

Date: January 6, 2022

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Celeste Choate, Executive Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of January 11, 2022



VISION

Nurturing growth by sparking curiosity and fostering a sense of belonging.

MISSION

We encourage learning and enrich lives by providing access to diverse resources and programs.



We cultivate equity, mutual respect, and belonging by learning about and responding to our community.

WE WELCOME ALL.

Goal 1: We provide a welcoming and inviting space for dialogue and personal connections.

- The Champaign County Genealogical Society's Annual Show and Tell took place on December 14. Attendees shared a variety of family heirlooms, including a 1945 hospital birth receipt, a stone crock used by three generations to make strawberry jam, and a porcelain cat that was a wedding favor from the mid-1900s.
- Ashanti Files, the 2021 Urbana Poet Laureate, presented the Library with a moving poem, included in this month's board packet, about her experience of the Library as a safe and welcoming place. Both before and during her tenure as Urbana's Poet Laureate, Ashanti Files and the Library have worked together to hold multiple programs focused poetry and art, and she has championed youths using poetry to find their voices. Staff look forward to working on more projects with her in the future.



Goal 2: We engage the community to understand and respond to unique needs of our community.

- Starting in December, staff were able to resume visiting nursing homes and assisted living facilities. At our visit to Brookdale Senior Living, staff reconnected with residents, renewed library cards, and signed people up for home delivery. Several residents thanked us for coming.
- The Library regularly receives feedback from community members. Please see below for two notes shared during the holiday season, which especially made us smile.

& everyone @ the Urbana Free Library-

Thank you all for everything you do! The library has become such a special place to our family. We always look forward to coming there & are so grateful to have such an incredible resource filled with such caring people in our community! Wishing you all safe & special holiday season & New Year!

Dear,
Librarian
Thank you for all
of the books, crafts
and the reading contests!



We connect people with tools and resources for learning and leading fruitful lives.

WE SPARK CURIOSITY.

Goal 1: We connect people to resources and technology for personal growth leading to greater fulfillment.

- Monthly Family Craft Kits continue to be popular with children and their families. Each month staff create 100 kits, and it's normal for all of the kits to be taken before the month ends.
- To celebrate the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope on December 24, the Illinois Space Grant Consortium provided the Library with a total of 100 children's kits to give away. The kits contained an activity pad and NASA-related materials. The kits were so popular that the consortium gave the Library a second set of 50 kits after the original 50 were given out in less than a week.
- **Website update:**



Background -For the past two years, Community Engagement has made updates to the Library's website to ensure it's easy to navigate, has current information, and is attractive. After investigating options for a complete update of the website, we have determined that we need assistance from a website developer to create a new site that better reflects trends in library websites and provides access to library resources in a streamlined way. On the agenda is a contract for website development services with Proof Studios. The Library had a competitive bid process for [website development services](#) that garnered 15 proposals. The successful candidate is Proof Studios, which has worked with several other public libraries and similar nonprofit organizations. Community Engagement staff has already engaged in pre-work, like analysis of the current website and structuring new website menus, that helps contain the cost of this project. Staff recommend the Board approve Resolution 2022-01 so work can begin immediately with the goal of launching a new website in 6-8 months.

FY22 Budget Amendment- Community Engagement staff have reduced hours for the remainder of FY22. Along with the one-time additional revenue from the Per Capita Grant for Public Libraries the Board approved for this purpose in November, the amount saved by this reduction will be used to redesign the TUFL website and migrate it to an updated platform.

- Staff recommend moving \$9,000 from 80280809 50110 Staff – Regular Employees to 80280809 52199 Other Professional Services.

Goal 2: We expand horizons and facilitate knowledge exchange by offering diverse programs.

- At the craft program Paper Art: Winter Scene on December 11, 13 community members created a wintery mountain landscape using paper, scissors, and glue. Ages ranged from elementary school kids to senior citizens, and one person thanked the Library for holding a fun program for an “old soul” like them.



We help our community thrive by creating connections and working with partners.

WE CONTRIBUTE TO A STRONG SOCIAL FABRIC.

Goal 1: We make the community better for all by promoting diversity, equity and inclusion through our collections and programs.

- One of our previously recorded programs got a second life. Garden to Plate: Cook Fresh with the Red Herring was shown on TV as part of the CU Wise TV lineup. CU Wise TV brings programming to seniors through Urbana Public Television and Parkland College Television and is organized by the Senior Task Force of Champaign County. Other recorded Library programs will be featured in the future.

Goal 2: We stimulate connections and partnerships to create a vibrant, engaged community.

- Led by the local organization Kwanzaa 365, December’s Young Artist’s Studio used art to examine the cultural history of Kwanzaa and its seven principles. Children chose two of the seven principles and used paper and magazines to create artwork representing what the principles meant to them. The **Young Artist's Studio series** is sponsored by **The Urbana Free Library** and **The Urbana Arts & Culture Program**.
- Given the popularity of our Family Craft Kits, in December the Library began offering teen craft programming as a weekly take-home kit. Library staff would like to thank the Urbana Middle School and University Laboratory High School libraries for agreeing to be kit pickup locations to make it easier for their students to participate. During the first week we offered kits at the schools, one of the schools ran out of kits in less than 24 hours!



We are mindful of the wide array of resources needed to serve evolving community needs and are transparent with our operations.

WE ARE A STRONG ORGANIZATION.

Goal 1: We steward our physical and financial resources to allow for growth and sustainability.

- The Board received the Draft Technology Plan January 2022 – January 2023 for review last month. No suggested changes were made to staff. Staff recommend adopting the Plan.
- Preliminary reports show that The Urbana Free Library Foundation’s campaign kept pace with last year thanks to the generosity of community members. Enough funding has been secured to refresh the New Book Area in the Children's Area, so staff members are working on plans to update that space this spring.

- Staff will provide their budget request for the Foundation’s FY23 budget at the Foundation’s meeting later this month.

Goal 2: We cultivate continuous improvement among Board and staff members to create increased engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

- Additional, weekly cybersecurity emails are being shared with the Board and staff members.
- When the Whistleblower Policy was passed in November, Trustee Hursey asked about external reporting options like the one at the end of the [Respectful Work Environment Policy](#). She collaborated with staff, and an updated version of the policy that includes external reporting options is presented for Board review this month. Staff recommend passing the updated policy.
- In light of the Library’s focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, staff recommend adding Juneteenth to the Library’s list of paid holidays for benefited staff. The Hours of Service and Leave policies have been updated with this in mind and are on the agenda for Board approval.



Look here for additional information and action item details that are outside of the scope of the strategic plan.

Library eNewsletters:	
January News & Events: https://conta.cc/3pA1nbD	January Youth & Teen: https://conta.cc/3mGMFOq
January Archives Newsletter: https://conta.cc/3FkdLC7	Winter Reading eBlast: https://conta.cc/3drZiHY

Other Library News:

Apprenticeship program a win for students and library: <https://ischool.illinois.edu/news-events/news/2021/12/apprenticeship-program-win-students-and-library>

Top of the Morning, Dec. 22, 2021 (featuring The News-Gazette collection): https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/history/top-of-the-morning-dec-22-2021/article_1dfb8d59-87ee-570a-86ac-e6f9ab1716f7.html

CI Living The Urbana Free Library Staff Picks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMZT6cicip4>

Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Holiday Cheer: <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2021/12/15/champaign-urbana-holiday-cheer/>

Must-Do Things During Winter Break in Champaign-Urbana: <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2021/12/13/winter-break-champaign-urbana/>

Inside Out | The mystery of the Francis Willard fountain: https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-the-mystery-of-the-francis-willard-fountain/article_96d0d8e1-e38e-5bcd-ada5-630820a677c2.html

BEST Arts 2021: https://www.smilepolitely.com/arts/best_arts_2021/

Book Review: Caleb Wilson | ‘The Hollow Places’ a chilling rarity in fiction: https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/caleb-wilson-the-hollow-places-a-chilling-rarity-in-fiction/article_a4dba9ce-1130-5aab-8bea-9159035029fe.html

Budget and current financial information is here: <http://urbanafreelibrary.org/your-right-know#fin>, with FY22 financial reports here: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/financial-reports>.

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2021 - June 2022					
	July	August	September	October	November
Illinois Funds account	\$ 207,424.37	\$ 207,427.85	\$ 207,431.24	\$ 207,435.71	\$ 207,440.46
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,554,612.35	\$ 2,487,141.44	\$ 3,282,091.64	\$ 3,549,391.89	\$ 3,345,850.39
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 27,405.31	\$ 36,424.06	\$ 41,483.42	\$ 44,531.75	\$ 48,636.90
Total	\$ 2,789,442.03	\$ 2,730,993.35	\$ 3,531,006.30	\$ 3,801,359.35	\$ 3,601,927.75
