

In the past month, I have taken a couple weeks of PTO to do my annual volunteering for the Coldwater High School band camp. Thank you for continuing to indulge my participation in this activity. It's not exactly a vacation, but I definitely come back energized from all the youthful positivity. My 20th anniversary as a BDL employee was recently reached, and I feel truly blessed to be able to call this workplace and this community home for so long. I look forward to more good years together with my vibrant colleagues!

Summer Reading Program

It's been all-hands-on-deck for a couple of months, as this year's summer reading program was the first one since 2019 to feel completely normal. All branches have been happening places this summer, with greatly increased program attendance to a level we haven't seen since 2017. Materials usage is about three-quarters of what it was pre-pandemic. I am so grateful to work with such dedicated and talented individuals across the county who have made this summer such a success!

Health Department Partnership

The partnership with the tri-county health department to distribute covid tests has not begun yet. The health department has directed us to engage with MDHHS directly, so it will be a little more time before the details are worked out.

Personnel

The Sherwood Clerk Position remains open, and has been reposted. The current crop of applications is being evaluated, and we hope to be able to conduct another round of interviews soon.

Bonnie Sherman, our longtime Heritage Room Coordinator, has let us know she would like to step back from those duties, but stay on as a volunteer in a more limited capacity. This position has been posted internally and we will proceed to external candidates if necessary.

Facilities

As you will see in person at this month's meeting, the Sherwood Branch has been re-carpeted and the new chairs ordered are in place. As easy as it was to type that sentence, it belies the major work involved, with so many moving parts needing to be juggled. Thanks to Traci for coordinating the movers, carpet installers, and floor painters, not to mention all the packing and unpacking she had to do herself! And thanks to Curtis for helping me with the technology and putting together all these new office chairs!

The new service desk for the Coldwater Branch Teen Space arrived, and it looks great (photos in the branch reports). We are still waiting on delivery of a matching cabinet and two fun teen chairs. The new chairs for the Coldwater Branch reading area also look great! Any furniture that was replaced that still had some life left was donated to a variety of local groups: The Tibbits Opera House, the Coldwater Community Center, the Eby Center, and more. The final bill for all of the furniture purchases came in at about \$500 under the authorized amount.

Meetings and Training

Coldwater DDA committee x2, Quincy Advisory Board, Woodlands Library Cooperative, Midwest Collaborative for Library Services visit, Library of Michigan Directors

I also attended a workshop put on by a group of Michigan Library figures on the topic of materials challenges. I will share some of what I learned at when we are together at the meeting.

StoryWalk

Final preparations are underway for the permanent StoryWalk installation at Heritage Park. We had several meetings to determine the location and installation date. The first several books have been selected and ordered. Erica, our Children's Services Coordinator, has been crafting the panels with reading prompts and engaging images. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for Friday, September 8 at 10 am.

Marketing

The 2023 Fall Event Guide has arrived! It is full of great free activities for children, teens, and adults. It highlights our annual Family Fright Night, a TeenTober Reading Challenge, and Library Card Sign-Up month.

The library's TikTok channel has been active for a little over a month. Seven videos have been posted. The videos have ranged from a highlight of our graphic novel collection, foam party recap, and our Library of Things. The most popular video to date was a spoof of the Kardashians.

Meagan Marsh has been working on a campaign "I didn't know my library did that" throughout August. It will lead into our September campaign for Library Card Sign-up month. Various library services are going to be highlighted on social media. This will remind patrons of the perks of their library cards! A special bingo sheet will help us celebrate the perks of your library card. Patrons of all ages can play along during September for a chance to win prizes. Also coming up in September is the release of a special children's library card design!

A Back-to School campaign was put together including a special flyer for the school Open Houses. It highlighted the reasons students need a library card.

Meetings

I attended the weekly meetings with the Kiwanis Club of Coldwater. I also had several meetings with the City of Coldwater about the StoryWalk. John, Jessica, and I all met with MCLS.

Digipalooza

I had the opportunity to attend an all-expenses-paid trip to Digipalooza in Cleveland. This is a conference hosted by Overdrive. As a new member of the Woodlands Library Cooperative on the eResource Committee, it was great to be able to attend. Woodlands uses Overdrive to provide digital library content for the cooperative on the Libby app.

Day one was a tour of Overdrive headquarters and office hours with the Overdrive account teams. I visited Overdrive's Digital Bookmobile. Their touring bookmobile is a bus full of various technology and devices. It helps new users experience the library's digital collection for the first time. It also shows experienced users tips & tricks to enhance their experience. They plan to start traveling the United States again soon!

The second day was packed full of workshops.

- First up was a session on how to leverage your budget to meet the demand of your patrons. This is especially relevant to the shared collection by the cooperative. Overdrive is now allowing a cost-per circ model, like our Hoopla service, that can turn on and off. This may be a great solution to shorten long waits on popular titles. This could also work for BDL to buy digital content for specific titles. It turns off and on making it more manageable for budget reasons. A great example of how BDL might use this would be during our One Book One County. Using this model we could buy the digital title and have it available for our patrons only. Then when the event was over it would turn off.
- The second session was customizing the Libby platform to make your user's needs. As a cooperative, this level of customization is a little tricky. It highlighted services that librarians often do in their physical locations like displays and staff picks. One library took its Program Guide and turned it into an ebook. They added it to their digital collection and patrons were able to check it out.
- Next was a session on some creative digital reading campaigns designed to reach underserved audiences. This included the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District which handed out cell phones with 18 months of service to low-income residents. Another library in Oklahoma put in solar benches at their parks. The benches were able to provide marketing for their digital library but also give people a place to charge their devices. Several libraries are partnering with their local transit authorities to give free checkouts of ebooks for people riding the buses. A lot of amazing work is being done around the country!
- After a talk from author Sarah Penner and lunch, we came back together to hear about comics and graphic novels! According to Overdrive, they are outperforming other forms of fiction. In both checkouts and in attracting and engaging new audiences. Not limited to fantasy and superheroes, comics now extend to nonfiction! We heard from the experts on what's trending and how these materials can accelerate a digital collection's performance. I know at BDL we have some great users of these formats and demand for physical copies is up.
- Then it was on to marketing your digital collection. I always like to hear what other libraries are doing to promote digital items. A lot of suggestions included staff having regular training sessions to be more confident talking about the services offered.

- It wouldn't be a library conference without a discussion on book banning. Representatives from Overdrive's school service, called Sora, moderated a discussion with librarians on the frontlines. navigating book bans and challenges in their communities.
- Last up for day two was the big business of audiobooks. Industry leaders and publishers were present and shared the current state of audiobooks. They highlighted the increase in digital and the decline in physical. One librarian spoke up that she needed audiobooks on CDs still for the truckers and farmers. I can say the same since our audiobooks on CD are used in those types of vehicles here in Branch County.

Day three started with a round table discussion with other librarians. The general theme seemed to be that patron demand for digital content is at a high and budgets aren't high enough to meet the demand. Overdrive announced some changes to digital magazines that should make users happy. Kanopy, a streaming movie service, provided some updates with new content added. The closing speaker was author Eriq LaSalle who is an author, producer, and former actor from the TV show ER.

It was a jam-packed three days! My brain was buzzing with information all the way home. The committee group is meeting later in August. We have already started discussing how this can be implemented. Since I am a very new member I am looking forward to learning more and helping our digital users get their content!

Submitted,

Kimberly Feltner

- What an absolutely incredible summer! The 2023 Summer Reading Program (SRP) ended officially on July 29 but really ended with the SRP Wrap-up Foam Party on July 31. We ended SRP with an almost 50% completion rate! We had 973 registrations and over 450 completions. That's fantastic! The Foam Party had a massive turnout, over double what we expected. It's difficult to know the actual number as the software had some technical difficulties during the event. We do know that 900 attendees went into the foam and many many other people attended but didn't go into the actual foam pit.
- The fair was so busy! We had over 1500 people visit our booths from Sunday to Saturday. We brought back the prize wheel and people were BIG fans. From babies to at least one octogenarian, lots and lots of joy come from it. Attendees could win bubbles, bookish stickers or regular stickers, candy, pop-its, temporary tattoos, a library button and if you were really lucky, a super fun surprise! (The surprise was this: You could get sprayed with the water bottle, or spray someone from your group OR your local librarian!) This was the largest group of people we've seen at the fair in recent memory.
- On August 19, we will be having a graduation ceremony for our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten graduates! We have 9 kiddos that have successfully completed the program and we'll have a ceremony and refreshments in Kids Place at the Coldwater branch.
- Meetings: These are the meetings that I've attended this month.
 - MCLS meeting with John and Kimberly
 - BCCN
 - Winter Program Planning
 - Family Fright Night Planning

