



Director's Report September 2024

Special Highlights

UBOB Year Two

After months of hard work, the collaborative efforts of Education Services, Marketing, and Collection Development Teams paid off, and the second year of JCLS' Unofficial Battle of the Books (UBOB) successfully kicked off on August 26th. Marketing played a crucial role in this endeavor, building on last year's success and helping to introduce a host of new features for the second year. This year's enhancements include a fresh new passport design, a range of Beanstack badges, and collectible prize pins, among other exciting additions. The team is enthusiastic about generating buzz for the challenge and is gearing up to register students and teachers over the coming weeks.



The Medford Teen Department has been hard at work gearing up for the start of the school year and the second year of UBOB. There is a display behind the desk, and Teens will be launching both of Teen's UBOB-themed book clubs in September. There will be one club for Middle Grade Readers and one for High Schoolers. Teens can participate in both book clubs. Bookmarks and handouts are available with the first three book choices for each club's meetings.

In Collection Development, Youth Selection Librarian Monica Owens made sure that ample copies of the titles are in the collection, and Technical Services adjusted the cataloging and processing of the materials so that they are more easily identifiable by patrons and staff. Meanwhile, Data and Analytics Coordinator Regina Mannino created an updated version of a UBOB inventory and participation tracking spreadsheet for the Programming & Outreach team. Staff across the system are excited for this program. Their collective effort aims to build on last year's success and engage even more participants in this dynamic reading competition. Here's to another great start to UBOB!



Marketing

Amidst all the UBOB prep, the Marketing team also held its second Capsule Session for staff. These capsule sessions are held quarterly and surround a single topic related to JCLS marketing. August's session covered social media, both the philosophy behind it as a marketing tool and how it is used specifically at JCLS. Speaking of social media, JCLS continues to gather followers on all platforms. The team celebrated surpassing 300 followers on Threads, a new platform from Instagram that is meant to be a competitor to X/Twitter. On @JCLSBeyond, the

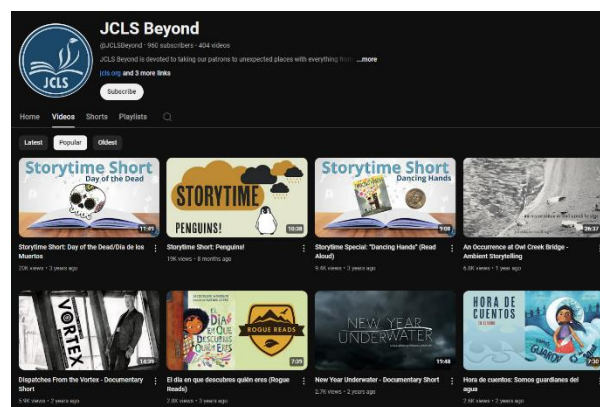
Library's YouTube channel, the Día de los Muertos storytime video passed 20k views, and several other videos are closing in on milestones as well. The channel now has 960 subscribers, which represents an increase of over 500% since 2020.

Press Releases:

Big Ideas Discussion Series: <https://bit.ly/3AOTGqp>

Notable Videos:

The Rise of Retellings: <https://bit.ly/3YR9d2P>



Public Services

Bear Creek

Ashland

Continuing a series of similar events held throughout the summer, Ashland Children's recently hosted another successful Collaborative Art session. Unlike most programs in which attendees work on individual projects, these sessions encourage patrons to pool their creativity and make one large creation together, which is later displayed in the branch. Each session featured a variety of mediums and creative end products, consistently receiving enthusiastic responses from participants. It is always a delight to witness the boundless imagination of children as they learn, create, and explore together.



Teen Specialist Miki Hocker hosted an all-day passive program in the teen area where participants decorated a back-to-school book bag. This program had a good turnout, and the teens mentioned that it was fun to have the space to craft freely. Based on this feedback, Hocker is looking for more ways in which the Teen Department can host programs on weekends where teens can craft and create freely.

Adult Services Librarian Cody Reese has established a bi-weekly Creative Writing Workshop that now has several attendees who come to every meeting. Reese reports that the group has developed a strong rapport and is very supportive of each other. Participants sometimes linger in the library long after the workshop has finished, talking to each other about writing and a range of other subjects. Two participants who did not know each other before have become good friends, and several participants now feel comfortable sharing more vulnerable writing pieces.

Throughout the fair-weather months, scores of Pacific Crest Trail hikers visit Ashland, and they make a point to stop in the library on their journey. It is a popular spot, as it offers a convenient place not far off trail to rest, browse the book sale for new reading material, and use the computers to fill out paperwork allowing them to enter Canada on foot. Recently, some hikers shared that they had started on the Mexican border and that day was their 100th day on the trail.

Phoenix

Branch Manager Jody Fleming visited the summer school students at Phoenix Elementary and discovered that the students were fascinated with maps. Fleming brought a large map of the world, planning to show the kids where various turtles, tortoises, and frogs lived. However, the pictures of the reptiles and amphibians were quickly abandoned because the kids were so excited to know where cities, states, countries and continents were located. Fleming helped to find where they were located, and the group had fun talking about places they knew about and locating them on the map.

The summer school children also participated in summer reading and received their free prize book during a visit. One child said, "I'm going to keep this book for ever and ever and make my parents read it!" Another exclaimed, "It has stickers!"

Talent

Many kids came to the library in the last weeks of August to turn in their summer reading logs. Most had already completed a slip earlier and claimed their free book, but they wanted to make sure they increased their chances of winning one of the drawing prizes. A blanket shaped and printed to look like a burrito has generated the most interest over the summer, and there is a fabulous array of more prizes waiting to go home with lucky patrons at the end of the month.

The turnout for the final Lego Challenge of the summer was the biggest yet, with many patrons either building on their own or pooling their resources in a collaborative effort. The participants were given the task to create something based on the theme of "History," and builds represented a wide range of periods, including prehistory, medieval, Babylonia, and WWI. The most recent incident represented was the tornado that struck Joplin in 2011.



Central Area

Medford

Medford Teens welcomed guest presenter Izzy, who taught patrons how to tie rock climbing-worthy knots using their own lengths of paracord. Izzy is a certified rock-climbing instructor who works with school groups in Jackson County. Teens took their cords home after the program so that they could keep practicing the knots.

Early in the month, Children's threw a birthday party program for Smokey Bear to celebrate 80 years of the popular fire safety icon, as well as instruct kids and families the importance of fire safety in the area. Activities included making a storybook telling the history of Smokey, a puppet show on safety and learning how to build and put out fires in a safe manner while camping.



Central Point Library

Children delighted in the combination of natural and human-created materials by making wind chimes out of cholla cactus husks and simple metal washers and ribbon. They were fascinated to learn about different cacti and their historical and modern uses, including their use as the base of a wind chime.



Why did the dad go to the library? To *check out* the Bad Dad Joke of the Week! Patrons have become quite fond of Joseph's Bad Dad Joke of the Week at Central Point. Library Associate Joseph Ritchie comes up with a doozy every week and patrons love it. This week, a young patron commented, "I like the joke, but basically, it's horrible." Another patron called the library just to find out what the joke of the week was. Other patrons have been inspired to tell their own terrible jokes. Staff love to see the laughs and groans from patrons of all ages, and Ritchie has been getting lots of kudos from other dads.



Lower Rogue

Gold Hill

The Gold Hill staff designed a fun Summer Reading Road Trip activity for kids, boosting the circulation of nonfiction books about US states, all while staying local. The idea was simple but effective: for every state book a child read, they earned a sticker representing that state. If they were the first to read about a particular state, they proudly placed the state sticker on a big US map located prominently in the Children's section. Kids also added sticky notes around the map sharing something they had learned about each state. One enthusiastic



patron checks out three state books each time he visits the library and said his goal is to read all of them by the end of the summer.

Jacksonville

There was a paws-itively wonderful event in Jacksonville, featuring a dog trainer, a dog groomer, and of course, some lovable dogs! This event, sponsored by Friends of the Animals, was all about teaching kids how to understand canine communication. This local organization has been working to increase their presence in the community, especially for educational programs, and expressed how grateful they were to the library for providing the perfect spot for this popular program.



The local Scouts pulled out all the stops to create a captivating display in Jacksonville's foyer display case. Their impressive setup has attracted plenty of attention and sparked numerous questions about the local troop, showcasing their dedication and engaging the community with their activities.

Rogue River

Rogue River Library Associate Cici Gomez led an engaging program introducing the bullet journaling method to both kids and adults. Bullet journaling is a system that combines a planner, to-do list, and diary, and allows users to customize their organization and creatively track their goals. After the session, many patrons checked out books on bullet journaling to continue practicing and perfecting their skills.



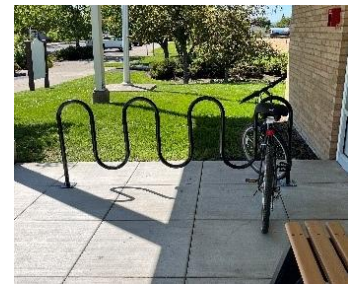
Ruch

After a successful one-year trial with the Swank movie license, which allows for public screenings, the Ruch staff decided to renew their subscription and keep movies as a regular part of the branch's programming. These movie nights (with popcorn, naturally) have proven to be a hit, especially among tweens and teens. To keep the excitement going, an August display titled "Movies at Your Library" will stay up through September, helping to promote the recurring afterschool program for teens and tweens during the Ruch Outdoor Community Schools' library visits.

Upper Rogue

White City

Now that educators are preparing for the school year, Branch Manager Allyson Beck, Community Librarian Evelyn Lorence, and Education Specialist Bella Silva visited teachers at Table Rock Elementary. The teachers loved hearing about all the resources that JCLS offers them, and one talked to Beck about wanting to bring their class in monthly once school starts. The White City Team is excited to have more connections with the teachers and students as the school year begins.



Putting the final touches on the patio refresh, the White City branch installed a new trashcan along with a bike rack under the awning that was put in earlier in the summer. Just in time for fall showers, bikes and scooters will not be affected by the elements while patrons visit the library.

Shady Cove

Shady Cove patrons enjoyed the process of raising caterpillars that eventually transformed into beautiful Monarch butterflies. They did not have a formal butterfly release party: butterflies have their own schedule and often chose to emerge outside of the branch's hours. Branch Manager Mensing closely monitored their progress and took photos and kept detailed notes, eagerly sharing updates with all the enthusiastic fans who were captivated by these little miracles.



Prospect

On Fridays in August, the Prospect Library opened its doors and craft supply bins to the imaginations of young patrons for open-ended craft time. Projects included making awards out of found objects, mask making, accordion book making, and bedazzling and painting wood rounds. Needless to say, Prospect's glue guns, paint brushes, and scissors have stayed busy throughout August.



Eagle Point

Eagle Point Branch staff rearranged the adult area of the collection. The large print section was moved closer to the entrance into an area with better natural light. Adult fiction and non-fiction swapped places to make browsing more intuitive, and the Spanish section was brought to a more prominent location and decorated in the hopes of increasing its use.



Culminating a sweet series of summer programs, Library Specialist Jenna Steigleder held a Clap for Cupcakes storytime National Cupcake Day. Originally intended to be held on the front lawn, a passing storm wanted to add its thunderclaps to the party as well, so the festivities moved indoors. Patrons enjoyed their sweet treats warm and dry inside the branch, where they played games and waited for the weather to change.

Butte Falls

The Cultivating Companions Growing Connections Class series wrapped up along with the end of summer, leaving everyone with fond memories and new friends. This well-attended program was both educational and fun, bringing together various community members. To celebrate the conclusion, participants assembled a selection of herbs to create a range of delightful tea varieties. The tea was enjoyed alongside refreshments like brownies, cookies, and fruit. The class was a big hit, and nearly everyone who participated eagerly asked if there will be similar classes or programs in the future.

Community Resources

The Community Resource Specialists have had a particularly impactful month. They have successfully assisted fifteen individuals in securing housing or shelter, a critical achievement as the need for stable housing continues to grow. Additionally, they have supported 30 patrons in gaining access to vital substance use treatment and mental health resources, ensuring that those in need receive the care and support necessary for their well-being.

A particularly touching moment this month came from an RCC student, who shared how the library has been a sanctuary for them—a place where they feel safe and supported as they work on themselves both academically and in terms of their health. This patron expressed that the library played a pivotal role in helping them navigate the challenges of financial instability and allowed them to remain in school. Community Resources is thrilled to report that this patron is now on track to graduate this coming spring, a testament to the transformative power of the resources and support provided by libraries.

Outreach, Programs, and Digital Services

Programs

As August draws to a close, it is time to put a cap on the fun and diverse lineup of the "Read, Renew, Repeat" Summer Reading Program and get ready for Fall. JCLS offered an eclectic array of activities for patrons to enjoy throughout the summer. Participants got creative with cozy crafts like the All Abilities Art Class, Story Retelling, and Folded Book Art. Animal enthusiasts enjoyed Wildlife Safari and Salmon Watch presentations, while those looking for self-improvement took part in Renew Your Space, the Teen Walking Challenge, and Hands-Only CPR classes.





Patrons were also delighted by popular favorites returning from previous years, including performances by the Fratello Marionettes and Tyler Spencer with his Australian didgeridoo. These highlights offer just a glimpse into the extensive and exciting summer programming provided.

As far as the 'reading' part of summer reading goes, Jackson County had some big successes there, too! Overall, 2,536 patrons registered for one of the two challenge options - minutes tracking or book tracking - with 2,090

active readers over the summer. Of those who signed up, many proved that they were up to the challenge as 1,839 readers completed their logs and earned a free book. On the Beanstack app, 15,377 badges were earned by the eager patrons. Patrons who opted to track their books read 35,831 books. The patrons who selected the Minutes challenge logged a whopping 504,281 minutes, totaling about 11 and a half months.

Digital Services

The end of summer saw no slowdown for Digital Services, with both appointments and interactions increasing. Patrons expressed their gratitude with heartfelt comments. One patron particularly appreciated the End of Life and Online Accounts class, noting it had eased some of the burden as her husband has faced health issues. Another described their appointment as "exciting" and "pleasant," and conveyed their genuine appreciation for the service provided.

Outreach

Highlights from Outreach include DART attending the Prospect Jamboree. Wi-Fi received the most use since upgrading the mobile hotspot from a cellular service to satellite-based StarLink. Mobile Services Specialist Maddy Tuttle went around to vendors to hand out DART's information and received numerous expressions of gratitude and excitement that the library was present. Staff had a blast chatting with folks from the community until a storm rolled in and started blowing canopies away. Then it was all hands on deck to batten down the hatches and make sure everything was dry and put away. Luckily, the Outreach staff is well-practiced at adapting to needs of all kinds, and soon they were set and ready to go for whatever came their way.

Digital Services Supervisor Eric Molinsky partnered with Librarian Brianna Levesque and Adult Services Librarian Carrie Tannehill and represented JCLS at the annual OLLI Open House at Southern Oregon University. Levesque and Molinsky displayed information highlighting the library's programs, databases, and digital resources, and answered questions about these and other library topics of interest to attendees. The event also presented an opportunity for networking, and potential partnerships were explored. A highlight for many who stopped by the JCLS table was the Outreach Department's Dolly Parton cutout, which advertised the Imagination Library. For this event, a hidden Bluetooth speaker could be activated so that Dolly "spoke" a special welcome message, resulting in an excited attendee bringing a friend back to the table with the request to "make Dolly talk!"

Business Librarian

Business Librarian Roslyn Donald participated in a Youth Financial Literacy event sponsored by the Jackson County Housing Authority. Youth from eight different sites were invited to learn more about bank services, credit reports, and how to budget for needs vs. wants.

Donald has been selected as Vice Chair for the Southern Oregon Innovation Hub governing committee. This committee is charged with administering the \$150,000 Innovation Hub grant, which will foster more small business innovation and connection across Jackson and Josephine Counties. Major Hub activities for FY25 include creating an entrepreneurial support system eco-map and sponsoring several networking events.

DART

DART cultivated a new partnership with Rogue Community Health by visiting their Medford Health Center and the Jackson apartment complex during National Health Center Week. In addition, DART re-visited The Jackson as

a new monthly location. While at one of their regular stops in August, Mobile Specialist Maddy Tuttle assisted a patron struggling with computer use to locate a phone number. This patron expressed high gratitude to Tuttle for the assistance and was directed to Digital Services for more advanced help in other technological areas.

Education Services

Education Services had a fun August preparing incoming students and is ready to kick off the new school year. Class Visits were held at the six elementary school host sites for Medford School District's Kinder Jumpstart. Students were pooled from all elementary schools within the district, so effectively these efforts reached all 14 schools and 256 kindergarteners.

Support Services

More WiFi Hotspots Coming Soon

Technical Service and IT worked together to prepare 150 additional new Wi-Fi hotspots for release in early September. JCLS anticipates that with the influx of these new hotspots, patrons will begin to find hotspots available on the shelf for immediate checkout, rather than it being necessary to place a hold. Staff are excited to monitor and witness the improved digital equity access these additional hotspots will provide.

Ashland Book Locker Milestones

Assistant Director of Support Services Kelda Vath is delighted to report two major milestones in the ongoing strategic plan driven project to bring a book locker to the south Ashland community. An MOU with the Ashland Family YMCA has been signed, as has the contract with book locker vendor Lyngsoe, the same company who supplied the book locker outside the Shady Cove branch last September. With these two major milestones completed, the project implementation can get started. The new book locker is expected to be ready for use outside the Ashland Family YMCA well before the fiscal year's end.

Collection Development

A new electronic resource called TeachingBooks, formerly available only for library staff, became available to the public in August. TeachingBooks was created by book lovers for anyone who reads, teaches, or enjoys books for children and teens and offers listings for tens of thousands of books, with info such as author interviews, book guides, activities, and lesson plans, Storytime activity kits, video book trailers and more. Patrons can search for a specific title or browse through hundreds of specially curated lists related to topics such as phonics and phonological awareness, major life events, and top booklists for specific age groups. This resource is perfect for teachers, homeschooling parents, and kids looking for help with school projects.

In August the Library of Things items purchased in July made their debut. These items include additional copies of the sewing machines that are a bit more powerful and can handle quilting, an air fryer, food dehydrator, induction cooktop, and Instant pot. New additions to the collection included the Kubb Viking Clash toss game and a USB floppy disk reader. Believe it or not, some folks still have important information stored on floppy disks that they need to access, making the floppy disk reader a valuable resource!

Information Technology

Last month the IT team updated the software that JCLS uses for wireless printing. The wireless printing service allows patrons to send documents to a print queue at their branch of choice, then release the print job onsite when ready. The new software features an intuitive interface, available on the JCLS website, and offers the ability to print directly from a phone, tablet, or laptop, or the option to send a print job via email.

Facilities

In early September, JCLS released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for landscaping and groundskeeping services at 13 of the 15 branch locations. The intent is to consolidate landscaping services under a direct contract to realize efficiencies and, as stated JCLS's strategic plan, enliven and improve facilities and create welcoming outdoor spaces.