

## Library Director Report

December 2024

Prepared by Tana Elias, December 30, 2024



Left: Pinney staff with holiday gifts for local families; right: cart loaded with gifts at Central Library

### Partnership Highlights

Many of us were heartbroken and frightened over news about the school shooting at Abundant Life Christian School earlier this month. I was impressed by how quickly City officials and those in the community reacted to support affected families and neighbors, host vigils, and offer resources. The City of Madison issued a [list of resources](#) for the general public, and thanks to the quick work of our Collection Management Team (especially Holly, Jody, Kathy and Molly) and technical services staff, we had a [list of library resources](#) to share with our community by the end of the week. I had the opportunity to highlight their work and the small role library resources can play during difficult times in an [NBC15 interview](#) last week. Special thanks as well to Katie Strong and her team at OverDrive who donated additional resources to our OverDrive Advantage collection available to Madison residents and to Pinney staff who helped Public Health book study and meeting spaces for community healing recovery efforts. While this was not the kind of partnership I'd hoped to highlight this month, I'm glad the library could play a small part to help our community in a time of need.

On a more cheerful note, library staff at Pinney and Central Libraries worked to support five families through a partnership with Dane County Health & Human Services. Staff at those libraries coordinated donations, shopping, gift wrapping, and delivery of two car loads full of gifts to local families in need. Started nearly a decade ago by our now-inactive Culture & Engagement Team, this team effort is a great way for staff to give back to our community.

We also worked with the Friends of Goodman South Madison and the Friends of the Madison Public Library to provide over 200 new and gently used books to seniors participating in a program through NewBridge led by Dr. Fabu Carter. I don't have photos of that event to share but received a personal note thanking the library and Annie Weatherby-Flowers for making the connection and providing the books – not a single donation was left!

## Staff Shout Outs

In December, Pinney Library clerk Tim Haub was honored with a #TeamCity award. #TeamCity awards honor City staff who've been nominated by their colleagues for doing great work across the City. Tim's nominator said:



*Tim has been a dedicated servant in the neighborhood he lives in for almost 25 years, and with MPL for even longer. He provides exemplary customer service and is a valuable teammate who is incredibly kind, helpful and thoughtful to his colleagues. His ability to get along and communicate with all walks of life, young and old, provides incredible value for Madison Public Library when Tim is out on a public service desk.*

Tim recently celebrated 30 years of employment with the library. Congratulations, Tim!

## Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update

We are working our way through all the requirements of the Flexible Facilities Program grant on our way to formal approval and acceptance, and multiple library staff attended a grant training meeting on December 12 where we learned more about the timeline and procedures for requesting funds. The project is expected to go to bid January 16, 2025 after securing Council final approval on January 14.

This grant commits the project to a construction start date of no later than July 1, 2025 and construction completion by September 20, 2026, so much of our budget conversation in 2025 will revolve around making sure that we can support operations in 2026 and beyond. We are working through our hiring processes for the first three systemwide positions to support the Imagination Center, starting with a Maintenance Mechanic 2 position that will be posted in early 2025.

The library has been called various names throughout the life of the project, but now is the time for the Library Board to select a final name for the library portion of the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park. At the January Board meeting I'll give an update on the library naming conversation, ask you to review the [library's naming policy](#), and provide some more information on similar local naming processes in order to create a process and timeline for choosing the library's final name. The library is also launching an email newsletter later in January to provide monthly updates on the Imagination Center project.

## **Library Metrics**

I'm not including data in this board report but will have a year-end data report in February as part of the review of the DPI Annual Report and a recap of the year in library statistics.

As always, all monthly key metrics, by month and library, from 2015 to the previous month, are always available on our interactive dashboard: [MPL Monthly Metrics | Tableau Public](#).

## **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On May 31, 1875, the City of Madison opened its first free public library and reading room – two rooms in the City Hall building open for five hours per day Monday – Saturday and two evenings a week for two hours each. Library users had to sign an obligation in which they promised to obey library rules and the library was only open to adults aged 16 and older. What a long way we've come! You can read a lengthy history of the library's first 125 years online at [All Their Ways Are Helping Ways](#), by local author Bob Kann, published in 2000.

We'll be launching a year long series of events and promotions to celebrate the library's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in partnership with Madison Public Library Foundation in later January, so stay tuned!

## **WE READ – All Winter Long!**

One of the library's key focus areas is literacy. Below is an excerpt from Youth Service Manager Tammy Ocampo's recent message to library staff about the Library's WE READ youth literacy campaign:

It's time, once again, to celebrate library joy via our WE READ winter campaign! This campaign will be promoted **December 16 - January 11** and while supplies last.

### **WE READ Lotería Kits**

Families can stop by any Madison Public Library or the Dream Bus to pick up a WE READ Lotería Kit. Lotería is a traditional Mexican game similar to Bingo. The Lotería Kit includes 4 tablas (game cards), some colorful beans to mark your board, and a fun crown for the winners to wear. These kits are for children ages 4 and up. If families need more than 4 game cards, we have posted links to a printable version on our WE READ page [madpl.org/weread](http://madpl.org/weread). Families can use their WE READ card decks from summer or, if they don't have those, they can grab a new deck. This incentive is "while supplies last".

### **Big Feelings Scavenger Hunt + Book Lists**

Small children are still trying to figure out how to express themselves. This winter we will encourage caregivers of babies & toddlers to explore books for babies and toddlers via a specially curated book list with titles to help kids and families recognize and work through emotions. Children visiting the library can also search for the different emotions/faces around the Children's Area in a "Finding Feelings" scavenger hunt.

### **New Toys and Reading Buddies**

In December every library will share new toys for babies & toddlers, and we've expanded our reading buddies collection, too! Kids can practice reading aloud in a low-stress environment while snuggling up with these cozy friends.

Many thanks to Tammy and the youth services and marketing staff who created and continue to promote WE READ, and to all our public services staff who engage with families to help them find great reads and fun programs at the library.

### **Upcoming Events**

We've always got hundreds of events happening each month – check out our event calendar at [madpl.org/calendar](http://madpl.org/calendar)! Here are a few I wanted to highlight for you coming up in the next month or so:

- All library [art exhibitions](#)
- I AM a Man: The Re-humanization of Black Men Artist Event, Jan 18, 1-4pm, Goodman South Madison Library
- [Puzzlepalooza: Jigsaw Puzzle Competition and Puzzle Exchange](#), Jan 11, 9:30am-1pm, Central Library [registration required]
- Tax Assistance will be offered at multiple libraries with dates & locations announced in mid-January
- and [hundreds more](#) youth literacy, adult classes and book clubs, and events