



Outreach and Program Services Grows

Outreach meets community members where they are by bringing the library to them. To better serve our community, the library updated an open position to be an Outreach and Program Services Manager. In November of 2021, Brittany Jacobs started in this new role. She jumped right in developing community partnerships, looking for new opportunities for outreach, and supporting our team in program planning and coordination for all ages.

The library popped up at community events, including National Night Out, the Teachers Reception, Pride in the Park, Juneteenth, Snake Alley Art Fair, the county fair, the Youth Jamboree, the vintage market, and more. The team also took activities and books to senior living centers.

During the school year, preschool story time outreach visits returned to all Burlington Community School District and Head Start classes. These, along with other community stops, brought this outreach to 30 classes each month. Afterschool program visits, classroom book talks, and monthly STEM activities at Staying Ahead also continued. In March, the library started a new outreach program to all the first grade classes in West Burlington.

The team also started up new programs. For example, the Vacation Through Time series drew a crowd to learn about the Titanic through exhibits and hands-on activities and Jump on The Move took Double Dutch to city camp and community events.

Sensory Inclusion Work

Specialists from Great Prairie AEA trained the library team on serving community members with different abilities, especially children with autism. Representatives from Hope Haven also shared about their services and led discussion on how the library can best serve their clients.

Thanks to Friends funding, the library team created sensory bags. The library also began regular outreach story time visits to the autism classrooms. The AEA team and teachers from the school district gave their time to support an after hours sensory night at the library. Several families remarked that they wouldn't have come to the library without that event.

The Community Foundation granted funds for more work on this initiative. The library began the process to become sensory certified. Because of this work, two team members were invited to present at a statewide training for youth librarians and be featured on a podcast.



Summer Reading Bookends the Year

The fiscal year starts with the end of one summer reading program and begins with the start of the next year's. 1,010 community members across all ages registered for the 2021 program and committed to reading. At the end of FY22, the numbers already surpassed last year's level of participation.

In summer 2021, in addition to the library's weekly presence at the Farmers Market, the library had a booth at the Very Vintage Market for the first time to share information about library services. The Friends of the Library partnered with a table of vintage books and albums for sale. The youth team did programs at the city camp and, new in summer 2021, visited KidsZone with activities throughout both summers. One parent shared that their child opted to attend KidsZone on their birthday because they didn't want to miss the library coming that day.

The library's 2021 summer "bookmobile" visited North Hill for summer school, Perkins Park for the city camp, and the YMCA for their day camp each week. It also went to Crapo Park and The Port to be on hand for performers and classes as an option for families attending library events held there. Thanks to the Burlington Community School District who loaned the library the truck that had previously been outfitted as a short term bookmobile, in summer 2022 the library had a very successful first half of summer out on the road giving away free books to City Camp, the YMCA camps, Kid Zone, and the BCSD Summer School kids.

For the 2022 summer program, the team added preregistration, which brought in lots of people eager to sign up. They also reworked the program to focus more on high quality experiences through performers and events and improved prizes, including drawings on alternating weeks. One week was a great packet of coupons from area businesses and attractions, including pool passes and free admission to the Children's Museum in Coralville and to Blank Park Zoo. The library also partnered with the Capitol Theater to offer some of the performers to great success. With a 15% increase in the amount of programs hosted in June compared to 2021, there was a 40% increase in attendance in the first month of the summer 2022 program.

Each year community organizations, businesses, and individuals make it possible to offer a robust summer learning experience. Thanks to their monetary and in-kind donations, the library team is able to help families ward off summer learning loss by encouraging reading and by providing classes and performers to keep kids learning and having fun all summer long.

Continuously Improving

The State Library allows all public libraries across the state to share resources at no cost to the libraries through a courier service. This relatively new service expanded in 2021 to two delivery days a week instead of one.

The State Library also began offering BrainFuse HelpNow to Iowa libraries at no cost. Brainfuse HelpNow provides learners of all ages with one-on-one online tutoring and other resources to help them succeed. The State Library already provided Brainfuse's JobsNow and VetNow tools to support job seekers and veterans.

The State Library added over 3,000 magazine titles available as unlimited simultaneous use without circulation limits in the Libby app for cardholders.

The library was awarded funding for new hotspots and Chromebooks through a federal ECF grant and new STEM tools and training through STEM Scale Up.

A new room reservation platform made it easier for community members to make their reservations online.

The team created a new booklet to offer a simple, all-in-one overview of services and resources for card holders.

The library added access to same day stories and an archive of past articles of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal online with a library card.

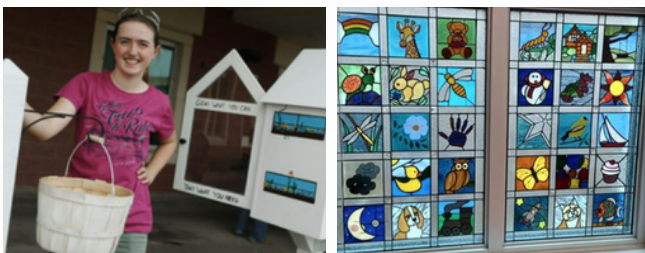
The flight lab joined the train table and tree house as favorite activities in the youth area, along with the art cart and iPads.

The library joined the city's phone system with new phones after over 15 years on a dated system that was beginning to fail.

As part of the strategic plan, the team selected an automatic check-in solution. The SmartBins arrived in June.



Revisiting the logo was part of the library's strategic plan. The new logo showcases a distinctive part of the library building and reminds us that libraries offer a window to the wider world.



Little Free Food Pantry Installed

The Library's Kindness Club investigated a little free pantry at the library as a year round food sharing project. Mary Joyce, a Notre Dame Eagle Scout candidate, eagerly took on the project and installed it in September.

Community Comments

"You have a great library – this is awesome!" -- comment from a couple using the genealogy room for several days

Patron email comment: "Thank you so much! Really appreciate how the Library and the staff go the extra mile for your patrons. You are all the BEST!!"

A customer praised a staff member for being so helpful and calm while she was stressed. He saved the day for her today and she was thrilled. She said lots of great things go on at the library, but she doesn't always remember to stop and say anything.

A local resident shared that her mother loved to read and loved to read to her kids and grandkids, so they chose supporting the library as a way to honor her memory.

"Thank you for all the arts and crafts you send us! The residents love doing them! Also thank you for the book program! The residents that get books love to read and love the variety they are given! Thank you! From Staff & Residents at Oakview" -- comments in a card



Celebrating 15 Years at 210 Court

Opening on November 6, 2006, the new building allowed the library to achieve full state accreditation. Before 2006, the library failed in only one very important required standard –accessibility. The library's current home meets ADA requirements. Meeting rooms, self-checkout stations, a drive-up book return, a used book store, wireless access, a dedicated story time room, and geothermal heating and cooling are just some of the other improvements made possible by the move to the new building.

Over the last 15 years, the team has continued to make changes and look for improvements. Collections have been moved and spaces and furnishings redesigned. Whole new sections in the library have been added, such as the Tween, Money Matters, and Create Space areas. We look forward to more changes ahead as we continuously seek ways to improve service to meet the needs of our community.

Storytime Room Gets Added Color

The Stained Glass Artisans members donated their time and talents to create a beautiful work of art for the children's storytime room. This is the third large installation that this group has gifted to the library. They also created a window in the youth collection area and several stained glass lampshades throughout the library