

Youth Services Monthly Report for June 2021

From: Joshua Carlson

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Programs

Summer Reading at the Library

Our online Summer Reading program kicked off June 28. To sign up, log reading and take part, as well as more information, visit: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/summer-reading-2021/>

Summer Programs

We have a wide variety of virtual programs lined up, as well as the return of in-person storytimes for ages 2-6 outside on the Library Plaza. More information on the full schedule of events can be found here:

<https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/summer-vs-programs-overview/>

Dungeons & Dragons for Teens

Erik and Ben's roleplaying adventure for teens continued. The group of eight is playing Dungeons & Dragons utilizing a combination of Roll20 and Discord to facilitate the gameplay. Erik provided some insight into what is currently happening in the game, which is meeting twice per month for a 3 hour session:

"The campaign came to an end this month. The group found the monster that had been digging holes throughout the caves, but made short work out of destroying the beast. They continued searching through the caves and found the room that the Minotaur was hiding in. It was a strange room with a portal in it and tied up, a beaten old creature that looked a lot like some of the creatures they had been fighting. The Minotaur was difficult at first, but a spell from the Bardalorian uncovered that the Minotaur was really an animatronic monster. Once this was revealed the group had no problem defeating the Minotaur. As they were fighting a strange miasma started to fill the room and they noticed that some of the creatures they had killed started to move. They needed to think fast. They grabbed the older creature after nursing it back to health and searched the room for any evidence or treasure they could find. They quickly left the cave to escape to freedom. They went straight to the Alderman's home to collect their reward and tell them what they found out. Based on the information they gathered from the old creature and the Alderman they realized that their quest was not nearly over, they needed to sail to the other side of the world to discover what was going on. But we will have to wait until September to find out what happens next."

Virtual Board Games

Ashley and Erik hosted two sessions of their monthly virtual tabletop games program. Erik noted, "we played a variety of games, talked and joked around with one another."

Austin Olney's Programs

Austin hosted sessions of Minecraft for Teens (which he will be expanding through the use of Minecraft Realms moving forward), Virtual Chess, Virtual Youth Meetup, Fortnite with Friends, and a Creative Design Help program for both youth and parents.

Online - Blog Posts, Videos, Etc.

Great Podcasts

The Great Podcasts column is well on its way! In June, we added a second part of Great Podcasts for Kids, as well as entries for Great Podcasts for Teens and Great Podcasts for Parents and Caregivers. Look for new entries monthly. You will be able to find all of the posts in the Great Podcasts series here as they are published: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/tag/great-podcasts/>

Dive into Diversity

Ashley, Raquel and Kathlyn's Dive into Diversity column explores diverse books, characters and creators.

- Raquel's entry for younger readers offers some great Summer Reads: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/dive-into-diversity-summer-reads/>
- Ashley's post for grades 4-6 also has some great diverse Summer Reads: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/dive-into-diversity-summer-reading/>
- Kathlyn's post of YA titles focused on diverse Historical Fiction: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/dive-into-diversity-ya-historical-fiction/>

Find all Dive into Diversity posts here: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/tag/dive-into-diversity/>

Peculiar Picks

Josh's entry for his Peculiar Picks column, which focuses on awesome, but perhaps not well-known, books for younger readers, continued some more recommendations for uplifting, positive, picture books based on songs, such as Peace Train, Sweet Child O' Mine and Forever Young:

<https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/peculiar-picks-26/>

Find all Peculiar Picks posts here: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/tag/peculiar-picks/>

Trove Displays

Raquel, along with Tata and Caroline, created a diverse Summer Books display up front on the tall rolling carts. These tall carts will be rolled to the Lobby with the Summer Books on one side, and titles related to the Outside Storytime, during each storytime program. Raquel and Tata also created displays for the summer reading theme of Tails and Tales; Fourth of July, Summer Treats, and International Day of Friendship (July 30).

Professional Development, Collection Management, and Other

Staff prepared materials for summer programs and Kits. Caroline, for example, assembled 60 Grab & Go PreK Kits for "P is for peacock." She noted, "this kit includes construction paper for feathers, orange cut outs for the legs, googly eyes, as well as sequins for the feathers." In addition, she created STEAM Kits to make bubble wands, which include pipe cleaners, beads and a link to how to make homemade bubbles. Tata and Raquel collaborated on the PreK "Q" Kit.

Josh completed his time as a judge in the Children's category for the US Selfies competition, which awarded honors to two children's books that were independently or self-published in the past year. The winners were announced during the ALA virtual Annual Conference: *How to Fold a Taco* by Naibe Reynoso and Ana Varela won first place, with *The Rumble Hunters* by Courtney B. Dunlap and Nazar Horokhivskiy coming in second.

Josh noted, "it was really fun to be involved with and to see some awesome work that we probably never would have heard about otherwise. I plan on getting both the winners, along with some of the other titles I reviewed during the process, for our collection."

Ashley and Kathlyn prepared for the upcoming summer Book Bunch: Comics programs, creating questions and discussion points for the programs.

Raquel created the new StoryWalk which will be outside on the Library Plaza beginning July 12. Lauren and Caroline contributed with activity sheets and take home projects in conjunction with the book *Who Am I?* which is a fun and colorful introduction to vegetables for kids. More information on the StoryWalk here: <https://whiteplainslibrary.org/2021/06/the-troves-summer-storywalk/>

Erik attended the American Library Association (virtual) Annual Conference. He attended speaker sessions with Danny Trejo, Billy Jean King, and Barack Obama. He also hosted a virtual round table discussion with the Maker Tech Interest Group. Participants had time to ask questions and discuss ways of using Makerspace equipment in their Library. The Maker Tech Interest Group's program proposal for Core's 2021 Forum in September was accepted.

Josh, Kathlyn, Lauren and Raquel met with Karyn and Brian to discuss next steps following the Diversity Audit course. Josh notes, "it was a productive meeting and I think we have a good foundation for using these tools to examine our purchasing in the future."

Two workers will be joining the Trove as part of the Youth Bureau's Youth Employment program. The two teens will be working on Tuesdays and Thursdays through mid-August. They will help out with the outside storytimes and various projects, such as assembling Grab & Go Kits and shifting materials.

Lauren notes that the nonfiction weeding project (first round) is nearing completion and that shifting of materials will take place soon.

Caroline, Raquel and Lauren began working on ways to highlight and support local Native populations. Caroline reached out to Aaron Paige at ArtsWestchester to begin a conversation on this project. One of the goals is to create a collection of materials that have authenticity to Westchester indigenous people.

Ashley attended online workshops: One was, Defend Yourself - Safer Libraries was a two-part workshop which she said was "very extensive, interactive, and focused on de-escalation, active bystander skills, boundary setting, and empowerment self-defense." Another was, Working with the LGBTQ Community: Tools for Those in Helping Professions to Create a Supportive and Affirming Environment "was really informative and I liked the tips they gave as best practices for library staff." Included at the end of this report is a handout from this workshop.

Tata read to the Head Start Socialization's virtual program on June 17.

Josh attended virtual BookFest on June 8-9. Panels attended included:

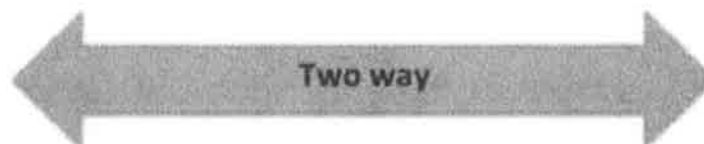
- Hope on the Edge of Catastrophe: Rising to Face a New Tomorrow. Josh comments, "I was already interested in apocalyptic fiction, and how that represents our fears (and hopes) but this session was really eye-opening at how the genre (and scfi generally) needs to re-imagine itself, encompassing diversity not just in characters, but also in how those apocalypses are experienced by characters and what they represent."
- Like, Share, and Subscribe: Reaching Your Audience with a Podcast! Josh notes, "I'm new to exploring podcasts myself, which is why I started the Great Podcasts series of blog posts for the Library. This session was fascinating and informative, with speakers who have successfully been using the podcast format for their libraries for quite some time. It would be a great thing for the Library to explore."
- Community, Bookstores, and Libraries for Antiracist Refuge: Dissection, Reflection and Getting the Work Done. Josh notes, "there was A LOT in this session. It was definitely the best of the several I attended. It demonstrated that while the Library is on the right path, there is a lot more we can do. Also, I'm really looking forward to reading panelist Amber Cabral's book, *Allies and Advocates: Creating an Inclusive and Equitable Culture*."

Josh attended a webinar, Building Connections with Community Assets. Josh notes, "this could have been cliched, but the panelists really approached this from a racial justice standpoint with a focus on defining 'community outreach' vs 'community engagement' and the importance of engagement - getting the community to work with you collaboratively. All in all, a great webinar."

OUTREACH vs. ENGAGEMENT

- **Community Engagement:** Building relationships between staff and surrounding communities to empower people to take ownership of their library and its resources. Engagement is an active partnership that serves the interest of local communities and the public good.

Examples: getting community members involved in the planning of programming, facilitating conversations in which people can envision what they want out of their library, and including community members as experts in their own neighborhoods.



Kathlyn took part in the Homeless Training Institute's online workshops for librarians helping homeless patrons. Kathlyn mentioned, "the training taught an empathy-based problem solving model that will be extremely useful when working with teens as well (or really, any patron.) Specific topics included: building a good rapport with patrons, using body language and nonverbal communication, de-escalating tense situations, how to avoid calling the police unnecessarily, and how to effectively ask a patron to leave. I found this empathy-based approach really useful and was happy to learn new strategies for working with teens."

Lauren attended the above training, as well, and indicated it was “incredible.”

Josh and Erik interviewed several candidates for PT Library Assistant positions in Youth Services. Three were selected and began working at the end of June. They will primarily be working afternoons/evenings and weekends. Erik gave them a tour of the building and helped them fill out necessary paperwork. They received training during their first two shifts in both the Trove and Edge. Please join us in welcoming Alain LaForest, Amy Ribakove, and Aimee Salinas. Alain is a MLS student at Pratt and has a background in real estate, retail, project management, instituting STEM projects with high school students, and mentoring, reading with and tutoring grades 3-8. Amy is a MLS student at Pratt and has a background in bookstores, publishing, writing, being a camp counselor, a head start classroom aide, and working with grades 2-4 in homework help. Aimee has some library experience at NYPL, as well as a background in retail, social work and working with individuals with disabilities and autism.

Lauren conducted an outreach visit to the Church in the Highlands preK summer program. She noted it was a “fun outreach for the 2s, 3s, and 4s classes. I’ve even already seen some of these kids in the library!”

Working with the LGBTQ Community: Tools for Library Staff to Create a Supportive and Affirming Library Environment

Presented by Maria Demauro, LMSW on June 25th. 2021

**Note: This information is subject to change and language flourishes in the community. Always check on the most cultural relevant resources. Feel free to reach out to PFY at 516 679 9000*

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questions, and a variety of identities!

- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are not the same and one does not determine the other

Sexual orientation (LGB)

- Physical/emotional attractions to others (or lack thereof)
- Typically develops between the ages of 5–7 and manifests as crushes (“puppy love”)

Gender identity (T)

- Personal conception of one’s own gender
- How you see yourself and how you want others to see you
- Basic gender identity is formed around age 3

What is Gender?: Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Gender Roles, Gender as a social construct

Transgender: People whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth

Cisgender: People whose gender identity does align with their sex assigned at birth

Nonbinary: Regardless of what they were assigned at birth, does not identify as squarely male or female

Best Practices for Library Staff

- Think about what you call library patrons. Are you using gendered terms? Try using first names, or gender neutral terms instead
- Look at policies respecting library users’ ability to change their name and gender marker on record. If this is an easy and affirming process, a transgender patron’s library card may be the first place they use their chosen name. This makes the library space not only a place of learning, but a place to feel affirmed and safe.
- When working with children, ask if an adult or a parent is with them, rather than their mother or father. Not all children have a mother and father!
- Avoid dividing activities based on gender
- Include books with prominent LGBTQ characters in displays year round, highlight LGBTQ themed book during Pride month (June), and highlight LGBTQ books during other months (For example. Black History Month – February: Marsha P Johnson was a black transgender woman who was an advocate at Stonewall!)