

March 2021 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

Adult Literacy and Our Economy

The Library District, Front Range Community College and the Larimer County Department of Economic and Workforce Development have enjoyed a long partnership focusing on multiple programming and education efforts. All three organizations have been meeting recently to find additional ways to partner and support each organizations effort around upskilling and career training as our local economy recovers from the pandemic.

Now, more than ever, is the time to be having these conversations. According to a recent report commissioned by the Every Library Institute, compared to many post-industrial nations, the United States lags significantly behind in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. About 130 million U.S. adults have reading skills below a sixth-grade level. Low literacy often leads to lower educational attainment. This combination of factors fosters negative inter-generational impacts, including lower earnings and higher rates of unemployment. This inter-generational cycle leads to generations of individuals with limited autonomy and creates barriers to civic and community participation.

Lower literacy skills and educational attainment have dire economic consequences. People with lower literacy skills have significantly decreased worker wage potential, discouraging regional and national economic growth. A September 14, 2020 article in Forbes Magazine estimated that low literacy could cost society trillions in tax dollars, business stagnation, and lost consumer spending.

Public libraries are uniquely positioned to improve literacy and remove barriers to higher educational attainment levels and contribute to economic growth locally. Indeed, one of the core roles of libraries is to provide literacy services to adults, children, and families. From book clubs to tutoring programs, citizenship classes, conversation tables in English, and entry level computer/device classes, libraries provide countless opportunities for adults to increase their literacy skills, improve their English language proficiency, and engage with their communities. Closing this gap improves generations of families' lives and promotes local, state, and national economic growth opportunities.

According to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), a large-scale study developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), literacy is defined as "understanding, evaluating, using, and engaging with written text to participate in the society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." Since 2012, PIAAC has assessed individuals between the ages of 16 and 65 in 32 countries for literacy, numeracy, and digital problem-solving skills—all concepts crucial to participation in all levels of the economy.

In the United States, PIAAC literacy data was collected in 2012, 2014, and 2017. Data will be collected again in 2023. Findings from these assessments show that the United States scored only slightly higher than the international average. On a scaled score of 500, the United States ranked 272 in literacy, while the average was 267. However, while the United States is higher than the overall average, it lags well behind other post-industrial countries like Japan and Finland, which scored 296 and 288, respectively. 21% of U.S. adults (43 million people) lack English language skills sufficient to complete tasks that require "comparing and contrasting information, paraphrasing, or making low-level inferences.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

In March, Angela Kettle joined the Communications teams as our new programming and events coordinator, and is already connecting with various staff who plan and develop library programs. She will work on developing a library programming plan to guide our work around programs, events, and activities.

March Highlights:

- Finalized and submitted the Poudre River Public Library District 2020 Report to the Community. A digital copy is available on the District website.
- Rolled out public communications about PINs being enabled on library cardholder accounts. Worked with PINs project team on messaging, webpage content, social media, email marketing, and other communications. PINs were added to library accounts on March 30.
- Earned media coverage: *The Silver Lining* (new local magazine): article highlighting library resources for Women's History Month.
- Prepped graphic design and promotions for April Story Stroll at Front Range Village Shopping Center and Council Tree Library (runs April 1-30).
- Began research and work on a library programming plan, including staff input, best practices, evaluation options, and more.
- Continued working on summer reading marketing materials and promotions.
- Continued 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 Ken Draves

Ludy Rueda's report

Recording of Spanish Virtual Storytime (VST)

- These stories celebrate International Women's Day
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l81uxGbdjyU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWD5IdF2Fp8>
- Recording of Spanish Phone-A-Story (PAS)
Celebration of International Women's Day with "Marisol McDonald doesn't Match".
- Coordination of French Phone-A-Story (PAS)
4 French stories provided this month with the support of our CSU partners from the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures.

IMAGINANTES X (Teen programming)

Clay and Stop Motion Animation Workshop 3/27/20 23 teens participants.

Spanish Book Club: Café de Olla

Author Renato Cisneros joined us during the discussion of the book "La distancia que nos separa" 3/20/21 11 participants

Reignite Your Future! Adult Learning Informational Forum

23 eager to learn adults attended our event. This series is possible thanks to joint efforts of FRCC, PSD, and PRPLD. 3/24/21

Panes del Mundo/Breads of the World

"Pizza Napolitana" 3/11/21 27 participants

Various

- Attended a Latinx Network meeting to talk about the steering committee's efforts on the vaccination campaign. At this point, I'm stepping aside.
- Attended the International Federation of Libraries and Institutions' midyear meeting as an observer.
- Attended REFORMA CO conference Planning Meeting
- SRC planning and translations
- Spanish Website revision
- Coordinate Volunteers for Children's Day various tasks
- Helped revising Community Services plan
- Helped community members to sign up to get in the vaccination line



About Café de Olla Spanish Book Club

“WOW, qué honor poder tener la oportunidad de conversar de manera íntima con autores de talla internacional como Renato Cisneros, Gracias a la biblioteca por esta oportunidad!” ...what an honor to have the opportunity to talk intimately with an international renown author as Renato Cisneros. Thank you to the library for this opportunity!

“Fue un gusto conocer a Renato! Mil gracias otra vez a la biblioteca por hacer estos encuentros posibles!” It was a pleasure meeting Renato! Thanks again to the library for making these programs possible!

About Reignite You Future! Adult Learning Series

From Dion Duran FRCC “thank you for making sure all the details were covered and keeping us on track; you are a true professional.”

About IMAGINANTES X Stop Motion workshop

“Muchas gracias a ustedes que trabajan para ayudar a los y Jovenes a ser productivos” Thank you very much to [the library] for helping the teens and providing creative activities.

Africa Garcia’s report

Virtual StoryTime:

- Think Big, Little One
- Una niña, un tambor, un sueño
- ¡Azúcar!
- Sembrando historias: Pura Belpré

Phone-A-Story:

- El sistema solar con Ellen
- Cómo la Luna recobró su forma

Trainings & Webinars:

- USCIS Naturalization Civics Test
- Purchasing card training
- CAL Makerspace Group

Virtual Programs & Events:

- **Resource Night with Poudre School District / Noche de recursos con PSD:** Family Liaisons, Counselors, and McKinney-Vento representatives from O’Dea, Riffenburgh, Shepardson, and Laurel hosted this event for Spanish-speaking PSD families and invited us to present on library resources and services.
- **Spanish Citizenship Classes:** materials were mailed and we had 6 people signed up for these 4-session citizenship class. For our last session, we had bilingual immigration lawyer Kim Medina join us to answer participants’ questions.
- Café de Olla Spanish Bookclub
- Reignite your future! Adult Learning Forum: in partnership with PSD and FRCC, we are hosting this 3-part series focused on adult learning. During the first meeting, we presented some library resources relevant to adult and English learners.
- IMAGINANTES X – Stop Motion: second program of our IMAGINANTES X series. Prepared bags with materials for all participants and dropped them off at the branches to be picked up. The program itself went very well and everyone was able to participate thanks to the loaned iPads.

SRC:

- Continued planning SRC programs and entered all confirmed summer programs on DEMCO.
- Meetings with Children’s Librarians to make decisions about Grand Prizes (Family Pass to The Farm & Family Pass for Spring Creek Gardens) and smaller prizes (gift baskets).

Meetings & Other:

- Changed Spanish website March book recommendations by updating Bookjackets through Check It Out.
- Attended and participated in multiple meetings (LatinX Community Network) with other local organizations and non-profits.
- Translated all PINs- related communications, website, and library accounts information.
- Meeting with PSD Elementary Media Team to discuss summer reading ideas.
- Meeting with N2N (Housing Search).
- CS meeting with Angela.
- SRC Programmers meeting with Angela.
- Community Services Plan.

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

By Currie Meyer



Outdoor Storytime at the Environmental Learning Center: Every Wednesday morning throughout March, CTL storytime staff shared songs, movement, learning and love of books with young children and their families. The chilly weather couldn't stop the fun! *Meet and Collaborate #4, Re-envision its unique, collaborative programming and services to deliver higher impact. #3,*

Create opportunities for intergenerational experiences to share knowledge and stories.



“Totally Tangrams” Take-and-Make for kids and tweens: Library Assistant Linda Justice planned and coordinated this take-home kit that combined math, spatial reasoning and problem-solving in a fun, non-digital activity. Over 500 kits were taken during the month! *Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity. Support K-12 learning. Meet and Collaborate #4, Re-envision its unique, collaborative programming and services to deliver higher impact.*

Public computers and printing services resumed: On March 5, CTL re-introduced two public user PCs along with printing, scanning and faxing services. Access to computing and printing at CTL had been suspended since 2020 due to the risks of social proximity and surface cross-contamination. Systems Administration Manager Mark Huber and I coordinated the rollout, which included new reservation and print management systems as well as a new printer/scanner. *Reimagine the Future #5, Maximize efficient, flexible and sustainable library operations. Learn and Discover #5, Provide flexible...services that deliver community impact. Support K-12 learning.*

Professional Development: Children's Librarian Amy Holzworth continued her EDI learning with webinars from School Library Journal, RMECC and University of Denver. I read the white paper, “Public Libraries and the Pandemic: Digital Shifts and Disparities to Overcome”, released in March by the New America Education Policy Open Technology Institute. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/public-libraries-and-the-pandemic/> *Reimagine the Future #3, Invest in staff development. Focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.*

Circulation Supervisor Angela James' activities during the month included preparing for customer account PIN rollout; development of procedures around the revamped Limited Library Card; collaborating with Kim Doran for the closure of Harmony Library in May and June and the temporary shift of some services to CTL. Sadly, Angela announced her plans to resign in early May. She is planning for a smooth transition of duties to her yet-to-be-hired successor. We will all miss her greatly. *Learn and Discover #5, Provide flexible...services that deliver community impact. Reimagine the Future #5, Maximize efficient, flexible and sustainable library operations.*



Virtual Trivia Night for teens and adults – round two! Teen Services Librarian Jenny Thurman and colleagues Miranda West and Nicole Burchfield hosted another successful Trivia Night on March 11. The event featured questions about Harry Potter, Broadway songs, Comic Villains, Sitcoms, and foreign Book Covers. 21 people attended. Comments from the chat included:

“This was lots of fun! Great job!”, *“You all did a good job doing this :)”*, *“This was so much fun!! Thank you!!!!!!”*

Jenny also coordinated and co-coordinated these Teen / Tween programs in March:

Flying Machines Take and Make kits – 170 kits were taken

Tween Family Book Club – March 18, via Zoom. Comment: *“Thank you again to you and Nicole for doing this. We had a great time and it was such a multi-sensory experience. We really enjoyed the book and the book club and all of the activities (and getting to try dragonfruit and dried mango!).”*

Cooking Class: Spring Desserts cook-along with Sapna von Reich – 13 attended via Zoom.

Learn and Discover #1, Connect individuals with opportunities to explore, create, and spark curiosity. Meet and Collaborate #5, Create opportunities for intergenerational experiences. Support K-12 learning. Focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Focus on Community health.

OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

The library and the League of Women Voters hosted a Ballot Initiatives program ahead of the April 6th city election. UNC professor Karen Barton hosted a presentation on the MV Joola, Africa's Titanic. Ian and Audrey have begun bringing volunteers into the digitization project.

Ian is piloting a data-mining project for the District, to better understand what the community is seeking from the online catalog.

Read Across America Day/Week: March 1-6 Read Across America week encourages everyone to create and celebrate a nation of diverse readers. Displays at OTL encouraged customers to read books that foster inclusiveness, explore identity, cultivate compassion, inspire stewardship and build community. OTL offered “Do It Yourself Story Stroll” Take and Make kits at the beginning of the month. (Credit: Deidre’s brilliant idea!) Staff created about 180 kits and they were gone in 5 days.

Outdoor Storytimes: OTL’s first in-person storytime of the year was offered March 17, but had to be cancelled due to snowy conditions. Music and Movement Storytime in the Park will be offered every Wednesday morning at 10am and 11am weather permitting through at least August, 2021. They have been well attended and families are so grateful to have storytimes back! Kids enjoyed coloring sheets designed by Laura Carter and SRC pre-view handouts in the

children's area during the week of Spring Break. Laura's artwork is amazing, as usual! Thank you, Laura!! As pandemic response levels shift, so does the children's area at OTL. We have added two tables and seating to accommodate children and caregivers. The seats have been well-used by caregivers reading to children or children reading to themselves. A heartwarming sight!!

The Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference March 25-27 featured keynote speaker Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot and several sessions regarding social-emotional learning. Karla attended sessions including *Impact of COVID-19 on Colorado Early Childcare Communities* and *Social Emotional Learning - All Day Long! (Part 1)* Information will be shared with the OTL Children's Functional Team at their April meeting.

Spanish Instruction for Staff: Only 4 sessions left of Spanish Classes! Thank you, Professor Monzon and staff who attend live sessions or watch the videos. Thanks again to Library Leadership for allowing staff time to learn Spanish.

Kristen continues to lead the Sharepoint file sharing project, from here on out to be identified as "Staff Cache." She worked with Kim and Holly to create a prototype department page for circulation and materials processing. It's looking great and we can't wait to share it out. Kindra is becoming a subject matter expert for the District in Sharepoint. Kristen and Karla worked with the EDI team to choose a consulting firm to work with the library in 2021. Kristen's Google Class, which is piloting a "flipped classroom" cohort, has eight people enrolled and engaged in enhancing their digital literacy skills.

The ESL Mentoring service has seven English learner/mentor pairs in progress. We have 16 learner applicants and 15 mentor applicants, with 8 of them trained. Anne is planning another Mentor training potentially for late April/early May.

OTL is preparing to wish our Teen Librarian, Nicole, all the best in her new adventure in Durango. We are in the process of hiring two part-time Library Assistants and one of them will be bilingual. We are working with studioTrobe on the OTL lobby and 2nd floor spaces designated for renovation. We are moving the periodical and newspaper collection to the northwest bumpout area, to create a right-sized space for quiet reading and also to open up the "treehouse" space for art exhibits post-renovation. The OTL Supers team is evaluating schedules, services and spaces in preparation for the eventuality of expanding hours. Xochil is fine-tuning different options as OTL identifies service needs and aligns staffing accordingly. Xochil also successfully mentored a community member pass her citizenship test. We are share in this communal success. OTL is piloting a furniture inventory process for Rachel and working with the Facilities team to implement a proactive approach to facilities maintenance. The building is prepping for its upgrade in July!

HARMONY LIBRARY

By Ken Draves

Library District/FRCC-Larimer Campus updates

Harmony will be closed to the public May 11-July 4 for updating mechanical and HVAC systems, re-carpeting sections of the library, upgrading doors, and painting. Staff will be able to continue working in the building and we plan to continue to have staff working in building during most mornings, to continue shelving returned materials and paging holds.

Teen Services—Miranda West

- In mid-March, Miranda was invited to take part in a focus group for YALSA (the Young Adult Library Services Association) to discuss her experience as a part of the teen services library community, the effect of Covid on those services, and how YALSA can support those in teen library services in their work.
- Miranda also attended an LGBTQ+ Trusted Adult training put on by the Alliance for Suicide Prevention of Larimer County.

Jobs & Careers—Miranda West

- On March 23, Miranda gave a presentation on the library's job and career resources to about 30 members of the Northern Colorado Networking Group (NoCoNet).
- Along with Ken, Matt, and Elaine, met with contacts from the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Center about ways to expand our partnership, with a focus on digital literacy and upskilling for job seekers.

Children's Services-Jennifer

- Worked with Molly and Mike for new Harmony paint color plan.
- SRC planning meetings, programming, marketing, prizes
- Coordinated preparation of April Take&Makes for assembly
- Planned for continuity of children's services during Harmony's Spring closure