

As 2022 came to a close OPL saw progress on efforts to make the library a more welcoming and comfortable place; define and maintain service excellence; and engage with the community both in person and digitally.

## Goal 1: A Community-Driven Library

We are inspired by our community. We are committed not only to strategically using our resources to support community needs, but also to further existing initiatives.

### Objective A: Increase intentional, two-way communication with community members to better understand, respond to and support community goals

Listening to community members; tracking patron service requests; and recording patron comments helps the library respond by adding or modifying services to meet expressed needs. Some examples from 2022:

- Book club offerings for kids and teens were reconfigured to better serve their reading interests. The library added Elementary and Tween book clubs; pared back the Teen Book Club to serve grades 6-8 and added a Young Adult Book Club for high schoolers. Participants and their parents had expressed a desire for this type of change, which was also deemed beneficial by library staff.
- A document shredder and laminator were purchased for public use after numerous requests from patrons.
- Weekly pickup of library materials from Oshkosh North and West high schools resumed, based on requests from the schools and students. Making it easier to return materials makes it more convenient for busy students to use the library.
- High use of the library's notary service is reinforcing OPL's decision to improve access. Previously, notaries in the Administration Office handled these duties, but hours and staff availability were limited. The service was moved to Information Services and all staff are now notaries, providing the service by appointment during the library's extensive regular hours. In 2022, 754 documents were notarized during 447 appointments.
- Numerous requests from patrons and interest expressed to library staff in the community led Information Services to offer Everyday Tech. These one-hour sessions focus on technology used in daily life—useful smartphone features; digital photography; using social media and virtual meeting platforms — as well as one-on-one assistance with general tech issues, debuted in January.

### Objective B: Gather and use data and information to guide decisions, provide assessment measures, and allow for clear reporting.

Developing performance measures is a work in progress but there are examples where data is already by used to guide decisions and improve library offerings.

A draft list of performance indicators tied to strategic plan objectives has been completed and shared with the administrative team. Next steps include determining data collection responsibilities and reporting protocols. Practices are tentatively set to be piloted as part of a program evaluation system in 2023.

OPL's eNewsletter is a study in monitoring analytics and going where the data leads to achieve success. The library uses Constant Contact to create and distribute a newsletter via email each month to 6,800 subscribers. Monthly analytics consistently pointed to reading recommendations as the area of greatest interest for subscribers, so content

was heavily geared to Staff Picks and other types of book lists. Ongoing study of the analytics has helped to shape additional content, inform when the email is delivered and improve engagement. The results: In November 2022 the eNews logged a 53 percent open rate – significantly higher than previous rates of 30 percent and well above the 2022 industry average of 21 percent.

### **Objective C: Increase and strengthen community partnerships to build the library’s reputation as a trusted collaborator and a place where people and ideas come together.**

Maintaining ongoing dialog with community partners has led the library to collaborate on services that benefit the community. A few examples:

- The Winnebago Free Legal Assistance Clinic resumed and work continues to improve the sustainability of the service. Attendance at the clinic in Oshkosh was 181, with 235 more people served at the Neenah and Menasha public libraries.
- Winnebago County Public Health resumed weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinics at the library and made home test kits available for pickup during regular library hours.
- A partnership with the Department of Workforce Development, Fox Valley Job Center and more recently the Society for Human Resource Management is making weekly one-on-one assistance for job seekers available at the library.
- A Comfort Cabinet of basic hygiene items was set up on the library’s first floor for patrons in need and staff from the Day by Day Warming Shelter began holding regular office hours at the library.

### **Goal 2: A library card that matters**

We want our library card to offer value to all community members, so we will stay attuned to people’s lives and goals.

Issuing and updating library cards during community engagement and outreach activities removes barriers to checking out library materials and using online resources. Mobile circulation technology makes it possible for library staff, armed with an iPad or laptop, to get library cards in order at community sites and events in our area. OPL’s Community Engagement Librarian Sandy Toland has been conducting regular card clinics at Evergreen, the Oshkosh YMCA, and Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, with regular sessions added at Carmel Residence and Simeanna Apartments in 2022. She also visited Pollack Community Waterpark regularly throughout the summer.

### **Goal 3: A catalyst for learning and growth**

Our commitment to our community can be found in our building, in our virtual spaces, and in all the work we do and the resources we provide. As a community catalyst, we understand that it is our role to learn from and respond to the needs, goals and aspirations of the people of our community.

#### **Objective A: Increase visits to the physical library.**

Engberg Anderson Architects has conducted a building use audit and is collecting facility and community data for use in developing a master facilities plan. Library staff is working to assemble a steering committee for the project and collecting data on current building use.

Work began on a new customer service model for OPL, built on the foundation of the library’s core values and incorporating principles including Whole Person Librarianship, Positive Behavior Intervention Systems and the tenets of civility. Early in 2022 ARPA grant funds were used to train staff in Whole Person Librarianship and hold a series of Lunch & Learn sessions about community agencies and other resources. A customer service committee of staff from across the organization was assembled to begin work on the model. Recently a draft that outlines the correlation between current practices and the library’s organizational values was shared with library staff. Revisions will be made

based on staff feedback and new practices and concepts will be incorporated into the model. As this work continues, training opportunities and additional procedures that support customer service outcomes are being identified for future implementation.

Effective policies and procedures contribute to maintaining a desirable library environment – one that allows all patrons to enjoy using the library. Recent revisions to procedures and documentation for reporting rule violations and other incidents in the library were made to add clarity, consistency and support for staff in their jobs. In addition to revising incident forms and procedures, the following were also created:

- A guide to following the new reporting procedures.
- A logging system that front-line staff can use to track issues that don't require formal reporting.
- A follow-up procedure that incorporates reflective practice, discussion of how the incident was handled and any additional action that needs to be taken.

### **Objective B: Increase visits to the library's virtual spaces, including the website and social media channels.**

OPL found success using its social media channels to connect patrons with library activities and expertise in 2022.

- September's Freedom to Read initiative included a scavenger hunt for challenged books conducted via Facebook. The activity led to impressive increases in people reached (50%), post reach (101%), engagement with posts (168%), page likes (229%) and page views (295%).
- March Book Madness debuted on Instagram for the first time. In the Final Four-styled bracket, the library's top checkouts of 2021 went head-to-head, with followers voting for their favorites.
- OPL reached out to followers on Instagram and Facebook to choose the theme for this year's F Stop Photography Contest. Four options were posted on the platforms and followers cast their votes. The theme that resonated most with them: Joy.

**Other activities related to Goal 3:** While not tied to designated projects, several activities that embody this goal merit mention. OPL offered opportunities for community members to showcase their talents in creative writing, photography and poetry and provided a venue to share them with the wider community.

- Local poets submitted 180 poems for the April Poetry Walk. Twenty were selected for display in downtown businesses throughout April and all entries were highlighted on the library website.
- The Lakefly Writers Contests drew 86 entries from 74 individuals in Personal Essay, Poetry, Short Story and Teen Short Story categories, all centered on the theme, Into the Unknown.
- The F Stop Photo Contest returned for its third year, with entrants sharing 29 striking images that expressed their interpretation of joy. In addition to featuring the entries on the OPL website, an in-person exhibit was held at the library for the first time thanks to a grant from a local business.
- Other annual programs offering creative outlets for kids and teens continue to be popular, including the LEGOmania Design Contest, Teen Two Sentence Horror Story Contest and Creature Carnival for children.

## **Goal 4: A provider of and connector to trusted information.**

We are committed to creating, providing and connecting the people of our community to trusted information. We will be our community's lifelong learning platform

### **Objective B: Create trusted content that informs community members and showcases the library's unique skills and collections.**

The library's genealogy and local history resources and expertise were showcased frequently with programming, community presentations, displays and research assistance.

- Local history librarian Michael McArthur did a variety of community talks on topics including the Athearn Hotel, Stein's Shop and OPL's online genealogy resources. Library programs included the popular Genealogy Lock-in, a suite of nine programs on a variety of local history and genealogy topics and Librarian Learns, McArthur's monthly local history show on YouTube.
- Displays featured on the library's second floor in 2022 included a collection of Oshkosh Corporation memorabilia and an Oshkosh man's collection of decoy ducks, hand-carved by Oshkosh artists.
- An article in the local weekly newspaper highlighted OPL resources available for researching the history of a house. Staff also assembled resources and provided research assistance to Communities students from Oshkosh North High School for a local history project about named schools, parks and other locations around Oshkosh.

OPL's Freedom to Read initiative combined a scavenger hunt for challenged books; a community movie screening; a panel discussion and a series of book talks with Readers' Advisory Librarian Nancy Bell to creatively advocate for the right to freely read and express ideas. The effort spurred community conversation; staff was interviewed and invited to speak on the topic; and the library took the opportunity to better educate staff about the freedom to read as well as review related policies and procedures.