

Oshkosh Public Library Highlights September 2022

1. A month of Freedom to Read activities led by the library has prompted conversation and community engagement around the right to freely read and express ideas.
 - a. A scavenger hunt generated excitement as community members searched throughout Oshkosh for 10 copies of five challenged books. By Sept. 21 all the books had been found and many participants sent in selfies when they found a book to share on the library Facebook page. The hidden titles featured striking commemorative book covers designed by OPL Graphic Artist Justin Cole.
 - b. On Sept. 3, 37 people attended a library-sponsored screening of the movie adaptation of Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* at the Time Community Theater.
 - c. Five evenings of book discussions about the challenged titles featured in the scavenger hunt set the scene for conversations about the books, the reasons they are so often challenged and the importance of upholding the freedom to read. Multiple copies of each book are available for checkout at the library and the conversation will continue with a monthly Banned Book Club starting in October.
 - d. Freedom to Read activities wrap up on Sat., Sept. 24 with a presentation and panel discussion on book challenges and the right to read freely.
2. Notary service continues to grow at OPL, with Information Services staff notarizing a record 121 documents in August. That's up from a previous one-month high of 73. There is no charge for the service and the library's evening and weekend hours make it convenient for patrons who need a notary.
3. Oshkosh native Roger Ludwig, who has been collecting decoy ducks since 1957, has loaned OPL part of his hand carved wood decoy collection for display on the library's second floor. All of the decoys were handcrafted by Oshkosh artists, the oldest dating back to the 1920s. The decoys will be on display through Nov. 1.
4. A special program about monarch butterflies drew 22 people for a hands-on interactive learning experience on Sept. 17. The program highlighted the work of two local Girl Scouts to install a Monarch Garden in Rusch Park. Educators from UW Oshkosh brought butterfly specimens and offered insight into the importance of this pollinator and its fascinating life cycle.
5. OPL's local history experts are assisting students in the Communities Program at Oshkosh North High School with their "What's in a Name" local history projects. Local history librarian Michael McArthur introduced students to trusted resources in a presentation at North; then groups of students visited the library to peruse OPL's files on the Oshkosh schools, parks, streets and buildings they are researching. OPL has been assisting Communities for several years with their local history projects, which this year will culminate in an open house at The Waters on Oct. 12.

6. Bricks & Brews, an evening of LEGO building for adults, launched on Sept. 14 at Fifth Ward Brewing Co. A small but enthusiastic group took on a library-designed LEGO building challenge in Fifth Ward's beer garden. Individuals crafted beverage holders with LEGO bricks, as well as colorful backstories that made for plenty of laughs and spirited conversation. The top creation is currently on display on the library's second floor. Two more sessions are scheduled for Oct. 12 and Nov. 9.
7. OPL has taken a new approach to book clubs for children and teens to better serve their reading interests. The library now offers an Elementary Book Club (ages 5-8); Tween Book Club (ages 9-11); Teen Book Club (grades 6-8); and Young Adult Book Club (grades 9-12). Grouping readers in more narrow age ranges creates a more comfortable environment and helps librarians select books that are more likely to appeal to participants.
8. Teen Services Librarian Maggie Mueller brought a LEGO challenge to Oshkosh North, where 15 students who recently immigrated to the area participated in activities organized by NAMI, World Relief and the Oshkosh Area School District. When Maggie asked the students to create a new emoji, she could tell that they didn't understand the term. A few pictures drawn on a white board and a quick look at a smart phone was all it took for the students to recognize what she was asking them to build. The students enjoyed working together on this creative activity!