

Executive Director's Report

July 2026



Library at the Fourth of July Parade

For the first time in years, the Library marched in the Rolling Meadows Fourth of July Parade. Eight staff handed out snacks, rode the book bike, blasted bubbles, and pulled a book-themed birthday cake mini float in honor of America's 250th. We gave away 2,700 fruit snacks along the route, and thousands more residents lined the streets. Parade-goers were visibly happy to see the Library out in the community, and the response was positive enough that we intend to make this an annual appearance. Supports Strategic Plan Strategy 1.5, "Coordinate larger-scale, family-oriented community events positioned to increase the library's visibility and reach."





Mini Art Show Fills the West Wing

The Reference Department's Mini Art Show ran throughout July, inviting the public to pause and enjoy a gallery of miniature masterpieces. Developed by Reference Librarian Nana H., the show featured work by 39 local artists, each challenged to interpret the summer reading theme, The Pursuit of Happiness, and paint what brings them joy. Admission was free, and the exhibit was supplemented with CreativeBug bookmarks and brochures on Library resources for artists. This was the second half of the program; the Make + Take portion took place in June.

More than 90 guests of all ages signed the guestbook. A sampling:

"Just beautiful — happy paintings. Thanks for sharing."

"I'm so impressed with the vision & talent of these artists!!"

"Thank you for hosting this event! We have a very talented & involved community."

"Warms my heart and soul. Much thanks."

Supports Strategy 1.1, "Diversify adult programming, with a particular emphasis on opportunities which center culture and language and offerings that hold intergenerational appeal."



Ravinia Words & Music Returns

The Ravinia Words & Music Program came back to the Library for the first time in years. Because the opportunity came together unexpectedly, Readers Services staff regrouped quickly to fold it into the Adult and Teen Summer Reading programs. Patrons who registered or logged reading by July 4 were automatically entered in a raffle for four lawn passes to their choice of 12 eligible Ravinia concerts, with the drawing held July 6. The promotion drew enthusiastic participation and positive feedback. Supports Strategy 1.2, "Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors."



Line Dancing Draws a Crowd

Denita Inez of Desueno Dance Studio returned by popular demand to lead a soul line dancing class, her second event at the Library. Patrons spent the hour moving and socializing, and Denita's warmth as an instructor was the highlight. One patron shared that others had made her feel like a bad dancer her whole life, but that Denita made her feel like she could dance. Several attendees asked whether line dancing could become a recurring program three or four times a year. Supports Strategy 1.1, particularly its emphasis on programming that centers culture.



American Revolution Series Begins

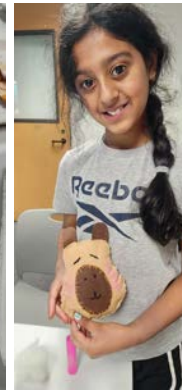
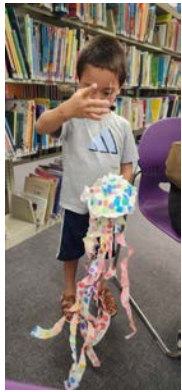
Professor Gary Midkiff presented Part One of his American Revolution program as part of our celebration of America's 250th birthday, covering the events on both sides of the Atlantic that led to the colonies' fight for freedom and closing with the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Part Two, covering the battles and personalities of the war, follows in August.



Youth Programming Overview

July was a full month of summer reading logs and programming, including Park District and Neighborhood Resource Center campers, Creating the Stuffed Animals of Your Dreams, Kids Camera Club: Focus on Nature, Precious Prints for our youngest patrons, Coding Club, Kawaii Stitching, Start Stitching, Explore Your Senses, STEM: Engineering Mystery Bags, and Dogs! Supports Strategy 1.3, "Position the library as a versatile education hub for young patrons from infants to teens."





Hot Notes! Swings Through Arts Alive

Matt and Cynthia Gruel performed Hot Notes! Songs from the Swing Era for July's Arts Alive concert. Beyond the singing, Cynthia danced through several numbers and the easy camaraderie between the two added real energy to the show. Patrons have already asked for a return engagement, an easy request to fill, since the duo has multiple shows in their repertoire.



ILA Honors Executive Director with Intellectual Freedom Award

Executive Director Jack Bower has been named a 2026 recipient of the Illinois Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Award, presented by the ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee for outstanding contributions to defending intellectual freedom. The award recognizes his sustained advocacy for government transparency and for the public's right to access library spaces free from retaliation, work undertaken independently, as a private citizen, outside his role at Rolling Meadows Library. Of this year's honorees, the committee wrote that they "simply insisted that public institutions follow public rules." The Library shares his commitment to intellectual freedom, open government, and the core values of librarianship.





Polaris Migration Testing Underway

Data testing has begun for the initial test migration of our Sierra catalog records to Polaris, which will show how cleanly our records transfer to the new system. The Technical Services team, along with Circulation Services' Mary I. and Reference Librarian Anne J., attended Polaris Client training at the consortium. Technical Services Director Wendy F. and IT Director Mike M. attended the IT Orientation session on Polaris system requirements, and after working through a number of technical glitches, Mike successfully loaded the Client interface onto Circulation and Technical Services computers. Youth Services and Circulation staff have also begun their CCS training, with Circulation attending both Intro to Leap and Staff Client sessions this month. Supports Strategy 2.4, "Pinpoint and address imbalances between what patrons want and what is available to them from RML and the possibilities of consortium membership."

Circulation Leadership Transition

Circulation Services Director Mary Sebela will retire this fall after 43 years at the Library, with her last day on October 2. Many of our current staff were hired by Mary, and she has been one of the faces of Rolling Meadows Library for decades, known well beyond our community for her positivity and her genuine love for her patrons. We are grateful for the generous notice she has given us as we navigate the transition into the CCS consortium.

Mary Ivory-Coulomb has been promoted to Director of Circulation Services, effective Monday, September 28. She brings a decade of experience at Rolling Meadows Library and has consistently demonstrated the skill and commitment the role requires. We congratulate them both!

Farewell to Laura C.

On July 30, we said goodbye to Circulation's Laura C., who retired after 14 years with the Library. We will miss her and wish her all the best.

Legislative Update: Jury Duty Pay and 9-8-8 Posting

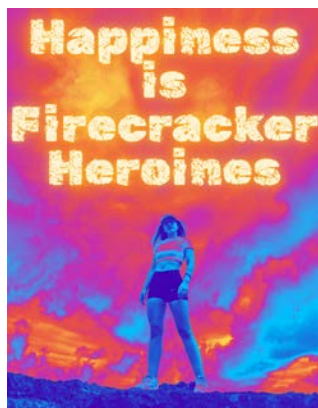
Public Act 104-0683, signed July 31 and effective January 1, 2027, requires employers with more than 25 employees to pay employees their regular rate of pay while serving on jury duty. The Library already compensates staff for jury service, so this largely reinforces our existing practice. Administration will review the personnel policy to confirm alignment, notably, the Act sets no cap on the number of paid days.

Senate Bill 2771 will require every Illinois public library to post contact information for the 9-8-8 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in a prominent, patron-accessible location. The bill passed both houses on May 31 and awaits the Governor's signature. We have already posted the hotline information, using the free print materials the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration makes available.

Department Highlights

Readers Services

- **Happiness Is Handmade (July 16 & 23):** A new round of crochet classes brought back familiar faces alongside new patrons. Not everyone finished within the session, but several are working from the provided resources to complete the project on their own.
- **Trivia Under the Stars (July 20):** Weather moved trivia indoors, where the Library of Things supplied the atmosphere with a star machine. Eight returning players and five first-timers competed in a friendly evening. Winning teams shared their prizes so that every table went home with a pick from the candy bin.
- **Summer Displays:** Readers Services staff design displays of 25–50 curated titles each, spanning genres, authors, and topics, and refresh them regularly through the summer. The result is a steady stream of timely, high-interest selections that draw patrons into parts of the collection they might not otherwise browse, supporting circulation, summer reading participation, and readers advisory all at once.



Reference Services

- **Flavorful Kitchen Escapades:** Hosted by Reference Librarian Lauren V., this perennial favorite drew 13 participants, including several pulled from the waitlist. The group was genuinely intergenerational, a pre-teen and a teenager each attended with their mothers, adults ranged from their 20s to their 60s, and an elder patron came with a somewhat younger neighbor. A direct fulfillment of Strategy 1.1's call for "offerings that hold intergenerational appeal."
- **Notary Service Keeps Growing:** The Library recorded more than 30 notary appointments in July. The continued investment in this service remains a clear benefit to the community.

Special Services

- New displays included a smile station photo-op backdrop, a Forgotten Founders display tying into the 250th anniversary, and new art gallery work from photographer Tiffany Whister.



Circulation

- With help from our patrons, the Maximum Happiness barometer has been filled with happy face stickers. A small but ongoing nod to Strategy 4.5, "Adopt continual feedback mechanisms to gather input from community members on an ongoing basis."
- July brought several raffles at the Circulation desk, with a disco ball, an Elephant and Piggie activity book basket, and a Polaroid camera as prizes.