

Newtown Public Library
Library Director's Report for February-April 2020
June 18, 2020

Statistics:

Circulation

Though the library was closed due to the pandemic, May 2020 circulation (41 items) was slightly less than the month before (57 items). This is likely circulation from library staff members.

Our circulation of digital magazines through DCL's RBDigital was down slightly in May 2020 (101 items) when compared to April 2020 (119 items). The circulation of eBooks and eAudiobooks through Overdrive continues to grow. May 2020 circulation of eBooks and eAudiobooks (1,483 items) was up by 23% when compared to April's circulation of eBooks and eAudiobooks (1,209 items). We continue to add eBooks to this collection which helps our patrons get high-demand titles quicker than other patrons whose libraries have not purchased additional eCopies.

Wi-Fi Sessions

Though we have been closed, our Wi-Fi continues to be popular in our community. Though our WiFi usage in May (1,329 sessions) was less than April (1,808 sessions), we still feel encouraged that patrons recognize they can access this service when needed.

Youth Services Update

From Angela Hegadorn, Youth Services Librarian:

"We continued story times on Facebook Live for the first three weeks of May, then took a break for Memorial Day. We also used this time to plan for SummerQuest, our summer reading and learning program. Since we didn't know what re-opening would look like, programs were planned and promoted just for June. Typically, we release the whole summer schedule at once.

In June, all programs moved to Zoom. We are excited to host two book clubs with Culbertson Elementary librarian, Patricia Gandolfo. She graciously agreed to work with us, and I'm hoping this will lead to a long-term partnership.

We also had our first 1000 Books before Kindergarten participant finish the challenge! We celebrated her on social media, and in online story time. Congratulations to Emerson, who turned two in May.

Total Facebook views for virtual programming: 704."

Upcoming Events:

Although we have had to cancel many programs due to being closed, we still have a weekly online story time as well as an online book club discussion through Zoom. Many more programs are scheduled online in the future as mentioned in YS update.

Friends of the Library Update

The Friends of the Library have not met since the last report and do not have any events planned at this time. Arlene has met with Lynn Elston, the President of the Friends of the Library, to discuss future needs of the library during this challenging time.

Miscellaneous

The new website for the library has been launched recently but continues to be fine-tuned. We are pleased with the result and are looking forward to using the website for more promotion of the library.

The director and the staff continue to attend meetings and webinars online each week. We believe this has been a positive experience for staff to get instruction that interests them and also fills the requirement that staff complete continuing education each year. Our staff have totally met their quota for this year and for next!

We are still working on getting self-check-out at the library for use when we reopen but have decided to wait until July to pursue it further since contactless pick-up has been launched and takes a lot of staff time.

Last week, patrons who had requests on the hold shelf before the pandemic were contacted to determine if they were still interested in the items that they requested. If so, the library scheduled a day for the item to be picked up as a way to prepare for contactless pick-up this week.

So far, after only three days of being available this week, over fifty patrons have reached out via telephone or email to take advantage of contactless pick-up at the library. Patrons have been delighted with the service thus far. At this time, patrons simply call or email their requests and, once we pull the items for them, we set up a day for them to pick up the items. By keeping things simple, we have found this process to be pleasant for us and for the patrons.

As we continue on, we hope to add evening or Saturday pick-up times. We have been flexible this past week and have offered pick-up of materials later in the day or on the weekend to accommodate special requests. I expect that this will continue since these requests are a priority for us.

We have received many messages of “thank you!” both via email and over the phone. Our patrons are so grateful for this new service. Here are just a few responses I have received from our patrons via email:

“Thank you, Arlene! A very easy process! We are so excited to have new books. 😊”

“This is a great service and now my son can start his summer reading. Thanks!”

“Thanks so much for the quick response! The kids are eager to get the books. We really appreciate you all starting to offer curbside service.”

“Thank you! We are so excited the library is starting to be available again!”

“The girls miss you! We are excited that you will be offering a pickup service. We can’t wait for something new to read. 😊”

“We are so happy to hear the library is finally reopening!”

“Welcome back even in a modified fashion!”

“Whatever we can get would be great! My daughter has been using a lot of online resources for reading but she misses the actual books and we always like to read some good ones together in the summer.”

“OMG, what good news to hear that you are doing this! I am so happy!”

“So excited to start using the library again!”

“I was hoping to see if I could pick up some books for my 5 year old. I am honestly going broke buying books off of Amazon to keep her busy during the quarantine. You are much appreciated!”

“I’m so excited to read that the library will be open for pick-up!”

“Thanks, Arlene! You’re the best!”

I had to include that last one in my report since I thought it would be of interest to the Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Caruso

Director, Newtown Public Library