

April 2021 Report from the Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

By David Slivken

The \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill recently signed by President Biden contains \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which supports libraries and museums across the country. This allocation marks the largest single increase in the agency’s 25-year history. And that support aligns closely with the country’s heart. At the start of 2020, Gallup reported that “visiting the library remains the most common cultural activity Americans engage in” — far more than going to movies, sporting events, concerts, national parks, museums, casinos and zoos.

Changes to Library Services and Restrictions

As you may be aware, Larimer County issued its Eighth Amended Public Health Order on April 16, 2021, with updated guidance for businesses/organizations. This order remains in effect for 30 days. The Library District will continue to follow health and safety guidelines set forth by Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE) when it comes to making decisions about leveling up our services and operating safely. LCDHE lists public libraries as “Critical Businesses and Critical Government Functions.” Our goal is to safely resume library services as much as possible given the current situation. In some instances, the District may have stricter practices than recommended by LCDHE but will not have less restrictive practices. Below are the updates and changes to our operations effective April 17, 2021.

Face coverings – a face mask or covering is required for anyone age 11 and older when they are inside the libraries or other District buildings. The mask must cover the nose and mouth and be worn at all times. Face shields are not a substitute for a face mask but may be worn in addition to a face mask.

Library building capacity – public library buildings can operate without capacity limitations as long as customers and staff have space to maintain 6-foot physical distancing. Staff no longer need to monitor the number of customers in the building.

WHAC and Midtown building capacity – building managers at WHAC and Midtown will make a determination about staff capacity and/or work schedules based on the ability to maintain 6-foot physical distancing.

Remote work – staff who can work remotely should continue to do so. Library staff should communicate with their supervisor regarding remote work.

Working in multiple locations – LCDHE confirmed that staff may safely work in multiple building locations as necessary.

Customer time in building – there are no longer time limits for customers inside the libraries.

High-risk customer hours – we no longer have specific hours for high-risk customers. We currently offer curbside pickup for anyone who is not able to visit or comfortable inside the library. Signage has been updated.

Public computers – customers may use public computers for an extended period of time.

- OTL and HL – PCs available for up to 2 hours per day per cardholder.
- CTL – PCs available for 30 minutes, with possible 15-minute extension.

Indoor seated / unseated events – while LCDHE allows for indoor events with some restrictions, the Library District will not be holding indoor programs at this time. Outdoor events and entertainment – LCDHE does not have capacity limits for outdoor events though 6-foot distancing requirements should be followed. The Library District’s outdoor programs will continue to follow distancing requirements, face covering requirements, and may require registration. Some outdoor locations and program partners may have additional requirements that we will follow.

Cleaning and disinfecting – recent scientific reports and studies and the CDC have indicated that there is little risk for surface transmission of COVID-19. The LCDHE confirmed that we no longer need to complete enhanced pandemic-related cleaning of frequently-touched surfaces in our public buildings. Staff will now follow regular cleaning procedures and schedules.

The Library District continues to look for opportunities to provide essential community services in a safe way and in alignment with local health guidance. Additional updates will be provided as we are able to proceed.

COMMUNICATIONS

By Katie Auman

April Highlights:

- Helped coordinate National Library Worker Day celebration with a video, staff shout-outs, Board letters of support, and more.
- Earned media coverage: The Silver Lining: article highlighting library resources for Earth Day.
- Digital advertising began at Holiday Twin Drive-In Theaters. We have a season-long advertising package on both outdoor screens through September 2021 that will feature the Summer Reading Challenge, library collections and services, and back-to-school messages.
- Virtual exhibitor at the Northern Colorado Writers 2021 Conference to highlight library resources for authors and writers.

- Worked with SA to create a COVID-19 vaccine information webpage and with Community Services to translate into Spanish. The page provides resources for understanding the vaccines and for scheduling an appointment.

Ongoing Activities:

- Working on projects related to enhancing customers’ digital experience with the library, including cardholder account PINs and a new library app.
- Building a library programming plan, including staff input, best practices, evaluation options, and more.
- Summer reading marketing materials and promotions.
 - Two animated videos produced - English and Spanish
 - Staff promotional video produced
 - Bilingual promotional bookmarks printed
 - Bilingual reading logs printed
- Efforts related to social media, email communications, newsletters, video development and other key activities to keep the community updated on Library services and news.
 - Added Linktree for Instagram for “link in bio” access for followers. First month’s click-thru rate is 78.18%.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

By Ken Draves

Programs:

- Virtual storytimes and phone-a-story
 Staff continued to create virtual storytimes and phone-a-story, including coordination of four stories in French through the support of our CSU partners from the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures.
- Citizenship classes. The April set of classes was in English. The 4 sessions were hosted on Tuesday evenings. Registered participants received a package with all materials.
- Writing workshop for teens. Our third IMAGINANTES X workshop of 2021.
- Día del Niño. For this year's celebration we hosted a virtual storytime (We Are Water Protectors) followed by a clay workshop. Bilingual event.
- Online program Dances of the World. Welcomed participants and monitored chat.

Other Community Engagement activities:

- Africa and Ludy were invited to present on library resources and services during an ESL class offered by PSD.
- Be Ready Fair. With Angela’s help, coordinated the swag bags for May 1st event involving United Way and Early Childhood Literacy Council. \

- Reignite your future! Second session of this 3-part series to promote adult learning in partnership with PSD and FRCC. Presented about library services and resources. Translated FRCC power-point. Bilingual event.
- Larimer County Digital Literacy Initiative – meeting w/ Eileen, Miranda, and Kristen and Larimer County Workforce Development staff on partnering to support community digital skills for expanded employment opportunities for seniors, Latinx community, and others.

Summer Reading Program:

- Continued working on our summer schedule. So far, we have confirmed storytimes with 5 partners in a total of 9 different sites. Housing Catalyst, Coachlight Apartments, Boys & Girls Club, Teaching Tree, and Camp Sol (PSD).
- Participated in the recording of the staff video to promote SRC on social media.
- Created reading lists for babies and toddlers, kids, teens, and adults on Check-It-Out. Worked with Peggy on where to link those on the website + app.
- Tested all aspects of Spanish SRC website and communicated concerns to Peggy, who fixed everything after our feedback.

PSD Liaison work:

- Staff coordinated with 4 PSD schools that wanted to promote library cards. After presenting about library resources, services, and programs last month, staff picked up library card forms and then dropped them off with the library cards.

Trainings, webinars, and professional development:

- Connecting Communities with Teleservices: Learning from the Digital Navigators
- N2N Rent Assistance Training
- PSD Media Specialists meeting – summer reading.
- Meeting organized by Amy to introduce a collaboration opportunity w/ Melissa from alternate sentencing (kits, take & makes, etc.)
- Prepared laptops and loan agreements for community partners to use for vaccine signup

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

By Currie Meyer



Story Stroll: In partnership with Front Range Village / RPT Realty, CTL hosted the *Maria had a Little Llama* Story Stroll during April. 15 FRV tenants participated in the walk-and-read activity by displaying a page of the story in their front windows.

National Library Workers' Day, April 6: CTL Staff enjoyed supportive messages, balloons, flowers and treats on National Library Workers Day. Thank you, BOT, for the delicious cookies and thoughtful notes!

Facility improvements March and April: Installation of new hard surface flooring in entryway; replacement of decorative “sails” above children’s window seats; installation of additional cabinets for children’s services supplies in storytime room.



PoeTREE April 1-30: CTL Children’s Services Librarian Amy Holzworth engaged families with the PoeTREE activity. The activity inspired dozens to write a spring-y acrostic poem on colorful paper leaves or butterflies.

Paper Garden Take and Make kits for tweens and teens: Created and coordinated by CTL Teen Services Librarian Jenny Thurman; available during April at Harmony and Council Tree Libraries; approx. 135 kits picked up; kits contained all materials needed to make varieties of paper flowers, plus a “blackout” poetry activity for National Poetry Month.



Colorado Teen Literature Virtual Conference April 10; 2 teens, two CTL LAs and Jenny Thurman attended, PRPLD paid for registration (\$15 each); half-day conference featured teen authors Varian Johnson and Alan Gratz.



Staff communications and camaraderie during Covid:

Although we have missed meeting in person, our twice-monthly classified staff meetings via Zoom have remained productive during COVID. Here is a screenshot of the April meeting, featuring Angela James (lower right) in her last meeting as a District employee.



Live long and prosper, Angela! May the force be with you. May the odds be ever in your favor. Goodbye, and **thank you** for all the fish!

OLD TOWN LIBRARY

By Eileen McCluskey

Karla is coordinating with her team to finalize OTL's SRC activities and prepare for the shift to more outdoor programming. OTL's Wednesday story times have been running as weather allowed in April. Karla finished up the staff Spanish language lessons series. The instructor was excellent.

Kristen facilitated the hiring of three new part-time LA's for OTL. She attended the Digital Navigator's webinar as she prioritizes digital inclusion services and activities for the community. She completed the 5-week Google class and hired Think Again training as part of the Library District's EDI team. Kristen's leadership with the Staff Cache project is ramping up and we hope to start to roll out parts of this project soon.

Deidre hosted an Etegamí program during which participants learned about the art and made their own postcards to share. She also put together and distributed Poems in Your Pocket for Old Town Library patrons to take. Meg hosted another book group and Know Your City session. She is also working to secure authors for the FoCo Bookfest. Ian has been working on training volunteers to help with the digitization project. He has also been working on a proposed supervisory restructure for districtwide subs.

Eileen's ongoing projects

- Worked with OTL Supers team to refine scheduling and manage employee workloads. As library hours expand and in-person programming increases, understanding our capacity is a moving target at times. Completed hire for three new part-time LA's, including a new Bilingual LA. We look forward to welcoming these new employees to replace a portion of OTL's vacancies. Plans for outdoor programming and getting the book bike out on the trails is something to look forward to in the coming months. We wished Xochil a fond farewell and best wishes with her new position at the Circ Super at CTL. We also wished Nicole all the best with her new position in southwest Colorado. We will miss these two amazing women.
- Attended a meeting of City leaders, shelter employees, and Library Park area service providers about activities planned for the summer and changes to the shelter model starting on May 1.
- Met with a representative from Neighbor2Neighbor regarding staffing for a rental assistance event for Spanish speakers. The event is scheduled for May 14 and is intended to help distribute \$10 million in funds for rental assistance, allocated to the community. Due to high application volumes, there is a 6-8 weeks backlog for Spanish speakers to be contacted with assistance. The event is intended to reduce the backlog.
- OTL renovation – DAG team is meeting weekly to review updated design plans and furniture bid
- Larimer County Digital Inclusion Initiative – working with Tammy Olivas at the Economic and Workforce Development office, along with a PRPLD team, to scope out this project and invite county library stakeholders to partner with this project.

- Staff Cache sharepoint site – working with Kristen and the project team to schedule site build-outs and finalize information governance protocols.
- ESL Mentoring – Anne and Eileen completed the 2nd round of mentor training and it is going really well. We have 7 learning pairs working together on learner goals. New learners are diligently working on their first project presentations. Anne is completing learning assessments and starting to match learners with newly trained mentors. She is doing an amazing job with this service. The feedback so far from learners and mentors has been excellent. We had 15 new mentors at our second training and immediately after the training was completed, two additional mentors submitted applications after new trainees shared their excitement. Once the 15 mentors are matched with learners, we will be exceeding our goal for 2021 to have 20 learning pairs actively improving their English and working towards defined professional and personal goals.

HARMONY LIBRARY

By Ken Draves

Library District/FRCC-Larimer Campus updates

Harmony Library will close 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. Some outdoor programming such as storytimes will take place during the closure. The current project has taken a number of years to secure State funding and is a welcome upgrade, as most or all mechanical systems are original to the building which opened in 1998.

Business Services—Matt West, Business Services Librarian

- Presentation to Utilities Team
- Money Matters Programming
- Provided direct business information consulting to current and potential small business owners
- Helped Pueblo Library with Collection Development and Business Databases and connecting them with CRC
- Worked to support local small businesses in conjunction with CSU Pivot program offered through School of Business
- Talked with DDA (Downtown Development Authority) regarding Small Business Week
- SBDC Acuity Training
- Met with Andrew Minor with Larimer County Workforce and Economic Development
- Learned about the Fort Collins Restaurant Revitalization Fund