



Director's Report

Date: September 5, 2024

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Celeste Choate, Executive Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of September 10, 2024

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Strategic Plan Progress



ENHANCE

We steward our physical and financial resources to serve evolving community needs that support growth and sustainability.

- At the DIY School Supplies program, children of all ages could work on craft projects to personalize their materials for school. This included things like decorating folders and notebooks, making buttons, keychains, and origami bookmarks, and even small "pocket pals" to keep with them during the school day. The most popular of these options was making buttons. Many attendees were very engaged in their projects and excited to bring their new creations to school, staying nearly the entire duration of the two-hour program as they worked through each station. One caregiver even described the program as a "dream come true" for her three children.
- Archives continued a quarterly segment in its newsletter called "What's New in the Archives?" The segment highlights newly available materials, provides updates to existing projects, and shares information on other items of interest. To sign up for the Archives newsletter (or any Library newsletter!) visit <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/newsletters>.



EMBRACE

We learn about and respond to our community in order to create a welcoming environment that cultivates equity, mutual respect, and belonging.

- The Cunningham Township used The Urbana Free Library's 2nd-floor computer lab as a location for their Digital Inclusion Help Desk pilot program. Township Peer Leaders were on site at the Library for three weeks in August to help Township Clients navigate applying for assistance. Library staff were on hand to help teach the Peer Leaders how to utilize library technology. Over 14 township clients were assisted during the pilot program. The program was extremely successful, and the Township is working on plans to continue the Help Desk program.
- The Library will be receiving the Community Impact Award from the C-U Immigration Forum on September 22, 2024. According to the *News-Gazette*, ["Among the contributions that won over judges: the recent hiring of a bilingual librarian to direct Spanish language programming, hosting a Latin American Story Time for kids and adult services librarian Carol Inskeep "expanding immigrant awareness" through programs and collaborations."](#)



EMPOWER

We connect people with tools and resources for learning, knowledge exchange, and personal growth that leads to greater fulfillment.

- In August, the Library added 14 new Launchpads to the Children's collection. Launchpads are tablets preloaded with award winning educational and entertaining apps for children. The wide variety of apps focus on reading, science, creativity, movement, music, problem solving, and fun. They are geared towards children ages 3 - 7 years old and do not require internet access, thus helping bridge the digital divide. Ten of the Launchpads are available to checkout, while four remain in the Children's department for use inside of the Library. These four Launchpads do not require a library card to use them, which promotes equitable access for all.
- To celebrate the Summer Olympics, kids tested themselves on a variety of Olympic-themed activities: a balance beam (painter's tape on floor), high jump (jumping over a small stack of 2x4s), equestrian (horse puppet on a mop handle), javelin throw using straws, fencing with foam swords, sit-ups, jumping jacks, and jumping rope. Kids got a medal after doing at least five of the activities. For a snack, they ate Olympic rings made out of fruit and vegetables. The kids could also complete an Olympic word search and make a torch craft.
- Brian Adams gave a fascinating talk on the history of The Urbana Free Library to 24 community members, from its early days and multiple locations in downtown Urbana to the construction of our current building. Using architectural blueprints, newspaper articles, photographs, and more, Adams gave an in-depth history. He also reviewed architect Joseph Royer's other local and national buildings. Royer worked in a variety of styles, including historical revival styles and art deco (what would have been the contemporary style for him). Interestingly, Brian mentioned that many people do not know that the Library's floors were originally marble, and there is a covered stained-glass skylight!

Action Item Details & Additional Information

- Board members Daniel Urbana and Glen Layne-Worthey met with Dawn and Celeste a couple of times to discuss a possible process for hiring a new Executive Director (ED). Dan and Glen recommend approval of the Request for Proposal included in the Board packet, which is an initial step in the ED hiring process. The pre-recruitment planning includes meeting with stakeholders, which may involve individual and group meetings with the Library Board, Library staff and community members. The specifics will be determined later when working with the search firm, which will be chosen at a later date.
- To replace a program book cart, the following budget amendment is requested by staff:
 - \$1,243 increase to Library Program Supplies (80280809 51812)
 - \$1,243 decrease to Other Supplies (80280801 51900)
- A separate memo with recommended budget shifts to allow for increases in legal services and to hire an executive search firm will be provided to the Board before the meeting.
- This month, staff present four policies for Board approval as part of our regular cycle of policy review and updates. Staff recommend approval of these four policies.

Communication

Library Newsletters

- The TUFL Times, August: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/127>
- The TUFL Times: Youth Edition, August: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/126>
- Archives Newsletter, August: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/125>

Library News

- August 4, 2024, *News-gazette.com* - Rachel Vellenga | Clytemnestra' a tale in ancient Greece of heartbreak, vengeance, love, power https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/rachel-vellenga-clytemnestra-a-tale-in-ancient-greece-of-heartbreak-vengeance-love-power/article_1887edbe-4fb4-11ef-b096-df8d66ac35d3.html
- August 9, 2024, *Ipmnewsroom.org* - What's Your Story? Urbana Free Library seeks visual artists for new program starting this fall <https://ipmnewsroom.org/whats-your-story-urbana-free-library-seeks-visual-artists-for-new-program-starting-this-fall/>
- August 13, 2024, *Smilepolitely.com* - Art Works: Artist and activist Lemarye Jones <https://www.smilepolitely.com/arts/art-works-artist-and-activist-lemarye-jones/>
- August 21, 2024, *Chambanamoms.com* - Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Feeling Fall <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2024/08/21/feeling-fall-champaign-urbana/>
- August 30, 2024, *News-gazette.com* – C-U Immigration Forum awards | Six to be honored for welcoming ways https://www.news-gazette.com/news/c-u-immigration-forum-awards-six-to-be-honored-for-welcoming-ways/article_5d23c952-6648-11ef-9b61-47531170373a.html

Budget Information

- Budget and FY24 Financial Reports: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2024 - June 2025						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
Illinois Funds account	\$ 229,049.51					
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,325,335.18					
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 107,613.47					
Total	\$ 3,661,998.16	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -