Central Library Monthly Report

December 2022

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Library Manager

Services & Collection

- **Local History & Genealogy** – Dan posted several interesting items to the LH/G Facebook page, including the 1965 discovery of a 12,000 year-old mastodon tusk in Onondaga Valley by a worker at Saunders’ Gravel Quarry. Dan also received 24 requests for vital records in November, which is an unusually high number. Several of the vital records requests related to dual Italian/U.S. Citizenship applications.

- **TeenSpace** – Nan weeded out all the teen audiobooks and removed the shelving to create more seating space. She added a small table and 4 chairs, as well as 2 beanbag chairs which were refilled and transferred from KidSpace.

Programs

**For Children**

- **Storytime w/ Jackie, Thursdays @ 10:30** – (Attendance = 49)

- **Ihsan School Visit** – Ihsan School of Excellence came to the library in mid-November. Jackie, Nan, and Maggie made sure the group had a great visit, with crafts, storytime, KidSpace play, new library cards, and teen activities. (Attendance = 92)

- **Empower CNY Tutoring, Saturdays 1:30-3:00** – Free tutoring for kids in grades K-8, with volunteer high school tutors. (Attendance = 40)

**For Teens**

- **Teen Advisory Board** – Nan spoke with TeenSpace users about what they would like to see in their space. She received requests for games including Elden Ring and the new Call of Duty Black Ops, which we will try to purchase in the New Year. (Attendance = 8)

Library Visits.... 4,972
KidSpace Visits.... 654
Digital Circulation.... 4,856
Total Circulation.... 12,266
Computer Use.... 1,627
Reference.... 1,227
**For Adults**

- **Talk to a Lawyer, Tuesdays at 12:00** – Patrons can drop in for free legal information, assistance, and representation in civil legal matters. (Attendance = 12)
- **Weekly programs w/Arc of Onondaga, Wednesdays at 9:30** – Each week, Arc groups visit Central Library for storytimes with Jackie and crafts in the MakerSpace with Trudi. (Attendance = 40)
- **Drop-In Tech Help** – Patrons can get help from staff and volunteers 5 days a week with all their technology questions, including personal tablets and phones. Tasks we helped patrons with this month included Google Docs and Twitter instruction, resume formatting, and ID.me account creation. (Attendance = 39)
- **Yoga with Dan, Tuesday evenings** – Yoga instructor Dan Nichols provides this calming program to our patrons on the second and third Tuesdays of the month. (Attendance = 4)
- **Community Health Resources** – Health organizations provide twice-monthly tabling at the library. Organizations include The Prevention Network, Helio Health, Syracuse Healthy Start, Syracuse Surge Initiative, Planned Parenthood, and the Onondaga County Health Department. This month, groups met with about 86 patrons to talk about their services.
- **Tuesday Reels Movie Matinee, Tuesday 11/22** – We showed “Indian Horse” in November, and had hot chocolate provided by Stephanie Pestillo of Fidelis Care. (Attendance = 8)

**Staff**

- Kate Kisselstein joined our team in November, as our new Librarian I for Local History. Welcome aboard, Kate!

**Outreach & Collaboration**

- Jackie and Maggie are planning outreach programs with the Green Lakes education staff. They have worked with park employees to plan themes and activities, with a rotation of OCPL staff visiting the park each month beginning in January 2023.
- Central was the site of an I-81 hiring event in early November, focusing on Syracuse City and Onondaga Nation residents. Representatives from the NYS DOT, construction unions, SUNY EOC, and Deputy Mayor Sharon Owens spoke about the importance of hiring locally, and attendees were able to circulate and get information on career opportunities. Almost 100 people attended, and this was just the first in a series of similar events around the community.
- In early November, we received some equipment from the Virtual Court Access Program (VCAP). This was a project that got stalled by the pandemic shutdown, but Dawn has been working to bring it to some of the city libraries, including Central, and the addition of our Telehealth Booth helps make this a great time to launch the program. Mark Coolbeth from the IT Department at the Onondaga County Courthouse dropped off a laptop and printer/scanner on a rolling cart, which we installed in the Telehealth Booth. We will now be a location on the court’s list of places to refer individuals who need to make virtual court appearances.
The Year in Review & A Look Ahead...

As we look forward to 2023, I took some time to reflect on new goals we want to achieve, and what things we’re doing that we want to keep doing. This year, I worked some of our Central Library Plan of Service priorities into our goals, along with some new things we hope to achieve. I am so lucky to work with a staff that is dedicated to serving our community and our library system, and does it all with kindness, insight, and strong teamwork. We have grown by leaps and bounds as we emerge from the fog of the pandemic, and I’m excited about what we will do in the next 12 months.

We were able to hire new staff in key positions this year, including TeenSpace, Access Services, and Local History. These staff members took on programming initiatives that helped move the library forward during this “comeback” year. We identified services that need extra support, most importantly tech help. Since the pandemic, many services that our patrons used to get over the phone or in person have migrated to online systems. Many of these systems can be clumsy to navigate, or simply take a long time to work through, such as job applications and forms for social services. We took on a staff of volunteers through Literacy CNY’s Digital Navigator program, and also identified Central staff who are comfortable enough to teach tech skills and positioned them at services desks during busy hours.

It has been 6 years since our renovation, so one of my goals was to assess how we are using our space. We now offer a Telehealth Booth, which is a privacy space where patrons can engage in telemedicine, do Zoom job interviews, and many other services that require greater privacy than our other meeting rooms. Combined with our tech help service, we can now be a stronger workforce development center, taking our patrons from resume creation to filling out job applications to attending a Zoom interview. We have also revamped our MakerSpace in the past year. Previously, MakerSpace was an all-day space, largely self-navigated, but with a somewhat overwhelming collection of materials and technology. It could be difficult for our staff to learn all the features, let alone patrons wanting to use the MakerSpace. This year, we created a more focused programming space marketed toward specific audiences.

During the shutdown, it was very helpful for me to have documents saved with emergency contact info for staff, policies and procedures, and other information that would help me do my job from home. I also created several new documents over the course of our reopening. This year I took the time to pull all of that information together, edit it, and create a Central Library Pandemic Operations Plan. This plan is a great resource based on our recent experience, and can help inform decisions about future emergencies.

One of my biggest goals this year was to get all Central staff trained on Leap – the internet-based version of our Polaris checkout software. I gave my staff a set of training materials, a checklist, and 3 months in which to completely switch to Leap at all information desks. By October 3rd, every member of my staff had learned Leap and returned their signed checklists. In the process, we all learned from each other, and are now poised to help other libraries get on board with Leap.

Along with all of our Central Library-focused goals and achievements, my staff continue to support the OCPL system. They devoted hundreds of hours to work in the Sorting Room and Interlibrary Loan, took on community distribution responsibilities, trained in Special Technologies and Adaptive Resources (STAR) to help fill the gap when our previous STAR librarian retired, and took great pride in our system support role as outlined in the Central Library Plan of Service.

As for what’s in store for 2023 – read on for Central Library’s Blueprint for the Future!
Welcome to Central Library’s
Blueprint for the Future

A one-year plan to promote three core tenets of our library: Literacy, Access, and Inclusion. In accordance with OCPL’s mission and Central Library’s current Plan of Service, we strive to promote and maintain a culture of curiosity, a space for community dialogue, and a welcoming seat for everyone at our table. As we continue to recover from the effects of 2020’s devastating pandemic, we are focused on building a resilient staff that can support not only Central’s collections and services, but continue to be a strong support structure for the entire library system. And above all, we are focused on excellent public service and a community mindset that embraces the needs of patrons and colleagues.

OCPL Mission Statement
Onondaga County Libraries prepare our community for a bright future by creating opportunities, empowering people, and inspiring ideas.

Overview of the Central Library Plan of Service
The Central Plan of Service is a 5-year commitment to provide support to the entire library system, based on OCPL’s Plan of Service, in the following specific areas:

- **Resource Sharing**
  - Cooperative Collection Development
    - Providing collection improvement and maintenance services to ensure Central’s collection can support the needs of all 32 libraries
- **Delivery**
  - Helping in the Sorting and Delivery Department approximately 7-10 hours per week, depending on need
- **Interlibrary Loan**
  - Helping in the Interlibrary Loan Department approximately 20 hours per week, with at least one dedicated Central staff member
- **Bulk Loan**
  - Supporting branch and member libraries’ outreach efforts by providing a bulk loan service
- **Local History & Genealogy**
  - Programs, resources, and training are provided to branch and member libraries
  - Two full-time and several part-time staff are trained to help patrons research genealogy and local history items of interest
- **Special Client Groups**
  - Special Technologies & Adaptive Resources (STAR)
    - Providing equipment for braille printing, JAWS and ZoomText software, a braille and described video collection, and support for patrons with disabilities
- **Professional Development and Training**
  - Providing yearly training in core competencies and services, open to all OCPL staff
- **Coordinated Services**
  - Central is home to a kit lending service for programming librarians, specializing in children’s programming kits
The Blueprint

Central Library’s blueprint for 2023 will encompass goals in our three focus areas: **Literacy**, **Access**, and **Inclusion**. These areas complement each other, creating a big-picture view of what we plan to achieve in 2023. Assessment will include tracking our Plan of Service throughout the year, staff and community feedback, and the flexibility to add to or adjust our goals as we go.

**Literacy**

At Central, we maintain a focus on our core services to lend materials and technologies, as well as provide readers’ advisory and tech help for using and enjoying these materials.

- **Hiring**
  - Literacy Aide
    - We will hire a part-time Literacy Aide dedicated to youth services. This person will support current programming and will promote storytelling to children and teens, as well as helping select literacy materials. This goal also supports **Inclusion**, with sensory storytimes and other support for neurodiversity.
  - Local History
    - We will hire a part-time Librarian Assistant for Local History & Genealogy. This person will assist LH/G librarians in answering research questions for our patrons, helping with family trees and other genealogy projects, and providing program and collection support.

- **Collection**
  - We will onboard new staff with goals to join our Adopt-a-Collection program in their area(s) of interest. All collection input is helpful not only to our patrons in-house who look for opportunities to discover new authors, but to patrons across the county who borrow Central’s materials. This goal also supports **Access** to curated materials both in print and digital formats, and **Inclusion** by bringing a variety of diverse viewpoints to the selection of materials.

- **Digital Literacy**
  - Increasingly a need among our patrons, we will continue to find new avenues of tech help support. We will reconfigure our staffing model to allow desk staff with strong technology skills to devote more time to helping patrons navigate technology. This goal also supports **Access** and **Inclusion** by being a link in the community chain of services that help patrons in our neighborhood who may not have access to technology to sign up for social services, develop a resume, fill out job applications, and attend virtual interviews and courses.

- **Programming**
  - KidSpace
    - In 2022, we increased outreach efforts to the Zoo, the Everson, the Samaritan Center, and other local venues, with a focus on book giveaways and storytimes. We saw positive feedback via Facebook, as well as organizations that liked seeing us out in the community and called to request our presence at their events. We will continue to connect and offer our presence, as well as inviting more schools
to make visits to Central. This goal also supports increased **Access** to library programs and services by bringing them directly into the community.

- **TeenSpace**
  - TeenSpace staff will work with SU students and community volunteers to offer a series of workshops on job readiness and life skills for teens. This goal supports a variety of literacy skills, including reading, technology, financial, and problem-solving.

- **Adult Services**
  - Local History & Genealogy will offer workshops and one-on-one instruction for patrons who are working on their family trees, as well as digital literacy instruction in LH/G-related databases. This goal supports digital and traditional literacy as well as **Access** to our collections of rare materials and librarians to help navigate these collections.

- **Training**
  - Central Library will offer 4 training sessions for the year, on topics of interest to OCPL staff including Polaris Leap, customer service, and databases. This goal supports digital literacy for staff, who can in turn provide better service to patrons in these areas.

**Access**

Although often overlooked as a service, the space itself is something Central Library has generous amounts of which to offer to our patrons. As was made even clearer during the pandemic, our community needs and appreciates the unique spaces we have on all three floors to explore technology, study, gather, read, and attend virtual meetings.

- **Space as a Service**
  - We will reopen the MakerSpace, with a different set of goals than we had pre-pandemic. The space will be a combination of workshop and programming space that can be booked by librarians and community volunteers, as well as one-day “free play” access on Thursdays. This goal also supports digital **Literacy** in the areas of emerging technologies, 3D printing, and music production.
  - We will use our Telehealth Booth for an increased number of services, including vaccine and testing clinics, and virtual court access.

- **Hiring**
  - We will hire a part-time Librarian I to increase efficiency of service on the first floor. This person will be part of the Access Services team, and will allow us to schedule 3 staff members at the first floor desk during the busiest times of the day. This goal also supports digital **Literacy**, as this staff member will provide tech help services during their shifts.
Inclusion
Central encourages our co-workers with a wide array of diverse backgrounds and experiences to give their input and skills in designing programs with an equally diverse patron attendance in mind.

- Central LIFTS
  - Improve and expand our LIFTS (Library Initiatives for a Thriving Syracuse) program, adding new community partners, particularly in the areas of technology instruction and health education. In 2022, we developed a twice monthly tabling program with several health organizations, and also established 5-day tech help. There is still a big demand for both of these services, and in 2023 we will continue to expand our efforts. This goal also supports Access to resources that go beyond books and computers, as well as digital and health Literacy.

- Workforce Development
  - Since we reopened post-pandemic, we have had several opportunities to invite companies to Central for hiring events, during which they helped patrons fill out job applications. We have partnered with Amazon, UPS, and most recently City Hall for an I-81 hiring event focusing on residents in our zip code and members of the Onondaga Nation. In 2023, we will expand our offerings and get the word out that we are open to organizations coming to Central to help our patrons find employment. This goal also supports Literacy and gives us another avenue of tech help support provided by organizations that can help patrons navigate their websites and applications.

- Free Legal Help
  - We will maintain and expand the legal resources we offer to our patrons. We hope to add another day a week to our Volunteer Lawyer program. We also received equipment from the Virtual Court Access Program (VCAP), allowing us to use the Telehealth Booth for patrons who need to make virtual court appearances. This goal also supports Access to the space and technology our patrons need to attend their court appearances while maintaining privacy and safety.

- STAR
  - We will train additional staff in Special Technologies and Adaptive Resources (STAR), in order to help patrons with disabilities. This goal also supports patrons’ Access to the support they need, as well as staff Literacy in digital and community resources for people with disabilities.