking Accountability.” Jacksonville patrons showed up to take part

in this stimulating and civil conversation about what it means to be held accountable, whether for a public figure or in their own personal lives. Several participants spoke of how nice it was to have the opportunity to discuss ideas in a safe environment. The Friends are hoping to bring more speakers in from the Oregon Humanities Project.



Jacksonville staff attended Jacksonville Elementary School's Open House night and connected with many new and familiar faces. The Paws to Read Program flyers were a big draw for the kids, who recognized some of their canine friends.

The Southern Oregon Miniaturists continue to amaze at the intricate pieces they display at the Jacksonville branch. The Quilt Barn, shown here, has tiny, handmade quilts and little mini bolts of fabric. Kids and adults love to look at the amount of detail that goes into each one.

Ruch



This month, the Ruch Branch celebrated its 40th Anniversary and brought the community together for an all-day celebration that included historic displays, a sharing-circle, bookish costumes, gift books, a special Storytime, and cake. The event was "campus-wide," with activities in the library, the Book Barn, the A-Frame Bookstore and DART. Marketing Specialist Ryan Pfeil captured the essence of the event in this short video: <https://bit.ly/40plmLN>

Upper Rogue

White City



Early this month, patrons came to decorate Mexican Tin Hearts or Milagritos. The word Milagritos in Spanish means "little miracle," used as symbols to wish others good luck, good health, and hope for the future. Children colored on the tin hearts that staff had drawn and cut out.

White City has a few new young patrons who are excited to find books. When they have returned the books, they give the books a hug and say goodbye to them. They also love seeing that they can feed Fernsworth books.

Shady Cove

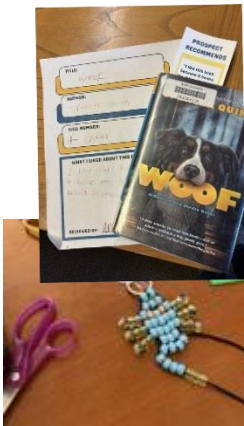
Kristine Lefever, president of Pollinator Project Rogue Valley presented "What is a pollinator garden?" Patrons learned why the plants that are chosen for landscaping matter and how to create a more sustainable and beautiful garden. Lefever also provided information about the native bees, birds, beetles, butterflies in the area and how to best support them. These creatures are critical to the ecosystems and food systems that face many threats in today's world.

Shady Cove hosted an annual plant swap and seed saving event on October 26. This is a well-attended event that connects people to each other and sets the branch up for restocking the seed library. A grocery bag was filled with envelopes containing 40 varieties of seeds. Patrons also exchanged other live plants such as raspberries and house plants.

Prospect

Prospect's First Friday Art Lab was a fizzing success. First participants made puffer fish out of balloons by filling each balloon with baking soda and a capsule of vinegar. Once sealed tightly and decorated colorfully, a quick smash (or a stomp) the vinegar released into the baking soda creating a chemical reaction that caused the balloons to puff. After that, participants made sensory squishy toys by filling balloons with flour, baking soda, and other tactile sensations. Finally, the group made fizzy art by combining watercolors and baking soda to make a colorful medium that activated when sprinkled with vinegar.

Prospect Charter Elementary students continued weekly visits to the branch. Students learned about annual publications with newly received editions of the Farmer's Almanac, National Geographic World Almanac, and the Guinness Book of World Records. Library goers also enjoyed searching the shelves and catalog for spooky books, as well as books about performing magic, skateboarding, and strategy games. Students also devised and enjoyed an ongoing challenge: finding the biggest and heaviest book in the branch.



This month Prospect also introduced "Prospect Recommends." Young readers have the opportunity to provide short reviews of books they have enjoyed. Prospect staff then convert these reviews into "shelf talkers" to help other readers find books they might enjoy.

Eagle Point

Library Associate Nicole Shuey hosted a Beaded Creatures Crafting program. Using small beads and string, patrons made keychains shaped like a variety of different creatures. Shuey has done this program a number of times in the past as a take and make, but this was the first time she made it an in-person event. Patrons seemed to like the time to craft together and were interested in doing this kind of program again.



The Friends of the Eagle Point Library (EPFOL) had a celebration to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the current Eagle Point Library building. The building was a massive upgrade for the community 20 years ago. Friends of the Library and community members worked hard to raise the funds to build this building, and the money to purchase the land the library sits on was donated by a single Eagle Point resident as a tribute to her daughter. Many of the people who were at the original ribbon cutting attended the event this month. In addition, for the month of October the Library's display case highlighted the history of the Eagle Point Library.

Butte Falls



Butte Falls received new picnic tables for the outside space. The Butte Falls Branch continued Storytimes at the Butte Falls Charter School for Kindergarten and 1st grade classes. They also provide Storytime for the preschool students in the community. The 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes come every 2 weeks to the library. These students check out books and, on some days, can take part in a story time.

Community Resources

This month, the team successfully organized a food drive across all 15 library branches, gathering an incredible 417 pounds of food for the Access Food Pantry. This collective effort will directly benefit families in need, demonstrating the power of community support and the commitment of the library patrons and staff to giving back.

The team provided over one hundred bus tokens to patrons needing transportation to access critical services such as shelter, medical care, and mental health appointments. These tokens are often lifelines, empowering individuals to reach the support they need to thrive. The department facilitated over three hundred referrals, guiding patrons toward the information and resources vital to their well-being. Each referral represents a step toward building a more resilient community, and it is a privilege to support the patrons in this way.

A special highlight of October was the dedicated work of Community Resource Specialist Sara Levasseur, who supported a family with two blind parents navigating the complexities of homeschooling their young children. Sara connected them with resources and helped them create a plan to ensure their children receive a quality education.

Outreach, Programs and Digital Services

Baby's First Book

The first book to be published by Jackson County Library District, *Rogue Reader: A Baby's First Book*, received an official Certificate of Registration by the United States Copyright Office. This book, written and illustrated by a local author and illustrator, will be printed by Blackstone Publishing and available to newborns soon.

Digital Services

Digital Services patrons continued to comment positively on the help they received. Digital Services Specialist Nicole Vukcevic was called out specifically by a patron who said her "tech support was a great help today. She was very pleasant, mature, and patient with me as a senior of 77. I appreciate her help and want to commend her friendly attitude."



In April, Digital Services Supervisor Eric Molinsky began representing the digital literacy aspect of the library through attending meetings as a member of the Rogue Valley Broadband Access Team (RVBAT) along with Network Administrator Jason Whyte. The Rogue Valley Council of Governments website lists links for the Digital Services department's page on the JCLS site, as well as the collaboration with Ashland Senior Center for technology courses. Plans call for this information to be expanded over time. <https://rvcog.org/rvbat/>

At Home Services

At Home Services Specialists Mackenzie Pollock and Kateri Warnick have been meeting with local community partners specializing in senior care to talk about what the program is and how it can work with their patrons.

At Home Services received a note back from a patron. "Sorry it's taken me so long to return the books. I fell and was in the hospital and rehab for several weeks. I was so thankful to have the books. It's always so exciting to get them. All your selections are great. Thank you."

Business Librarian

Business Librarian Roslyn Donald gave two presentations to two different groups. The first was for Libraries Build Business, an ALA-sponsored monthly Zoom meetup for business librarians nationwide. The topic of Donald's presentation was "500 Square Miles, 3 Counties, 2 States: Outreach to the Applegate Valley." One of the few group members working in a rural county, Donald shared her experiences working with local community groups to promote business resources to local farmers and artisans.

Donald also participated in a panel discussion titled "Business Gems You Might Have Missed" for the Women Entrepreneurs of Southern Oregon (WESO). Along with Darby Ayers-Flood, Talent Business Alliance president,

and Jennifer Nicholls, an attorney specializing in small business, Donald urged attendees to consider “business librarian” to be an essential part of the team that every small business person needs to succeed.

DART

Mobile Services Specialists Maddy Tuttle and Leah Finney participated in multiple community events, including the Southern Oregon Pride Parade in Ashland, the Ruch Library’s 40th Anniversary Celebration, and Liam’s Trunk or Treat in Central Point. DART was enthusiastically joined by Ashland Library staff members for the Southern Oregon Pride Parade, where staff and their families distributed JCLS stickers to community members along the parade route. Liam’s Trunk or Treat was another wild success, and staff distributed candy and Dolly Parton Imagination Library materials to attendees.

During DART’s visit to OHRA, Tuttle and Finney were approached by a regular patron from the Kelly Shelter. This patron had recently relocated to OHRA and was thrilled to learn that DART regularly visits her new place of residence, allowing her to continue to access DART’s services. This patron also expressed gratitude to Tuttle and Finney for providing her with in-depth information about the Ashland Library, which was a new and unfamiliar branch to her.

Education Services

Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence and Education Services Specialist Bella Silva hosted many visits to schools in promotion of UBOB, library literacy standards, webpage resources for students, and upcoming programming. At Patrick Elementary, the team was joined by Gold Hill Branch Manager Julie Doty and was met with extreme enthusiasm from two groups of 5th graders, even receiving programming and collection suggestions from the kids themselves.

In partnership with At Home Services, Project Cozy crafts for homebound patrons were completed by local teens from South Medford High School, Logos Charter School, Medford’s Teen department, Ashland’s Teen department, and B2B students.

Lorence and Adult Librarian Kayla Samnath hosted one of Education Services' regular program offerings, "Mindful Minutes," in the B2B classroom. This particular visit was impactful because the mindful crafting time was spent on Project Cozy. The boys were highly responsive to this opportunity for community connection, quietly crafting tea light candle holders while listening to *Hide and Seeker* by Daka Hana.

Library Administration

Community Presentations

Library Director Kari May presented at several different conferences and programs, beginning with the Friends of Hannon Library at Southern Oregon University. May served on a panel with other librarians in Southern Oregon to discuss “Challenges Facing Libraries Today.” May then attended the Oregon Library Association of School Libraries (OASL) Conference in Portland and co-presented information about the newly-developed Advocacy Toolkit and how it could be adapted for use at school libraries around the state. After the Big Ideas presentation at the Ashland Library, May concluded her round of presentations for the month by joining SOU University Librarian Carrie Forbes for a special presentation during Friends of the Library Week, again focusing on challenges facing libraries today.

While in Portland, May met with staff of Multnomah County Libraries and toured several of their recently-renovated libraries as well as their new Operations Center and new library in the Holgate neighborhood.

Multnomah recently passed a bond measure to expand and renovate their libraries, and it was a great opportunity to gather ideas as JCLS looks towards future building projects.

Human Resources

With the conclusion of Staff Day, the staff day committee sent out a survey to all staff to gain understanding of what went well and where improvements could be made. The committee reviewed this information at their wrap-up meeting. Furthermore, it was discussed to entertain a new location in 2025. The location and day will be announced before the new year.

October marked the return of the monthly Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Roundtable. This voluntary monthly training opportunity is an opportunity for staff to increase their knowledge related to equity, diversity and inclusion. October's theme was LGBTQ+ History Month. Staff Development Coordinator Loren Clupny provided articles for staff to read and discuss in breakout rooms. One of the articles, "Preserving History at the Digital Transgender Archive with Portico" discussed the Digital Transgender Archive (DTA), an online resource dedicated to preserving and providing access to transgender history. The other article, "Out of the Card Catalog Closet," discussed when Librarians gathered in 1970 to challenge the Library of Congress classifications and catalog subject headings.

Marketing



The team collaborated with SOPBS on two ventures. The first one was special screenings of their docuseries, *Energy Horizons*, and a Q&A video with the director, Keegan Van Hook. The team also facilitated special screenings of the latest PBS Kids animated series, *Carl the Collector*.



Marketing staff created a short murder mystery video in honor of the Ashland Mystery Fest. The video starred staff and was shot at Noble Coffee in Ashland. Festival swag bags also received special bookmarks and stickers. All told, videos on the JCLS YouTube channel got over 3,000 views in October.

An additional milestone for the JCLS social media accounts was reached when the @jclsoregon Instagram account passed 2,000 followers. The October Beanstack Reading challenge, "Season of the Witch" had 61 participants, the bulk of which were adult readers, who combined to read 398 books. The October email newsletter also broke a record for its highest open rate, being read by nearly 60% of subscribers.

Press Releases:

- Big Ideas Discussion Series: <https://bit.ly/48M2Dxl>
- SOPBS Screenings: <https://bit.ly/3YDz7oZ>
- Windows in Time: <https://bit.ly/3CIPaAe>

Notable Videos:

- Q&A with Keegan Van Hook: <https://bit.ly/3BOUGei>
- Murder Mystery: <https://bit.ly/48j67HC>
- BrainFuse HelpNow Commercial: <https://bit.ly/3Yga0lt>
- Baseball Documentary Short: <https://bit.ly/3NlEseI>
- 40 Years of the Ruch Library: <https://bit.ly/40pImLN>

Support Services

Professional Development and Networking

Assistant Directors Joan Vigil and Kelda Vath recently attended the Urban Libraries Council's (ULC) Annual Leadership Forum held in Philadelphia, PA. This special event, attended by Library Director Kari May in 2023, brings together public library leaders from ULC member libraries across the United States and Canada. This year's gathering featured topics and library panels relevant for library leaders, including library partnerships, fostering trust in the workplace, celebrating failure (and how that creates dynamic innovation), embracing change, and advocacy for the future of libraries. The Forum also offered ample time for networking and making connections and featured keynote speaker Kim Scott, bestselling author of business book *Radical Candor*, and her latest, *Radical Respect*.

Three members of the JCLS Safety Committee – Facilities Assistant Kyle Depew, Library Clerk Sasha Basset, and Community Resource Specialist Leigh Madsen – attended the 2024 Southern Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Conference held in Ashland. Highlights included sessions about engaging staff in a safety culture and ways to improve the function and effectiveness of Safety Committees in the workplace.

Collaborations

Collection Development and Technical Services have teamed up to create a new video series called “Back of the House” aimed at educating staff about the work done by their colleagues in Support Services departments. The intent is to release a video on a new relevant topic every couple of weeks. Topics covered so far include detailing changes to Library of Things and Book Club Bag circulation, as well as how JCLS is using leased books to support patron demand as well as countywide reading programs like UBOB and Rogue Reads. This video series serves as casual information sharing amongst colleagues and helps support JCLS's Strategic Plan Goal 4, to nurture the library's infrastructure through fostering internal communication and engagement.

As reported in July 2024's Director's Report, JCLS re-launched its circulating Wi-Fi hotspot collection at the start of this fiscal year. At that time, approximately half of the planned new fleet of hotspots were put into circulation. In October, the remaining new hotspots were released into circulation bringing the total number in the collection to 276 items. These additional hotspots have vanquished the long hold queues for hotspots, and in most cases, patrons can walk into a branch and borrow a hotspot off the shelf. This project supports JCLS's commitment to digital equity as well as Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan to improve and enhance the collection and ensure that user technologies remain current and accessible. The team is excited to see what other positive effects this expanded hotspot collection will bring.

Network Administrator Jason Whyte developed and deployed a secure way for Branch Managers to remotely view a mobile-friendly system status monitoring tool. The web-based interface provides Branch Managers allows for timely response to network issues, often caused by power outages or unexpected hiccups with the Library's Internet Service Provider.

IT Staff worked with vendor Office Tech to consolidate multiple copier/printer leases into one newly updated lease agreement. As part of this update, seventeen existing leased printer/copiers across the district were replaced with upgraded models that provide the same essential features for staff and patrons. IT Technician Sean Northcutt worked with Office Tech to deploy these printer/copiers in October, ensuring a seamless experience that supports daily operations across all locations.

Facilities

Talent library was the recipient of a lot of new flooring attention in October. The Talent staff offered 'back door service' to patrons for the duration of the two-week project, and Facilities, IT, County Facilities Maintenance, all worked together to great success. The entire branch received new carpet, including the meeting room. Even the restrooms' flooring was replaced (and required removal of toilets for a time). Now that's thorough.

