

Director's Report June 2025

Respectfully Presented by Nikki Ericksen, Library Director

Programming

Summer Reading Program: There were a total of 108 kids who participated in the summer reading program. The Butcher's Nook ice cream coupons have been very popular. So far, we are expecting 25 people at the ice cream and bowling party for the 30-hour finishers.

Summer Discovery Program: This month volunteer Anna Boon taught origami, Mikiah organized a Town of Plains scavenger hunt with the local businesses participating in handing out clues, and we explored Montana's aquatic past and present from tylosaurus and ammonites to salmon and sturgeon. These programs have been fairly popular considering that programming numbers are usually very low in the summer. I plan to do them again next year and keep working toward more volunteer leaders to take the workload off of staff during this busy season.

Field Trips: Both field trips went extremely well. The younger kids engaged in cardboard engineering. Camp Bighorn donated their entire cardboard recycling bin and kids had their own roll of tape along with other supplies to build anything they wanted with plenty of books for reference. We left the supplies out for the entire day and other families took advantage and built their own creations.

The field trip for the older kids featured a game where they worked in teams to crack the code to unlock a box full of goodies. The activity required them to look up books in the catalog, find them on the shelves and use them to fill in the blanks. Once they filled in the blanks, they used library resources to solve the clues and each team discovered one of the numbers of the combination lock. It took them about 75 minutes to get it open with a member of staff working with each team. Afterward, we read "Can you survive the 1910 Big Burn?". The kids discussed their options, debated with each other and chose their way through alternative sections of the book. In the end, they died a horrible death together and we all had a good laugh.

Fundraising

Our new Friends of the Plains Library group have decided to provide us a means of taking credit cards. This is something we have not been able to do due to limitation in county policy. All monies will be placed in the Friends' account. Donations will remain in the Friends of the Library account while fines and fees will be paid back to the library quarterly. I'm really happy and appreciate this convenience to our patrons and improved ability to collect both monies owed to the library and donations to the Friends of the Library.

Events and Meetings

Commissioners Budget Meeting: Nate Stropko and I attended this meeting on July 9th. It was very short, less than 15 minutes. Commissioners and CFO had only a few clarifying questions for us. Jessica Connolly (CFO) created a Repair and Maintenance line item for us for the accessibility grant. Dan Rowan noted that city should be paying to replace broken items such as the door openers per the interlocal agreement. I agreed with him but said that going out and getting the grant seemed the faster way of getting it fixed.

I should receive a copy of the preliminary county budget and will be diligent about checking it for mistakes before it is approved in September.

Staff and Volunteers

Mikiah's last day will be July 25th. She has been a huge help to us and really showed us what having someone in that position can do for the library. Cindy and I have had the time to further major projects while Mikiah has covered duties for both of us. We have also been able to provide a more solid product in summer programming with Mikiah's help. We are eager to find someone to fill this position permanently.

Melissa will be on maternity leave beginning in late September and will be gone for at least 6 weeks.

In order to accommodate vacation for Cindy and me, the library will be closed July 28th through 31st. Melissa will be stopping in the library while it is closed to cover necessary tasks like feeding the fish and watering the plants. I will return from vacation on August 11th.

June Statistics

CD	15
CHAPTER	41
DISPLAY	78
DVD	100
EASY	162
EASY-NF	10
FICTION	116
JUV-BIO	3
JUV-FICT	131
JUV-NF	38
MONTANA	12
MYSTERY	47
NEW-BOOK	71
NON FICTION	34
SCI-FI	12
STACKS	129
WESTERN	11
YA	62
Total	1,131

Programming Attendance

Ages 0-5	0
Ages 6-11	0
Adult	0
General Interest	84

New Patrons	16
Computer Users	106
Volunteer Hours	47
Crates to Missoula	16
Crates from Missoula	16