

October 2020 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

Poudre River Public Library District and the 2020 Election

Colorado adopted voting by mail in 2013. Many states have increased the opportunities for voters to cast their ballots by mail this year as an alternative to gathering at a polling place during a pandemic. But in an environment where some politicians are trying to raise doubts about the security of voting by mail and the ability of the United States Postal Service to deliver mail-in ballots, many libraries in Colorado and nationwide are using their unimpeachable reputations to offer stability as ballot drop-off sites.

Drop boxes can offer a safe and secure way to vote as the nation continues to face COVID-19, wildfires, and policy changes affecting the stability of the postal system. The Harmony Library has had a ballot box in front of the library for several years. It's been well received by the community and especially Front Range students, since it is so convenient for those both working and attending school. In general, most of the work related to collecting ballots is done by election staff, but libraries that wish to offer the service need to prepare. Library District staff needed to know how to respond if a voter attempts to hand a ballot to them or drops the ballot in a book return, rather than the ballot box. If the Library finds ballots in our book returns or our remote book drops, we place them in an envelope, and send them to the Harmony Library with instructions to be deposited in the ballot box. On Election Day, ballots can also be sent to the Council Tree Library as Council Tree will be a voting center on November 3rd. That said, the library district is not liable or responsible for these ballots. We advise voters to check the website on the Larimer County Clerk's office to track their ballot. If they cannot track their ballot, voters can request a replacement ballot or show on Election Day at a polling location.

The Council Tree Library will serve as a polling location on Election Day. The library worked closely with Larimer County elections staff, inviting them to tour the library to ascertain best options for safe and secure voting. After some deliberation, we decided to close Council Tree as a library on Election Day to insure the safety of all concerned.

Voter Education

The Library partnered with the League of Women Voters Larimer County for two virtual voter information sessions in October: a presentation of the ballot initiatives during the 2020 General Election and a meet and greet with local candidates. For the candidate meet and greet, participants were added into Zoom rooms in small groups led by a LWV facilitator. The groups then had 15 minutes with each candidate to ask questions and get to know them.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

In October, the Communications Team helped produce a successful virtual Fort Collins Book Fest. The team also planned and implemented external communications around the new fine free lending policy.

October Highlights:

- Used the FoCoBookFest.org website and the Library’s Facebook page to livestream the event.
- Coordinated “fine free” communications including press release, blog post, webpage, staff communications, newsletter article, and customer email announcement.
- Finalized marketing collateral for the “Winter Reading Challenge: A Winter Tale” which will run from November 16, 2020 through February 7, 2021. This includes print/digital pieces like a promotional bookmark, reading log, webpage, and completion prize.

Ongoing Activities:

- Keeping customers updated about library news via email, website, and social media
- Working with staff to expand the Library’s selection of video tutorials, Tech Tips, “how-to guides” and other video resources
- Working with local media to share news about the Library District
- Managing new staff-only SharePoint site, created by SA, to support staff at-home access to library news, key health and safety documents and videos
- Continuing with social media promotions and platforms including “The River’s Mouth” blog

COMMUNITY SERVICES

By Johanna Girón Ulloa

Collaborative-Innovate and Inclusive

Homebound continues to provide services to older adults throughout the District. Gayle Brakefield coordinates the selection and delivery to over 30 customers in the following sites: Good Samaritan, Sanctuary Place Apartments, Columbine Facilities, Estates Senior Living Apartments, Crossing Senior Living Apartments, Affinity Senior Living Apartments, Rigden Farms Senior Living Apartments, Fort Collins Health Care Center, and many private residences.

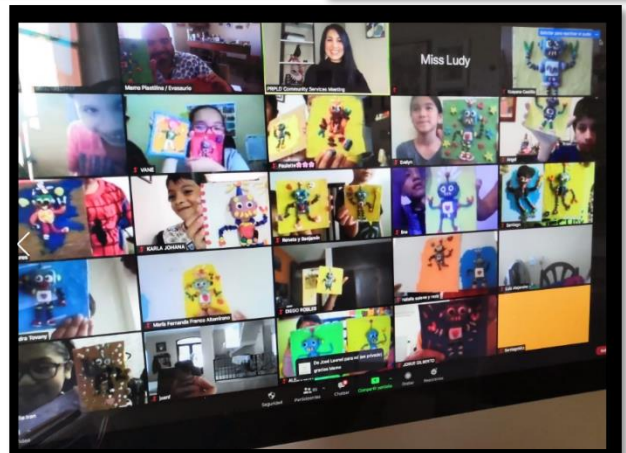
Our partnership with the Larimer Advance Care Planning Team from the Health District of Northern Larimer County continues to be strong. Bookclub for Mortals read, *Will My Cat Eat My Eyeballs?* by Caitlin Doughty, a wonderful read that explores many questions from children related to dying. The book club conversation for Mortals participants was delightful. We also partnered for Dia de Muertos program "Talking About Death is Part of Life" with Death Doula Adriana Alotey, where the conversation covered many essential aspects of the process of dying.

The celebration for Dia de Muertos is an active process of community work that starts many months before the actual celebration takes place on November 1st. This year Ludy Rueda coordinated with more than 10 community partners to provide a line up with more than ten programs. The programs were designed intentionally centering people of color and hiring experts in Mexico; the programs included hands-on activities for children and adults, cooking classes of traditional foods related to the celebration, an intimate conversation with a Death Doula, and amazing informative programs with Guadalupe Zetina Gutiérrez, a Mexican anthropologist whose career specializes in Dia de Muertos celebration.

In addition, this year, multiple organizations and sites hosted and created altars in the community. Ludy Rueda, Africa Garcia, Rob Jaosdhpaisdy placed the library's altar at the old Lyric Cinema in Downtown. For more information, please visit our blog at <https://blog.poudrelibraries.org/2020/10/dia-de-muertos-2020/>.

Comments from customers and staff:

- "The Mexican pan program yesterday was awesome! Thank you for putting on these zoom baking events, it's brilliant programming."
- "Thank you for making this class possible (Pan de Muerto) as well as the one with the Archeologist. It was extremely informative! I'm ready to try my Pan de Muerto and honored those who no longer are here."
- "Thank you Ludy, Africa and CS for providing the Sugar Skulls-very we and inspiring! The families were grateful to have something for the kids to do."



COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

By Currie Meyer

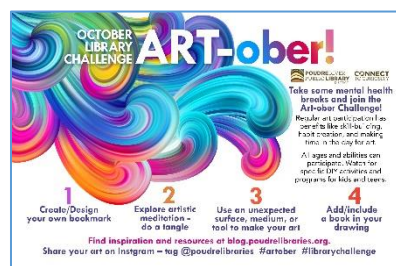
Expansion of operating hours, October 5: During the three weeks preceding the change, Angela and I worked collaboratively with LLT, lead and front-line staff to plan for the expansion of operating hours to include mornings and Sundays as well as simultaneous curbside and in-library services. We re-arranged workspaces, staff duties and schedules to align with the increase from 44 hours per week to 58. Angela arranged / trained staff on a new curbside phone system. I approved and placed all new signs. “Reimagine the Future” #4 Develop more agile, responsive, and effective services.

DART week October 12-18: Total customer transactions in three libraries plus the Answer Center - 2,856 - were 64% of 2019. Most common question types were Procedural (50%), Directional (17%) and Reference (16%). More results attached.

Preparations for Election Day: During October, I finalized arrangements to use the CTL space for active voting with Larimer County Elections officials. Matt moved dozens of pieces of Library furniture and equipment from the meeting room to make space for voters. Angela re-aligned hourly staff scheduled on Election Day for non-public service duties. We prepared signage, accommodations for safely-distanced queuing, planned physical arrangement of space, and shelved face-out materials on display in order to remove any possible political messages from view. Meet and Collaborate #6, Serve as a center for civic information, discussion, and engagement.

Preparations for fines-free operations: Angela met several times with colleagues in Circulation, Finance and Systems to plan for staffing, messaging and procedural changes due to the decision to cease overdue fines on all materials starting November 1. Meet and Collaborate #4, Re-envision its unique, collaborative programming and services to deliver higher impact.

Art-ober: A new month-long art-inspired program for children and tweens, led by Library Assistant Drew Gaede. included Take-and-Make kits, project inspiration / guides online via blog, videos and photos.



One Book 4 Colorado: A book for every 4 year-old, an annual project of the State Library and Governor’s Office, was locally organized by CTL Children’s Librarian Amy Holzworth. Amy hosted a virtual read-aloud in Spanish by Larimer County Commissioner John Kefalis and arranged for book give-aways at each Library.



What’s Your Vote? Mock voting activity for children and tweens, created and organized by CTL Library Assistant Jillian Harrison, this engaging activity attracted over 100 kids. Young voters were challenged to choose between sweet and salty snacks, including mock candidates such as “Mr. Paul Potato Chip” and “Ms. Isabel Ice Cream”. No actual food was provided; just food for thought! *Meet and Collaborate #5, Serve as a center for civic information, discussion, and engagement. Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity.*



OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

Notable October programs, services, and staff training

- Monique, Kristen, Ian and Xochil hosted virtual BookFest sessions.
- Kristen coordinated the relaunch of computer services at OTL and HL. Thanks so much to our amazing IT team for helping make it happen.
- Xochil continued to tweak and adjust OTL’s schedule and created YouTube videos
- Kindra is working with the file management project team, specifically researching naming schemes and document retention.
- Erin is hosting Great Decisions and International Night while working with Ian on 2021 planning
- Karla, Monique and Xochil rallied to create over a 100 Take and Make kits for fire evacuees. While the pick-up for the kits did not happen, Old Town Library families are benefiting from their work and taking kits home. They are a hit.
- Old Town Library staff offered in-person story times in Library Park when the weather cooperated.
- Conversations in English and the Virtual Legal Clinic continue to attract participation.
- Nicole Burchfield created a new virtual escape room based on the Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark series just in time for tweens to enjoy for Halloween. She also shared some great horror reads for tweens.
- The Roots teen group with the Natural Areas invited Nicole to share some poetry activities with them at Greenbriar Park.

Forthcoming programs, services, events ,and training:

- Monique, Anne and Eileen are prepping for the ESL Mentoring service launch.
- Eileen was selected to participate in the Colorado cohort for Transformation for Libraries: Learning-Unlearning-Relearning Through Strategic Foresight. This interactive, intensive 3-day workshop was made available via an IMLS grant. The cohort was facilitated by The Futures School and attendees learned how to leverage a practical Strategic Foresight framework called Natural Foresight. The training seeks to teach a tangible and replicable process to enable learners to act strategically now so that organizations are prepared for the future