

N E W C A S T L E



LIBRARY DISTRICT

QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

Administrator's Message

Greetings! I am Carly Searcy, your New Castle Library District Administrator.

I'm originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan. My first job working in a library was at Kalamazoo Public Library in circulation. After that, I moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan and worked in the public library in both the Director's office as a secretary and later in public service. During this time, I attended the University of Michigan's School of Information, where I earned my master's degree, and I also worked in the Undergraduate Library at the University.



Since earning my MIS, I've worked for the Internet Public Library, Jackson Community College (MI), the Allen County Public Library (IN), McNeese State University (LA) and the Calcasieu Parish Public Library (LA). I've also worked with an educational consortium as a project manager, as a volunteer services director for a youth-serving agency, and on a community-wide shared data project to improve educational outcomes. I am also proud to have served as an Americorps VISTA working on college access. The common threads in all of these positions are education and service to the community.

I'm honored to be doing this important work with you. I look forward to getting you know you and your library and learning how I can be of service to you.

The library is dangerous—
Don't go in. If you do

You know what will happen.
It's like a pet store or a bakery—

Every single time you'll come out of there
Holding something in your arms.

~ Alberto Rios, "Don't Go Into the Library" ~

Lessons learned from a first-time Summer Reading Programmer

by Neva Lila

Planning for a Summer Reading Program is daunting any year, and harder for any first-time programmer.

Throw in the uncertainty of a pandemic, it becomes almost impossible to plan a successful Summer Reading Program. Yet, one way or another, we all did it! Congratulations!

Personally, I look at this year as a great learning experience. I learned so many not-to-do's this year that I can at least be grateful for the knowledge gained from learning the hard way. Planning a bigger program that umbrellas smaller weekly programs, all while maintaining regular duties throughout the three months of summer is grueling to say the least! Yet, it is important not to forget the reason why a Summer Reading Program is essential to our community. There is a family out there that may not have the resources to go on vacation this summer. However, they do have the library which does have free programs going on during the summer, and there are activities that they can attend weekly to keep their kids entertained and engaging in enriching experiences that contribute to the goal of developing a passion for lifelong learning.

Honestly, that family was me, a stay-at-home mom with very limited resources, and I made it my goal to not make my kids feel like they were missing out on experiences other kids were getting by going to every program possible. Their summers were full of fun and adventure provided by the library! But now I am on the other side and see how hard it is to develop and execute an array of programs for an entire summer - let alone a summer that is trying to recover from a pandemic that may or may not have gone away!

Here are some of the lessons I learned from attempting to provide a somewhat normal Summer Reading Program.

- **Start my planning EARLIER!**

If I thought I started early enough, I most likely did not! I need to start even earlier.

Now, since I knew our community would not appreciate a virtual-only Summer Reading Program again this year, my colleagues and I waited until we had a better understanding of the possible constraints we might be under before beginning to plan. It was hard to see into the future and guess where the state of the pandemic would be, but when it seemed like more things might be opening to in-person options, we decided to offer three different alternatives and let each family decide what they felt most comfortable with. If they preferred outdoor programs, we provided a weekly park program. If they preferred a virtual setting, we provided a virtual storytime. And if they wanted to actually come into the library, we provided safe in-person programs in the building. BUT I did not have time to plan the programs as I would have liked since we had to delay many of these decisions.

- **Developing all the flyers, informational sheets, calendars and advertising materials for a Summer Reading Program takes SO much longer than I realized!**

This is why it is so important to start earlier than one may initially feel is necessary.

This actually was my first lesson learned, and a hard lesson to learn, because every time I thought I had created enough materials, a new way of advertising our Summer Reading Program would arise, or a gap in the information we had created would appear. I realized that I needed to really think through all the best ways to educate the public about our Summer Reading Program before beginning to create all these materials.

- **I need not to forget about Social Media.**

Promoting programs through the events page of a social media platform takes longer than one may think!

- **Plan out all the ways I want to inform the community about our programs.**

Connect with school districts in the area, daycares and other community organizers to spread the word about our upcoming Summer Reading Program.

- **Be dedicated to planning the weekly programs EARLY.**

This is important so that I can feel confident in my execution of enriching programming, and more importantly - I WILL NOT HAVE TIME FOR ANY PLANNING LATER.

I will not have the time once programming has started to plan, prep, conduct the program, tear down and clean up from the program, take the necessary time to do a self assessment, and then turn around to plan for the next one.

I am positive my list here misses many necessary elements of running a successful Summer Reading Program! Looking back, do any of you have any important lessons learned after your first Summer Reading Program? I would love to hear them. It would be wonderful to generate a helpful Do's and Don'ts list for new Youth Services librarians running their first Summer Reading Program. I'll be honest, I always heard librarians planned early, some very early, for their Summer Reading Program, but no one explained why. I learned the hard way. But thankfully, it will be lessons I learned and will not repeat!

Did I miss anything? (Obviously I did!) Please send your lessons learned to my email at childrens_director@ncdlc.org.

Reference Shelf: Reader's Advisory Resources

by Apryl Gilliss

As you may know, readers' advisory is a service which involves suggesting titles to a patron through direct or indirect means based on their individual interests and tastes. Helping patrons discover leisure materials is the core of readers' advisory services.

In the readers' advisory interview, you want to engage the patron in a conversation that elicits information about their reading interests and habits. You can ask them which genres they like or what they enjoyed about the last book they read, for instance.

It is a great feeling to help a patron find a fiction or nonfiction book to read, a movie to watch, or a music CD or an audiobook to listen to, for their own enjoyment. Readers' advisory takes practice, but there are resources available to help.

Among the most popular question I get from patrons is, what is the next book in a series by a particular author? I have found the site www.bookseriesinorder.com to be the most useful. You can just put in the Google search box, "[author's name] books in order." The sites www.fantasticfiction.com and www.goodreads.com are also helpful. Sometimes the author's own website provides a nice, printable list of books in order by series.

If a patron has a favorite author or is looking for other books similar to those written by a particular author, books by other authors they may also like are called readalikes. If you just put in the Google search book, “[author’s name] readalikes,” for example, your results will include helpful lists that have already been put together by others and online resources such as www.literature-map.com and www.goodreads.com.

A few other online sites and blogs that I have found to be helpful include the following:

- www.whichbook.net - This site enables millions of combinations of factors and then suggests books which most closely match your needs. You can choose a range of what you’re looking for in a book using a slider. For example, you can enter a range between “happy” and “sad” or a range between “no sexual content” to “explicit sexual content” and you’ll see suggested titles.
- www.whatshouldireadnext.com - Enter a book you like and the site will analyze a huge database of real readers’ favorite books to provide book recommendations and suggestions for what to read next. There’s also a blog with interviews of authors.
- www.bookriot.com - The largest independent editorial book site in North America, and home to a host of media, from podcasts to newsletters to original content, all designed around diverse readers and across all genres.
- www.fictiondb.com - At this site you will find simple lists of books in order by author and by series. You can also search their extensive fiction database using a wide variety of criteria. Find books when you don’t remember the title.
- kitchensinkra.com - This blog provides a list of linked genre tags as well as posts that offer lists of readalikes. The authors are four librarians who believe that everyone is a reader and they will “use everything - even the kitchen sink! - to connect a person to their ideal book.”
- www.gnooks.com - This site will ask you which authors you like and then think about which other authors you might like too. It will make a suggestion, and then you click either “I like it,” “I don’t like it,” or “I don’t know,” with the next suggestion appearing, and so on.

I would also suggest checking out PA Power Library’s Books and Authors, powered by Gale’s What Do I Read Next? series. This resource is for readers from every level of reading proficiency and enables users to explore the endless possibilities and combinations of books, authors, genres, and topics from more than 240,000 titles. All books are recommended by librarians or other experts, are award winners, or appear on best seller lists.

IT News

by Ron Davis

Hello Everyone. I hope you are all doing well and staying healthy. It’s been busy with District requests to upgrade Workstations and Servers throughout the District. If you have Workstations or Servers that need upgrading. Please let me know so that I can get you on the Schedule. I would like to congratulate Amy Geisinger on her promotion to the OCL. I know she will do a fantastic job however she will be greatly missed here.

Teen Scene

by Sharon Savage

During May, I look forward to the blissfully warm, bucolic days spread before me like a fragrant field. I anticipate this season just as author Elizabeth von Arnim, "...and the summer seems as though it would dream on forever." I'm watching those clouds dance across the sky... Whoosh! It's August. Reality hits with a vengeance; my days of dreamy moodling and idle rest in the afternoon sun seem wasteful as September approaches like Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel!

Summer in our libraries is a busy, joy-filled interval from the remains of our year. Summer is "prime, beach-front property" for public libraries. Many children are excited about reading, discovering a new series or their next favorite book. My heart sings as I see a child with an arm-full of books! When they want to share what is especially meaningful about their favorites, that is my whipped cream with a cherry on top. Cue the brass band with cymbals crashing this summer as there are more teens (finally) coming back into the library! Teens with their arms filled with books! Teens other than Naomi Savage! Teens other than the home-educated ones! New Teens! Teens elevating the Young Adult circulation numbers! Sing it with me, "Interjections, show excitement or emotion... Woo!" (Schoolhouse Rock)

The City of New Castle Blueprint Communities Initiative alongside a group of community partners/stakeholders (including our library) brought back our Summer Playground Program after an absence of eleven years. Many of our neighborhood playgrounds suffer from neglect and misuse – previously alleviated by the occasional community clean-up. New Castle's Chief of Police, Bobby Salem implemented volunteer efforts to revitalize several of our playgrounds over the past three summers. This is a brilliant, inspiring effort to encourage our children to break away from their screens for a bit, get outdoors to discover the wonders of our natural world. Make Friends! Build Community!

I know the numbers are underwhelming for our first year back. I do believe the outcomes are worth our time and effort. I see connections being forged between some families, thus encouraging friendships where they didn't previously exist. I see the alleviation of fear and isolation.

One grandmother mentioned that her ten-year-old granddaughter was afraid to leave the house; she feared she would become ill. Another grandmother told me about deaths in their immediate family and how she is raising her ten-year-old granddaughter. These girls are now friends.



One came into our library for The Book Scavenger Club for the first time! She couldn't remember if she visited previously. One of these girls mentioned, "The Library day is my favorite day, because you LISTEN to us." I am old-school; I don't believe children need constant entertainment. I do believe they need to have conversations; I believe they need a listening ear. This is certainly the most challenging summer outreach that I have experienced. This is due to various reasons – many that I am still mentally processing, but it IS so necessary and important to lay this foundation for our children. When these children are then encouraged to visit and then welcomed into our library family, this opens a world of opportunities and experiences to develop the skills they need to become successful young adults.



Sometimes we need to look at what worked in the past to move on toward the future. Building community within our neighborhoods. The families need to know who from their neighborhood will be at the parks each day, the partners need to come alongside a program managed by the Parks & Recreation Department. Parks & Rec need to have dedicated staff (AmeriCorps or Interns) at each site.

Our public libraries are uniquely situated to build vital links and connections within the communities we serve. We must not abdicate the essential service we provide for the edification of our communities. We are the Lighthouse in a storm.

I am uber-excited for our Youth Services meeting on September 3rd! I am so looking forward to hearing about the wonderfulness you provided to your communities this summer. Have a lovely remains of the summer... sit in the shade and muddle a bit... watch the clouds dance across the sky.

Grants as Ways to Support Your History Needs

by Morgan Smith

Since I started at New Castle Public Library a little under a year ago, I have been getting acquainted with the History Room that the library maintains. I have been taking inventory, rearranging collections, preparing the storage area, and seeing what needs repaired. Throughout this process, I was made aware by a co-worker that there were even more items that were not catalogued that were housed in a storage room I hadn't seen. This co-worker also proposed that we find a grant so that we could get the funds to preserve, organize, catalog, and display the collection that had been in cardboard boxes since the 1960s. I found this to be an excellent idea, only I had no idea where to start. The process took a long time, and we didn't even find the right grant until just a couple of months ago; however, I did learn a few tips that I can pass along from this experience.

- Take your time and find the right grant that works for your project. There are many grants out there, but you want to make sure that your specific project meets the criteria. You can always apply for more than one grant and if at first you don't succeed, try again. But, just keep in mind that you want to work with an organization that values your effort and your materials so just make sure that the grant you apply for compliments your project. (It took about 8 or 9 months to find one that fit our project!)
- If possible, assemble a team to help you apply for the grant. I was so grateful that I had my co-worker, Jillian, to help me fill in parts of the application, especially since I didn't have any prior experience with this sort of program. Grants can be tedious and time-consuming, so assembling multiple people to help is a good idea. Different strengths and different perspectives can help with the application and help divide the workload.

- Be concise and detailed with your wording about the project you want funded. It is essential to reveal the importance of your project, and don't be afraid to let your passion for the project and the materials show. The more details you give, the better the organization who holds the grant will understand your project.

I knew a little bit about grants before this process, but what I didn't realize was that both finding and applying for a grant can be a very time-consuming and detailed process. Thankfully, I had help from a few people along the way (shout-out to Jillian, Apryl, and Amy). The most important tip I learned though, is do not be afraid to ask questions; whether it's help finding the correct grant, writing it, or just proofreading, applying is a lot of work and breaking it down and getting help is essential.

By no means do I know everything about grant writing, but this experience did teach me quite a bit. I still have a lot to learn, but if you ever need any help, have any questions or want to share your own unique experience, please don't hesitate to contact me at msmith@ncdlc.org.

Around the District

Butler Area Public Library (BAPL) ...

- BAPL was once again asked to participate in the Public Library Association's Inclusive Internship Initiative. Their summer intern is named Chloe Robinson, and she is a student at Butler Area Senior High School. Her project for the internship is a series of workshops called the Body Image Boot Camp.



From left to right: Intern Chloe Robinson, Director Lori Hinderliter, Youth Services Librarian Tiffany Harkleroad.

- BAPL received the Pa Forward(R)/NNLM Virtual Children's Program Grant for my Healthy Habits with Daniel Tiger program, as well as the PA Forward Virtual Program Grant for Margaret Hewitt's Family History Friday video series. Both of these programs are available on Niche Academy.

Slippery Rock Community Library (SRCL)...

- Slippery Rock has good news! They recently had an intern from Chatham University working with them over the summer and they completed the plantings they received as a part of the Pollinator Grant. This grant was written by the Butler County Conservation District for the SRCL. Over 300 native pollinators and 8 cubic feet of mulch arrived in early June. Natalie and members of the community planted the pollinators (flowers and shrubs), spread the mulch and planted trees in the memorial garden. Then Natalie applied for and provided the necessary documentation for the library to become a Certified Wildlife Habitat.



Welcome to the Family!!



Introducing Owen Charles McKibbin, born July 9 at 11:37am, 9lb 1oz. So far he is a very good sleeper and his big brother Noah is his biggest fan. Owen and Noah are the sons of **Andrea Kiehl McKibbin**, library director of the **Ford City Public Library**.

Caitlyn Boland, library director of the **Mars Area Library**, along with her husband Ryan, daughter Emilia, and son Wesley, welcomed Finnegan Reid to their family on August 2, 2021.



Megan Babal is the new Adult Services Manager at the **Cranberry Public Library**. Prior to this new role she was the Public and Outreach Services Librarian at Grove City College for 8 years. Megan received her M.L.I.S. from the University of Pittsburgh in 2012 and holds a B.A. in History from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is excited to join the Cranberry Public Library and serve her new community. When she isn't working she enjoys reading historical fiction, genealogy research, spending time outside and playing with her family's dog, a border collie mix named Kellie.

Just for Laughs



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