



- This December has been a time for getting some work done on various IT projects. Among the usual maintenance and preparation for the new year, we have also installed a new server used for a variety of internal purposes, and loaded the backend systems for the new RFID project. The cellular hotspots we got as part of our CARES Act grant have arrived, though we can't circulate them yet because we are caught up in some sort of holiday/end-of-year/COVID-induced backlog with Verizon.
- As you'll see from the other reports, curbside service levels vary from day to day and from branch to branch, but on the whole we are doing much more business than we did with our first outing in June.
- The Branch County Commissioners declared a lost health emergency situation, as required by the Open Meetings Act to permit us to continue to hold virtual meetings until December 31, 2021. We are not obligated to do so, however, and may resume in-person meetings at such time when it is safe to do so and allowed by the health department. (Michigan SB1246 has passed the legislature and is expected to be signed presently by the governor to allow virtual meetings for any reason through March 31, 2021.) The Commissioners also approved Susie Brook's new term as a BDL Trustee.
- For a couple years now, the BDL Board has had [a policy for an employee and volunteer recognition program](#), and aside funds for this purpose, but nothing had been formally instituted until now. The rules and procedures for this program are below, but first a report on this year's awards.

It was a real treat for Kimberly, Jessica, and me to tally and evaluate all the nominations and reflect on all the high quality work that has been done here this year in support of our stated goals of good service, teamwork, innovation, ethics, and more. We have an outstanding family of library staff and volunteers!

25 individuals, representing all 6 branches, were nominated a total of 61 times, and nominations were received both from supervisors and from peers noticing excellence in their colleagues. Of the 25 nominated, 16 were recognized this year, with awards of \$200-\$500 each. As the Board policy dictates, we won't have any sort of public notice of who was recognized without the recipient's permission. As of today, we don't have anyone's permission, so this summary will be in generalities.

Those receiving awards—15 staff and 1 volunteer—covered a cross-section of responsibilities and positions at the library and represented people at 5 of our branches. These were individuals who joined our BDL team recently all the way up to people who have been here for decades. People were recognized for their excellent customer service, for their creativity in programming, for their excellent work ethics, and for how they might consistently do a number of little things very well adding up to a greater whole.

8 individuals received a \$200 award, 3 received a \$300 award, and 5 received a \$500 award, using the entirety of the \$5,000 budgeted for this purpose.

While nominations were kept confidential, it was so heartening to read everyone's praise and appreciation of their team members. Everyone awarded received a signed letter from the management team letting them know why they were recognized. If we get consent from enough recipients, our plan is to make a public announcement of our "employees of the year" and ask the local news to cover it like they do other Branch County businesses.

Next year, the numbers of staff and dollar amounts awarded might be different, and the slate will start clean for everyone. Getting recognized this year doesn't guarantee a recognition next year, and not being recognized this year won't impact a person's chances next year.

We look forward to seeing this recognition program grow and thrive.

Submitted by John Rucker

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## **BDL Employee and Volunteer Recognition Rules**

Employees and volunteers are the greatest asset of the Branch District Library. It is the [policy of the BDL Board of Trustees](#) to recognize employees and volunteers who exhibit excellence in their work, who practice and demonstrate our core values, and who contribute significantly to the mission of the BDL.

Help foster a culture of excellence by nominating someone below to be considered for a year-end merit-based award.

Read on for details, or skip to the nomination form.

### **Awards**

Each year, the BDL Board of Trustees will authorize an amount of money which may be spent on the employee recognition program, but the exact implementation is determined by the Director.

For 2020, the amount set aside in the budget for this recognition program is \$5,000.

Possible awards will vary in amount, with the exact amount awarded based on the judged impact of the individual's action in the nomination or collected nominations.

It is possible that not all of the money budgeted in a given year will be awarded. Not every person nominated will receive an award. We could have a maximum of twenty \$250 awards or five \$1,000 awards, or a variety of different combinations of amounts in between based on what happened in that year.

### **Eligibility**

Any BDL volunteer or hourly employee is eligible for recognition. Salaried/management staff are not eligible. An employee who is nominated for recognition during the year but leaves the BDL before the awards are given will be taken out of eligibility.

## **Nomination Criteria**

The BDL's [2018 Strategic Plan](#) states that our Core Values are:

- We are forward-thinking.
- We are involved.
- We are trustworthy.
- We are community-focused.
- We provide high quality and diverse programs.

Keep those values in mind as you nominate someone for recognition, as well as [our mission](#): "To provide the people of our communities with library collections and services to meet their educational, informational, and recreational needs."

Recognition should also be geared toward supporting the institutional needs of the BDL, that is:

- To promote individual, team and organization success.
- To link numerous "little efforts" to a large effort with greater impact.
- To reflect the highest ethical and professional standards.
- To encourage and promote staff development.
- To recognize creativity and innovation.
- To recognize excellence in public service.

Employees and volunteers may nominate themselves, however self-nominations will not be weighed as highly as a nod from a peer or supervisor. All supervisors, including those on the management team, are encouraged to be observant of all the good things going on at BDL--whether on the front lines or behind the scenes in tech services and support roles--and nominate people for recognition.

## **Selection Process**

Nominations are due by 5pm on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving each year. The BDL management team will review all nominations based on the criteria above and will select winners. The number of nominations a person receives will be weighed next to the impact of the action for which he or she is being nominated. Nominations received after the Thanksgiving cut-off will be considered for the following year's awards.

Selection will be based partially on a point system:

- One point for each self-nomination
- 5 points for each nomination received from a peer
- 10 points for each nomination received from a supervisor
- Up to 10 points from each on the management team for how well they feel the action nominated for recognition supports the criteria above, for a total of up to 30 additional points.
- Additional points may be earned based upon ratings earned on the annual performance review, with 0 points for an overall rating of "Needs Improvement", 1 point for "Meets Expectations", 3 points for "Exceeds Expectations", and 5 points for "Outstanding".

Points an individual gets from all nominations will be added together to help guide the award selection. Selection is only partially based on points, because the Director may always reserve the right to recognize someone for substantial deeds that didn't get a lot of notice, and so on. Past awards, or lack of awards, will not be considered as a basis for influencing the current year; everyone starts with a blank slate each January.

Tax law requires that merit bonuses be reported as part of wages on your check, therefore awards will be distributed on the next possible pay period after the decisions are made, and must be awarded in the current budget year. A letter from the management team will precede each award to inform the winner of their prize and of the library's appreciation for their job well done.

The Director must report to the BDL Board on the numbers and types of recognition awarded, but no public display of recognition will be made without the recipients' consent, since not everyone likes being in the spotlight.

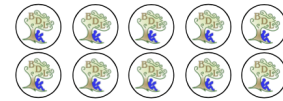


- Since March, BDL has hosted an impressive number of virtual programs. Every month, we point out how good the virtual programming is for BDL. This month was no exception. For example, the Bronson branch contributed 22 virtual programs and had 2375 views! The nightly reading of “Wind in the Willows” from Steve Watson and Lynnell Eash’s Finger Play Roly Poly program were favorites. All branches contribute to our virtual content. Virtual programs range from storytimes, craft instruction, and informational talks. We will be taking a virtual programming break from January 4 - January 17. The popular Grab & Go kits, craft kits to take home, will be available for curbside pickup during this time.
- We mailed a total of 258 annual donation letters. Also, BDL participated with the Branch County Community Foundation (BCCF) for Giving Tuesday. The Community Foundation coordinated an online hub for non-profits and various community organizations on its website. BDL shared the campaign on our website and social media before Giving Tuesday. The public could choose where to direct their donations. Any donations received by the BCCF for the library are sent directly to the library.
- The marketing department developed a BDL loyalty card program that will run until the end of the year. Patrons get a punch card and when they check a total of ten items, they get an amazing BDL coffee mug.
- The marketing team is also developing social media posts and videos of new items to allow people to “browse” virtually. Angie Clark creates posts weekly showing the book covers of new items from all sections. I have created several photo slideshows of new books. There will be some trial and error to see what works best on each social media platform. If you follow us on Facebook or Instagram, expect to see a lot of different methods being used.
- Our patrons are taking advantage of curbside services! We are having visits for material pickup, faxing, printing, and library cards. For the thirteen days in November that were curbside only, we served 377 pickups. The Library of Michigan considers curbside alternative services. The visits do not count for open hours or attendance that you see on the monthly statistical report. Unfortunately, those two categories will show zero. Library staff are tracking curbside visits and we will be able to report those monthly to the board. The Branches are reporting an increase in visits for the first several days of December and I anticipate seeing higher numbers moving forward.
- I attended the Branch County Community Network virtual meeting in November and December. I also took a webinar titled “Burnout and Stress: Strategies in case 2021 is as bad as 2020”.

**Branch District Library**

THIS CARD BELONG TO:

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CHECK OUT 10 ITEMS BEFORE THE END OF 2020  
AND GET A BDL COFFEE MUG!



VALID UNTIL DEC. 30, 2020

\*ONE CARD/MUG PER PERSON

Submitted,

Kimberly Feltner