

## **Duluth Public Library Board Meeting: January 28, 2020**

At the main branch: repairs have been completed on the elevator and new public restrooms on the lower level are now open.

This month the Rural Aids Action Network (RAAN) began a regular presence in the Partnership Center at the main branch. RAAN staff are present at the same time as St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services staff. RAAN is offering free Narcan distribution and one-on-one training in its administration.

A new art display can be viewed in the Computer Center. It's a sampling of work from visual arts students at Choice Unlimited, a nonprofit that supports adults with disabilities and people experiencing other barriers to employment and community inclusion.

Every Child Ready Duluth is progressing. The library is in the process of hiring a library technician to join the librarian already at work on this program. In addition, an application will be made for an Americorps/Vista position to complete the goal of three staff members for ECRD. Framework and development for the program is in progress with the help of a hired consultant. Community outreach and coalition building is underway.

The library's 2020 goals were reviewed with the Board.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Library Advisory Board Meeting, November 26, 2019**

1. The Duluth Public Library filming and photography policy was updated and approved to include individuals from the public who wish to take pictures or films.
2. The City of Duluth open meeting law was reviewed with the board by city personnel.
3. The circulation policy was updated and approved to reflect the library's new fine free status.
4. The new early childhood literacy librarian was introduced to the board.
5. Board members were encouraged to attend the December 16 City Council meeting at which the new budget will be debated and approved. Opportunity will be available to speak up for library funding.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Duluth Public Library Board Meeting, October 22, 2019**

1. The Race Card is underway with excellent participation. This national project encourages people in our community to share their honest experiences of age and thoughts about race, giving voice to emotions that aren't often talked about. All members of the community are invited to pick up a Race Card, complete it and return it to the library.
2. The first art exhibit organized by the library's Diversity Action Group is on display on the top floor of the main library. The exhibit features photography by children who live at AICHO.
3. The early childhood literacy program, Every Child Ready Duluth, was launched with a press conference on Wednesday, October 30, at 10:40 am. The event was held in the youth services department and featured statements by Library Foundation members, library management and Mayor Emily Larson.
4. Two new half-time library technicians have been hired, one for the main library and one for Mount Royal. In addition, an early literacy librarian has been hired to begin work in November.
5. The Public Restroom Project continues with a projected completion date of late November or early December. Other maintenance projects include the installation of new lights and controls in the Green Room.
6. A new library policy concerning photography at library events was presented and approved.
7. The successful Port Card project is undergoing some revision in the contract between the library and the school system and is so currently on hold.
8. There was discussion of the direction Library outreach might take in the coming year. Building maintenance issues at the main library and parking at the West Duluth branch continue to be among topics of conversation.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Library Advisory Board Meeting: September 24, 2019**

The Learning & Libations fundraiser for 2019 went very well. Good news is that it has outgrown library space so that part of the event was held outdoors.

Changes in how the city processes applications for openings on boards were reviewed. There is one opening for the Library Advisory Board. Both the library and the city are looking to reflect the diversity of the library community in filling it.

There has been a very positive response so far to going fine-free. Many long overdue books are coming back. A small increase in the fee charged to for-profit groups that use library meeting rooms was approved. Use of rooms by non-profit and community groups remains free.

The city budgeting process was reviewed. The mayor's proposed budget, which includes funds for an early childhood literacy program, has been presented to city council. Final approval of the budget won't occur until December.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Duluth Public Library, August 27, 2019**

The Foundation's "Case Statement in Support of an Early Childhood Literacy Program in the Duluth Public Library" was presented to Mayor Emily Larson and CAO Noah Schuchman on July 5 with a favorable response from both. The Foundation is hopeful that funding for this initiative will be included in the 2020 budget to be presented to the City Council on September 9. The Foundation is offering to partner with the City to get the program started this fall.

The Duluth Public Library is going "fine free" effective September 4 when a press event will be held. The goal of this initiative is to increase library access to all members of the community.

Construction of the new public restroom facilities in the basement of the main library is expected to begin the week of August 28 and to last eight to twelve weeks. During this time programming at the Main Library will be limited and the Green Room will not be available for use by outside groups.

The summer reading program wrapped up on August 16 with participation slightly higher this year than in 2018.

Also, of note was the very high use of student Port Cards over the summer. Library staff are delighted and note that giving kids control over their own library account and using a virtual card made it easier for them to use the library.

The annual Gathering of Associated Library Advocates (Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and the Library Board) is scheduled for October 1. This is a time for the three Boards to share their own roles in library advocacy and to look together toward advocacy strategy in the coming year.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Duluth Public Library Board Meeting, May 28, 2019**

Comments/questions offered by a community member concerning the West Branch of the library were addressed during the public comments portion of the meeting.

The Library Manager's Report was presented and accepted. The report noted that new computer space in the Main Branch is being well used and that both patron and staff have been positive. Social workers are now available for consultation on a drop-in basis at the Main Library for a few hours a week. So far this arrangement is working well. A Board member has resigned leaving an open seat on the board. Applications for this position are taken at the City Clerk's office. A new secretary was elected by the board.

The Library staff proposal to eliminate overdue fines is moving forward. Next steps to implement the plan will be presented to the City Council. As an outgrowth of the work of the Diversity Action Committee, a Policy Art Exhibit in the library is being developed. A proposal was shared with the Board, but not accepted at this meeting after feedback suggested further work was needed by the committee.

Library advocacy remains a major focus of the Board. An update on communication with the City Council was reported.

Submitted by. Debbie Rasmussen

## **Library Advisory Board, March 26, 2019**

Elections were held for board officers. Sue Schumacher presented a detailed discussion of the library youth staff's vision for an early literacy program based at the library. This included specific ideas that could be initiated once a dedicated early literary staff person is hired. It was noted that the Library Foundation has expressed interest in helping to make this position a reality. A draft letter to the City Council was read and discussed. The intent of this letter is to encourage the start of focused dialog between the City Council and the library concerning development of a clear plan to address implementation of the strategic plan (already approved by the City Council). The letter notes priorities identified by the Duluth community which the library can work on. The annual report to be filed with the state was reviewed and approved. The report details usage, staffing, and expenditures by the Duluth Public Library.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

## **Library Advisory Board, February 26, 2019**

Library advocacy was a major topic of discussion. Monthly letters to City Council advocating for funding to support the strategic plan for the library (which was unanimously approved by City Council some time ago) have continued. Discussion at this meeting focused on each of three aspects of the strategic plan: facilities and programming overall; early learning; and enhancement of West Duluth Branch programming. The Board agreed that more pointed advocacy is in order to address each of these areas. For example, a specific proposal to initiate an early learning program may be more fruitful than simply advocating for early learning. The Board expressed interest in partnering with local experts in this area to develop a specific proposal for early learning and will begin to look into this.

The Board approved updated policies related to circulation and to provision of library cards for employees living out of state. 2014-2018 library usage statistics were reviewed, including use of student Port Cards provided through schools. Port Cards allow students to check out books without a personal library card. The use of this service is growing.

The Board discussed the possibility of dispensing with at least some library fines and has asked appropriate library staff to develop a proposal concerning this.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen



## **Library Advisory Committee, January 22, 2019**

The status of library facilities continues to be a major focus of discussion. Of particular interest is that a grant of \$8,000 has been approved for use at the main library building. These funds will be used to move the computer lab upstairs and install bathrooms on the first floor. Funding is still being pursued for the computer lab updates, lighting, and controls. The new bathroom will meet the capacity needs for the building. Construction will begin around April and continue for a few months.

Submitted by: Debbi Rasmussen