
Director's Report

February 2021

Public Services

Due to winter weather conditions, the Library was closed on February 1, 2, 7 and 18. The Library opened one hour late on February 19.

With the decline of positive COVID-19 cases in Nyack to below 50 cases, the Library resumed its Browse and Borrow Services the week of February 22nd. We now welcome the public to make an appointment to visit the library for 20 minutes per day to browse and borrow materials. The CRC service area continues to take 30 minute appointments for computer, copier, fax and notary services.

Facilities

D. L. Scharf & Co. repaired the Local History Room northwest corner walls and replaced the corner carpeting with vinyl tile.

Water infiltrated the Furnace Room and Local History Room in the area adjacent to Furnace Room in the last half of the month. D. L. Scharf & Co. assisted with lifting cabinetry in the area to provide some air circulation in the area where water accumulated. While carpet and tile in the affected area was wet, the accumulation of water was limited to specific locations. A drainage and landscaping contractor assessed this recent situation as a potential groundwater issue and it does not appear to be associated with other issues that we have experienced in the past. During these incidents, water was not seen in the northwest corner of the Local History Room.

The 3rd floor restroom in the Library remained out of order for the full month of February.

Suite 1C in the DePew house has been repainted following a wall repair, and it is now rented to a tenant who previously leased a basement level suite.

Snow removal took much staff effort this month. Following the Feb. 1-2 storm, our current parking lot snow removal company had to be called back to remove extra mounds of snow to allow for full access to all parking spots. In addition, another snow removal company was hired to remove snow from walkways that staff did not clear.

Personnel

Two staff members were on temporary leave from the Library this month: Donna Lightfoot Cooper and Michelle Morales. Several staff members needed to quarantine as a precaution this month.

Meetings

I attended the RCLS Annual Report workshop on February 4th and the RCLS Director's Association meeting on February 10th. Valerie Williams-Sanchez and I attended a Strategic Planning Workshop on February 4th in preparation for undertaking the Long Range Planning project this year. I also met with several Board Committees: Finance; Building and Property, Personnel and Policy.

Technology

Lou Moreno ordered five laptops that can be used by library staff as needed for off-site work. Lou created an equipment signout form for staff to complete prior to taking the laptop off-site.

Congratulations to Aldona Pilmanis for adding to our virtual library service technology tools through her application and grant award by RCLS. T

NYS Annual Report Preparation

The task of compiling the New York State Annual Report was completed through the efforts of Minerva Parker, Sharon Alfano, Tracy Dunstan, Aldona Pilmanis and with the assistance of their staff. RCLS facilitated the process through great training, an excellent LibGuide with all the documentation and many of the statistics needed to complete the report. I appreciate everyone's contribution to accomplishing this very large undertaking. Minerva's notes and attention to detail made the difference in our ability to complete the effort successfully.

Advocacy Meetings with Local Legislators

Several staff and members of the Board of Trustees, including Ellyse Berg, Brian Murrell and Wayne Henry, participated in the NYLA Advocacy Day meetings via Zoom with local legislators including Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick, Assemblyman Mike Lawler and Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski. Tracy Dunstan and Rosemary Farrell participate in the RCLS Advocacy Committee, and they both spoke about the work we do for our community. Morgan Strand spoke about the importance of serving our children, families and teens. Brian Murrell and Wayne Henry also spoke on behalf of our library and the need for continued financial support from the State. Sharon Aperto spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Nyack Library. Nyack Library participation in Advocacy Day was noticeable with representatives from the Board, staff and Friends. Attached to this report is the text of the valuable advocacy comments written and communicated by Tracy, Rosemary and Morgan.

Looking ahead

Please note the upcoming events

Carnegie Concerts via Livestream

- March 14 2:00 pm Celtic Music
- April 10 7:30 pm Americana
- May 1 7:30 pm classical piano

National Library Week April 4-10

Rotary Club of Nyack Cocktails for Charity fundraiser on Thursday, April 15th at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

Tracy Dunstan Advocacy Day Text

Thank you, Assembly member Lawler, for having us here today. My name is Tracy Dunstan, and I am the Head of Adult Services at the Nyack Library. The Library is a member of the Small Business Association and strives to work with our local businesses and organizations. On the 4th floor, we have a Kurz Business Corner that seeks to provide a place where entrepreneurs can research business opportunities and job seekers can access both online and print materials in their search for employment. We also work with local restaurants for programming and cross-promotional opportunities, such as our “Nyack Eats” program in the summer. We worked with RCC to provide Individual Small Business Development Center Consulting – we helped 21 patrons last fiscal year.

We continued to serve our patrons through telephone and reference services during the Quarantine closure while also wholly revamping how we conduct programs by moving them to a virtual format. We doubled patron access to digital resources such as Kanopy and hoopla – think Netflix but free- and increased the number of ebooks we purchased. We also added to the number of hotspots that we circulate so that patrons can access wifi from home – vital for virtual learning and remote work.

That’s what libraries are – vital. We are essential to the community, and we strive to meet our patrons' needs best every day. Thank you for your support of libraries and what we do.

Rosemary Farrell Advocacy Day Text

Hello, my name is Rosemary Farrell and I’m the Programming & Community Engagement Librarian at Nyack. I started this position in January of 2020 and two and ½ months later, we shut our doors. By April 6, we had successfully pivoted to offering virtual programs via zoom and Facebook Live as well as engaging our patrons through social media, contests, YouTube videos, streaming services, ebooks and e audio books, among other strategies and offerings. It was difficult at first but I’m proud to say that we not only created full calendars of virtual programs, but our programming statistics reveal that we reached more people during the pandemic, and from more places, than when our doors were open. This was due to the hard work of our staff, the support of our Director and the Board, as well as the financial support of our school district taxpayers and the State.

Still, we know that there are groups in our community that we have not been able to reach as well--the English Language Learning Community, the elderly, and those lacking the technology and/or tech knowledge to engage in the virtual world. These gaps existed before the pandemic and will persist & worsen without proper attention and the funding this requires, cutting people off from the riches that our library has to offer. Even something as simple as having the funds to pay people to translate promotional materials and social media posts into Spanish & Haitian Creole would be a great help. Although we always welcome and very much appreciate our volunteers, I believe it is preferable to pay people for their time and expertise.

We also know that in times of economic hardship--like, in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008 and certainly now largely due to the pandemic--public library usage dramatically increases. People will be looking for a safe, friendly place to rest, read and work. Many will be looking to access social services and search for employment. Our library needs the resources to pay staff, as well as outside employment consultants, to help patrons write and refine their resumes, navigate already existing job sites, complete online applications, and prepare for interviews. Nyack is gratified to partner with the RCC Small Business Development Center, as well as the Kurz Foundation, in offering programs and materials related to

entrepreneurship. But we could do, and want to do so much more for individuals looking for work, or affordable housing, or a way to apply for citizenship or social security.

Thank you for your time.

Morgan Strand Advocacy Day Text

Good afternoon, Assemblyman Lawler. My name is Morgan Strand. I work for the Nyack Library and am here representing the Youth Services Department. Libraries help create healthy connections with the services they provide to communities. Our main focus in the Children's Room for the last 4 years has been on early literacy. We recently partnered with Nyack basics, which focuses on the five evidence-based parenting and care-giving principles that help our children grow and thrive.

Our mission is to teach these skills using early literacy kits we have purchased and story time programs we offer. For example, Cuentos Y Canciones is a program we host which focuses on underserved communities and teaches non-English speaking parents early literacy skills. We also host a toddler story time, and a preschool story time.

Our Teen Room has become a safe haven to many teens and tweens. We have created a safe environment where teens feel very comfortable being themselves, and have no worries of being bullied. We work very closely with other community groups and the schools to make sure we are staying on top of the needs of the teens. We offer cooking programs and other life skill classes so that they can in turn be more independent. Throughout this pandemic, we have still made sure to connect with the teens through multiple books clubs, craft programs, and art classes. These programs are often filled to capacity. This just goes to show that teens are still seeking the engagement they were getting from us in person.

I appreciate you taking the time to listen about the importance of libraries in communities. Funding cuts at this time would greatly hamper our ability to perform these very important services.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with the words of Sidney Sheldon "Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life."

Thank you