

Director's Report July 2026

Respectfully Presented by Nikki Ericksen, Library Director

Community Events

Pool Party: The library reserved the pool for summer reading program participants and their families on the evening of Thursday, July 9. Attendance was not based on reading but encouraged families to get out together. It also exposed more people to the pool and the services it offers. It gave me a chance to promote the upcoming science fair and Teen Space.

Science and Art Fair: This special 2-hour event required some heavy lifting figuratively and literally by library staff, but the engagement by participants of all ages, made it feel worth it. There were over 20 stations of STEAM inspired activities. Families had the chance to learn about and break open geodes, engineer a boat from aluminum foil to float a heavy load of pennies, and explore Bernoulli's Principle using a hair dryer and a leaf blower to levitate objects.



Older kids had a blast dismantling appliances including a computer tower. They worked together to program a small robot that responds to colored lines drawn on paper. Preschoolers enjoyed a water table and big pile of cardboard boxes to stack and knock down. Art stations included aluminum foil sculpture, collage, musical instruments and origami.

Discarded books played a big role in the program. This free resource lent themselves to building ramps for remote control cars, being dissected for collage,

origami and book sculpture, and a huge giveaway table gave families a chance to load up on free reads.

We got a chance to show off our new telescope we received thanks to a Nasa grant received by the University of Montana Spectrum program. We plan to create some sort of stargazer club at the library in the future. The telescope and the programmable robot will be available for checkout beginning this fall.

We were thrilled with the 8 project entries. Each kid/family got a chance to explain their art or science project and one girl even attempted to dissolve an egg before our eyes. We awarded first place prizes in art and science.

Special thanks to Rachel Bennett for bringing her spinning wheel and sharing her fiber knowledge. Thanks to Suzanna Martin for providing a fun rock painting station.



Staff and Volunteers

Terry has been on vacation for two weeks and will return on the 30th. I will be on vacation from August 3rd through the 13th. Mikiah's last day will be August 18th and Andrew Davidsmeyer, our new library tech will begin August 31.



Building

Kid's Area Changes: By removing some of the larger elements (fish tank, picnic table and toy chest) and replacing them with lighter, more upright elements, we have made the children's area work better for patron families. The kid's area continues to do a lot of heavy lifting with this area in use most of every day. I have tried to optimize the amount of floor space for kids to play and increase seating for parents. We have streamlined the toys to make it easier for parents and/or staff to clean up and to redirect focus back on books and family reading.

Collection Management

As summer programming comes to a close, we are turning our attention to collection maintenance. We are working to decrease the number of items in several sections. I asked Cindy to reduce or "weed" the junior fiction section. She removed all books that had not been checked out in the past three years. As a result, this section is lighter making it easier for young readers to find something they like to read.

We are also working toward a more user-friendly nonfiction section. We plan on altering the shelves so they are spaced to hold the larger nonfiction books that we have. Right now, many of the books are shelved on the fore-edge or on the spine. This section feels bloated, messy and overwhelming.

Cindy is doing a thorough weed of this section reducing it enough so that we can remove several shelves so they can be spaced further apart. The goal is to give this section the same inviting feel that the fiction sections have and for books to be easier to find and peruse.

Fundraising

Cindy is heading up a craft fair to benefit the library. She is working with Rhonda Roth, local craft vendor, to organize the event. It will be held in the

library yard and parking lot on September 19. Three vendors have already expressed interest in attending.

New Patrons	
17	
Computer Users	73
One-on-one Ass.	
16	
Patron Traffic	
2311	

Programming

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CD	3
CHAPTER	31
DISPLAY	27
DVD	191
EASY	181
FICTION	118
JUV-FICT	103
JUV-NF	
48	
MONTANA	13
MYSTERY	53
NEW-BOOK	86
NON FICTION	
42	
STACKS	123
WESTERN	27
YA	50
MontanaLibrary2Go	