

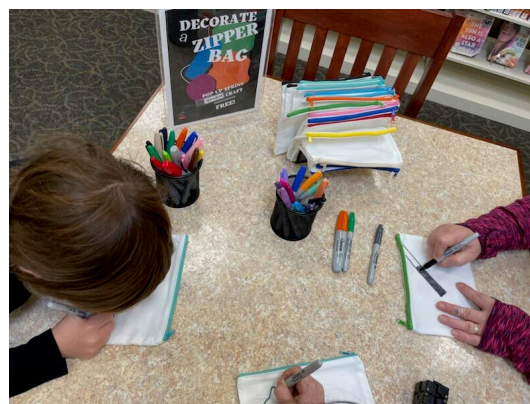
Library Director Report May 2024

Prepared by Tana Elias, May 28, 2024



Libraries Weathered the Tornado Warning

On the evening of May 21, our libraries navigated a storm that left some libraries without power and required some staff to stay past closing until the Tornado Warning expired. Meadowridge Library was without power until the afternoon of the 22nd and remained closed for the day. Our staff helped keep patrons safe during the weather emergency and handled the extra work the day after, even while dealing with their personal challenges of wind damage or an unexpected no-school day. The next day, our staff pivoted to provide extra workspace for neighbors without power or internet, and families looking for activities for their children during an unexpected day off of school. I'm so proud of how everyone pulled together to provide safe experiences for our patrons and each other. We'll be following up on ways we can improve our response to severe weather incidents in the future.



Neighbors stop by Sequoia Library for power & internet (left) and Alicia Ashman Library for crafts for kids (right) on May 22.

School Field Trips Are Back!

After several post-Covid years with fewer school field trips, we've seen an increase in school visits this spring. From May 28-May 30, the Central Library hosted every 6th grader from Black Hawk Middle School when they recorded individual verses for their "Science of Rap" unit led by UCAN and hosted by Bubbler staff Rob Dz and Nate. Earlier in the month, I started my day at the Sequoia Library, where I had the opportunity to open the door for a class of Midvale Elementary first-graders hosted by librarian Ruth. Altogether, in May our libraries welcomed classes from eight schools (Lincoln Elementary, Midvale Elementary, One City Schools, Nuestro Mundo, Lakeview Elementary, Randall Elementary, Black Hawk Middle School, Mineral Point) through 11 visits reaching over 370 students.



Black Hawk Middle School students at Central Library (left) and Midvale Elementary students at Sequoya Library (right)

Budget Update

At this point in the year we've submitted both our capital and cost-to-continue budgets. On June 17, the Mayor will give us our operating budget guidance, which will be due back to Finance on July 19. At the June 6 board meeting, we'll ask the board for general guidance on how to approach any reductions and can give preliminary figures on cost-saving scenarios to guide that discussion.

I've attended the first public City budget engagement event, Krissy Wick attended the second event, and I plan to attend the three remaining events by June 5. The feedback gained at these events and at Common Council will shape the guidance we receive from the City.

Organizational Assessment

In March, the Library contracted with Advancing with Purpose to conduct an organizational assessment. Through a series of 1:1 and group meetings with managers, as well as access to a wealth of library and city data, they've drafted a plan which reviews our organization in eight strategic areas and compares our library to peer libraries in terms of collection, staffing, services and organization, and highlights areas for clarification or areas in which our services or processes differ from other libraries. On Monday, May 20, our leadership team joined the Advancing with Purpose team in a full day retreat to discuss the findings of the assessment and work through exercises reviewing service levels and organization charts. Service level review will help us make more informed reductions if needed for budget reasons and to consider service levels in light of changing library use trends and future staffing needs. A third draft of the plan is currently underway incorporating information from the management retreat and will be shared with the Board for comment. Kim Zablud from Advancing with Purpose will join us at the June 6 board meeting to give some background and preliminary findings as we work through the rest of the process.

Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update

We are nearing completion of the Construction Documents (CD) phase of the project, with final CDs produced in June 2024. The project is scheduled to proceed to bidding in the summer of 2024, with a construction start date in the fall of 2024, and a completion date in the summer of

2026. However, City budget guidance in June of 2024 may delay the bidding timeline if significant reductions to existing library services are needed on top of the additional operating expense required by the Imagination Center project. We are in the process of applying for a grant from the Flexible Facilities Program, funded through the U.S. Department of Treasury's Capital Projects Fund (CPF) program, which was established through the American Rescue Plan of 2021 to support long-term pandemic recovery by improving infrastructure for work, education, and health monitoring. The state has been awarded \$107 million for the program and will be giving priority funding for the first \$20 million in awards to new construction and renovation projects for public libraries.

Staff Day 2024

Our all staff in-service is planned for May 31, 2024. This year, we moved the timing from the traditional fall start date to May in order to introduce our new director and bring staff together earlier in the year. We'll focus on meeting each other, building community amongst staff, and how to have difficult conversations and tell your story in light of what are expected to be difficult budget conversations ahead this summer and fall.