



We may be closed to the public, but the past month has seen a flurry of activity at the BDL as we respond to the rapidly changing situation and work to retool our operations to continue to provide the highest level of service that we can during this difficult time.

From the outset, we had no choice but to focus on our “digital branch” as the core of our operations. To lower barriers, we immediately asked our digital materials providers to stop blocking downloads of materials if patrons had charges on their accounts due to lost materials. In addition, we removed our monthly budget restrictions for the popular Hoopla service. We are still limiting users to 6 items per month, but we are willing to pay more than we were expecting to let as many BDL patrons as possible have a chance to access this service while our doors are closed. The Woodlands Library Cooperative also increased funding to OverDrive, for which we are grateful.

In addition, we signed up for a new service, RB Digital Magazines. RB gives our patrons access to over 3,000 great magazines that cover a wide variety of interests. We pay a flat fee, which will be budget neutral this year, given budget savings due to canceled training and programming. For this flat fee, patrons may download as many magazines as they want, and keep them for as long as they want. People will love this new service, and it will be publicly announced on Monday to kick off National Library Week in style!

To help people continue to get these premium online services, we automatically renewed any library cards that were due to expire, and are letting new patrons register online. Patrons receive their library card number via email and will get the physical card in the mail within a few days. Our Wi-Fi remains on at all branches 24/7, and we repositioned the antennas in a few places to make our signal stronger in the parking lots. Unsurprisingly, usage is down overall for March, but still very much in use throughout all hours of the day at all locations.

We automatically changed the date due on all items out so that no one would have to worry about items they had checked out, and we encouraged patrons to just keep them at home for now. Branch Managers have been checking the drop boxes for returned books and mail when they check building security and conditions, and quite a large number of items have been returned anyway. Items are placed in quarantine for a few days, then wiped down before being checked in and returned to the shelves. As the Board requested, all BDL employees were informed that any appearances to our physical spaces was entirely optional, and anyone who did so signed a waiver that they did so of their own accord. On the advice of our legal counsel, I provided travel documents for the Branch Managers and bookkeeper, underlining their status as essential for the basic business operations of the library, and asked everyone else to stay at home.

To facilitate our remote meetings, collaboration, and patron events, we started using Zoom over the past month, which has been really nice. Given that patron programming will be severely impacted by the COVID-19 situation, I foresee that Zoom will remain a part of our programming arsenal for many months to come, even once our doors are open to the public again.

As programming moved online, our staff have stepped up amazingly, from helping to select online resources that we share, to conducting virtual story times, to holding book discussions, to demonstrating craft ideas and science projects. As of 4/16, BDL has put on **31 original video**

programs totaling over 7 hours of content, and held 4 book discussions. In the coming weeks we have even more planned, including some new experiments, like trivia nights.

To say that I'm thoroughly impressed with our staff during this time would be an understatement. Their dedication and creativity have shone through clearly during this time. On top of juggling their personal lives during all this, they are keeping the facilities secure, keeping the bills paid, working on programming, taking training classes online, working on materials selection and planning for when we reopen, and just attending virtual meetings to help keep everyone's spirits up...this is a great team. I can't wait to tell them all that in person someday soon (but not unsafely too soon!).

Part of that planning is for changes we'll need to make to our spaces and procedures for the coming months. The distancing and disinfection that we started before the closure will continue for a long time to come. And we have purchased plexiglass sneeze guards from Pennzoni Display Company, from Sturgis, MI, for our public service desks as another part of the puzzle to help keep our staff safe when we reopen. Here's an example:



There have been almost daily webinars we're attending from the CDC, the Library of Michigan, the Michigan Library Association, the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services, the American Library Association, Library 2.0, and more. Librarians across the country are working together with our health and government agencies to make sure that when we resume public services, we do so as safely and effectively as possible.

No doubt there will still be obstacles ahead; but, in these circumstances, I am proud to be navigating these strange waters with this crew and with the strong support from our Board of Trustees. We will come out of this stronger and more relevant than ever, knowing we've given it our best.

Be safe. Be well.

John Rucker



The closure of our physical spaces turned our focus to digital library services. During the last half of of March alone, we hosted 10 programs on the website and Facebook. Using data collected from Facebook, we had 3430 views and comments from those 10 programs. I am happy that we have been able to provide entertainment and even a sense of normalcy during this trying time!

I can't thank the staff enough who are at home recording story times, hosting experiments, providing readers advisory, and other great things. Without their help, we wouldn't be able to move forward with virtual programming. One of my favorites has been our Bedtime Storytime, with Lindsay Villa. She read a chapter from "The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe", every night. This is one of my favorite books and I was not surprised to see children and adults tuning in to hear her read. She has done a fantastic job with her character voices and has such an energetic personality. My family enjoyed the BDL Explorers segment with Keeley Briggs. We learned how to make crystals with borax or salt. At one point, I had 13 jars going making crystals! I am hosting the Quarantine Virtual Book Club every Thursday night at 8pm. This book club "meets" on the library Facebook timeline and shares what we have been reading! I have enjoyed these conversations with our patrons and may have added a few titles to my TBR list.



Making Crystals



Patrons are continuing to apply for library cards online. We even received a library card application from Ontario Canada! After contacting them, they declined to pay our non-resident fee. I have been mailing out approximately 10-15 cards a week.

BDL is celebrating National Library Week (April 19 - April 25). This year's theme is "Find the Library at Your Place". We are hosting a virtual library spirit week with dress up days and will award two \$50 gift cards from Meijer. Also, we will be providing a daily spotlight of our digital library services. Follow along on our Facebook page or website!

Submitted,

Kimberly Feltner

NATIONAL LIBRARY VIRTUAL SPIRIT WEEK!

Participate with us at home by taking pictures for one or all of our Library Spirit Days! Submit your pictures on our Facebook page or by email to FeltnerK@BranchDistrictLibrary.org

Two pictures will be selected by library staff to win one of two \$50.00 Meijer Gift Cards!

April 19 - Shelfie Sunday

Show us your shelves!

Books or movies, impressive us with your organization!

April 20 - Team Spirit

Dress to represent your favorite high school, college, or pro team.

April 21 - Dress Like a Librarian

Tuesday is National Library Workers Day and show us your best inspired Librarian Outfit.

April 22 - Rainbow Colors

Happy Earth Day! Dress in any color or all the colors from the rainbow!



April 23 - Throwback Thursday

Get into your closet and dig out your clothes from past decades, 70's, 80's, or 90's.

April 24 - Bookface Friday

Replace your face with a book cover! Need an Example?

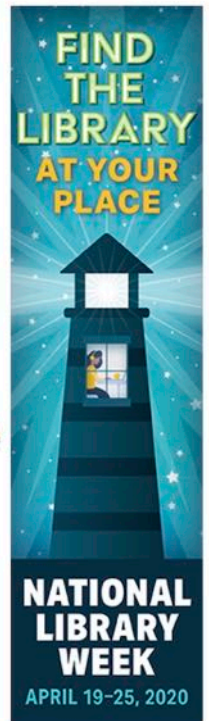


April 25 - Superhero Saturday

Dress as your favorite Superhero or celebrate our everyday local heroes (nurses, doctors, firefighters, police, etc.)



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www.BranchDistrictLibrary.org

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES
April 2020

It's an interesting time in the library world right now, but that doesn't mean that we aren't trucking along! Due to the Corona virus situation, there is a lot of changing, rearranging, and evolving that we're doing for online programming to stay relevant for our patrons. This has been entirely because of the collaborative effort of many staff members at BDL contributing videos to our Facebook page. We really have the best staff around!

While the *One Book One County* event featuring Irene Butter in person was cancelled, I am in the middle of working out details with her agent about a virtual book talk featuring Irene at some point in May and that is very exciting!

There have been some necessary revisions to the 2020 Summer Reading Program. The program will now begin registering patrons on June 1st, and the BDL will begin our SRP on June 15. The program will run 6 weeks (instead of 8) and will end on July 25th. More information coming on this soon!

I will be starting Tuesday Trivia on Facebook beginning April 21 at 7:30PM. Week 1 will feature 90's Trivia questions, and week 2 will feature Disney Trivia questions. This will run for at least 6 weeks, and promises to be a ton of fun!

Submitted,

Jessica Tefft