

HOW'D WE DO?

JANUARY 2021

1. Submitted at CTL: Hi Currie--Yesterday at curbside book pick-up we also scored take-and-go comic books and basket-making crafts. In the time of virtual learning and soooo many screens and apps, this effort by the library to provide hands-on activities means a lot. It was a happy surprise for Maya & Graeme. Both have enjoyed creating comics over the past few months -- so that project is a slam dunk! It sounds like they will make the baskets as gifts for family. Thank you so much! Wishing you and yours restful, peaceful holidays.
2. Submitted at CTL: Since I have you, just wanted to say thanks for all the storytime videos online over the last few months and also for putting together a safe storytime option for the little ones. We REALLY appreciate it. Adelilne still asks to watch the rainbow one you made.
3. Per Manager Currie Meyer: At Council Tree Library a customer asked for Librarian Amy's help in finding information for her school-aged daughter on a famous female aviator from Colorado. Amy helped her while she was here at CTL, and later followed up with an email that listed many online resources. The customer responded with her thanks. Customer's comment: Thank you SO much Amy! You have been a huge help! Thank you so much for taking the time to help us find some wonderful sources! We really appreciate your time and expertise!
4. Submitted at CTL: I hope you all are well! I was wondering if it would be possible for a librarian to pick out books for my 5 year old. We would typically check out 20-30 books per week at the council tree library. We've worked with many of the story time staff and Drew has been very helpful with finding books for Torsten in the past. Let me know if you think this may be a possibility:). He's not picky and just loves to read!! Thanks for all you do!
5. Submitted at CTL:
Dear Dear PVLD, Thank you for your fine service throughout the Pandemic. Your creativity with Curbside delivery at Council Tree has been amazing. Prospector working very well as well. Looking forward to full reopening! Happy New Year to PVLD Staff
6. Kudos from a customer about OTL Library Assistant Erin *Lucero*
Good Morning Ms. Lucero, Thank you for offering a fun and educational activity! With school being the way it is right now; I am constantly searching for learning opportunities. My son loves cars and building. The first thing he asked this morning was when he could make the car. He will be excited to hear about the catapult activity next month. We are grateful to you and the whole library system for supporting us, especially through this challenging, strange time. With much appreciation!
7. Re: supporting my son with a disability
I have been saddened and frustrated by the library's lack of care for my son with bilateral microtia when it was open. My son, who is four, has bilateral microtia (in basic terms: has no ears) which makes most masks impossible for him to wear. He is also working on auditory training (we adopted him at two years of age, so we are working with speech and teaching him to listen since he could not hear much for the first two years of his life.) For him, he benefits greatly to have nothing on his face to help him grow in listening and communication. The

second best option is having a face shield so his face is still visible and his hearing device is unhindered. I have been accosted twice at the library with no regard given for his disability but how his is not wearing the correct mask! It makes me sad because he is loving books, but I have not felt like the public library of all places has been friendly and kind to him. I would like to see this change. People need to understand that people have disabilities which may hinder their ability to wear masks in the same way and they still deserve to be treated with respect and kindness.

RESPONSE from DEPUTY DIRECTOR KEN DRAVES: Greetings. Thank you for sharing your recent concerns with us at the library district.

I am glad to hear that your son is finding a love of books. I am saddened to hear that you've not felt he's been treated kindly and in a welcoming way at the library. I hope I can offer some explanation regarding why the district currently requires face masks of all people in our facilities.

During most of the pandemic the library's doors were entirely closed to public entry, with our services either all virtual or available via curbside service. When we opened again for public entry, for public health reasons we opened with many restrictions. While open to the public we offered limited "grab and go" service. We offered very little of our normal seating, gathering and play areas, toys, interactives, computers, or furniture.

While open, in order to minimize risk, we encourage people to come in briefly, pick up materials, and not linger. None of this is how we operate normally, and it is not how we like to operate optimally, but it is the only way currently to allow public access while acknowledging and adapting to the deadly threat COVID-19 poses to our community.

While the end of the pandemic fortunately seems to be within sight now, I'm sure you know the crisis is far from over. In 2021 so far---fewer than three weeks--- there have been more than 1,500 new cases of COVID-19 in Larimer county, and many deaths.

The library is providing limited access, facilitating use of the library in a way that protects the health and safety of our community, including public, staff, and all of those people in their homes and families, so that everyone may be around to enjoy our libraries once we are able to reopen them fully.

The library district follows the public health guidance of the Larimer County Health Department, as well as the State of Colorado and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). None of the public health agencies recommend a plastic face shield as an adequate and safe substitute for a mask.

We understand that masks are not feasible or desirable for everyone, and to provide an alternative to physical entry when we do reopen on a limited basis, we will continue to offer other ways to use the library, including placing holds and picking items up curbside. We also offer digital options for children and caregivers such as virtual storytimes.

I understand that is not the same experience as physically browsing the shelves of the library in person, but it is what we can offer until we return to full service once it is safe to do so.

Please know we want to be welcoming to you and your son, and for him to use and love books and his library. If you want to discuss how we might do that better, given our current public health limitations, please let me know.

Also, if you would like to discuss ways the library can serve you and your son, or would like to talk with a children's librarian, please let me know. If you would like to talk, our librarians and I welcome the opportunity.

We are all so ready for a time when we can end all of the current public health restrictions we have in place related to the pandemic and return to full service. Best, Ken

8. Collection of Comments in Response to the Virtual LatinX Resource Fair that Community Services Manger Johanna Ulloa Helped Coordinate

- Awesome! I've heard from staff who attended that it was excellent.
- Fantastic work. I just left a meeting where someone reported it was the best training/information session they have EVER been a part of. That's a pretty great comment. I'll be working with Paul to get all the resources and hopefully the video add to the google site.
- It was truly impressive. Great work Liz, Genesis and Johanna on pulling together so many presenters. The presenters were so informative and the number of attendees spoke to everyone's interest in and desire for the resource information.
- Such a great job and great turnout!
- Just wanted to give a HUGE shout out to Genesis Galdean, Liz Orona, and Johanna Ulloa for coordinating and hosting two sessions of the DHS Disparities Action Committee: Virtual LatinX Resource Fair.

Special thanks to Library Services for lending us some really incredible presenters (and Johanna) who provided such valuable program information to our caseworker community. Everyone we SO impressed at what you all offer!

We had an incredible turn out of over 120 participants over 2 sessions and 14 presenters from community agencies who serve our LatinX community. Their commitment to help lead us as an agency to address disproportionality and disparities is really extraordinary. We're lucky to have amazing advocates as a part of the Disparities Action Committee. Really great work Genesis, Liz, and Johanna!

Here's a snippet of the feedback we got about the fair:

- It was awesome to hear about some new community resources as well as hear about some of the agencies we all know about, but didn't realize some of the other resources they offer. Thank you again!
- Oh my goodness,I cannot thank y'all enough for this fair! This has been a gap in my CW since I started and I am so impressed with the amount of resources that actually exist. This was incredible
- Thank you! I am looking forward to receiving the handouts. Very good resources!

Thanks!



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9. Re: Book Returns

Suggestion: I'm really frustrated that there are no more fees for the library books, I am on hold for a book that was due on Jan 6 and it is now Jan 16, there is no incentive to return a book if there are no fees, I am so confused why you would take away fees, I feel like the fees make people more accountable. I get fees all the time, but it makes me return a book way faster. I don't mind paying my fees once a year because I see it as a service to my Library to help with costs or whatever. So I would like it if there were fees. Thank you.

RESPONSE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SLIVKEN - Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts regarding the Poudre River Public Library District's decision to become fine free. We believe in providing equal access to knowledge and information for all. This means actively working to eliminate barriers to access and to encourage community-wide use of the Library's vital materials, resources, and services. The pandemic has further demonstrated how important access to library resources are for our community – for entertainment, for education and learning, for job searches, and much more. The Poudre River Public Library District now joins our neighboring library systems who are currently fine free- -Loveland Public Library, Berthoud Public Library District, Estes Valley Library District, Clearview Library District in Windsor, Red Feather Lakes Library District, High Plains Library District in Weld County, as well as most public libraries throughout Colorado.

I am sorry to read your reserve has still not been returned. Unfortunately, this happens all too often whether we are fine-free or assess fines. We do still have set lending periods with due dates, so customers cannot keep library materials forever without penalty. While customers won't be fined for keeping an item beyond it's due date, we want to remind everyone that other people are waiting to enjoy and use the item. We are increasing our overdue reminders for customers so we can encourage people to return their materials before they are considered "lost." After 21 days being overdue, the item is considered "lost" and customers will be billed for the replacement cost of the item plus a processing fee. After 28 days being overdue, a customer account may be turned over to a collection agency.

While we may not agree on this policy change, I do want to thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns. I hope you will continue to use the services and resources of the Poudre River Public Library District.

10. To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to express my frustration over recent changes to your library fine policy. When I first saw that you were getting rid of fines for overdue books, I thought it was great. What a thoughtful way to help people during the pandemic, by allowing them to cross one worry off their list. Plus, we're all

trapped inside, so we're likely reading more, or at least trying to. That's certainly been the case at my house. And of course, we're not able to be inside the library, browsing, interacting with your helpful staff, and returning our books promptly.

But yesterday, I received a very official looking notice that my account is going into collections if I don't return an overdue book immediately. Rather than simply paying overdue fines in order to keep a book (which is not renewable) a little longer to allow my teenager to finish it, I will now be forced to pry it out of her hands and rush it back, lest I be hounded by a collection's agent ... over a library book that is three weeks overdue.

It would have been nice, when you were announcing your PR-friendly 'no more overdue fines' policy, if you'd also mentioned that the system for recovering books would now involve collection agencies. I've been using the Poudre Library System for almost twenty years, and I've never had a threat of this sort. Are you really going to take action which could impact people's credit scores, ability to access a line of credit, and possibly their employability over unreturned library books? This is unacceptable. If unreturned books are becoming that much of a problem, please just reinstate the fines. It would be more humane and less damaging. I implore you to re-think the use of collection agencies for overdue books. It is entirely out of proportion with the level of transgression and could have a devastating financial impact on families. Thank you for your attention to this very concerning matter.

RESPONSES from EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SLIVKEN:

*#1 - Dear Ms. , My name is David Slivken and I serve as Executive Director of the Poudre River Public Library District. I want to let you know we are in receipt of your concern over the notice you received several days ago. I have asked staff to check into this and report back to me on Monday. In the interim, while we do use a collection agency to help us recover library materials, I do want to assure you the library **never** report accounts we believe to be delinquent to credit agencies.*

With the library district recently being fine free, we have revised our time frames to inform users that if an item is on reserve for another user, it is important the item be returned so others may enjoy. We typically send out an email reminder just before and several times after the item is due, and if the item is on hold and needs to be returned or available to renew. I really appreciate your patience and will be in touch early next week.

*Kind regards, **David E. Slivken** | Executive Director*

#2 - Good Morning Ms. ,It became clear, after your email last week, that we needed to prioritize sharing information on how we handle overdue materials so our users can be better informed and not caught off-guard by our policy change to be fine free. I am sharing with you information the library district will be sharing with our users on how we address materials not returned so others may enjoy them – see below. I want to thank you for sharing your concern. We very much appreciate it. Be safe, David

We know many people are wondering how going "fine free" impacts our ability to get materials back in a timely manner so others may enjoy them. *Will people keep items forever? What is the*

incentive to return materials? We answer these questions and others on our [Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#).

Customers should make a habit of always returning items on or before the due date. It's not just the right thing to do, it's how libraries work. To give an extra push, the Library has increased the frequency of reminder notifications you'll receive.

There is still a consequence for not returning an item on time, but it will not be in the form of overdue fines. Below is the timeframe the District follows for reminder notifications before we consider an item "lost" and assess a fee for the replacement cost of the item.

Day Before item due	Reminder Email is sent
Day After item due	Reminder Email is sent
Week (7 days) overdue	Reminder Email is sent
2 Weeks (14 days) overdue	Final Notification is mailed via USPS to your address
3 Weeks (21 days) overdue	Item is considered "lost" and billed to your library account (My Account)
4 Weeks (28 days) overdue	Accounts with a fee balance of \$50 or more are turned over to an outside agency for collection and assess a \$10 processing fee

While the District has always used the services of a collection agency to recover items or funds, we do not report to credit bureaus, so it does not affect credit scores or credit reports.

Our goal is to eliminate barriers for individuals and families to continue to use our library services while also ensuring that our materials are available for everyone to enjoy.

Have other questions about our fine free policy? Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on our website or call the Answer Center, 970-221-6740. Thank you for continued support of the Poudre Libraries.

11. Here are a collection of responses we received from customers after Communications sent out a Happy New Year email.
- Being able to read good books helped accelerate what could have been a slow year! As long as I have a good book waiting I can get through most logjams. Thank you for your great work and your flexibility in dealing with new hurdles.
 - Thank you so much for all you have done to keep books in people's hands.
 - Thank you, and we here at GTF MEDIA and our entire team would like to wish you and your family and all the members of the library district a safe and healthy New year.
 - You know what? You guys did an amazing job of keeping the public informed and thinking of ways to keep being "our local library".
 - Well done and stay safe and strong going forward.
 - On behalf of my 5 yr. old grandson (Mason) and myself - THANKS!

- Thank you so much for all you do! You are all so helpful. A big bright spot during this pandemic is what you are PRPLD!!!
- How very nice and thoughtful of you all!!! And a big Thank You to one and all for doing your very best to provide excellent service to our Fort Collins community during these challenging times. And a very Happy and Safe New Year to you, also! 😊😊
- Thank You!
- You all run an outstanding library program!
- Happy New Year
- Thank goodness for our wonderful library! So lucky to have this resource! Thank you for all you do!
- Thank you! I appreciate the books I've been able to check out and read in this crazy year!
- What a sweet message! If anyone sees this, your end of year email really put a smile on my face :)
- Here's to a much needed end, I hope you all have a happy new year!
- Thanks for the greeting. It was a tough year and it was 366 days not 365 days as you noted.....some folks are superstitious of the leap year and figure it caused us untold hurt this time around. Superstitions or not, we love the Poudre River Library. Thanks for your good service and great selection of books.
- THANK YOU for everything you are doing to provide such excellent service to our wonderful Ft. Collins community!!! You have made that happen and we all appreciate it.
- You all do such an amazing job with changes in our world. You are always so helpful, kind
- With my phone calls. Bless you all. Happy New Year. Good health and happiness to you all.
- Thank you to your incredible, warm, helpful staff. May 2021 be a far, far better year.
- Thank you for all the services you continue to provide especially Hoopla.
- I'm grateful you have partnered with front range also as it broadens the scope of your collection.
- Your staff is always helpful & pleasant.
- I could not have gotten through this year without your wonderful services providing me with books and DVD's. Thank you so much!!! Hoping things will steadily improve so that I can actually come in, browse again, and smile at the staff. Wishing the very best in the New Year to you all.
- Dear Old Town Library,
 Thank you for remaining open during the pandemic. Your online process for putting books and media on hold, and your awesome outdoor pickup process have saved my life.
 I love to read and cannot imagine not being able to check out books and DVDs from the library.
 Thank you for all you do and for making it possible for people to keep checking out books, DVDs, and more during the pandemic!
 I want to thank all of you for making it possible for me and all of us who love the library to use the library during this pandemic. I do hope you all manage to stay healthy.

- Thanks for the note and thanks for being our public library. I probably don't patronize the library services as much as I might, but I support what you all do for the community and find that you are there when I need you.
- 📖 To our beloved library...
Happy New Year to you all!!
🎉 🍷 ❤️
May this new year bring hope that the pandemic will end, that we'll retrieve a level of normalcy, that we can begin the healing process as we grieve our national family's sad losses, and that we can be safe again. All the very best to you all! 📖
- I think u folks have done a commendable job keeping the load on the wagon during this unbelievably stressful year. Despite all the challenges your staff have faced in 2020, u've kept many thousands of readers supplied w/ books & I want u to know how much I appreciate the excellent job u've done. Thanks a million!

12. To The Executive Director and Library Board Members:

I am writing this letter in concern for the health of the library staff in regard to the re-opening of the library to customers starting January 25th.

The library has been able to serve most of the needs of customers through remote services, which has prevented staff members from exposure to Covid-19 at work. Preventing exposure to Covid-19 is life saving.

Since Covid-19 is a deadly disease, I feel the risk to staff is much higher than any benefit the library customer will receive from re-opening to the public. Is browsing the stacks looking for a book by a sick customer really worth risking the life of a staff member when curbside pickup of library materials has been very well received by the public? Is having a staff person in the library building at a public desk to answer reference and research questions necessary when email and phone reference service has been and can continue to be provided? I believe the needs of the public have been, and can continue to be, well served by remote services.

There have been over 400,000 deaths from Covid-19 so far in the USA, with expected deaths to reach 500,000 by the end of January. There are new and more highly contagious variants of the virus in Colorado, and those new variants are possibly more deadly than the original virus. New variants of the virus from South Africa and South America may soon arrive in the USA.

This virus is out of control. It is my belief that the library should not be open to the public until the public and staff have been vaccinated. I believe opening the library to the public can wait until this virus is more controlled. The deadly nature of this virus cannot be overstated.

The risk/benefit to opening now is too much risk for too little benefit.

I am asking the board to reconsider the opening of the library to the public. I know the library will open to the public on January 25th, but that decision can be changed as new data reveals the risk. I believe the data shows opening now is premature.

Please reconsider the re-opening of the library. The health of your library staff depends on your decision.

RESPONSE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SLIVKEN:

Dear Mr. , Thank you for contacting the library board regarding our plans to re-open our facilities to the public. I very much appreciate your feedback. Please know the decision to re-open has been made with great care by library leadership. While all of the public libraries in Larimer County have been open for months, Poudre River Public Library District made a deliberate decision to close our facilities again in November until certain metrics provided by the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment (LCDPHE) began trending in a positive manner that would allow our facilities to open to the public for Grab-and-Go browsing. While many areas of the country are struggling containing the virus, Larimer County residents have done an exceptional job in wearing masks and socially distancing themselves. The result is substantial improvement in the following metrics:

- 14-Day average Test Positive Percentage (5.7%)*
- Days in past 14 with > 10% positive tests (0)*
- 14-Day case rate per 100,000 (360--it has dropped nearly 2/3 since Thanksgiving)*
- COVID-19 patients in hospital (53)*
- % of hospital utilization and % of ICU utilization (70-80%)*

Our re-opening is not being done as a response to public pressure, but it is being done as a recognition of improved metrics as well as the responsibility we owe to the public to provide services if they can be provided in a safe manner. In limited numbers, the public will, once again, be allowed inside our facilities for Grab-and-Go browsing and limited public computer service. Wearing masks and social distancing is required. Curbside services, along with Bundle o' Books service, will also continue.

We have shown over the last year that we can still serve the community, pivot our services to respond to their needs during a pandemic, and do so safely.

Kind regards, David

13. Subject: Re-opening Libraries

I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THIS. The libraries would not re open until more of the general public are immunized against Covid-19 and the library staff have been immunized. You are putting them all at risk again.

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