

Executive Director's Report

August 2026



Summer Reading Challenge Closes with Record Completions

The Pursuit of Happiness Summer Reading Challenge ended August 16 after running since June 3, and completions set a new record. Sign-ups and participation came in just shy of our previous highs, close enough that the summer stands as one of our strongest on record across the board.

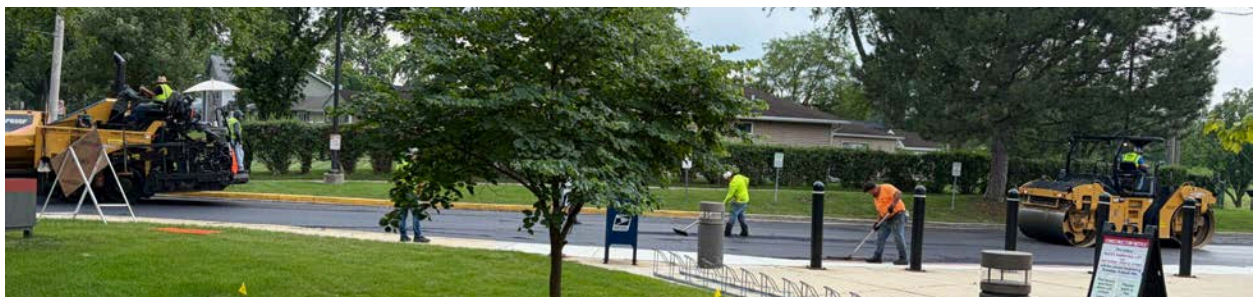
On the youth side, more than 800 kids signed up, 498 participated, and 488 finished the challenge. Our youngest age group posted an all-time high, with many new families joining over the summer; we ran out of the smallest t-shirt sizes entirely.

The Adult and Teen program drew 486 registrants: 418 adults, 43 teens, and 25 staff. Of those, 221 completed all 12 reading challenges and earned every available prize, including the final Summer Reading t-shirt (206 adults and 15 teens).

Supports Strategy 1.3, "Position the library as a versatile education hub for young patrons from infants to teens."

West Parking Lot Repaved

The west parking lot has been repaved and re-striped. By partnering with the City's annual summer repaving program, we completed the work for under \$200,000, well below the \$320,000 the building's engineering assessment projected for the job (40,000 square feet at \$8/SF). Speed bumps and final striping for the limited mobility spaces at the front entrance are the only items still outstanding. Resurfacing of the east lot remains on the assessment's list and is slated for 2027. Supports Strategy 3.1, "Conduct a facility needs assessment to understand and begin sequencing needed reinvestments in the aging library facility."



Library Hosts Cook County Justice System Program

On August 15, the Library served as the venue for Navigating the Cook County Justice System, hosted by Cook County Commissioners Maggie Trevor and Kevin Morrison and joined by Clerk of the Circuit Court Mariyana T. Spyropoulos. The program gave nonprofits and community organizations a chance to connect directly with representatives from the Circuit Court, State's Attorney's Office, Justice Advisory Council, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Office, Law Library, and Veterans Assistance Commission, and to learn how those resources can support local individuals and families. Supports Strategy 1.2, "Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors."



Patrons Get Their First Look at the New Catalog

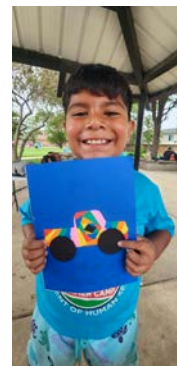
August brought the next stage of patron communication about the new catalog launch: the cover story and main article in the Fall newsletter, bookmarks tucked into items borrowed at the Check Out Desk, a dedicated page at rmlib.org/new-catalog, and an email blast. Supports Strategy 2.3, "Invest in the library's online discovery tools through a website redesign and improvements to app functionality."



Youth Services Programming

With schools back in session, School Outreach Coordinator Alex E. has already presented book talks to every 7th grade Language Arts class at Carl Sandburg Middle School. The Imagination Zone continues to draw families, with two wooden dollhouses back in August giving kids a space to tell their own stories.





Polaris Training Accelerates; Data Testing 81% Complete

August was the heaviest training month yet ahead of the CCS migration. The Technical Services team and Reference Librarian Anne J. completed six hours of cataloging training in Leap. Dori J., Julie M., and Technical Services Director Wendy F. spent nine hours on acquisitions training. Circ staff, IT Director Mike M., and Wendy took a five-hour class on Leap's circulation functions, and Readers Services staff and Mike attended a three-hour session on the Polaris serials module. Assistant Director Lucia Khipple, Director of Reference Services Jennifer Collette, and Wendy joined a Zoom meeting on settings for BiblioCore, the new patron discovery layer.

Wendy also trained staff across Readers, Reference, and Youth Services in data testing. By the end of August, 81% of the legacy codes requiring verification that records transferred cleanly from Sierra to Polaris had been completed. A special thank you to Wendy for attending so many training sessions and shepherding the library so well through this transition.



A Classic Reference Question

So much of a librarian's daily work now revolves around technology and troubleshooting that a true reference question is a genuine treat. Late in August, one arrived in the Ask A Librarian inbox from a patron in Pennsylvania researching his late uncle, a drafting engineer who worked at Western Electric's Rolling Meadows facility before his death in 1972. Reference Librarian Lauren V. dug in and came back with a trove of information only a dedicated information professional could have surfaced. Kudos to the patron for thinking to reach out to the local library and to Lauren for the answer!

In the Community

Back-to-School Kickoff at Kimball Hill

School Outreach Coordinator Alex E. and Community Relations Manager Laura G. represented Youth Services at the back-to-school kickoff at Kimball Hill School, promoting Library programs and services to arriving families. Two raffles kept kids engaged — a guess-the-number-of-apples jar and a drawing for our summer mascot, the little stuffed capybaras — and there was a line for both. Supports Strategy 4.1, "Prioritize outreach into underserved pockets of the community."

National Night Out

On August 4, Readers Services staff represented the Library at National Night Out, welcoming a steady stream of visitors throughout the evening. Information about the ESL program was among the most requested handouts, a sign of real community interest in our educational resources, and the frisbee giveaway proved popular enough that staff kept handing them out as they walked back to their cars. Our table sat next to the Friends of the Library table, letting us showcase the Library and its supporters side by side, and RML was later featured on the Rolling Meadows Chatter Facebook page. The best part was simply how many residents stopped by to share how they love their library. Supports Goal 4, "Increase community awareness around the value and versatility of the library."



NWSRA Golf Classic

Board President Phil Priest represented the Library at the Moretti's/NWSRA Golf Classic on August 19 at Villa Olivia Golf Club. The annual outing benefits the Special Leisure Services Foundation, which funds the Northwest Special Recreation Association's accessible transportation program. NWSRA groups are familiar faces at RML, so supporting their work is a natural fit.

Celebrating Eunice Semple

An envoy of library representatives, including President Priest, visited Eunice Semple for her 100th birthday in August. In 2023, Eunice retired from volunteering at the Rolling Meadows Library after over 64 years of service, which included being a founding supporter of the library as well as a 40 year Library Trustee. She was presented with a birthday card from the Library featuring over 100 signatures from well-wishers.



Department Highlights

Readers Services

- **Adult Adaptive Engagement:** Readers Services continues to host several adult program groups visiting once or twice a week. Participants take part in the Summer Reading Challenges and a range of activities, the Art Cart, Happiness Rocks, games from the collection, and adaptive reading challenges, alongside browsing and reading in a relaxed, welcoming setting. These visits offer meaningful opportunities for literacy engagement, social connection, and community participation across a wide range of needs, abilities, and interests.
- **Happiness Rocks:** The summer's runaway favorite among adults and teens drew 148 participants over three months — 44 in June, 71 in July, and 33 in August.



Special Services

- **Saddle Shoe Sisters (August 9):** Despite a deluge less than an hour before showtime and limited parking, the Arts Alive concert drew a good crowd. Three talented performers played and sang their way from the 1940s through the 1970s in full 1950s regalia, poodle skirts and saddle shoes included. Patrons singled out the guitar work and the group's harmonies.



- **Garden to Plate (August 13):** Chef Susan Maddox demonstrated three dishes, provided samples, and sent patrons home with recipes. A cooking instructor at the College of DuPage, she is also an animated and funny presenter. Attendees learned, laughed, and ate.



- **The Beat That Changed the World (August 20):** Producer and director Pamela Enzweiler-Pulice returned with a history of rock and roll from the 1940s to the 1970s, tracing the genre's roots back to African rhythms and following its evolution through musical clips and interviews with rock icons. Several patrons described it as both informative and a welcome walk down memory lane.
- Summer raffles at the Check Out Desk wrapped up August 3. Congratulations to Marcos, Damian, and Megan on some remarkably close guesses.



WINNING GUESS:
155
ANSWER:
157



WINNING GUESS:
289
ANSWER:
285



WINNING GUESS:
2,111
ANSWER:
2,110



- Main display cases featured "Stargazing, Meteor Showers, and the Books Between," timed to the Perseid meteor shower on August 12 and 13, plus a back-to-school push for 100 Books Before High School.



Facilities

- Landscapers removed the dead tree near the main entrance and planted a replacement. Fresh mulch went down this month, improving the look of the flower beds.
- Maintenance has begun replacing the cracked path light lenses previously destroyed by vandals.
- The west parking lot project allowed access to repair the long dead street light closest to the creek.



Circulation

- Please refer to the Circulation Monthly Statistical Report for the latest data.