

West Branch District Library **Annual Report FY 2014-2015**

Statistics from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Circulation Statistics Snapshot

- Collection Numbers: 30,666 (print)
 - 6661 (electronic)
 - 2258 (audio-visual)
- Total Circ: 48,443
 - *Inter-Library Loan Out: 4214 (VLC and Melcat)
 - *Inter-Library Loan In: 4260 (VLC and Melcat)
- Overdrive Ebook/Downloadable audio circ: 4541 (July 2014-June 2015)
- Active Users: 5156 (34.3% Non-resident)
 - *Note: There are 6808 (26.1% Non-resident) registered borrowers in the system, however, active users are patrons that have borrowed library materials within the last three years.
- Continual weeding has kept collection numbers virtually the same as compared to last year. Shelves are fairly full and library space is at a premium, so this is necessary. There may be some room for additional shelving down the road, but there wouldn't be a huge amount of new space, so keeping the collection in good shape is imperative. With the upcoming painting project, library staff may do a more concentrated culling at that time.
- During this year, digital collection (Overdrive) usage was up slightly, but overall circulation numbers were down. We may try shifting the holds ratio for buying extra copies of books by popular authors/bestsellers. This would allow for shorter holds lists for popular items and likely increase circulation slightly. Additionally, highlighting complementary materials during programming may boost circulation numbers as well.
- Internet usage: 17,056 public workstation users, 3285 wireless users
- The increase in digital circulation may be due to Overdrive usage that is continually getting easier. Improvements in the app and overall design of the system have made usage more intuitive for the user.
- Valley Library Consortium (VLC) voted to implement Enterprise for its online catalog. Because of survey responses provided by staff and patrons of the consortium, this product was implemented to address the vast majority of catalog searcher's concerns without completely changing the ILS (Integrated Library System), which would have been a vastly more expensive and time consuming option. Though there was a bit of a learning curve to begin with, patron response has been fairly positive.
- After attending a White Pine Cooperative workshop, Amy Winter opted to use a new covering system for paperback books added to the library's collection. The materials make paperbacks much more durable and will hopefully keep them in circulation longer than the library's previous method.

Tech Bright Spots

-The library's Tech Tuesday program was highlighted on a county-wide and even a statewide level this year. This drop-in, anything-goes tech inquiry session with individual staff assistance has really hit its stride. Patrons are used to the date and time, and all are very grateful for the one-on-one help. Andrew and Luke were able to offer a few Windows 8 classes for interested and grateful attendees, and digital photography was again offered as a workshop. Though attendance for these "classes" are not very high, it is still a nice resource to offer those who want more in-depth information on a small class scale.

-Library staff and public computer users will benefit greatly with the past year's installment of Merit fiber to supply internet access. Andrew completed the footwork within the library to get everything running smoothly. Outside of having to block some ports due to illegal downloading from patrons on the wireless, the transition has been great. It is wonderful not to have the inexplicable "crashes" during which we'd have to reset the whole network as we did on a regular basis with our previous internet service. As VLC is also a Merit customer, data sent back and forth on the ILS from staff computers is extremely fast and doesn't count "against" the library's total data usage.

-The children's section is enhanced by a new AWE computer station, a computer dedicated to early literacy for young children. This is the second AWE station in the library's children's section, and the stations are extremely popular with young patrons.

-After the library's last audit, it was suggested that a mechanism be put in place to track every sale at the circulation desk (fines, copies, etc.) which could be linked back to a receipt, if needed (except for Book Nook sales). After much research, Andrew suggested the best option (and a free one!) would be to use the library's iPad as a cash register. Though it is taking some time to figure out all the quirks and get used to the reporting features, it is helpful, though there will inevitably continue to be some semblance of human error (as there was with the past system as well).

-The library upgraded all public computers and staff computers to Office 2013 software. With no huge differences, this transition for both the public and the staff was fairly uneventful.

Program Milestones

-This fiscal year brought a science-based theme for the summer reading program (SRP). With experiment-focused drop-in event opportunities, attendance for programs really soared compared to previous years'. The hands-on experiments as opposed to craft-focused activities were a real draw and a format we'd like to continue in upcoming years with future SRP themes.

-The library was pleased to again be chosen as a site to host a Michigan Notable Author. Tom Dilley brought his research on cemeteries and tombstone markings to a very interested and engaged audience in April. The Michigan Notable event was partially grant funded – for many of the honored authors on the list, visits to libraries like ours might not be feasible for the author or the library's budget, so the grants certainly help make the program happen! Additionally, the library had great turnout for local authors presenting their works at Books for Lunch. The avid readers that attend Books for Lunch were quick to ask questions of local authors and receptive to hearing about the authors'

writing processes. Many attendees also bought copies of the authors' books, which the authors then signed.

-Back by popular demand was the Adult Reading Program that took place in the early spring. To help celebrate National Libraries Week, thirty adults tracked their reading progress just as they may have done as a child at their local library, and upon finishing the program were entered in a drawing for a Kindle Fire. This nostalgic program will likely become a mainstay for our avid adult readers in the years to come.

-Under the guidance of Sarah Godfrey, a Community Play Group began over the winter in the library's community room on Fridays. Attendance was very high, especially for a newly established programming. The group will continue during the next fiscal year. Also, a series of gardening workshops led by the library's knowledgeable patron Katrina Amerson helped to bring "new blood" to library programming – always a positive thing from my perspective.

-A new partnership with Michigan Blood has allowed for blood drives to occur onsite at the library every 56 days in hopes of bringing repeat donors back as often as possible. Michigan Blood is able to either conduct the drive in the community room or in their mobile bus which can be parked near the library.

-With continual effort and planning, library programming brings in great numbers of community folks, both registered patrons and otherwise. During this fiscal year, the library offered **228** programs with **5234** total attendance!

Facilities Report

-The library's rain garden on the north and east side of the building received a necessary re-mulch from G & H Landscaping. The library may want to look at additional mulch in the future with blocks for sparse grass around the edges. The garden continues to thrive and has even donated some "cuttings" to help establish other rain gardens in the area.

-Another cold winter brought about the freezing of the furnace exhaust causing the Book Nook area to be without heat briefly. Hacht Heating & Cooling has since put a mechanism in place to prevent this from happening during upcoming cold snaps, and the company will also be conducting an annual inspection of the library's air conditioning units. Mike, of Hacht Heating & Cooling didn't feel like an annual inspection for the heaters was necessary, just regular repair should the systems not function properly.

-The library worked with Surline Elementary School to bring some adjustable-height tables to the community room for preschool story hour attendees. Additionally, the library purchased varying sized colorful chairs to accommodate the little ones. This equipment was much needed and a welcome addition for some of our smallest patrons.

Personnel

-Jeana Stillwagon returned to work at the library as a part-time staffer! After a brief move, she returned to the area and applied for the open position at the library. It's good to have her back. Additionally, Lorie LeVasseur and Amanda Barratt were brought on to assist with page duties and circulation functions. We are glad to have them on our team.

-Staff handled my maternity leave and (part-time) return very well, including a stress-inducing staff resignation (of Linda Kotrys) while I was away. Andrew received a well-

deserved promotion to Assistant Director during the year which was touted by the local press. He received many well-wishes from patrons on his new position.

-Working with a science theme, staffer Brittany Fabbri was tapped to coordinate the Summer Reading Program for the library. Brittany did a fabulous job, though we had to bid her farewell as she left for the west side of the state for her first year of college.

-Andrew had the opportunity to attend the Michigan Library Association (MLA) conference in Grand Rapids in October. This professional development opportunity always provides great networking opportunities and ideas to implement from libraries both large and small. We will look forward to the return of the Rural Libraries Conference next spring – a great opportunity for staff and board alike!

-The library was proud to be nominated by an unknown community member for the West Branch Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business award in the Excellence category. Andrew, Sheldon Justice, Roberta Beck, and I were able to attend the Chamber Ball. Though we didn't win the award in our category, it was still an honor to be nominated and a testament to the hard work we as a staff and library board do every day.

Financial

-Unaudited Revenues and Expenditures:

Revenues: \$ 291,785.27

Expenditures: \$ 270,728.50

- The Summer Reading Program had a higher overall expenditure for the year, due to the science theme and shift toward experiment activities over craft-focused activities.

However, the turnout for these events was much higher than previous years, feedback was extremely positive, and subsequently, I feel the added expense was very worthwhile.

-Though they didn't quite reach the increased revenue goal in the year's budget, the library's Friends group continues to provide welcome revenue to the library's budget through operating the Book Nook every day the library is open. Book sales through Amazon are still going well with Sue Jennings now assisting Marsha Boyd in this capacity. Marylou Lockhart continues to sell rare books at Potato Barn Antiques as well. All of this revenue is so very appreciated. The Book Nook consistently receives compliments on how it is set up and run from out of town folks who have seen other library book sales and Friends endeavors. Our group does a FANTASTIC job!

-During this fiscal year, the library's reduced service area and subsequent lower penal fines with Churchill no longer encompassed by the library district was realized, and with the expense of the Merit fiber install (which went slightly over budget), the library still had a good year financially coming out with more than \$20,000 of unaudited fund balance. With fluctuating property values and penal fines, tax capture, and potential tax tribunal decisions that could be detrimental to the library's fund balance, these reserves are nice to have on hand.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Boersen, Library Director