



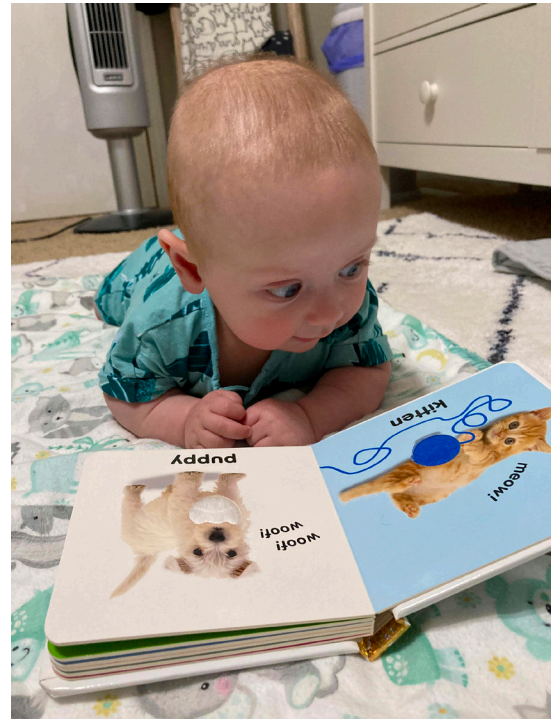
ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

To the Springfield-Greene County Library Board of Trustees
From Executive Director Regina Greer Cooper

July 16, 2021

The Board of Trustees welcomed new members Stacey Penney and Rachael Morrow from Greene County. They replaced outgoing members Catherine “Katie” Moore and Michele Risdal-Barnes. Stacey is with Ameriprise Advisors and Rachael is the owner of Morrow and Associates and an adjunct instructor at Southwest Baptist University.

The Friends of the Library continued to set records this year, even with abiding by COVID-19 protocols. Gross sales from the Spring Book Sale totaled \$143,154.11 and the Fall Book Sale brought in a record-breaking \$172,653.88. Even though the Friends had to transition to accepting donations only at The Library Center, that did not slow down the donations at all. As always, the Friends funded musical concerts at the branches, most of the Summer Reading Programming and the associate director’s budget, which funds branch needs that crop up during the budget year. This year the Friends also made grants to help fund \$8,000 additions to our Maker Space; and new auditorium chairs for The Library Center with \$23,137.51. The David Sedaris event, which is sponsored by the Friends, has again been rescheduled to October 21, 2021, because of COVID-19.



The Library Foundation distributed \$96,110.71 to the Library this year. The Doug and Rae Nickell Family Fund at the Community Foundation of the Ozarks provided a grant of \$20,000 to purchase e-books and e-audiobooks for the library collection. The Foundation received a check for \$640 for our virtual Death and Dying programming. Old Missouri Bank donated \$1,000 to the Jim Gorst memorial campaign to purchase a new stage system for The Library Center. Jim served as a member of the Library Foundation Board until his unexpected death in 2020. Three Help-A-Librarian projects were funded for branches. The end-of-year appeal raised \$10,395 and the holiday bookplates promotion brought in \$1,025. A grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks provided \$7,460 for a virtual reality program designed to foster empathy toward marginalized individuals. Bass Pro Shops provided \$4,968 to purchase hot spots to support under-resourced families as they work and study remotely. Give Ozarks Day brought in \$7,539.73 of unrestricted funds. Story Walks® were funded with a \$2,700 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. And the Library Foundation Board was finally able to hold a reception to roll out the Play and Learn Center at the Library Station. It was funded last year by The Stanley and Elaine Ball Foundation.

On July 16 a Springfield city ordinance went into effect requiring everyone to wear masks in public places, with a few exceptions. In keeping with the ordinance, the Library mandated masks at all locations in the district. Staff continued to be creative as COVID-19 wore on. The Business Continuity Team (Executive Director Regina Greer Cooper,



Associate Director Jim Schmidt, Human Resources Director Lori Ruzicka, Community Relations Director Kathleen O'Dell, IT Director David Patillo and Building and Grounds Director Leland Blatter) met throughout the year to make decisions to guide the Library's actions as the pandemic continued. All programs went virtual, the Between Friends Gift Shop created with IT staff an online Holiday Store, and The Library purchased laptops for in-house checkouts so patrons could social distance while using a computer. Many things continued to change throughout this year on an almost daily basis. Sadly, two of our coffee shops went out of business because of COVID-19: Big Momma's at the Midtown Carnegie Branch and the Mudhouse at The Library Center. Vaccination clinics began in May 2021, with more than 220 people receiving vaccines from the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at several of our branches. Things finally began to improve in late May when the City of Springfield entered into the green phase of recovery.

The pandemic had a devastating effect on the youth Summer Reading Programming in the branches. Only 3,714 youth participated in 2020, a 55% decrease from 2019. However, we received lots of feedback from families who did participate, thanking us for continuing the program in creative ways. All of our programs moved to a virtual format for the summer, as did our regular storytimes. The 2021 Summer Reading Program began on June 1. Staff are doing several outdoor programs and continuing virtual programs. Youth Services staff created Take-Out Kits this year, which continue to be a big success. Two other successful programs included "Joke of the Day" and "Poetry Pals" in partnership with Public Radio station KSMU. Calming Kits, provided by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, came to our Youth Services departments this year. The kits include items that a young person on the autism spectrum or with a development delay might find useful to stay calm or channel energy to help them have a successful and positive library experience.

We sold the property just south of The Library Center on July 31, 2020, for \$1,381,000. Work began on The Ridge development there shortly afterwards. For several weeks, blasting became a regular part of the workday for the staff at The Library Center. Lyon Avenue was closed for the construction, leaving only one entrance to the branch. New library signage was added on Campbell Avenue and El Camino Alto to help direct traffic to The Library Center.

The Local History and Genealogy Department worked on several projects this year. The Lincoln School Digital collection went live in November. Staff worked with project partners to collect and digitize photos

and memorabilia from the historic all-Black school. Staff negotiated an agreement with Newspapers.com to provide Springfield Newspapers from 1865–2020 for our patrons for in-library and remote access. We signed an agreement with the Springfield News-Leader to digitize its photographs in order to provide access to this important historical collection through the Library.

Property Tax statements were late getting sent out this year due to some computer issues at the county. As a result, collections and distributions were delayed. In spite of that we finished the year with 105.1% of all revenues collected and 93.5% of the budget spent. Thanks goes to former Greene County Collector Leah Betts for helping to straighten things out and for keeping us informed.

Associate Director Jim Schmidt coordinated listening sessions for staff on equity, diversity and inclusion facilitated by Dr. Charlene Berquist from Missouri State University.

Forty-eight staff attended the sessions. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion training was created by staff members Charity Jordan and Krissy Sinor, and is now available to staff. I was invited to join the community Tough Talks Collaborative. Staff Development Day featured a session presented by the local NAACP President Toni Robinson, called “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: What Are the Buzz Words? How Did We Get Here? Where Should We Be?” Inclusion was added to our library values. We also created the Inclusion Committee, which began meeting monthly in May. Collection Services Department completed an EDI collections audit.

After work on the new Strategic Plan was derailed by COVID-19, Matthew Simpson began working with library staff in August on the information that had been gathered from the public Listening Sessions and staff. The Board of Trustees decided on strategic initiatives and goals at its retreat in March 2021. Matt worked with administrative staff on finishing the key deliverables and benchmarks in April and May. The final plan was presented to the Board of Trustees in June and was approved. Work began immediately on the plan and will continue through 2025.

Spencer Fane was chosen as the library’s new legal counsel, with Elizabeth Wente as our primary attorney. She has worked with us on many items including a revision of the Library’s Personnel Policy Manual. There were lots of tweaks, corrections and legal updates to the manual. However, there were really only two major changes: one to the Weather Closing Policy and a revision of the Dress Code to make it more informal. The new policy was approved in June.

We became one of six public libraries to join the Development Partner Program for Vega, a new patron engagement and discovery solution for public libraries through Innovative interfaces, the Library’s integrated library system. We greatly expanded our Maker Space at The Edge Community Technology Center. We installed a telephone notification system for patrons. Notary services were added by appointment at The



Library Center and Library Station in order to help patrons get their ballots notarized for the presidential election. The Library has decided to continue offering notary service because of other patron needs. Our Embedded Business Library rebranded itself Business Connect, with special staff training for different levels of expertise. Our library was selected to distribute the Grow with Google Certificate scholarships through The Edge Community Technology Center, we joined the Southwest Missouri Community Health Literacy Project and the Library Station became a polling station.

Long-time Electronic Resources Librarian Renee Brumett left the district to become the Christian County Library System director. We revised some job descriptions, the ILL Department moved under the auspices of Collection Services, and former Electronic Resources Assistant Stephanie Ruhe returned as our new ILS Administrator.

Highlights from this year include:

FACILITIES

- Directory and office signage in the Administrative area at The Library Center
- New bike rack at The Library Center
- Custom-made in-house bike rack installed at Library Station. It spells out the word BOOKS.
- New display rack at Schweitzer Brentwood Branch
- New front entrance for Strafford Branch due to vehicle damage to the entrance
- The Library Center animal chairs were refinished.
- Tuck pointing and sealing completed at Midtown Carnegie Branch
- Air filters changed to hospital grade throughout district
- New sinks and counters installed in Park Central Branch restrooms
- Keyless entry installed at Willard Branch
- Parking lot resurface and restriping at Midtown Carnegie
- Replacement of auditorium chairs at The Library Center
- Play & Learn Center installed at Library Station

FINANCE

LSTA Grants

- Summer Reading Program promotional grant, \$2,059.66
- Technology Mini Grant of \$13,263 to purchase 15 laptops for in-library checkout
- Summer Reading To Go \$8,000
- Technology Ladder Grant for replacement for public computers and printers, \$27,633.

Agency Grants

- American Library Association and Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, three sets of women's suffrage centennial book donation for three age groups
- E-rate funding \$160,176.82
- Private Donations

- Friends of the Library, \$82,009.10
- The Library Foundation, \$96,110.71 including:
 - Doug & Rae Nickell Family Fund, \$20,000 to purchase e-books and e-audiobooks
 - Old Missouri Bank \$1,000 to Jim Gorst memorial campaign
 - Bass Pro Shops \$4,968 for hot spots to support under-resourced families as they work and study remotely
 - Community Foundation of the Ozarks \$7,460 for a virtual reality program designed to foster empathy toward marginalized individuals
 - Dora Wilson \$4,000 to Preserving Ozarks History Endowment Fund
 - Dollar General Literacy Foundation grant, \$2,700 for Story Walks ®
 - Farmers Gastropub \$1,000 for Heirloom Seed Library
 - Hospice Foundation of the Ozarks \$640

Other

- Greene County CARES Act grant for \$31,542.09
- Missouri State Library/Missouri Department of Economic CARES Act funding \$65,292
- MOBIUS
- ROI: \$26,045.86 paid resulted in savings of \$1,716302.09 in materials borrowed and support services

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- NASA Artemis Team Facebook Live
- We Need to Talk, an ongoing platform for controversial conversations on race public health, etc.
- Death and Dying series
- Oh, The Horror series
- How to Talk Ozark
- Winter and Summer Reading Challenge
- Acts of Community Kindness
- StoryQuest Adventures
- Hidden History Hunt

RECOGNITION

- Dake Wells from AIA Springfield Chapter Public Jury Award for Schweitzer Brentwood design
- Library Journal Star Library

STATISTICS

- 2,151,685 total district circulation
- 865,361 total district traffic
- Due to COVID-19: all facilities operating with adjusted hours and protocols.

Regina Green Cooper