

Library Director's Report - April 2020

Summary of Digital Statistics

Event/Service	Usage/Attendees
Digital library cards	29
Website views	3,205
Total phone support (English and Spanish)	37
Email support	55
Facebook reaches	13,123
Instagram views	1,301
Zoom programs	16 events/ 99 attendees
Digital programs (non-Zoom)	55
BookFix (Reader's advisory)	8
Electronic circulation: Hoopla	810
Electronic circulation: eBCCLS	Not available as of 5/7

Newsletter link: <https://conta.cc/2RFv0XL>

ADULT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Reports by Cathy Folk-Pushee unless otherwise mentioned

Virtual Open Mic Night, April 2

For my first ever online program I'd say this one went pretty well. There were some technical difficulties in the beginning and the sound quality for some performers was better than others, but there was so much heart and good humor that the overall feeling for the night was very positive. Some comments Tony and I received were:

"Dig all the diversity of talent, shows how very human we all really are. Definitely looking forward to the next one, keep me informed." Sal R.

"I was impressed by everyone's original works. Never knew there was this kind of originality in my backyard." Dave H.

"Thank you! I was able to join the event and it was wonderful!" Nancy S.

Virtual Georgia O'Keeffe Drawing Workshop, April 21

Barbara Freiberg reached out to me and asked if I would be interested in doing some kind of virtual workshop. Since I had already booked her for successful in-person programs I figured, why not give it a try. It actually worked very well. I saw some familiar faces from my previous craft programs and some new ones which is always nice. Even if attendees weren't thrilled with how their drawing turned out they were very happy with the whole experience.

"What a lovely art class. Thank you so much. Really enjoyed it. Please let me know if you plan to have another one in the near future." Kathleen S.

"That was SO great. She's an excellent teacher, just the right pace and illustrative technique for me." Sharon C.

Virtual "Fit to Be Lit" Book Club Meeting April 22-Report by Melina Halpin

For this month's discussion, we read [Searching for Sylvie Lee](#) by Jean Kwok. There were four attendees this time, two more than our first meeting. One of our attendees was new to using Zoom, and toward the end of our meeting, she expressed relief in how easy it was to use and said that she's excited to now be able to participate in virtual programming. Our discussion flowed nicely, with everyone expressing their opinions and dissecting the various plot points. One of our attendees didn't actually read the book, but said that she wanted to participate and support the group! She plans to read our next title and attend the May meeting.

Virtual Open Mic Night, April 30

This time we had slightly fewer performers sign up than last time, but it turned out to be a great mix of talents. While we are pushing the limits of Zoom with this type of program, it still resolved into an amusing evening of live entertainment which is so rare these days.

“The open mic night at the library was great tonight, everyone enjoyed the talent and was great to see everyone happy in such a difficult time.” Tracey K.

“Virtual open mic night! The best in armchair performances.” Paul L.

English Conversation, Computer Assistance in Spanish and English, and Bilingual Outreach

*Michelle Ferreira, Bilingual Library Associate
Virtual ESL Conversation*

Virtual ESL Conversation Class - 9

Using News for You Newspaper from New Readers Press, I am able to pull stories to converse to. We listen to a story either read by a student or put on automatic loudspeaker. Automatic loudspeaker is featured by New Readers Press. Then, we do an activity composed of learning vocabulary, multiple choice and put the sentence together.

Spanish Conversation Class - 2

Created a small talk conversation sheet to promote conversation starters and ice breakers.

Citizenship Mock Phone Interview - 4

Practice for the citizenship interview over the phone. People learn the reading and writing vocabulary needed to pass the citizenship interview. A guide is shared with each person to help study for the interview test.

Help Computer Support on the phone-15

- Spanish - 12 people
- English - 3 people

Email support in Spanish- 13 people

BookFix Personalized Books for Spanish Speakers- 1 person

Spanish Outreach

- Translated BookFix form into Spanish
- Translated BookFix email into Spanish
- Phone Support in Spanish
- Email support in Spanish

Young Adult Highlights

Keri Adams, YA Librarian, Head of Periodicals

Young Adult Attendance: 9

I was able to host one event this month: a booktalk event targeted toward middle school and high school students as well as adults who have an interest in reading teen books. It's an event I had contemplated doing in person at the library over the past few years and thought it would be a good idea to try online. I adapted a presentation I had made three summers ago because I figured older titles would have fewer holds on them. I replaced titles that didn't have copies in Libby or Hoopla and included some newer but under the radar titles. I had a very large number of registered users, but in the end, nine people attended, which is solid attendance for an event like this even during normal times. Of the people who attended and took the survey, four were middle school students and four were adults (one of which is in my adult book club). The reception was positive. One of the people who registered emailed later to say my email with the Zoom link had ended up in her SPAM folder, and she was happy that she could go through the Google Slides presentation for book recommendations for her and her daughter. If virtual programming continues in the summer, I will likely do this again with the presentation Rosalie helped me make for this summer's reading program.

Children's Program Highlights

Mari Zigas, Children's Librarian

Even though we were working from home this month, the Children's Department had a lot to do remotely. Book lists that hadn't been updated in months were given new life while new ones were created. Multiple webinars were attended, each with its own professional development form. Staff that didn't already have a Canva account created one and practiced making graphics - a tool very useful for when the library reopens. Books for the summer and fall were ordered, and programs were planned through the summer. Gladys and I are both learning ASL and are already incorporating signing into our digital programming.

A Children's Department Goodreads account was created to share with patrons our book reviews, what we're reading and what we want to read. We are also holding weekly department meetings via Zoom.

Gladys and I filmed multiple digital programs that were posted on Facebook and Instagram: Marvelous Mornings with Ms. Mari, Digital Bilingual Story Time with Ms. Gladys, and each reading a chapter a night from multiple books (Gladys reads in Spanish, I read in English). Gavin held his Graphic Novel Book Club via Zoom on the 16th - attendance was a dud but we're hoping to gain more participants next month. We are also holding a digital Scavenger Hunt and Stay at Home Reading Challenge until we reopen to keep kids excited about coming back. Gavin will be starting a virtual cooking/craft series next month.

Other areas where we help patrons remotely are through Phone Support (via the Verizon OneTalk app), making digital library cards, answering BookFix requests, and of course responding to emails at all times.

Although outreach is pretty much impossible during these times, I was still able to send the YMCA a video of myself talking about the health benefits of staying home and recommending some good books for their Health Day event (originally planned for April 18th - now it is postponed TBD). I was also approached by the Adler Aphasia Center in Maywood about possible volunteer work for their patients when we're back open, and Laurie Meeske has been great about finding new ways to partner with the community like the Hackensack University medical students.

April 2020 Social Media Statistics

Twitter:

Impressions: 1,654

Profile visits: 12

Mentions: 6

Followers: 832

Facebook:

Post Reach: 3,696

Post engagement: 883

Video Views: 2,956

Page views: 504

Page likes: 1,848

Page followers: 1,970

Instagram:

Impressions: 9040

Reach: 3084

Followers: 474

Outreach and Public Relations

Outreach and Public Relations Librarian, Laurie Meeske

PR, Marketing, & Sponsorship

PR

- JPL was mentioned in article was posted on Tapinto about our virtual events and services:
<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/hackensack/sections/arts-and-entertainment/articles/johnson-public-library-announce-virtual-library-cards-slate-of-virtual-programming-and-more-throughout-april>

Marketing

- Gen and I have continued working together to create several newsletters sent out to the library's mailing list regarding the library's status, virtual events, and services.
- Gen finished putting together a new COVID-19 Portal to help disseminate information that would be helpful to the community in the current crisis. Going forward, I will collect, organize, and post further content to this site to keep it current.
- I am continuing to collect and organize relevant content for social media from JPL staff and funnel it through to Gen.

Outreach

Students from Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine at Seton Hall University

- After connecting with students and representatives from the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine at Seton Hall University, we were able to arrange for students to provide additional virtual programming for patrons on a number of topics. As part of their service project, they plan to create a series of videos within four primary categories: Exercise, Education, Cooking, Wellness. The videos will cover things such as exercises for older adults, how to talk to your kids about COVID-19, simple cooking activities, etc.
- The students also plan to offer a live virtual Wellness Bingo event for families on May 29th. Many thanks to Mari for moderating this event!

Department of Veteran Affairs

- I reached out to our contact at the VA who usually provides an in-person information session regarding veterans' benefits at the library once per month. He agreed to provide a virtual information and Q&A session in May. Many thanks to Cathy for agreeing to moderate the event!

Collaboration with the YMCA

- I met with Mari and Keri to discuss possible ways for the library to partner with the Y, based on the ideas that had been put forward when I met with representatives from the Y. There are several initiatives that we hope to pursue once the library is able to resume running programs. We hope to offer a quarterly STEM activity for elementary and middle school aged students as part of the Y's Leap into Science grant. We will continue to monitor the situation and work to arrange an event once we are able to resume holding such events.
- The Y is also willing to help us promote our services and events once they are able to open their doors. Similarly, they were planning to bring kids over to the library to participate in the Summer Kick-off Party before we were forced to cancel it.
- Mari also recorded (and Gen edited) a video for the Y's virtual Healthy Kids Day that was originally scheduled for April 18th. However, this event has been postponed. The Y will let us know when they have a new date for the event.

Friends Update

- The Friends held a virtual meeting on Thursday, April 23rd.
- The Friends offered a virtual challenge for National Library Week. Patrons were invited to sign up to complete a challenge by April 30th. Challenges included downloading an ebook, audiobook, or magazine from the library's digital collection, participating in a virtual children's program, visiting the library's website, and visiting the Friends' website. Participants will be entered to win one of three of the new library bags purchased by the Friends. The challenge was promoted on the library's and Friends' mailing lists.
- I have also worked with the Friends to answer questions on the additional possibilities they are considering for future virtual initiatives.
- The next Friends meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 28th at 4:30pm.

Miscellaneous

BCCLS Technology Committee

- BCCLS is working to collect a variety of library-created video content in the hopes of creating a new initiative to share such videos with all BCCLS patrons, regardless of library affiliation. We are sharing some of our videos, such as the Crafting with Cathy series, so that they can be promoted across the full library system.

- The Tech Committee is currently investigating the possibility of purchasing an app for patron self-check-out. Basically, it would allow patrons to use an app on their phone to check out library materials to their library card while they are in a library building. It would reduce the amount of interactions between patrons and library staff, which could be helpful for maintaining and promoting social distancing once the libraries are able to re-open. Multiple demos of possible products have been lined up, and a summary will be sent to the BCCLS Executive Board.

BookFix Reading Recommendation

- I created a new email template for the staff to use when providing patrons with BookFix reading recommendations for children's, YA, and/or adult books.

Work from Home Summaries by Department

Technical Services

- Researching AV Materials (CDs & DVDs) for Future Purchase
- Researching Music Books for Future Purchase
- Researching Supplies for Future Purchase
- Watching Various Webinars From Library 2.0 & Webjunction
- Reading Online Reviews from Publisher Weekly & Booklist

Children's Department

- Planning, filming and editing digital programs.
- Webinar attendance and professional development.
- Weekly department meetings via Zoom.
- Planning Summer Reading - in house and digitally.
- Patron support via OneTalk, email, BookFix and digital library cards.

Young Adult/Periodicals Department

- Created and presented virtual booktalk program
- Brainstormed and prepared other virtual programs including gaming and book club
- Worked on collection development
- Attended webinars and professional development
- Provided support via phone and email

Reference Department

- Presented Zoom and video programs (Cathy, Melina, Michelle)

- Created Covid info portal for website (Gen, Laurie) (Fantastic job!)
- Read book reviews and worked on collection development
- Provided patron phone and email support
- Attended webinars and professional development

General Updates

Staff continue to work from home to provide a variety of services and make our resources available remotely as best they can. We now are offering phone support six days a week and a large variety of digital programming including Story Time, English conversation, Yoga, book clubs, book talks for teens and more. During the month of April, we reached over 13,000 users on Facebook alone. In addition, Genesis Jais has built a beautiful “Covid portal” with all of our operational updates as well as health, employment and community information.

I am asking the Board to help staff continue to work from home by purchasing 20 Wifi hotspots for staff without home internet access. Once we are reopened, the hotspots will be circulated to the public.

Also, we currently allow staff to carry unused vacation time to March 15th of the next year (or longer at the Director’s discretion). I am going to permit staff to carry unused 2020 vacation until the end of May, 2021. I feel this is only fair and with proper scheduling will not cause a staffing issue.

Thoughts on Re-opening

I have been asked to serve as a member of the SOOT Committee (Safe Opening/Operations Taskforce), which began meeting (virtually) at the end of April. All the Directors on the Taskforce agree that there isn’t too much to be done until the Stay at Home order for the State of New Jersey is lifted. However, I have been thinking about implementing various procedures, at least when the library first re-opens: limited services and operating hours to start, including times set aside for access by vulnerable populations only; protective shields for service desks as well as masks and gloves for staff; taking every-other public PC out of service to assist with social distancing; using disposal keyboard and mouse covers on public PCs; setting up barcode scanners on the public side of the circulation desk to limit the amount of contact that staff have with items being checked out, and more. I will continue working with the Taskforce and researching ideas and best practices from other libraries around the country.

BCCLS/State Library Updates

The BCCLS Tech Committee is looking into software to both help staff assist patrons on computers from staff machines instead of needing to stand directly next to them as well as apps that could be used for curbside pickup.

The State Library Construction Grant deadline is June 5th. I have submitted a sample resolution to the City to add to the docket for their second May meeting. I am still waiting on final materials from the City's grant writer and our architect but our portions of the application are complete.

Building and Grounds

All of the Children's furniture has been delivered and is being assembled and put into place.

The new security camera system is fully installed and works very well.

I will be passing along quotes for work that needs to be done to clean up a previously unused office off of the 700s room. To help with social distancing and also make better use of staff space, the marketing team will be relocated to this office upon reopening. The HVAC unit has been inspected and cleaned; the room still needs to be cleared out and painted. We will also need new curtains and to have the electrical outlets checked.

Respectfully Yours,
Tara Cooper