

Algansee

We are moved into our new space and loving it! A huge thank you to the many people who made this possible. We have received so many positive comments about the new building. Thank you!

We hosted an adult craft program our first day open. The paintings were a lovely variety of sunsets. It was a busy week, receiving and exchanging materials. The rocking chairs have been enjoyed by many. I love how the space has been inviting people to sit and talk awhile. The little ones were excited to see the child size coloring table waiting for them. The adults and older kids have been working together on the community puzzle. (We have space for a community puzzle!!!)

Our children's programs were also busy. We had new families attend story time at the library. We began exploring Russia with our tween group. Tuesday's afterschool group returned to craft. Family movie night had me a bit emotional. There was so much space! When everyone began getting a bit bored, groups naturally splintered off to play. There were kids giggling in multiple corners, in addition to our movie watchers, and adults that had gathered by the fireplace. It felt like such a warm, inviting community space.

I am looking forward to my first Noah's Ark workshop. A few of the kids got to peek at a few of the critters as I unpacked the box. They are adorable!

Happy new year to you all. I'm so excited for the programs we have planned this year. 😊

Submitted by Teresa Shilling



Bronson

The new year has started quickly, and we are already halfway through the month and planning our summer programs.

Reflecting on December, the City of Bronson held its first Grinchmas Festival. Businesses provided crafts, refreshments, and prizes, and kids had the opportunity to take pictures with the Grinch. At the last minute, we set up a table at the historical society museum to offer a craft. Jessie did an excellent job managing the materials as hundreds of people attended. While the city estimated over 500 attendees, most businesses and our Friends group, who handed out coloring books and ornaments, ran out of supplies before the event ended. It was a successful night, and planning for next year is already underway.

In other December highlights, Jessie, along with other District staff, participated in the Coldwater Christmas parade to hand out treats, and we welcomed a local daycare's miniature carolers at the library. We also held several pop-up programs during the Christmas break, including coloring, games, and a movie.

All programs for the March–May event guide have been submitted. Our first-quarter programs, including Homeschool Escapades, Coffee House, Book Lovers 'R' Us, Toddler Time, Friday Tales, and Adult Crafts, have resumed. We also introduced "Jigsaw Junkies", a monthly evening program where adults and youth can work on puzzles and enjoy refreshments. There is already a great deal of community anticipation for this addition.

With the new budget year, I have placed orders for books, DVDs, and a significant expansion to our Library of Things.

We are looking forward to a productive 2026.

Submitted by Lynnell Eash



Coldwater

Happy New Year!

Coldwater ended December with several warming family programs. First was Hot Cocoa Jars. Children created hot cocoa and marshmallow layers in a giftable glass jar. Second was, Let's Build A Snowman. It was a crafting program where they made a snowman that never melts. Patrons used air dry clay and miniature snowman embellishments. Lastly was Staycation Fun! This was an entire day packed full of games, crafts and snacks on every floor of the library and we saw over 45 participants!

Coldwater rung in the new year with some Lemon Pigs in Teen Space. This cute craft was based off a New Years good luck charm and is a quirky fun tradition. The teens and myself were super excited to take home a Lemon Pig for the new year.

Coldwater received some new enhancements to our branch; new cameras on the exterior of the branch, a wall mounted heat unit for the basement break room, and heat installed to the Branch Manager's office. The heat is much appreciated by everyone at the branch.

The branch had our security officer start on January 5. We had a new staff member, Becky start with us in December and she is a wonderful addition to the BDL team! The Coldwater staff is full of talented, wonderful individuals and this is going to be reflected in the next quarter of programs in the event guide.

Submitted by Christina Holibaugh



Quincy

Happy New Year! I hope you all had magical holidays and got to spend time with the ones you care about the most!

Here is a summary of the fun things happening at the Quincy Branch:

- To honor Connie Karney's memorial, we hosted Shenanigans with Santa, at Union Church. We had 175 people come and enjoy all things Christmas; breakfast from Small Town Girl, cookie decorating, Christmas games and crafts, pictures with Santa, and Santa brought Christmas books for every kiddo to pick out. Smiles were all around, everywhere you looked, and I was asked by many people to have this event every year. So much fun!



- I submitted all of our spring programs, be sure to check out the calendar to see what fun things we have coming up. I'm going to highlight a program that will be happening on March 2. What's on March 2 you ask? DR. SUESS' BIRTHDAY! We will be having a Dr. Seuss Day from 4pm-6pm with Dr. Seuss story time, Dr Seuss themed snacks and games, and just maybe get to take a picture with one of his special characters. Come check it out!
- We've been having some fun in the branch with some crafts in between the holidays. We've made our own snow since we didn't have any for Christmas this year, we learned how to make candles (and got to make one of our own), and we had a really fun search and find day. During the search and find day, I had them find the 4 snowmen hidden in our library that is a part of the Library-wide Scavenger Hunt as a way to promote that program and invite everyone to participate, plus come to Take Your Child to the Library Day in February.
- We got new branch cameras installed, inside and out. They are wonderful!
- Check out our adorable Elephant & Piggie display.



I hope everyone is staying warm. It's the best time of year to be cuddled up on the couch with a good book and a steaming cup of coffee.

Submitted by Sarah Strong

Sherwood

Happy New Year from Sherwood! It's hard to believe that another year has come to pass, but here we are, well on our way into 2026. We had some great programs in December and a few surprises, too!

Bobbie Mathis hosted a painting program for us. We look forward to her creativity every time she comes. With her we painted a relaxing creek in the snow. This was also our maiden voyage doing a wine/painting program. It went great and we were able to send Bobbie home with the extra wine that was left over.



Our Noah's Ark Babies are always a hit!!

Lap-time/story time is always hit or miss around here, but I sure am grateful when it's a hit.

Our kids programs are always well received. We have regular attendees and we never miss a chance to encourage them to "bring friends".

We also received a surprise visit from Modern Woodmen in December. The Sherwood Library was selected for the 2025 "Hometown Heroes" award. We were in the middle of some things and totally forgot to get an acceptance picture with Amy from Modern Woodmen, but I did include a picture of what was delivered to us. It was a welcome honor and we look forward to continuing the exceptional services for which we were recognized. We love our community and our surrounding communities!

Until next month,
best regards,
Traci Counterman - Sherwood



Union Township

"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written." – Melody Beattie

As we begin 2026, we at Union Township are looking ahead to an exciting year filled with new opportunities and engaging programs for our patrons. We can't wait to see what the new year will hold for everyone.

Check out our new library card holder! He was so excited to receive his very first library card.

On January 8, Meghan and I will visit Union City High School to meet with two advisory classes. We will share information about the library services and resources and assist students with signing up for library cards. We are looking forward to connecting with students and discussing all things library-related.

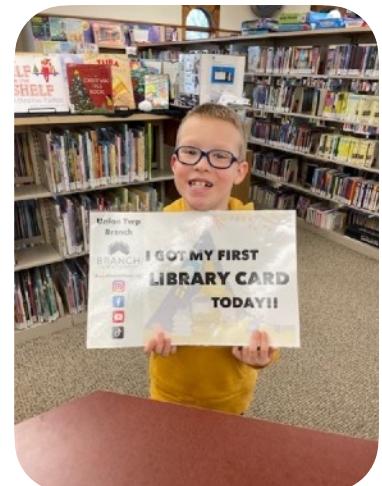
January will also include several behind-the-scenes projects, including transitioning all library seasonal displays, completing shelf wanding, and placing the first materials order of the year. We are excited to see the new materials that will soon be added to the collection.

Seed preparation is underway for our annual Roots and Shoots Seed Celebration, scheduled for March 14 from 9am-1pm. We have already received many generous seed donations, and the packing and sorting process will keep us busy over the next couple of months.

Recent and upcoming staff training include the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (December) and an upcoming session on AI and the Environment on January 22.

Looking ahead to February, upcoming programs include: Bobbie Mathis Presents: The Underground Railroad History Discussion on February 24 at 4pm, and an Anti-Valentine's Adult Paint Program on February 11 (Registration Required). Here's to 2026 and all that it may bring our way!

Submitted by Maria Rathbun



Outreach

Happy New Year! It may not seem like much has happened at the bookmobile this past month with holiday closures and the cold weather, but there is still quite a bit going on behind the scenes.

We had to cancel the bookmobile's route for a week in December due to a dead chassis battery thanks to the winter weather. Luckily, we did not have much scheduled that week. We are taking steps to avoid this happening again in the future. We also sent the vehicle in for some regular maintenance on the Odyne battery system just after the start of the year (without any disruption to our stop schedule).

We also saw an uptick in our attendance at our Butler stop last month with 10 attendees, all of whom were Amish! A few new library cards were created, and now we have a pretty steady attendance of at least 5 regular patrons in the area.

The first order of the year for new materials has already been submitted! This feels a little different from last year, as we now have a bigger audience and a better idea of what of what they like and look for. Some books have already been steadily pulled off the shelves throughout the past year in order to make space for newer ones. Most of these have not yet been checked out, so I feel confident in being able to place these into storage. These items will be listed as "in storage" in the library catalog, but can still be requested by patrons.

Speaking of new materials, I plan to put a little more focus on purchasing accessible materials in 2026. I will be adding a few kids titles in Spanish to my orders, and will be keeping an eye out for when the Lois Lenski Covey grant opens for submissions. This was a grant I applied for a couple of years ago and was awarded \$2500. It is specifically for libraries with bookmobiles. Awarded funds are used solely for purchasing more kids materials, and the maximum award is \$5000. I hope to use this for some of the more costly kids materials like Vox books and Large Print.

At the very end of 2025, I applied for the Stephen T. Reidner Grant for Life Enhancing Library Programs for People Living with Dementia. One of the things I've learned through my time at ABOS conferences is that people living with Dementia (except for probably in late stages of the disease) can still read. They read differently than we do, but the act of reading itself is more of an automatic muscle-memory action. This grant is designed for libraries who do not already have any materials or programming in place for this specific community demographic. There are 2 companies I've seen at ABOS who provide products that some libraries have cataloged and available for checkout in their collections. One of which is Reading2Connect, who makes books geared towards adults living with dementia.

Cheryl Lawrence
Outreach Manager