

Oshkosh Public Library Highlights May 2023

1. Staff from the Children's Department presented at the annual Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries conference in April. Marie Boleman, Lindsay Reuer and Kallie Schell talked about the ongoing popularity of take-home learning activities that they began distributing during the height of the pandemic. Early literacy kits, Storytime in a Bag and S.T.E.A.M. kits were two of the offerings highlighted during the presentation. Eighteen conference attendees from throughout the state also ventured over to OPL for a building tour on the final day of the event.
2. The artistic talents of library staff were on full display when Art by Librarians debuted under the Dome April 24-29. Staff from across the library shared their drawings, photography, Dungeons & Dragons dioramas and more. A reception held on April 27 drew 58 people - family, friends, patrons and visitors from the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries conference.
3. OPL observed National Library Week 2023 with a Facebook series that reflected this year's theme, *There's More to the Story*. The goal was to highlight library offerings outside our core focus on books and reading. Posts highlighted community engagement and outreach; partnerships; special collections such as TIY Kits; the library's role as a catalyst for creativity in our community; and yes – we did slip in one post about our support for reading. In addition to telling the library story, the posts contributed to increases of 56 percent in both comments and replies for the month of April, with overall engagement on the series at almost 4 percent (which is above the 2022 average of 3.5 percent).
4. Readers Advisory Librarian Nancy Bell spoke at the annual conference of the Wisconsin Education Council-Retired on May 4. Nancy presented popular books, award winners and underrated reads across genres from 2022 and 2023. She also shared tips and tricks for engaging readers with their new favorite books.
5. The Mark Gruenwald Comic Book Creation Challenge launched on May 6 and 100 people have already registered to create an original comic. OPL will continue to work with the Winnebago Area Literacy Council to distribute art kits to participants and promote their annual event, which is designed to foster literacy and creativity in our community.
6. The library participated in the River East Neighborhood Association's annual birdhouse building event on May 6. OPL played the role of good neighbor, bringing the event inside the library when rainy weather dampened the original plan to gather across the street in William Waters Plaza. Individuals and families painted birdhouses, signed up for the Mark Gruenwald Comic Book Creation Challenge, learned about upcoming library events and enjoyed time together under the Dome.

7. The Lakefly Writers conference was held May 5-6, with near record attendance and enthusiastic accolades from those who were there. There were 114 people registered for the conference, with 25 speakers and 15 volunteers to help keep the conference running smoothly. One attendee posted on Facebook: "10/10 would recommend (the conference) to anyone looking to grow their writing community or their craft!!" A full report will be shared at a future meeting.
8. More than 100 cyclists pedaled to the library on May 13 as part of the annual BikeOsh event. Riders travel to 20 pit stops around Oshkosh during the event, which encourages residents to get out and explore on their bikes. BikeOsh is coordinated by students in Communities at Oshkosh North High School.
9. OPL was also a pit stop in this year's Amazing Oshkosh event on May 13. Ten four-person teams raced around the city, completing challenges at a dozen locations that showcased the work of area non-profits and service organizations. At OPL, teams read a picture book and sang along with a fingerplay (highlighting early literacy); strummed some chords on a ukelele from a Try It Yourself kit; located a book club set; and played one of the library's lawn dice games.
10. Patrons and community members are excited about Check Out Wisconsin State Parks at Your Library. In less than three weeks OPL has distributed 38 free day passes to Wisconsin state parks. Library promotion of the program has captured a lot of attention, leading to hundreds of shares on social media by individuals and a featured reel by Discover Oshkosh on Instagram.
11. An impromptu demonstration of OPL online resources for Winnebago Area Literacy Council staff led to an expanded session for WALC tutors. Community Engagement Librarian Sandy Toland demonstrated Bluebird and Mango language resources; explored the international offerings of Kanopy and Hoopla; then navigated to Learning Express for practice exams for positions in health care, civil service, emergency services and trades. She pointed out ways they could learn about and share their learners' language and culture and parlay that into conversations and vocabulary.