

# May 2020 Report from the Executive Director

## ADMINISTRATION

*By David Slivken*

### Library District and Coronavirus Update

Three months into the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic that has brought the world to a halt, public libraries are doing what we do best: looking toward the future we hope to build together. Facing a host of unknowns, [library administrators are developing reopening plans](#) as diverse as the communities they serve. Reopening will look different across the State of Colorado, contingent on geography, funding structure and staffing, community needs, and the severity of the virus' local impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges for even the most cautious library libraries. While many public libraries have [disaster preparedness plans](#) designed specifically to guide their actions in the face of a catastrophic event such as flooding or a tornado, these plans rarely account for reopening after long-term closures, because no library wants to imagine having to close its doors to the public it exists to serve. The added need to continue encouraging social distancing, even after library buildings have opened to the public, in the interest of public and staff safety, calls for detailed implementation strategies for re-opening our library facilities. Please know we continue to bring our characteristic compassion and careful analysis to the task of re-opening for service.

The work our library district has done to prove we're accessible far beyond the four walls of our buildings is demonstrably paying off during this crisis. During the closure, library district staff are staying busy by providing online programming, business and non-profit consulting, answering questions via telephone and email, and expanding access to our digital collections. Additionally, curbside service for physical materials and printing began during the third week in May. Our re-opening has not been like flipping a switch. We are slowly adjusting a dial, and I say adjusting because there will be times we may need to go back to the previous setting. We turn it up and down, slowly, based on data and expertise provided to us by the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment.

The Executive Leadership Team and Library Leadership Team have emphasized the need to view our plan to reopen as a work in progress. We have learned that the situation is fluid and that any plan we make needs to be flexible. There is no quick return to normal because, for some time, normal will not be static. Nothing is set in stone; what life looks like after the final phase is still a question mark. I do think libraries will, at some point in the future, look like they did in February, but only if we, both our organization and society as a whole, do this right.

## COLLECTIONS

*By Tova Aragon*

[CreativeBug](#), a new database was launched. It provides unlimited access to thousands of online art and craft classes, workshops and techniques. Content includes instructional videos on drawing, painting, sewing, knitting, crochet, quilting, baking and more.

During our closure, selectors have continued to order physical materials. The orders were put into a queue at our vendors. The vendors held the shipments until notified that we could receive them. Shipments commenced on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

One delivery:



Collections staff have rearranged the space at Midtown to accommodate quarantining materials arriving by our courier for 72 hours and outside deliveries in boxes for 24 hours. In order to meet the Governor's order for 50% capacity at Midtown, staff continue to work remotely as much as possible. Shifts at Midtown have been expanded to include evenings and weekends to provide staff time in the building to process materials.

## COMMUNICATIONS

*By Katie Auman*

- Working with ELT, LLT, and planning teams on a phased reopening of library services and facilities
- Keeping customers updated about library reopening plans via email, website, and social media – particularly around materials returns, placing holds online, and curbside pickup service
- Working with media to share news about the Library District – received favorable coverage in Coloradoan, North Forty News, The Atlantic

- Promoting “virtual” 2020 Summer Reading Challenge – “Summer to Imagine” and updating or creating new graphics, videos, and other program materials; Continuing SRC advertising efforts online, in print, and on the screen
- 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
- Working with SA and content managers to revise and update their webpages with current information and promotions in light of COVID-19
- Continuing with social media promotions and platforms including “The River’s Mouth” blog

In May, the Communications team also participated in other activities including Virtual Staff Day, online trainings, and webinars for professional team development.

## COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

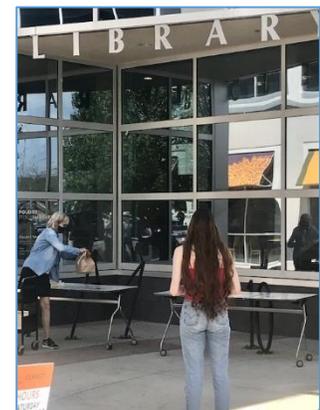
*By Currie Meyer*

**Work from home continued in early May.** Council Tree Lead staff, including Children’s Services Librarian Amy Holzworth, Circulation Supervisor Angela James, Services Librarian Jenny Thurman, and I continued work from home in the early part of May. During this time, CT Lead staff met virtually with their specialist-area teams to coordinate safe building and staff protocols, signage and communications, service development, materials return and curbside pickup as well as summer reading programs for children and teens.

### **Focus on “trifecta day”: May 20**

#### **Circulation, Materials Processing and Curbside pickup**

Angela and I focused on preparing building spaces for staff safety/health, quarantining of materials, staff scheduling and training, and operations protocols for materials return processing, which started May 15, holds requests, which started May 18, and curbside pickup, which started May 20. Angela was incredibly busy this month as she had to re-invent many processes, such as staffing for limited operating hours, materials quarantine logistics and managing Harmony Library’s holds within CTL operations.



#### Day one by the numbers

- ✓ Material returns May 15: **2,433** items
- ✓ Holds requested May 18: **980**
- ✓ Checkouts May 20: **349** items checked out
- ✓ Curbside pickup May 20: **164** phone calls and deliveries

*Fun fact – On Tuesday, May 26, CTL staff delivered **217** curbside requests, resulting in **836** checkouts!*

**Summer Reading rollout:** Jenny and Amy focused on final preparations and logistics for the summer reading rollout on May 20.

**Information Guides service rollout:** With the support of many specialist staff, Currie coordinated training, scheduling, infrastructure, marketing and the rollout of Information Guides. IG, a new phone-in reference service, is staffed by Library Assistants and Librarians from home. *Meet and Collaborate #1, Provide user-centered spaces that are flexible; #4, Re-envision unique programming and services.*

*Learn and Discover #5, Provide flexible programs, resources and services*

*Reimagine the Future #1 Make strategic decisions based on community...changes, #4 Develop agile services; #5, maximize flexible, sustainable library operations.*

**Amy attended the following meetings and trainings in May, all virtually:**

- May 5 - Early Childhood Council of Larimer County
- May 5 and 6 - attended an introduction to Take Note (music) program
- May 7 - Webinar about VROOM which has 1,000 activities for families of young children
- May 20 - PLA Webinar: Virtual Platforms
- May 27 - “Day of Dialog” sponsored by School Library Journal

*Reimagine the Future #6, Investigate emerging technologies; #3, Invest in staff development.*

## **OLD TOWN LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS**

*By Eileen McCluskey*

The Old Town Library team spent significant time in May creating re-opening plans while continuing to create virtual content for the website, story times and programs. The shift to curbside service was a significant logistical challenge, with Holly and her team leading the way at OTL. They did an amazing job.

With curbside delivery sorted out, the OTL team developed project plans, facilitated the Library District’s first virtual Staff Day (special shout out to Monique, Rebecca and Xochil), and is learning to thrive in a VUCA world (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity).

From Kristen:

- Lead the Computer Lab Monitors through a brainstorming session to develop service guidelines, schedule and procedures for a curbside printing service. The team followed through, working with SA and Communications to launch the service on June 8. This service provides a critical service for community members who do not have access to a printer.
- The Media Mentors updated handouts and created screencasts for frequently requested computer topics. Larimer County Workforce requested guidance on how to attach a file to an email, how to edit a word document, how to find files and rename them, etc.
- Introduced Time Clock and Shifts in order to provide a nimble scheduling tool for Information Guides and OTL onsite branch schedule. Created PIC schedule for OTL

using Shifts. The Shifts scheduling app is free with MS Teams and does not require an additional login for staff. We were able to use it District-wide.

- Participated in SRC Library Caravan
- Worked with Programming team to identify program plan for Levels 2-4, following up with webinar, virtual meeting, and screencasting requirements to implement program plan.
- With Ian and Eileen, created multiple safety videos for staff day

From Karla: The Summer Reading Challenge and our virtual programming schedule is full and up and running! Storytimes, phone-a-story and community read-alouds were introduced in May. These programs will continue throughout the summer along with Gnome Zone Weeklong Challenges and Lunch Bunch Live(a read aloud program for school aged kids). Guidelines for virtual storytimes were finalized and staff were trained on required technology.

From Ian: Developed structure, training, schedule and overall plan for digitizing Old Town Library's microfiche collection. Library Assistants are being trained on how to scan and do image editing, as well as organize the digitized newspapers into folders. Ian is keeping Lesley Struc, Curator of the Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, informed of this project's progress.

From Nicole:

- Participated in the Library Caravan with the Community Services team.
- Attended the Soundtrap music software training courtesy of the Bohemian Foundation, with the intent of creating a program for teens and/or their families.

From Eileen:

- Project planning and development with various colleagues on an internal information governance project, Learner/Mentor ESL program, and modified computer services for the public.
- Attend City Council Member Susan Gutowsky's Listening Session
- Reached out to community stakeholders regarding homeless services during the pandemic
- Oversight, planning and staff support for the many projects and services being offered and in development at OTL.
- Hosted virtual meeting for Front Range Library Security Managers