

July/August 2021 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

Delta Variant

The latest surge in Covid-19 cases generated by the Delta variants is throwing a wrench in our plans to return to normal library operations. This latest twist in the Covid-19 pandemic is one more on a long list—and, unfortunately, it may well not be the last. In light of this reality, I want to share with you several ways the library district is responding in the current environment.

Continue to prioritize employees' well-being

As of the end of August, nearly 86% of our library staff have been vaccinated. I am most pleased library staff has taken advantage of the incentives to be vaccinated. Vaccinated library staff are at a far lower risk of contracting Covid-19, including the Delta variant, and are less likely to suffer serious illness if they do. Still, recent data has drawn attention to rare breakthrough cases, and the risk to unvaccinated people and those with compromised immune systems remains high.

Meanwhile, many employees continue to have new or enhanced challenges in areas such as childcare, elder care, and mental health.

Returning to normal operations in our current environment without consideration to these can have profoundly negative effects on morale and retention. We continue to prioritize employee well-being relating to minimizing Covid-19 infections in the workplace. Additionally, we continue to evaluate ways we can help employees through these challenges by providing flexibility and support where needed.

Adaptability and Communication

Library district staff desire clear direction, and library leadership tries to provide this. As we share our decisions regarding the pandemic, such as mandates and recommendations from the State of Colorado and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, it is important to be upfront and honest about what we know and what we do not know. It is also important to have contingencies in place for when we need to change course. Using our Pandemic Response Plan as our guide, we have learned to adapt to changes quickly. In example, we went from everyone required to wear a mask ages two and older, to masks for those 11 and older to no masks required for anyone to again requiring masking for library staff only.

The challenge, though, with being adaptable is that it can increase anxiety among library staff, who have already been through a tremendous amount of change during the pandemic. Library leadership strives to recognize this anxiety and communicate in ways that help diffuse or reduce it. For library leadership, it can be especially challenging when State/County mandates are enacted or dropped, with little or no lead-time for communicating with library staff. I hear often from library staff who wish we would just give some time to adjust. They are absolutely correct and I understand their frustrations. Our new Staff Cache is helping by keeping current and relevant communications easily accessible to all library district staff members.

Continuing remote work and improving organizational culture

The number of library staff shifting to remote work was new to most of us. This shift demonstrated the viability of remote work for many of our positions. There have been concerns expressed by experts about the impacts of productivity, innovation and institutional culture. While I hear these concerns, I look back

on the past 18 months how our library staff figured out how to serve our customers in new and thoughtful ways, build relationships and solve problems while working remotely. Insisting on bringing people back to their workspace just so they can be supervised more closely has a counter-productive effect by displaying a lack of trust. Letting library teams decide together what works best for them and the library district will help build a culture of trust and mutual accountability.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

July and August Highlights:

- Launched the “Next Chapter” campaign designed to welcome occasional and recently inactive cardholders back to begin their own “next chapter” at the library whether it is going back to school, getting back to the office, looking for a job, pursuing a new hobby, etc. The campaign will include a mix of targeted direct mail, email marketing, digital ads, and social media.

Social media image samples:



- Refreshed the District’s community-led programming” model and application process to leverage the incredible talent, skills, and leadership found within our region. An overview of community-led programming at the library, along with the online application, is available on the website.
- Earned media coverage in July and August included
 - “Colorado Voices: From Backroads to Westering Women” - *The Silver Lining*
 - “7 Things that can be checked out at the Poudre Library besides books” – Townsquare Media, New Country 99.1FM <https://newcountry991.com/7-things-that-can-be-checked-out-at-the-poudre-library-besides-books/>
 - “Poudre River Public Library District director David Slivken to retire” – *Coloradoan* <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2021/08/02/poudre-river-library-district-fort-collins-director-retire/5454985001/>
 - “Residents can check out Larimer County Parks passes from library” - *Reporter Herald* <https://www.reporterherald.com/2021/08/06/residents-can-check-out-larimer-county-parks-passes-from-library/>
 - “Larimer County Natural Resources launches the Discover Pack, a new community outreach tool in partnership with area libraries” - *Estes Park Trail Gazette* <https://www.eptail.com/2021/08/09/larimer-county-natural-resources-launches-the-discover-pack-a-new-community-outreach-tool-in-partnership-with-area-libraries/>

- “Poudre River Public Library Board of Trustees Begins National Search for New Executive” – *North Forty News*
<https://northfortynews.com/category/news/poudre-river-public-library-board-of-trustees-begins-national-search-for-new-executive/>
- “Back to School? Book Recommendations for Lifelong Learners” - *The Silver Lining*

Ongoing Activities:

- Building a library programming plan, including staff input, best practices, evaluation options, etc.
- Summer reading marketing materials and promotions.
- Planning for 2021 Fort Collins Book Fest, happening October 22-24. Visit www.FoCoBookFest.org for news and updates.
- Assisting Community Outreach with planning the 2021 Día de Muertos community celebration. Visit www.NoCoDiaDeMuertos.org for news and updates.
- Continuing efforts related to social media, email communications, newsletters, video development and other key activities to keep the community updated on Library services and news.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

By Ken Draves

JULY

Programs:

In-person (outdoor) Storytimes:

- In-person Storytime at Poudre Valley Mobile Homes, Hickory Village, Village on Horsetooth, Alpha Best Camp, Camp Sol @ Beattie and Linton Elementary Schools, Landings Park, Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County, and numerous other locations.

In-person programs:

- 6/4: ArtReach (with PSD & TWP at Old Town mural alley)
- 6/5: SRC Kick-off Caravan
- 6/13: Rent Assistance Clinic (with Fuerza Latina)

Virtual programs:

- 6/1: Taller de Alebrijes Mexicanos
- 6/3: SRC virtual crafts
- 6/5: Panes del Mundo Croissants
- 6/9: IMAGINANTES X: Get prepped to get hired!
- 6/10: SRC virtual crafts
- 6/15: Evasaurio con Memo Plastilina
- 6/17: SRC virtual crafts
- 6/24: SRC virtual crafts
- 6/29: Taller de Arte Huichol

Other Community Engagement activities:

Meetings (Africa Garcia):

- LCN Steering Committee
- Community Meeting
- Larimer County Digital Inclusion Design Team
- Día de Muertos (Fort Collins Museum of Discovery)
- Planning with Animal Friends Alliance for 7/13 program
- Homebound & ILL
- LC Emergency Rent Assistance
- The Family Center
- Día de Muertos Planning
- Adult Programs Planning
- Library meeting with June Garcia

Other Activities (Reported by Ludy Rueda):

- Mexican Alebrijes virtual workshop
- Clay virtual workshop and Storytime
- Native indigenous art workshop
- In-person ArtReach program in partnership with PSD and Trees, Water & People
- Panes del Mundo: Croissants virtual class
- SRC kick-off caravan
- Virtual Storytime and Phone-A-Story in Spanish and French

IMAGINANTES X: Get prepped to get hired!

In partnership with Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development's CareerRise Team, we offered this virtual workshop for teens 14-18 in order to provide tools needed to be successful in job search process, from where to find opportunities, to how to highlight early experiences in a way employers will notice.

Story Stroll / Paseo Literario:

A new Story Stroll was placed at The Family Center

Informal Lending Library:

Weeded Children and Teen Books were distributed at Hickory Village and Poudre Valley Mobile Homes.

Others:

Ludy was able to coordinate a donation of 20 laptops from HP. These laptops have been given to Housing Catalyst Villages and to Latinx families from Hickory Village, Poudre Valley Mobile Homes and Harmony Village. The goal of this effort is to help bridging the digital divide in vulnerable communities. Outreach and other staff are working with Larimer County and neighboring public libraries to improve and expand digital inclusion and access throughout the county.

AUGUST

Africa Garcia (August 2021)

Virtual Storytime:

Aliento Perruno

Phone-A-Story:

- Pájaro Amarillo

Programs & Events:

- August 7th, Panes del Mundo: Tamales Dulces
- August 18th, Bookclub for Mortals
- August 28th, Family Resource Fair @ Aztlan Center

Committees & Teams:

- FRCC Diversity Committee
- LRC Unified Community Engagement
- Larimer County Digital Inclusion Design
- Adult Programming Team
- Access to Justice Task Force and Outreach Committee
- Customer Digital Experience

Professional Development:

- Webinar – Partnering to Meet Community Workforce Needs
- Dementia Friendly Spaces Training
- Webinar – Strengthen Patron Workforce Opportunities with Labor Market Information

Working on future programs:

- Met with Brenda and Lisa from ARO to brainstorm potential collaborations
- Met with a representative from University Village to plan computer classes
- Scheduled Spanish computer classes in collaboration with PSD
- Met with PSD to organize a Parent Literacy Engagement series
- Updated HB volunteer job descriptions and shared with Audrey who is reaching out to volunteers
- Met with Emma Martin from The Winslow to talk about potential programs together. Currently planning an “info night” to show residents how to download eBooks (and other library resources).
- Met with Alianza NORCO to plan bilingual Advance Directives workshop (11/2) and potential Citizenship workshop (working on that)
- Día de Muertos events & planning
- Revive your pride! On 9/19. Working with Communications to figure out library swag, activities, materials, etc.

Ludy Rueda's Report

- During August, I have been planning big fall programs: The Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Rafael Lopez Community Mural and the IMAGINANTES program, and Día de Muertos programs and community celebration. I'm very grateful of our Communications Department whose support has been fundamental in the planning of those programs.



- The Commissioner's Office invited our District to be part of a bilingual Storytime with Commissioners Kristen Stephens and John Kefalas during Larimer County Farmers Market. It was a great opportunity to engage with our representatives and our community and to create new connections.

- As we get ready for a new season, a thoroughly revision of programs and events offered by our department was done in order to support the efforts of preparing the new budget. I also helped preparing the Children's Programming team's budget.

- Our partnership with Larimer County Sentencing Department has allowed us to provide "Welcome back to school" kits to many children in underserved communities. These kits consist in a beautifully arrange bund of notebooks and art supplies. Children and adults have been very appreciative of this special gift from the Library to our patrons. A shout-out to Rob Stansbury who has helped transporting the kits.

From Irish Elementary School

- "Muchísimas gracias por los hermosos kits que nos trajiste. A nuestras maestras y alumnos les encantó. Estamos agradeciendo por nuestra maravillosa biblioteca. (Thank you so much for the beautiful kits you brought us. Our teachers and students loved them! We are grateful for our marvelous Library)"

- Storytime's schedule has been completed. 10 different schools and early childhood centers will get monthly visits this school year starting in September.
- I have been recruiting teens for the Library's Teen Council meeting happening next month. These teens have been part of the IMAGINANTES program and have shown interest on being part of the teen program planning and teen book collection development.

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

Summer Reading wrap-up: This year's summer reading challenge, Tails and Tales, ended on August 15. Teen Services Librarian Jenny Thurman reported **552 teens** registered for SRC this year. 319 logged that they read 10 hours, a 58% completion rate. 466 teens logged 10 hours of reading in 2020; 1110 in 2019. **2,834 children** registered for the program this year, attended dozens of outdoor and virtual programs and earned hundreds of prize books (final tally TBD). 37 children, 21 teens and 10 adults picked up **grand prizes** from CTL during August.

By Currie Meyer





Shelving reduction and reconfiguration project completed: In order to provide an improved customer experience, Collections Manager Tova Aragon, former CTL Circulation Supervisor Angela James, current CTL Circulation Supervisor Xochil Arellano and I collaborated on a months-long plan to reduce and reconfigure 13 stacks in the adult print area of CTL. **Goals included: improve access to the hold shelf, increase space for traffic flow, provide better browsing for customers and improve sightlines.** To achieve these goals, 13 six-shelf columns were removed, collections were shifted, reduced, redistributed and relocated. The hold shelf was moved to a highly visible, easily accessed location steps from the entryway. The extra space, visibility and easy access has been well-

received by customers and staff.

660 free Back to School kits given away in August: Clients of Larimer County Alternative Sentencing/Useful Public Service assembled the kits, containing markers, safe scissors, notebooks, glue and crayons, bundled them with colorful ribbons and a tag saying, “Happy Back to School!”. Amy Holzworth partnered with the agency to distribute the kits at no cost to the Library. Children and parents were charmed!



More August children’s services in highlights from Amy Holzworth, CTL Children’s Librarian:

Storytime at the Gardens on Spring Creek, August 11: Third of three summer storytimes. **109 people** enjoyed dancing, singing, spelling, and stories including 63 bilingual attendees associated with Poudre School District Early Childhood Education.

Storytime with County Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally at the Farmer’s Market August 28.

Circulation Supervisor Xochil Arellano reports she has been focused on maintaining efficient and service-demanded levels of **staffing** in August. She managed turnover and absence due to COVID-related issues among a handful of staff again this month. Xochil hired **two new CERs** in August and coordinated a half-day ACS training. Xochil also served on the Learning Organization Team to present **virtual Staff Day** on the morning of August 13.

HARMONY LIBRARY

By Ken Draves

JULY

Harmony Library building upgrades including upgraded HVAC, carpet, and painting, are on schedule and nearly completed. We reopen to the public on July 6. In the following couple of weeks the new HVAC system will be calibrated by the contractor.

Business Services (Matt West, Business Services Librarian)

- Seattle Public Library Meeting (scope of services)
- Training for C&S Supply
- Women Owned Business certification help for client
- SRC Caravan
- Proquest Trial w/ Molly Thompson for Statistical Abstract of the United States

- Pro quest statistical abstract trial with Molly Thompson
- Weeding 600s per Kim Doran at Harmony during closure
- Foreign Glass Manufacturers and Research for Distillery
- Research and consultation for SCORE clients
- General business reference questions forwarded by library staff
- QR codes for Money Matters

AUGUST

Harmony Library Refresh

Along with getting a new HVAC system installed over the summer, the Harmony Library has been remodeled. Stop by to see the new paint, carpet, and sliding glass doors. Coming soon: a new roof in October.

East Room

The computer lab at the Harmony Library has been repurposed into a flexible meeting space called the East Room. The space is available for PRPLD and FRCC staff to reserve for meetings and events. When the room is not reserved, the room is open for group study and collaboration. The room contains the following:

- 5 tables
- 24 chairs
- Projector & screen
- Mobile whiteboard

Monthly Report August 2021 / Business Services—Matt West

Research and consultations for local businesses including follow up appointments

SBDC Clients and research:

- Demographic info for local sandwich franchise and 5 locations for a buy out and bank loan process for underwriting research to secure loan
- New welding company business startup help
- Existing plumbing company looking to relocate
- Research for company designing new app
- Met with Council Tree staff to go over business services and provide a Q&A session
- Day of the Dead planning meeting with the staff at the Gardens at Spring Creek
- Meetings on bilingual business services for Old Town Library
- Grow with Google exploration
- Meeting with Economic Development for City and business partners
- Larimer County IDE board meeting on August 2nd
- Research for SBDC on new businesses in Larimer County
- Poudre School District Foundation Meeting (brainstorming with new superintendent)
- Meeting with CSU School of Business on new online Startup Space

- Meeting with CSU I4E on embedding library databases and research for Venture Validator programs
- Money Matters Investment Basics Class
- Foothills Mall Town Hall

Programming:

- Foothills Activity Center - elementary kids (offsite storytimes)
- Villages on Plum - preschoolers (offsite storytimes)
- SRC storytimes at Harmony through mid-August
- Organized logistics for SRC kids' prizes drawing
- Fall children's programming planning and scheduling

Children's Services reported by Jennifer Zachman:

- 2022 Programming Budget meeting with Programming Coordinator and Children's Librarians
- Monthly children's programming meeting
- Webinar - using Census data for children's programming (Aug. 31)
- Webinar - Virtual field trips programming (Aug. 31)
- Creating two new storytime boxes
- Decisions and purchases for remaining 2021 programming funds

General:

- Attended Virtual Staff Day
- Dementia-Friendly Training, live virtual session

OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

Programs and Services

- Monday morning outdoor programs at OTL were a hit with families and included drum circles, talented border collies, music, stories and movement.
- Deidre's Staying Active for Older Adults had adults moving under the Library Park canopy.
- Meg collaborated with the City on additional Know Your City programs, including one that gave people a walking tour of Old Town Art in Public Places and another walking tour at Kestrel Fields Natural Area. Meg also continues planning for Book Fest.
- The library's internal Sharepoint site, Staff Cache, continues to grow as departments deploy their content onto the site. Kristen and Kindra continue their work on the site buildout and staff awareness/training.
- The Book Bike has been out and about all summer, with trips to the Boys and Girls Club, City Natural Areas, Northside Aztlan, Foothills Activity Center and more.

Ongoing projects in support of the strategic plan

- Larimer County Digital Inclusion project has been named Digital Roots. PRPLD is now a Northstar Digital site and plans continue to develop for Digital Inclusion week starting Oct. 4. EWD is now offering drop-in career help at OTL twice a month. Kristen investigated PCs for People and worked with SA to revamp the library's computer services web page.
- OTL Remodel – We are under contract for furniture and GC services. StudioTrobe has submitted a permit application with the City, estimated at 6 weeks out. WSI has ordered new furniture for the

OTL computer lab as well as the furniture for the remodel. OTL's roof replacement is scheduled for October.

- ESL Mentoring service continues to grow and build community, along with supporting English language learning. Anne and Eileen hosted an ESL learning pairs social at Spring Canyon Park, with about 50 participants from the program. Anne has also expanded the program to including 1:1 tutoring for community members with a scheduled Citizenship exam.
- Eileen toured HPLD's MOVE department with PRPLD's Outreach team and Ken in order to learn more about their outreach vehicles. We learned they were SWEET!
- Eileen met with representatives from the City regarding supporting a Spanish-language Business and Entrepreneur Center at OTL.
- Holly and her team worked with Facilities and Collections to move stacks and open up more floor space for OTL customers. The changes are subtle but impactful.



Staffing – OTL said a fond farewell to Ian H., who accepted a library manager position in the Midwest.