



Director’s Report

Date: February 7, 2025
To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees
From: Rachel Fuller, Interim Director
Re: Director’s Report for Board Meeting of February 11, 2025

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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.

- Illinois Libraries Present (ILP), the organization that creates virtual events featuring well-known speakers for Illinois libraries, has joined the Illinois Library Association. The Urbana Free Library is a member of ILP and has enjoyed sharing its virtual events with the community. Currently, Programming & Outreach Manager Lauren Chambers is the co-chair of ILP’s Data/Numbers Committee and will remain a committee member through the transition.
- We have updated the Library’s full Disaster Plan and the shorter Emergency & Disaster Quick Guide. Both documents are available in hard copy in every department and electronically on all staff desktops for easy access in an emergency. Full copies of the Disaster Plan are also stored offsite with key Library staff, the Urbana Police Department, the Urbana Fire Department, and the Illinois State Library.
- Library displays impact the circulation of Library materials, and so there are multiple Staff Pick displays around the Library. Currently, 64% of Staff Picks items are checked out. Staff Picks and other displays promote materials in the collection that are no longer new and are housed in the stacks. For example, one popular Staff Pick is *Behind Her Eye: A Suspenseful Psychological Thriller* by Sarah Pinborough. Published in 2017, the book has circulated 14 in FY25 thanks to special showcasing by staff.



EMBRACE

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

- In conversations with local groups serving immigrant and refugee community members, many mentioned a need for space where people can practice their language skills in a welcoming and supportive environment. To help meet this need, the Library partnered with the Urbana School District's Multilingual Department to create a monthly Conversation Café for language learners of all ages. The Library recently held the first session, and 15 community members enjoyed snacks and used topic prompts to practice speaking together. Two participants interviewed by WCIA said that they became fast friends at the program, will meet up with each other weekly, and will attend future Conversation Café sessions.
- A Next Generation School transitional kindergarten class visited the Library for a field trip. They received a tour and learned how to find and check out materials. Then, they attended a story time about the Lunar New Year, which students were learning about in school. Because this year is the year of the snake, story time was followed with a snake craft and time for movement and play with the snakes before heading back to school for the day.
- The inaugural edition of the *TUFL Times: Home Edition* was included in one of January's deliveries to our Home Delivery patrons. This new in-print newsletter will be produced quarterly and will include tips on requesting Library items, book reviews, senior resources, a word search, and more.



EMPOWER

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

- There were two events this month exploring how to use historical records for genealogy research. At Probate Records: Wills and a Whole Lot More, Annette Burke Lyttle spoke to the 59 participants about probate records, which are kept by the probate court and contain rich genealogical information. She also included information on how to find these records on the Library databases Ancestry and FamilySearch. At Mixers and Shakers, Debra M. Dudek went through a brief history of cocktails and alcohol in America, Chicago, and Illinois. She covered the types of historical records related to brewing, bartending, and tavern-keeping that can be used for genealogical research.
- The winning word from this year's Adult Spelling Bee was formaldehyde. Our volunteer pronouncer, Mari McKeeth, made sure all the words given to contestants were pronounced correctly, and the trophy was taken home by a University of Illinois student. The program had 20 contestants who were cheered on by an audience of 29 community members. Our spellers ranged from many college-aged adults to families to participants from



previous years. One college-age participant said she "would come every week" if the program were offered.

- Sensory Stations was a drop-in program with 93 attendees, which featured several unique sensory activities for children to explore. Two of the seven stations allowed children to create their own sensory toys: a colorful gel bag and a fidget cube made from a wooden block and various textured materials. Three other stations featured sensory bins filled with materials such as shredded paper, pom-poms, and water, which children could explore with their hands or tools such as scoops and tweezers to practice fine motor skills. The last two stations featured different sensory toys available for checkout from the Library and a movement game. Participants varied greatly in age and ability, and the range of activities offered allowed everyone to find something that kept them engaged and entertained.
- A new exhibit has debuted in the case outside of Archives. Titled *Scorched Yet Standing: Resilient Local Structures Touched by Fire*, the exhibit looks at a handful of local structures where a fire once occurred, but the structure still exists today. Stories include fires at Carle Hospital, Skateland, The Trade Palace in Rantoul, and a 1994 fire at The Urbana Free Library



Action Item Details & Additional Information

- Congratulations to IT Manager Leon Wilson, who was named as a co-author in a recent scholarly article titled "Public Quantum Network: The First Node." The article was published online in *Applied Physics Letters* (Vol. 126, Issue 5) on February 5.
- Upon approval of Resolution 2025-01 to accept gifts, staff request approval of the increases to revenue and expense lines listed below:
 - \$40,000 increase to Donation/Contributions/Gifts (810 46300)
 - \$35,000 increase to Admin General Gifts (81080831 82209)
 - \$5,000 increase to Staff Appreciation (81080831 82216)
- The Library's insurance premium came in higher than budgeted. Staff request approval to move funds to the Insurance budget line to fully cover the premium:
 - \$2,810 decrease to Building Maintenance & Repair (80280805 52201)
 - \$2,810 increase to Insurance Premium (80280805 52710)

Communication

Library Newsletters

- The TUFL Times, February 2025: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/153>
- The TUFL Times: Youth Edition, February 2025: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/154>
- Archives Newsletter, February 2025: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/155>

Library News

- January 1, 2025 – *morty.app* - Lost in Time - 150th Anniversary Escape Room <https://morty.app/attraction/55222/lost-in-time-150th-anniversary-escape-room>
- January 1, 2025 – *chambanamoms.com* - Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Settling in for Winter <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2025/01/01/winter-champaign-urbana/>
- January 2, 2025 – *wcia.com* - Community New Year's Resolutions 2025 <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/community-new-years-resolutions-2025/>
- January 6, 2025 – *ipmnewsroom.org* - Winter Storm Resource Center <https://ipmnewsroom.org/winter-storm-resource-center/>
- January 6, 2025 – *dailyillini.com* - City offices, schools among closed in CU due to inclement weather <https://dailyillini.com/news-stories/champaign-urbana/2025/01/06/city-offices-schools-closed-cu-inclement-weather/>
- January 6, 2025 – *news-gazette.com* - Storm impact: ISP reports interstate slide-offs and crashes https://www.news-gazette.com/news/weather/storm-updates-c-u-libraries-closed-sunday/article_6aec5682-ca05-11ef-92d3-73a2ec554cc9.html
- January 8, 2025 - *ipmnewsroom.org* - WILL Call: What's Happening in Champaign-Urbana Jan. 09 – Jan. 12 <https://ipmnewsroom.org/will-call-whats-happening-in-champaign-urbana-jan-09-jan-12/>
- January 9, 2025 – *smilepolitely.com* - The Weekender: January 10-12 <https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/the-weekender-january-10-12/>
- January 22, 2025 – *smilepolitely.com* - Fear takes up permanent residence in Champaign-Urbana <https://www.smilepolitely.com/arts/fear-takes-up-permanent-residence-in-champaign-urbana/>
- January 22, 2025 – *smilepolitely.com* - WILL Call: What's Happening in Champaign-Urbana Jan. 23 – Jan. 26 <https://ipmnewsroom.org/will-call-whats-happening-in-champaign-urbana-jan-23-jan-26/>
- January 23, 2025 – *wcia.com* - Early voting opens for Urbana primary election <https://www.wcia.com/news/your-local-election-hq/early-voting-opens-for-urbana-primary-election/>
- January 23, 2025 – *chambanamoms.com* - Celebrating the Chinese New Year and Lunar New Year in Champaign-Urbana <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2025/01/23/lunar-new-year/>
- January 24, 2025 – *wcia.com* - What's Your Story? at the Urbana Free Library <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/whats-your-story-at-the-urbana-free-library/>
- January 27, 2025 – *dailyillini.com* - Urbana Free Library hosts adult spelling bee https://dailyillini.com/life_and_culture-stories/2025/01/27/urbana-free-library-adult-spelling-bee/
- January 31, 2025 – *wcia.com* - Urbana Free Library hosting Conversation Café program <https://www.wcia.com/news/champaign-county/urbana-free-library-hosting-conversation-cafe-program/>

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	\$ 230,094.72	\$ 231,083.43	\$ 232,055.85	0.00	0.00
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,325,335.18	\$ 3,493,511.49	\$ 3,095,150.44	\$ 4,026,436.77	\$ 3,747,579.27	\$ 3,405,816.30
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 107,613.47	\$ 111,788.42	\$ 114,332.89	\$ 117,950.09	\$ 122,400.96	\$ 125,985.42
Total	\$ 3,661,998.16	\$ 3,835,394.63	\$ 3,440,566.76	\$ 4,376,442.71	\$ 3,869,980.23	\$ 3,531,801.72
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Illinois Funds account						
Busey Bank Cash accounts						
Busey Bank Web account						
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
**Illinois Funds account has been closed. Money was moved to Busey Cash account.						