

Oshkosh Public Library Highlights February 2021

1. With the wider opening of the library building for browsing on Feb. 10, circulation of materials has nearly doubled. Most people are keeping their visits short and some are continuing to take advantage of the option to place holds for quick pickup. Many patrons are expressing their joy over being able to come into the library building for materials!
2. Teen services librarian Maggie Mueller connected with 6th grade students at Lourdes Academy recently, visiting with three classes via Zoom to introduce them to digital materials and talk about books. Maggie explained how to get a library card and demonstrated Libby and Hoopla. The groups discussed books they were excited about, sharing their recommendations and even some requests for purchase. The classes emailed thank you notes to Maggie and one student included a selfie with his new library card!
3. Community Engagement Librarian Sandy Toland did a presentation at the Oshkosh Seniors Center on how to use Hoopla and Libby. Sandy also offered a broad overview of the online catalog, showing attendees how to place holds and manage their accounts.
4. The library's new Storytime in a Bag collection is proving to be popular, with 24 of 28 bags circulating within the first month of their release. The bags of themed books and activities support literacy by allowing users to create their own storytime experience at home or in the classroom.
5. The library has several activities in the works that support basic community needs:
 - a. Free socks provided by the Oshkosh Area United Way are available in the front lobby for anyone in need.
 - b. OPL is collecting items for the Day by Day Warming Shelter, including hairbrushes, body wash, deodorant, winter hats, insulated gloves and hand/foot warmers.
 - c. Survival kits are being assembled for those in need, particularly those without permanent shelter. The kits will contain basic necessities and the goal is to make them available in a convenient location that respects an individual's autonomy.
 - d. Three laptop computers were purchased for individuals who don't have a computer or Wi-Fi access at home and are not comfortable being in the library space at this time. Computers are offered by staff as the need is identified (***we are not promoting this service***) and can be bundled with an OPL Hot Spot if needed.

Most of these activities grew out of ongoing discussions at the library about community needs and how OPL can offer support. Additional projects being considered include offering space for job seekers to meet with non-profits that offer employment services and possible support for individuals who need to sign up for COVID-19 vaccinations.

6. The library has started conducting card clinics at the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry. Card clinics focus on helping individuals get library cards or update the cards they have; sharing information about library services and resources; and talking to community members about their needs and experiences. Monthly Card Clinics are also offered at Evergreen.