

January 2021 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

How Criteria Do We Evaluate on Re-openings/Closing of Facilities During Pandemic

After having our buildings closed to the public since November 9, 2020, the library district re-opened our facilities on January 25, 2021. As you are aware from emails you received, as well as postings on our social media outlets, the response from the public covers the spectrum. On January 27th, I presented to the entire staff our process related to closings/re-openings and answered (with assistance from HR Manager Sabrina Stromnes) staff inquiries.

Information Gathering

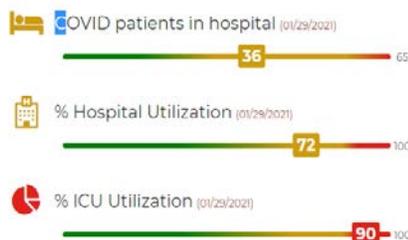
Library leadership is continually researching the effects of the pandemic. Three important sources of information are: 1) Center for Disease Control 2) Colorado Department of Health and Environment and most important for us, 3) the Larimer County Department of Public Health & Environment (LCPHE). We refer to the Larimer County COVID-19 Dashboard for updates on county metrics. One especially important metric we look at is **Cases per 100,000 Residents: 14-Day Rate**. While the rate is still high, it is 1/3 of where it was Thanksgiving weekend:



Another metric we look at is the **14-Day Test Positive Percentage**. Larimer County has made progress and at 5.6%, this percentage is within the acceptable margin of safety (Low: under 5%, Medium: 5-10% and High: 10% or more).



COVID patients in the hospital, hospital utilization, and ICU utilization is also an important number we review on a daily basis. These numbers can vary dramatically in short period of time.



Decision Making Process

As library director, I rely on anchors to be in place when decisions are made. Our Pandemic Response Plan is essential to have in place to help guide our decision-making. The Library District established this plan in response to threats posed by the COVID-19. The plan outlines a measured and responsible response to the pandemic. These procedures represent the District's commitment to provide library services to the public in the safest and most effective way possible during a period of pandemic illness, with public health and safety the primary concern and a goal of continuity of business operations insofar as is possible.

I also rely on the Safe Work Handbook. This Handbook is used as a recommended practice guideline and is developed in consultation with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, and State of Colorado, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.

Recommended practices are performed to the extent that the Library District is able to procure the necessary supplies. The Safe Work Handbook provides general recommendations for use in all Library District buildings.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) was formed in March of 2020. The ELT sets strategy, establishes priorities and remove obstacles for our library district as we manage our way through this crisis. The ELT consists of me, Ken Draves, Deputy Director; Katie Auman, Communications Manager; Rachel Tand, Director of Finance and Business Operations; and Sabrina Stromnes, our Human resource Manager.

The Library Leadership Team (LLT) remains an important component in addressing the pandemic. By establishing the ELT, the LLT can focus on their staff and building needs more effectively, and not be tasked with additional concerns brought by the pandemic.

I also work closely with our county libraries, as well as the High Plains Library and the Clearview/Severance Library. We share with each other and generally speak as one when we have a recommendation and/or questions to the LCPHE. Since our November 9th building closure, the Loveland, Berthoud, Red Feather, and Estes Valley libraries have been open while the PRPLD, High Plains and Clearview Library facilities were not to the public. In a Zoom conversation in mid-January prior to our re-opening, there have been no outbreaks at any of these libraries open to the public for browsing and public computing--wearing facial coverings, keeping one's distance and hand washing are credited for their success.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

In January, the Communications teams focused on developing an overarching communications plan for the District based on the strategic plan, input from library leadership, and other research. The 2021 plan aligns with the current areas of focus in the strategic plan and identifies opportunities to further build awareness and support for the libraries. The Communications team participated in a day-long planning retreat to create strategies and activities to best meet the plan's goals and objectives.

January Highlights:

- Began creative design and promotional planning for the Summer Reading Challenge: Tales and Tails / Cuentos y Colitas, June 1 – August 15, 2021

- Collaborated with Children’s Librarians to design and implement the February Story Stroll in partnership with the Downtown Business Association and Downtown Fort Collins

- Earned media coverage:
 - *Coloradoan* article: “Fort Collins library offering Chromebooks for checkout in digital equity initiative”
 - Townsquare Media radio properties: “Fort Collins Partners with Library for Chromebook Lending Program”
 - *North Forty News* article: “Poudre Libraries Reopen for In-Person Services”
- Supported library building re-opening plans and created communications for staff and the community
- Began hiring process for new Programming and Events Coordinator position
- Continued ongoing 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 SERVICES

By Johanna Giron Ulloa

We partnered with the Immigration Law Office of Kimberly Medina and ISAAC to host our first digital **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) workshop**. We all collaborated to provide information, legal assistance to more than 600 participants over 4 Zoom channels. ISAAC provided scholarship for DACA applications for those in economic need. This program exemplified our values of collaboration, innovation, and inclusion.

The Community Services Department will be highlighting this year the work, literature, and incredible culture of Native groups across the globe. To that end the team attended “Representation Matters-American Indians in Children’s Literature” with Dr. Debbie Reese.

In collaboration with the Department of Human Services, Johanna Ulloa coordinated our first **Latinx Resources Fair for professionals**. Over 120 participants were able to listen from over 14 local organizations that serve the Latinx community. Africa Garcia and Ludy Rueda presented library services, programs, and collections. Here is one of the many positive feedback emails we received *“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're lucky to have amazing advocates as a part of the Disparities Action Committee. Really great work Genesis, Liz, and Johanna!”*

In partnership with the Larimer County Health Department, we hosted an Informational Meeting with Dr. Chris Urbina and Sergio Torres about **COVID-19 vaccine**. Information related to the vaccine, side effects, and availability was shared in Spanish to the public.

Ludy Rueda planned a couple a virtual maker for the month of January. **Breads of the World** is a virtual baking session facilitated by Mexican baker, Eliceo Lara, who taught this class from his kitchen in Mexico City. This month, the featured bread was “Rosca de Reyes”. Twenty-five participants enjoyed this class and learned about baking techniques and the history of this particular bread. It’s very rewarding to receive messages from the participants expressing their gratitude toward the library for putting together these types of events.

The **piñatas workshop** was another hit among children in our community. The participants received all materials to make a piñata, and Veronica Venzor taught them how to assemble them while talking about the origins of the piñata. Some participants shared with us their creations that they proudly made during the workshop.

We partnered with CSU for **Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration**. Johanna Ulloa participated in weekly coordination meetings with community partners. Ludy Rueda hosted with a special virtual storytime and Phone-a-story. Furthermore, she coordinated a special PAS in French with CSU Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures.

Citizenship Study Group: Africa Garcia developed and delivered her first Citizenship Study Group. While she has been offering Citizenship Classes for months, she noticed the need for a Study group for those who want to get ready for their interview. The Study Group met three times during January. Africa prepared individualized packets with all materials needed for participants (based on their needs and application date since there has been changes to the interview process) and mailed them. She also reached out to the Citizenship Coordinator at the Brooklyn library and had a short meeting to share ideas. Africa also reached out to our Volunteer Coordinator to see if she could find a volunteer to help with the group. The volunteer was awesome and very helpful. The role of the volunteer was that of “USCIS officer” so participants could practice the interview with a native speaker in private (break out room).

ESL Mentor Training Africa Garcia helped with the mentor training of the new program implemented at Old Town Library. She was in charge of the “teaching” part of the training due to her professional ESL background. The training was a success and Africa really enjoyed participating in this and being able to help. From ESL Mentoring Coordinator, Anne Million: *“Africa, we wanted to thank you for your help and enthusiasm for doing our mentor training last night! You added so much knowledge and good energy to the session. We even had one mentor explicitly say she enjoyed your part on pronunciation and had forgotten how much she likes IPA - she'd like to work with an English learner who has struggles with pronunciation 😊*

Also, I really enjoyed discussing the teaching processes and ideas with you. I think our mentors really benefitted from you experience!”

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

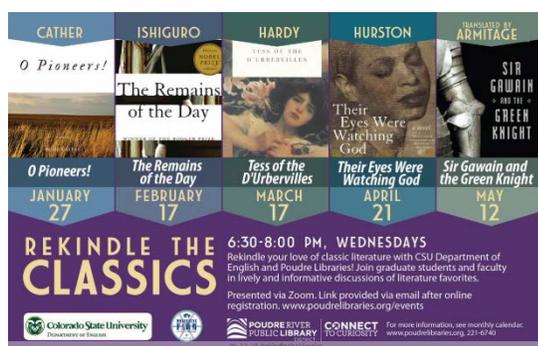
By Currie Meyer

Children’s Take & Makes on display: Children’s Librarian Amy Holzworth’s January Take-and-Make craft project for children featured snowflakes cut from coffee filters and painted with watercolor markers. Amy invited children to make two snowflakes – one for home and one for the library’s atrium windows. 150 children picked up these kits during the month. *Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity. Support k-12 learning.*



Pivot to in-building services, January 25: Circulation Supervisor Angela James and I prepared staff (procedures, scheduling), building/spaces, collections and signage for re-opening on January 25. This was our sixth operational pivot since March, 2020. *Reimagine the Future #4, Develop more agile, responsive, and effective services. #5 Maximize efficient, flexible, and sustainable library operations.*

Continuing Development: Amy attended the Colorado State Library’s webinar on the “Growing Readers Together” program on January 19. This is a statewide effort to share ways to engage with Family, Friend & Neighbor (FFN) child care providers through library programs and services. *Reimagine the Future #3, Invest in staff development.*



Rekindle the Classics begins its sixth year: Library Assistant Erin Walters and I, together with Colorado State University Assistant Professor of English Dr. Lynn Shutters, kicked off the spring lineup with Willa Cather’s *O Pioneers!* On January 27. 16 people attended via Zoom. The monthly spring and fall program features informal discussion of literary classics led by CSU faculty and students. Our third partner, Wolverine Farm Publick House, normally hosts the discussions. We hope to return to safe in-person discussions soon. *Meet and Collaborate #3, Create and maintain strategic partnerships that enable*

us to connect with customers. Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity. Reimagine the Future #6, Invest in...technologies for social and personal success.

Teen / Tween Take and Makes light up the month: Teen Services Librarian coordinated a District-wide Take and Make craft project for January featuring a kit to create a winter-themed light. The kits featured a battery-powered tea light, special semi-opaque paper and snowflake cut-outs. Libraries distributed approximately 200 kits during the month. *Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity. Support k-12 learning.*



OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

The OTL team planned and prepared for reopening with new desk schedules, a combined lobby service desk, fresh book displays, and team meetings to ensure that staff were ready to safely welcome the public back into the building. The entire OTL team, with support from IT, Facilities, Communications, HR, and Collections, has done an amazing job adapting and pivoting throughout the past year. Their positivity and forward-thinking approach has been inspiring. It's so nice to have people back in the building.

OTL's public computers are available again for the public, with the re-opening of the computer lab at reduced capacity. With the publicity launch of the Chromebook checkout service, the original six devices were in use with holds. We expanded the collection to offer 10 Chromebooks at OTL and offered the option for HL and CTL to participate in the service.

Ian's digitization project is beginning to move into its next stage by bringing volunteers on board to help with the processing and organizing of the microfiche collection. Mark H. is helping to make volunteers able to access the work from their home computers to keep the momentum going. Since the pandemic began, library staff have scanned 170 reels and processed about 30 of them. This has been a great pandemic project that will improve access to the microfiche collection for the community.

The OTL team is also beginning to scan the obituary collection to improve staff access district-wide and expedite the process of filling obituary requests. We hope to complete this project by April.

Meg S. has put together Know Your City, a nine-program collaborative series with the City of Fort Collins. Each month we will highlight a different city department and invite them to present some of their amazing work. The Media Mentors hosted a Declutter Devices program, facilitated by Sara and Kindra for 38 people.

Karla's Old Town Story Stroll has received a great reception, with more locations planned this year. CTL will repurpose the panels to duplicate at Front Range Village in the spring. Some fun January programs featured Balloon Powered Cars, virtual makerspace with host Erin L. and Yoga Storytime, LIVE! the District's first virtual, live storytime with host Deidre H. Nicole B. offered a virtual Dungeons and Dragons program.

Spanish Instruction for Staff is in its fifth week and going strong. Videos and materials are available to all staff unable to attend live sessions.

Anne M. and Xochil planned and facilitated the ESL Mentor training. Anne is in the process of matching mentors to learners and this service is launched!

Eileen worked with Wember to update and submit the RFP for the lobby and second floor spaces renovations. Proposals are due on February 5th and we look forward to vendor selection.