



The Urbana Free Library Director's Report

Date: July 10, 2026

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Taliah Abdullah, Executive Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of July 14, 2026

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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.

- The Library added a new collection of [Tonie](#) players and figurines, and [Yoto](#) players and story cards, to the Children's department. Tonies and Yotos are two different types of audio players for children that play stories when a figurine (Tonie) or story card (Yoto) is paired with the audio player. These players fill a technological and phonetical need for children without contributing to screen addiction, plus, patrons have been requesting them and are eagerly checking them out.



EMBRACE

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

- "This is to commend the staff member working in the 2nd floor archives area — Cherish. I'm from Fairhope, Alabama. I passed through Champaign-Urbana on the way home to the Alabama coast, and wanted to visit the area for the day to observe some street addresses in the area connected to my ancestors. Those ancestors lived in both

Urbana and Champaign, and a great-great grandfather of mine was an esteemed faculty member (and an alumnus) at the U of Illinois in the late 1800s and early 1900s. So, I unexpectedly noticed the library driving east to west on Green Street, stopped spontaneously, wandered in, and was directed to the 2nd floor where I was greeted by Cherish.

I cannot say enough about how helpful Cherish was, how she was sincerely interested in the questions I had about my family, and how she spent significant time identifying resource materials for me. Frankly, I almost drove past the library, but I'm thankful I stopped. I came away with new information about my family after a wonderful experience at the library. Clearly, Cherish has a passion for genealogy and for helping people connect with their histories. In my view, her assistance was over and above the norm."

- Nearly 400 people came to the Juneteenth Celebration held by Urbana's Library and Park District. Attendees enjoyed free food from local food trucks, a diverse selection of music from DJ Strange and New Souls, community art with Ja Nelle Davenport-Pleasure, and games with the Library and Urbana Park District. Mayor Williams, Rachel Lenz, Executive Director of the Park District, and Taliah Abdullah presented a joint proclamation for Juneteenth during the event.
- A lot of fun learning took place as children and adults learned how to make slime with three ingredients: glue, baking soda, and contact solution. Children activated their literacy skills as they read the recipe, followed the recipe step-by-step, and received verbal guidance to make a batch of slime.



EMPOWER

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

- Members of the vintage baseball club the [Champaign Clippers](#) wore their period uniforms as they shared on the history of baseball and current-day vintage baseball teams. Attendees were able to view bats and balls that were used for past and present games.
- The Library hosted a Panini World Cup sticker swap program. The Italian company, Panini, releases a World Cup sticker book before each tournament, and fans try to fill their player sticker books. The sticker packs are random and can quickly add up in cost, so the Library hosted a swap where patrons could trade stickers, connect over their love of football (soccer), and connect with the Library in the process. It was a great success as a first-time event, with over 20 patrons participating in the swap, many new families in attendance, and people saying it was their first-ever visit to the Library. The Library looks forward to hosting another swap in 4 years, for the next World Cup.
- Love Wins Crafting is an annual all-ages lively and joyful event hosted at the Library to celebrate Pride Month. Library staff and community artists are invited to share an arts and crafts project. This year, projects included library staff led beaded bracelets, zine-making with the UCIMC Zine Library, TBR (to be read) containers with Carnation Bookhouse, collage bookmarks with an independent artist, and decorating wood cutouts with Prism Community Art School. Attendees were able to find at least one project that they enjoyed, if not several!
- Lesley Deem from the University of Illinois Pollinatarium helped to usher in a celebration of butterflies with 48 people in attendance at "All Aflutter with Butterflies!" This interactive presentation stories, drawing, and craft-making. Mr. Michael Murphy's annual gift of Painted

Lady caterpillars and a Make and Take clothespin butterfly craft continued the celebration in the children's area. By June 22, all of the donated caterpillars had emerged as butterflies from their chrysalis' and were released in Terry and Barbara England gardens at the Library.

Action Item Details & Additional Information

- Staff request approval of a FY26 budget amendment for increased expenses in the Archives-General Gifts line. The Archives department, via The Foundation of The Urbana Free Library was the recipient of a grant from the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois, for the purchase of a new microfilm scanner.
 - \$6245.50 increase in expenses for Archives-General Gifts (81080834-51990)
- Digital Library Statistics:
 - Overdrive:
 - Ebooks: 4,836 circs / 71,323 titles in collection
 - Audiobooks: 6,448 circs / 40,138 titles in collection
 - Magazines: 2,730 circs / 6,724 titles in collection
 - Total: 14,014
 - Kanopy: 1330 plays
 - Comics Plus: 384 checkouts; 232 users

Communication

Library Newsletters

- TUFL Times, July: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/970d97e9-7e71-46bb-8608-53ac80c96b8f
- Archives Newsletter, July: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/40de6282-ecfa-4542-a27f-fdd85bcd47ec

Library News

- **June 2, 2026** - *wcia.com* - Juneteenth event, book recommendations with the Urbana Free Library <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/juneteenth-event-book-recommendations-with-the-urbana-free-library/?nxsparm=3>
- **June 4, 2026** - *Smilepolitely.com* - The Weekender: June 5-7 <https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/the-weekender-june-5-7/>
- **June 5, 2026** - *wandtv.com* - 5 things to do this weekend across central Illinois June 5-7 https://www.wandtv.com/community/5-things-to-do-this-weekend-across-central-illinois-june-5-7/article_4e16ca06-c768-4c6d-949d-7e586670487f.html
- **June 9, 2026** - *wcia.com* - Cooling centers open to help Central Illinois residents beat the heat <https://www.wcia.com/news/illinois-news/cooling-centers-open-to-help-central-illinois-residents-beat-the-heat/>
- **June 9, 2026** - *yahoo.com* - Cooling centers open to help Central Illinois residents beat the heat <https://www.yahoo.com/news/weather-news/articles/cooling-centers-open-help-central->

[215134752.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlMnVbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAANCmJZG58GJulw5ei-h1JVZbWQDmmAsS9ggmfHnVSRQIR_bs9WQvo3D3xBAfJRqYmyl6rTCZq7dCffLKcbIKViklqkBDToIviFAe3XodL2J_AIV_D8Sro86rKqZg9J3VpdMWOJPnV9LccB0I_e7l4Z0FCEtB40eNQ5Fr-RYL4Kre](https://www.chambanamoms.com/2026/06/10/summer-heats-up-champaign-urbana/)

- **June 10, 2026** - *chambanamoms.com* - Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – When Summer Heats Up <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2026/06/10/summer-heats-up-champaign-urbana/>
- **June 13, 2026** - *ipmnewsroom.org* - Champaign, Danville and Urbana to mark Juneteenth by celebrating Black freedom and families <https://ipmnewsroom.org/champaign-danville-and-urbana-to-mark-juneteenth-by-celebrating-black-freedom-and-families/>
- **June 14, 2026** - *chambanamoms.com* - Juneteenth in Champaign-Urbana: What is Open, What is Closed <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2026/06/14/champaign-urbana-juneteenth-open-closed/>
- **June 29, 2026** - *newschannel20.com* - Cooling centers in Champaign County https://www.newschannel20.com/news/local/cooling-centers-in-champaign-county/article_72a33a7d-8c65-4f82-a021-d24675cbb5eb.html
- **June 30, 2026** - *smilepolitely.com* - Philo Road needs help from the community, not law enforcement <https://www.smilepolitely.com/opinion/philo-road-needs-help-from-the-community-not-law-enforcement/>

Budget Information

- Budget and FY27 Financial Reports: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2025 - June 2026						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,476,560.39	\$ 3,188,594.97	\$ 4,675,169.94	\$ 4,116,589.59	\$ 3,568,902.80	\$ 3,371,285.16
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 152,102.48	\$ 155,474.35	\$ 160,216.59	\$ 163,753.82	\$ 168,142.05	\$ 170,486.63
Total	\$ 3,628,662.87	\$ 3,344,069.32	\$ 4,835,386.53	\$ 4,280,343.41	\$ 3,737,044.85	\$ 3,541,771.79
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,992,594.37	\$ 2,819,575.12	\$ 2,403,558.89	\$ 2,061,086.34	\$ 1,633,360.88	
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 173,685.86	\$ 176,444.52	\$ 180,524.89	\$ 185,225.72	\$ 188,299.01	
Total	\$ 3,166,280.23	\$ 2,996,019.64	\$ 2,584,083.78	\$ 2,246,312.06	\$ 1,821,659.89	\$ -