

**Date:** March 9, 2023

**To:** The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Celeste Choate, Executive Director

**Re:** Director's Report for Board Meeting of March 14, 2023



## 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.**

- As part of her February digital display, poet laureate Ja-Nelle Davenport-Pleasure collected what Black history means from Library patrons. Davenport-Pleasure is planning to use the words that were collected at the Library as part of a poem and art installation to be exhibited in the city later this year.
- In celebration of Black History Month, the Artist of the Corridor exhibit featured artwork about Black history and also by local Black artists Harvest Baker and Ja-Nelle Davenport-Pleasure (pictured right).



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

- The Library partnered with the Krannert Art Museum to bring a relaxing and interactive story time to the museum's Rest Lab, where families were invited to relax and unwind. Esther Yi shared books with a mindful or relaxing message and also shared songs and rhymes with the 40 community members who came to the event.
- Joel Spencer and Jordan Kahle have worked with a woman in the computer lab to help her write a resume and apply for jobs online. The woman came in this week to say that she was hired for one of the jobs. She is on a trial period, but has told them that she will come in and let them know when she "officially" has the job.
- The Library homebound staff has been sending birthday cards to our home bound patrons. The Library received the note at the end of the Director's report from one of the recipients.
- The Library is planning its twice-yearly survey of patrons about programs in April.



**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.**

- The Library launched new designs for its suite of email newsletters this March as part of the transition to Patron Point. This redesign was also an opportunity to showcase more aspects of the Library and point patrons to the wide array of collections, programs, services, and resources that the Library provides. Each newsletter is separated into three sections: Visit, Browse, and Engage, designed to highlight events, collections, and services. The goal of the new

designs is to help patrons discover something new at the Library. Many staff contributed to this redesign effort and the new newsletters will rely on teamwork across departments to contribute to the variety and vibrancy of future editions.

- Brian Roberston, Rachel Fuller, and AYS and Acquisitions staff are working in partnership with Champaign Public Library to prepare the libraries for their launch of Vega, a modern online catalog experience. With an image-based user interface and a heavy increase in hyperlinks, the updated catalog will provide patrons with more paths through which they will be able to explore the Library’s many resources. Launch is anticipated for later this spring.
- City of Urbana staff shared that the CCHA’s Flickr page has been a great resource for finding images that will be used in the next phase of the City’s Comprehensive plan. Staff were very thankful that the images were available digitally, and said that “nearly every ‘history’ section in nearly every chapter has some UFL Archives photo.”
- Winter Reading lasted from December 11-February 28. This year saw the largest number of registered participants in each age group since we started using Beanstack. A comparison between last year and this year is below.

	Registered FY23/ FY22	Prizes Taken FY23/ FY22	Total Minutes/Books Logged FY23/ FY22
Children	236 / 227	269 / 248	110,107 minutes / 109,437 minutes
Teen	107/ 37	37 / 15	63,166 minutes / 9,579 pages
Adults	183 / 172	212 / 121	1,228 books / 844 books

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

- Giant board games were a hit with families at the program Jumbo Games. Playing games promotes practicing gross motor skills in preschoolers and problem-solving skills in a fun atmosphere. Seventy-six community members of all ages enjoyed over-sized versions of Gobblet Gobbler (advanced Tic-Tac-Toe), Connect Four, and other board games.
- UFLive! in February celebrated Black History Month with a live music and spoken-word performance by Afro D & the Global Soundwaves, which specialize in socially-conscious hip hop/jazz/funk. Their music resonated with the 82 community members who came to the concert.
- Debra Dudek gave a fascinating presentation on the military records database, Fold3, to 56 attendees. She shared how to get the most out of the search features and troubleshoot tricky topics.



**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.**

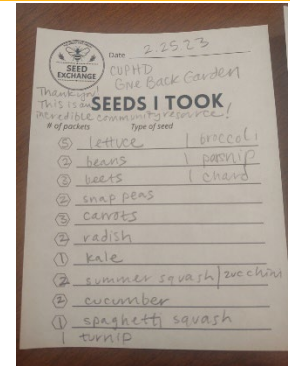
- Throughout Black History Month, the Library shared a collection of blog posts from the Champaign County Historical Archives related to Black history in Champaign-Urbana on social media. The posts generated meaningful engagement with our Facebook followers.
- February’s East Asian Story Time celebrated Lunar New Year with a story told in Japanese and English about how the years got their names. After the story, families could make a rabbit headband for 2023’s year of the rabbit or they could look up the year of their birth and make a headband featuring that year’s animal. They also enjoyed Lunar New Year gifts and treats provided by the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University.
- Community members were invited to listen to harp music by classical harpist Sabrina Vaughan and create paper hearts for local nursing home residents at February’s Harp & Hearts program. Forty-five people attended, and one patron loved the event so much, they asked if the Library could regularly feature harp or other gentle music accompaniment.

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

- CUPHD's Give Back Garden, which is part of Solidarity Gardens and also works with USD's Farm to School program, recently expressed their thanks to and reliance on the Library's Seed Exchange.



- This year Read Across America was able to hold the full event. The event was organized by the Urbana Park District and multiple other organizations including the Library. In addition to offering children who attended a free book and multilingual story reading, community members enjoyed literacy themed activities at over 30 tables run by different community groups. At the Library's table, kids could practice spelling words or their name using letters on a giant Connect Four board.



- The Library again participated in the Monarch & Pollinator Fair. Staff shared information about the Library's Seed Exchange and shared samples of seeds (sunflowers, zinnias, and morning glories) available for community members. There was a lot of interest in what kind of native flowers and plants are available at the exchange, and we received a lot of positive feedback for offering this service. A number of people commented that they planned to take advantage of it!



**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.**

- This month we present resolutions to allow the Library to enter into three cooperative purchasing agreements. With these agreements in place, the Library will not have to go out to bid as often for items such as carpeting because the administrators of the purchasing groups have already completed the competitive bidding process. The City of Urbana already has agreements with these three purchasing groups. We recommend passing these resolutions not only to save money on the items or services purchased, but also to save on staff time and effort.
- We also present a resolution this month to enter into an agreement with IMEG, an engineering firm that will conduct an initial study phase for the East Air Handler upgrades. IMEG has done extensive work with Engberg Anderson over the years and listed work for over 40 libraries in their proposal. Staff recommend approval.
- The City of Urbana ARPA grant announced which projects would receive funding, and the Library's bilingual Youth Programming Specialist proposal is among them. The Library will receive \$173,596 to cover the wages and benefits of the position. Staff are excited to be able to increase outreach to youth and better connect with multilingual and non-English speakers in our community. We anticipate bringing an agreement for Board approval in April.
- The Helping Our Youth Change Everyday Center (H.O.Y.C.E.) donated around 150 free seed packets for the seed library. When we ordered a large shipment of seeds from Seed Geeks, they sent us 99 free packets of seeds, including 22 different kinds of seeds.
- Architects from Engberg Anderson were on site Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> to tour the Circ-A/V area and Megan's Room and see firsthand some of the challenges posed by the current setup and discuss hopes/goals for the remodeled areas. Next steps will be an iterative, collaborative process to determine design possibilities.

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

- Staff participated in an all-day training event at ILEAS on Monday, February 20, 2023, that included sessions on equity, diversity, and inclusion; strategic planning; and staff benefits. An “escape room” game not only got new groups of staff working together, but also raised awareness about different types of misinformation.
- Amanda Standerfer facilitated a Strategic Planning staff feedback session at Staff Day. We are shifting the plan’s community survey and focus group sessions into May so as to not conflict with the already-planned program survey in April (Embrace, Goal 2). This also gives us time to communicate with our community partners and encourage them to share the survey so we have greater participation.
- The Community Engagement staff, with assistance from IT, implemented new procedures and executed several tasks to bring the Foundation into compliance with new MasterCard requirements for recurring donations. It was decided that these changes would apply to *all* recurring charges, not only those using a MasterCard, to ensure a proactive and transparent donor experience.



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

### **FY23 Budget Amendment**

- Staff propose a budget amendment to move funds from the Archives Microform line to the Archives Databases line in order to pay for digital access to the most recent copies of the News-Gazette dating from 2019-present. The News-Gazette microfilmed newsprint until October 2019, when they switched to HTML preservation.
  - \$6,000 decrease in expense to Archives Microform 80280803 51808
  - \$6,000 increase in expense to Archives Databases 80280803 52910
- Due to continued interest in the Seed Exchange, staff request:
  - \$500 increase to New Collections (80280802 51802 80103)
  - \$500 decrease to CDs (80280802 51805)

### **Library Newsletters**

- The TUFL Times, March: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/34>
- The TUFL Times: Youth Edition, March: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/35>
- The TUFL Times: School Edition, March: <https://uflil.patronpoint.com/email/preview/36>
- March Archives Newsletter: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Local-History---Genealogy-March-2023-Newsletter.html?oid=1131758007667&aid=9r0IKETgHOQ>

### **Other Library News:**

- February 7, 2023, *Smile Politely* – Get your Culture here: Valentine’s edition <https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/get-your-culture-here-valentines-edition/>
- February 9, 2023, *The Daily Illini* – C-U Fab Lab: Where art meets technology [https://dailyillini.com/life\\_and\\_culture-stories/2023/02/09/cu-fab-lab/](https://dailyillini.com/life_and_culture-stories/2023/02/09/cu-fab-lab/)
- February 11, 2023, *The News-Gazette* – Top of the Morning [https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/history/top-of-the-morning-feb-11-2023/article\\_93605210-135a-57e4-bfc3-021a30ed97ae.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/history/top-of-the-morning-feb-11-2023/article_93605210-135a-57e4-bfc3-021a30ed97ae.html)
- February 12, 2023, *The News-Gazette* – New storage building first in line of improvements to Urbana city facilities [https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/politics/new-storage-building-first-in-line-of-improvements-to-urbana-city-facilities/article\\_9f8614be-a009-5a19-93b9-892d957f7da5.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/politics/new-storage-building-first-in-line-of-improvements-to-urbana-city-facilities/article_9f8614be-a009-5a19-93b9-892d957f7da5.html)

- February 12, 2023, *The News-Gazette* – ‘Rest is Resistance’ is a call to action for those experiencing burnout [https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/anna-petrelli-rest-is-resistance-is-a-call-to-action-for-those-experiencing-burnout/article\\_df4b251b-2f17-5680-b840-2ab10c033028.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/anna-petrelli-rest-is-resistance-is-a-call-to-action-for-those-experiencing-burnout/article_df4b251b-2f17-5680-b840-2ab10c033028.html)
- February 15, 2023, *ciLiving* – Page Turners <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2v1v1aZeA4>
- February 19, 2023, *The News-Gazette* – ‘A very intentional investment in health and healing’ [https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/politics/a-very-intentional-investment-in-health-and-healing/article\\_ea992359-d843-5f73-8bfc-ddfee4d0f10e.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/politics/a-very-intentional-investment-in-health-and-healing/article_ea992359-d843-5f73-8bfc-ddfee4d0f10e.html)
- February 22, 2023, *Chambanamoms.com* – Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Closing Out February <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/02/22/closing-out-february-champaign-urbana/>

Budget and current financial information are here: <http://urbanafreelibrary.org/your-right-know#fin>, with FY23 financial reports here: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>.

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2022 - June 2023						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
Illinois Funds account	\$ 208,227.74	\$ 208,613.96	\$ 209,045.31	\$ 209,588.56	\$ 210,205.87	\$ 210,907.60
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,992,977.35	\$ 2,846,035.61	\$ 3,350,546.37	\$ 3,763,233.91	\$ 3,498,315.67	\$ 3,376,497.11
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 35,932.46	\$ 38,854.25	\$ 41,936.98	\$ 45,199.58	\$ 47,474.22	\$ 50,363.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,237,137.55</b>	<b>\$ 3,093,503.82</b>	<b>\$ 3,601,528.66</b>	<b>\$ 4,018,022.05</b>	<b>\$ 3,755,995.76</b>	<b>\$ 3,637,767.87</b>
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Illinois Funds account	\$ 211,663.19					
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,124,285.60					
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 53,023.54					
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,388,972.33</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

