

Date: March 4, 2021

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Celeste Choate, Executive Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of March 9, 2021

	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.
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	We cultivate equity, mutual respect, and belonging by learning about and responding to our community. <i>WE WELCOME ALL.</i>
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Goal 1: We provide a welcoming and inviting space for dialogue and personal connections.

- Back by popular demand, the Library hosted a second Virtual Beer Tasting with Riggs Beer; the event enticed 80 attendees who learned about the varieties of the featured beers offered. In addition, they were treated to a musical interlude from the group Hot Club of Urbana, and Matt Riggs of Riggs Beer shared stories about a five-generation farm that supplies the brewery with some of its grain and discussed how the brewery works to ensure sustainability and environmental responsibility. Afterwards, people stayed on Zoom, socializing and asking questions.

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

- In response to community request, the Library developed the Seed Library and response has been tremendous! Since opening for seed orders, the Library has lent over 400 seed packets including vegetables, herbs, fruits, and flowers. Community members have shared feedback such as "Thank you so much! This is such a wonderful program and very much appreciated," "Love the idea - - thanks for the commitment and service," and "Thanks for making this wonderful resource available! Can't wait to see them grow!"

	We connect people with tools and resources for learning and leading fruitful lives. <i>WE SPARK CURIOSITY.</i>
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Goal 1: We connect people to resources and technology for personal growth leading to greater fulfillment.

- CCHA staff published [a blog post](#) and [digital photo album](#) on the history of Champaign County fairs. Digitizing and sharing more virtual content helps connect our collections with patrons who are not able to visit the Library.
- Through our partnership, every other Wednesday this semester, elementary and middle school students can meet virtually with members of Volunteer Illini Projects to get help with their homework. Volunteer Illini Projects is a student-run campus organization that seeks to make an impact in communities through service. Homework Help program volunteers are available to assist students with a variety of subjects including math, science, and reading.

- Urbana School District students with school ID cards can now use those ID cards to borrow materials from the Library. This change makes it more convenient for students with IDs to access online Library materials, as they can do so without filling out a form or visiting the Library. Students without school IDs can still get a free Library card by simply showing a letter or email from the school district when they apply for a card.
- The Library has been awarded a 2021 Urbana Arts Grant for \$2,500. The grant will help fund a project over the summer, in which Urbana native and artist Langston Allston will work with community members to design and paint a mural on the Webber building. This project will give community members the opportunity to work with and learn from a professional muralist while adding a reading-themed work of art to downtown Urbana. *The Urbana Free Library Foundation has voted to match the \$2,500.*

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

- On February 25, CCHA welcomed Dr. Stephanie Fortado of the Illinois Labor History Society for a lecture on the [history of Champaign County's labor movements](#). The program featured materials from CCHA's special collections including laundry workers and nurses' strikes, and local unions for meat cutters, bakers, and phone operators.
- The University of Illinois Department of Entomology is ready to delight and thrill children and their families on March 20 at the Library's Insect Fun program! At this program, the Department of Entomology will be talking about different insects and will show live critters on Zoom.
- Author Maureen Holtz discussed her newest book [Robert Allerton: His Parks and Legacies](#) during a program on March 4. She spoke about Allerton's life, his homes near Monticello and in Hawaii, and the impact he had on the arts in both locations. Her presentation also featured archival photographs from Central Illinois.
- [The Journey of Mollie's War: WACs and WW II](#) will take place on March 9th. The program is made possible in part by a grant from the Urbana Arts & Culture program and is co-sponsored by TUFL, the Champaign County Genealogical Society, the Illinois Humanities Road Scholars Speakers Bureau and the Champaign History Museum.



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.

- In honor of Black History Month, the Archives highlighted audio recordings from the African American Oral History Project in February's newsletter. These [oral history interviews](#) were recorded with community members during the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. They cover a range of topics from personal histories and experiences of racism to recordings of speeches.
- In partnership with the Museum of the Grand Prairie, the Library is holding a Women's History Month Trivia Night on March 25. Trivia topics include art, history, science, music, leaders, and activists throughout history. Teams will register in advance and anyone who wants to study beforehand can check out the Library's collection of books on [women's history](#).
- In partnership with a local company, the Library is pleased to offer Red Clover Reader to community members. With Red Clover Reader, kids can read with family members whether they are together or miles apart. Reading partners can see each other face to face, turn the pages of the same book, circle words, point to a picture or share a doodle. The offerings available in Red Clover Reader include a variety of world languages, as well as a unique selection of fun stories focusing on diversity, social-emotional learning, and inclusion.

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

- The City of Urbana shared with the Library a thank you note – attached in the board packet-- they received from the U.S. Census Bureau. The Library was a member of the local Complete Count Committee and worked to share information about the importance of the Census, encouraging community members to complete the Census in an effort to have the full community represented.
- On March 20, community members can learn more about urban agriculture at a screening of *Plant This Movie*, which will be shown in partnership with Solidarity Gardens. The movie explores the history of the modern food system and how people world-wide are growing their own food in cities around the world.



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 Archives accepted a \$1,000 donation from the Champaign County Genealogical Society on February 24th. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Society and are grateful for their support of Archives programming. Please look to the Action & Information section and Resolution 2021-02 for specifics.
- At their February 17 meeting, the Foundation Board approved the Library’s FY22 grant request for \$46,100. This includes continued funding to support monthly music programs, author events, circulating WiFi hotspots, archives intern wages, and Development & Promotion staff. In addition, the grant will cover up to \$5,000 in professional development (earmarked for the 2022 Public Library Association conference). The grant also includes several projects that are ongoing (like the landscape designs) and other pass-through funding (like memorial books).
- The Friends of the Urbana Free Library have done a “soft launch” of their [TUFLFriends Etsy store](#), so people across the country can now support the Friends & TUFL online on Etsy and at the [Friends Amazon Book Shop](#). Please share with your networks!

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

- In our efforts to thoughtfully work towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive work place, Donica Swann and Brian Robertson are participating in the 21-week long [United Way of Illinois Equity Challenge](#). The Challenge will provide training tools and help us focus our efforts to provide tangible projects and learning opportunities for Library staff.
- The Library held a successful virtual staff day on Monday, February 15. After brief staff introductions, each department gave an update, followed by a presentation from Linda Colson from the Library’s EAP program talking about communication styles. After a break, staff heard from Fred Schlipf about the upcoming building program process and the day concluded with a video from Archives staff touring the Lincoln Square space and information about DEI efforts at the City and Library. Preliminary evaluations show that the Zoom format worked well for most people and that the sessions were worthwhile for sharing information.
- On February 8th, we began testing all on-site Library staff for COVID-19 using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test, which delivers results in about 15 minutes. On March 8th, we implemented voluntary twice per week testing for staff members who work in the building at least two days per week. There is significant value in having this twice per week testing option to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, and also to add an extra layer of safety for staff members.
- Former Library Board member Senator Scott Bennett was one of the over 75 attendees (legislators and other library supporters) at [the Illinois Library Association’s Central Illinois Legislative Meet-Up](#) on February 26th. ILA’s legislative priorities were shared and are included in the Board packet. Celeste Choate was one of the coordinators.



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

- Illinois has passed a law (PA 101-632, known as the Cards for Kids program) that will provide for free library cards to non-resident K-12 students whose household is at or below the USDA’s Income Eligibility Guidelines. The administrative rules that will direct implementation of this law have not been determined yet. We are happy to report that our intergovernmental agreement with USD#116 goes beyond the subgroup of students outlined in the law to include all USD#116 students as well as all teachers and certified staff members. We will review the administrative rules when they are released to ensure we comply with all of the guidelines.
- We have TUFL branded merch for sale through midnight on Monday, March 15. Board members can click here to order: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021TUFLMerch>
- There are problems with the Webber Building’s roof. Emergency repairs have been made, and a new roof is likely. Quotes are being gathered, and other TUFL buildings roofs and chimneys are being evaluated. It is likely that a future budget amendment will be needed.

Requested FY21 Budget Amendments:

- The Library has been awarded a \$2,500 Urbana Arts Grant and half of the amount will be given to the Library this fiscal year. Staff request the following changes:
 - \$1,250.00 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts 802 46300
 - \$1,250.00 increase in expense to Library Program Supplies 80280802 51812
- The Library received a gift from the Champaign County Genealogical Society to help with Archives “programs and speakers.” Staff request the following changes:
 - \$1,000.00 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts 810 46300 for the Archives
 - \$1,000.00 increase in expense to Archives Gifts/Other Library Materials 81080834 51990
- The Library received a gift from the United Way of Champaign County to purchase books for Urbana elementary school students. Staff request the following changes:
 - \$1,000.00 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts 810 46300
 - \$1,000.00 increase in the Children’s Gifts expense to Library Books 81080833 51801

Library eNewsletters:	
March News & Events: https://conta.cc/2Mpf50f	March Youth & Teen: https://conta.cc/2O2HUA0
March Archives Newsletter: https://conta.cc/3qEflHw	

Other Library News:

The Writers of Oya’s debut collection of poetry unmask their serious power:

https://smilepolitely.com/arts/the_writers_of_oyas_debut_collection_of_poetry_unmasks_their_serious_power/

Book Review: Rachel Vellenga – Some insight during this time of societal change: https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/rachel-vellenga-some-insight-during-this-time-of-societal-change/article_dbce91b0-1cfc-53ad-8264-621fa656d1a6.html

Tom's #Mailbag, Feb. 12, 2021 – Early film of Urbana: https://www.news-gazette.com/toms-mailbag/toms-mailbag-feb-12-2021/article_149a1939-4759-5209-a72e-93ddd4e535da.html

The Black Herstory Slam premieres March 2:

http://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/the_black_herstory_slam_premieres_march_2nd/

Master storyteller Dawn Blackman leads March Young Artist's Studio:

http://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/master_storyteller_dawn_blackman_leads_march_young_artists_studio_event/

Budget and current financial information is here: <http://urbanafreelibrary.org/your-right-know#fin>, with FY21 financial reports here: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/financial-reports>.

Here is information about our bank reconciliations. The totals include both restricted and unrestricted funds.

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2020 - June 2021							
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Illinois Funds account	\$ 205,960.29	\$ 205,988.20	\$ 206,009.74	\$ 206,122.77	\$ 206,340.41	\$ 206,403.46	\$ 206,418.43
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 1,674,756.55	\$ 187,126.62	\$ 1,674,697.83	\$ 3,076,869.85	\$ 3,126,830.04	\$ 2,867,559.11	\$ 2,714,123.40
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 57,393.33	\$ 61,436.33	\$ 65,497.23	\$ 68,408.79	\$ 70,892.52	\$ 76,656.74	\$ 80,631.43
Total	\$ 1,938,110.17	\$ 454,551.15	\$ 1,946,204.80	\$ 3,351,401.41	\$ 3,404,062.97	\$ 3,150,619.31	\$ 3,001,173.26