

Oshkosh Public Library Highlights September 2018

1. Summer reading stats are in, with all age levels reporting increases in sign-up or program completion:

Children: The number of children who signed up for summer reading was down slightly this summer, but the percentage of children who reached their reading goals at four, six, eight and ten weeks increased – in one case by 27 percent.

Teens: Increased outreach to Oshkosh middle and high schools paid off this year, yielding a 13 percent increase in teens signing up for the summer reading program. The 312 participating teens completed 274 Bingo cards – a 31 percent increase over 2017. They also read 325 more books this summer; an increase of 31 percent. Nearly 400 teens attended summer events; a 44 percent increase over 2017.

Adults: Participation in the adult program also increased by nearly 24 percent, with 133 people reading to fill their Bingo card. Participation was nearly even across age categories, with the largest increase – from seven to 17 percent - seen among people ages 50-59. This year 41 percent of participants completed all eight Bingo cards, compared to 7 percent in 2017.

2. The Friends of the Library held their first-ever block party on Aug. 24 and the event was a success on several fronts. Bringing the outdoor event inside didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of those who attended: The event raised \$2,005, almost half of which came from sales of albums and other items at the Music Market/Rummage Sale. A record player console sold for \$250 and the Friends received cash donations totaling nearly \$200. The event brought in people who use the library infrequently or not at all (45 percent of the raffle tickets were purchased by people who did not have library cards or had expired cards). The block party gave people the opportunity to experience the library in a different way; it opened their eyes to the fact that they can offer their support for the library and all we do; and the Friends engaged in their first large-scale fundraising event since regrouping as a 501(c)(3) organization.
3. The library's first grade initiative, Sky Hero League, is about to kick off, with nine schools (420-450 students) signed up to participate and two additional schools pending. The goal was to increase participation to eight schools this year. Minor changes have been made to the program, based on teacher feedback about the structure of the program and the activities that were most engaging for students.
4. The library participated in the Brain Fitness Fair at the Oshkosh Seniors Center on Sept. 12. As a community hub for lifelong learning, the library showcased online resources that keep the brain active, including Gale Courses, Mango Languages and Hoopla, which offers more than 300 eBooks, audio books and videos related to brain health. In talking with seniors at the event, staff also learned that many of them need assistance with technology, offering a timely opportunity to share information about OPL's Book a Librarian service. Library staff will also be participating

in a Community Resource Fair for Active Aging Week at the 20th Avenue YMCA on Sept. 26 and the Time of Your Life Senior Expo on Oct. 2 at the Oshkosh Convention Center.

5. OPL participated in the annual Back-to-School Fair on Aug. 16, where more than 1,000 children and their families received school supplies, clothing, hygiene items, haircuts and more to ensure that they are prepared to start the school year. Eight OPL staff members worked at the fair throughout the day, sharing information about our fall programs, library resources and services including the new Homework Helpdesk.
6. The library relaunched its eNewsletter in September, with a new format and focus. The design is more mobile friendly, with consistent use of the graphics developed for print and other digital platforms. While the newsletter will still highlight programs and services, a goal is also to link to original content on the library web site that isn't typically included in our calendars and other promotion. Around 30 percent of the nearly 7,000 emails sent in September were opened, well above the average of 15 percent.
7. OPL Reference staff is once again working with students in the Communities program at Oshkosh North High School to research local historic sites to add to the Discover Historic Oshkosh web site. The 19 students working on the project are each assigned a different site and Reference Staff was able to pull related local history resources and assist them with their research on Sept. 19. The local history files will continue to be available so that students may return to the library on their own time to continue their work.
8. The library has launched two monthly drop-in programs that are designed to introduce the community to the library's Technology Lab and highlight tech tools and tips for all ages. Maker Mondays is geared toward families, drawing 15 people during its first session highlighting Ozobots. Techy Tuesdays for teens and adults focused on virtual reality glasses in its September debut. Future sessions for both programs will include taking and editing digital photos and watching a demo of OPL's 3D printer.
9. OPL participated in the UW Oshkosh Volunteer Fair in September, signing up 29 students for library cards, showcasing upcoming volunteer opportunities and sharing information about library services and programs.