



Executive Director's Report July 2025

The end of June and the beginning of July are the times we spend on annual processes, closing out one year and setting a foundation for success in the next. The Board is no stranger to this, as many of your core functions come around this time of year.

Budget: The working budget is in place and we are one month ahead of schedule on our Budget Appropriations Ordinance.

Strategic Plan: Our goals for next year are set and a final closeout of last FY goals are in this packet.

Evaluations: All of the staff evaluations have been completed and merit increases have gone into effect.

Construction: We are wrapping up the elevator construction and have begun designing 1st floor renovations.



New Employees

- Leslie joined us as our Communication Strategist
- Lisa Winchell is our new Youth and Teen Services Manager

ALA Conference

I attended on the day of the American Library Association conference, as well as Megan Buttera, our Adult Services Manager, attended. We will report on the key takeaways from this meeting. The highlight for me was accepting the Wellness in the Workplace Award. We will issue a press release and feature a story about this in the fall newsletter.



Calendar

- Behavioral interviewing training 6/11
- Relay for Life 6/13
- 1st Floor design meeting 6/19
- Director of Rolling Meadows Library 6/24
- POC Board Meeting 6/26
- Friends presidents 6/26
- RFID planning with Bibliotheca 6/26
- ALA 6/28
- Parade Judge 7/5
- Rotary Installation Dinner 7/7

Staff You Should Know

Emilie in Collection Services processes books, AV, magazines, kits, and Library of Things. She disposes of discarded items on the back wall and relabels collections as needed. Her face will be familiar to you because she is also a highly involved community member. Her passion for community and attention to detail make her a perfect fit for our Library. She has served in two departments and on multiple committees. But you don't have to take my word for it; see what her colleagues have to say about her.

“Thanks for recognizing the problem with the Easy Reader stickers before they were all printed. Your eagle eyed attention to detail really benefits our members”



“Thank you Emilie for doing an absolute picture perfect job on the new Abraham Lincoln Award nominee books! I’ve never seen such even lines of tape! 📖”

“Thanks for doing such a thorough job on training Jennifer!”

“Thank you, Emilie, for printing off the sheets for our workroom board to communicate new LOT items—it’s incredibly helpful in keeping our department in the loop!”



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action	Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
Goal 1:		Maintain high levels of service by investing in staff: providing sufficient tools and training, optimal staffing levels, advancement opportunities, and fair compensation, while maintaining fiscal			
	1.1	Use benchmarking and internal library data to identify and achieve optimal			
		1.1.1 Investigate other sources of salary benchmarking (other than HR Source)	2024	2024	Complete
		1.1.2 Review job descriptions in advance of salary benchmarking. Include bilingual skills and other specialized requirements in job descriptions.	2024	2024	Complete
		1.1.3 Rewrite PTO policies from the ground up for clarity	2024	2024	Complete
		1.1.4 Identify need for new, additional, or changed positions to support Strategic Plan, and hire new staff.	2024	2026	In Progress
		1.1.4 Hire outside consultant to do time/work study	2025	2025	In Progress
		1.1.5 Review existing library data (exit interviews and EE survey) for feedback about compensation and benefits	2025	2025	Complete
		1.1.6 Ask staff about employee recognition	2025	2025	Complete
		1.1.7 Evaluate job descriptions and postings for approachable language (less jargony) to attract diverse candidates	2026	2026	In Progress
	1.2	Consolidate training tools into an easy-to-use platform and allocate sufficient time for staff completion of recommended training.			
		1.2.1.0 Choose Learning Management System: investigate, get demo and pricing for Paylocity/SharePoint LMS.	2024	2024	In Progress
		1.2.1.1 Implement chosen LMS. Communicate changes to staff and offer trainings for all staff, staff who will manage content, and staff who will administrate the system.	2024	2024	Not Started
		1.2.2 Create procedures for creating and capturing internal training materials (videos, handouts, etc) and for saving them to Sharepoint or adoped LMS. Must complete 1.2.1 first.	2024	2025	Not Started
		1.2.3 Organize training pages on intranet. Must complete 1.2.1 first.	2024	2025	Not Started
		1.2.4 Analyze time needed for training	2025	2025	In Progress
		1.2.5 Schedule training - give dedicated time to compete training (off desk time, Dept. meetings, Lunch and Learn) utilizing information from study and tools created	2025	2025	In Progress
		1.2.9 Study how other organizations incentivize bilingual staff (not just libraries) and use results (incentivize language learning)	2026	2026	Complete
	1.3	Understand and prioritize staff needs for supplies, equipment and space.			



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action		Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
		1.3.1	Research how staff want to receive information (enews, intranet, weekly brief, other), document what gets shared where, examine whether to continue weekly. Study recent staff engagement survey results and conduct new surveys or inquiries if needed.	2024	2024	In Progress
		1.3.2	Schedule M Team time to review recurring issues and assess changes - periodically go	2024	2024	Not Started
		1.3.3	Develop a method to regularly evaluate department/staff needs (in-house and WFH) and	2024	2024	Not Started
		1.3.4	Plan a renovation of staff and meeting spaces on the 1st floor, with the aim to rennovate	2024	2025	Complete
		1.3.5	Replace PC workstations, for both staff and members, with up-to-date equipment. Provide	2024	2025	In Progress
		1.3.4	Study work area efficiency (use consultant?)	2024	2025	In Progress
		1.3.6	Upgrade broadband internet at North Hoffman Branch and Rand Road Branch	2024	2025	Complete
		1.3.7	Investigate using Village fiber connection to connect to Harper College's ICN service hub to provide faster and more affordable internet service at Main.	2024	2025	In Progress
	1.4	Provide more growth and advancement opportunities at all levels to increase				
		1.4.1	Evaluate increasing retention bonus for long time employees (vs. new hires)	2024	2024	Complete
		1.4.2	Create levels/tiers for positions (i.e. Librarian, Library Associate) leads, including bilingual	2025	2025	In Progress
		1.4.3	Re-evaluate and re-write performance review criteria by department and position to	2024	2026	In Progress
		1.4.4	Evaluate methods or rewards for staff to join outside committees or organization	2024		Not Started
		1.4.5	Provide online access to online courses, seminars to encourage learning	2025		Complete
		1.4.6	Create temporary position to fill vacancy if we are not finding right candidate	2025		In Progress
	1.5	Revisit tuition reimbursement and conference attendance policy to make				
		1.5.1	Give more flexibility for managers to approve training during year	2024	2024	Complete
		1.5.2	Review and expand conference attendance guidelines for exempt and non-exempt staff	2024	2024	In Progress
		1.5.3	Define tuition reimbursement (vs. training) & streamline process	2024	2024	Not Started



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action		Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
		1.5.4	Increase tuition reimbursement allowance - compare to benchmark libraries	2025	2025	In Progress
		1.5.5	Offer reimbursement for language learning paths	2025	2025	In Progress
Goal 2:			Increase visibility and remove barriers to participation for all members of our diverse community through meaningful engagement, increased partnerships, and targeted communications.			
2.1		Develop a targeted communication plan utilizing social media, digital, and print to increase visibility of the library and its extensive services for non-users and the underserved.				
		2.1.1	Study Community Survey to determine other reasons people are not engaged/served	2024	2025	Complete
		2.1.2	Evaluate text reminder services for events/services	2024	2025	Complete
		2.1.3	Create a team and a strategy to distribute promos outside/outreach events	2024	2025	In Progress
		2.1.4	Study/survey local libraries for common translation practices	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.1.5	Develop flexible translation guidelines based on communication demos for digital/print communication	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.1.6	Examine non-traditional methods for event/service reminders	2026	2026	Complete
2.2		Develop mutually beneficial partnerships to help reach underserved communities within our district.				
		2.2.1	Go to community partners and talk with them about partnerships and needs	2024	2024	Complete
		2.2.2	Reach out to churches and groups that serve language communities	2024	2024	Complete
		2.2.3	Increase in-house programming done by local organizations	2024	2024	Complete
		2.2.4	Examine staff time devoted to working on partnerships	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.2.5	Increase capacity for school visits and tours	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.2.6	Increase capacity for outreach to seniors in order to expand programming at retirement homes and participate in their fairs	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.2.7	Provide business resources for entrepreneurs with underserved communities	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.2.8	Expand technology literacy thru outreach with apartment complexes and mobile food pantry	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.2.9	Host joint workshops on digital literacy and technology skills	2026	2026	In Progress



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action		Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
	2.3	Remove barriers to library usage by increasing translation capabilities across library services, collections, and locations.				
		2.3.1	Purchase translation devices for all desks and outreach and provide training for staff	2024	2024	Complete
		2.3.2	Develop bilingual volunteer job description	2024	2024	In Progress
		2.3.3	Label language collection shelf talkers in the language of collection	2024	2024	In Progress
		2.3.4	Make purchase suggestion easier to find and translated into other languages	2025	2025	In Progress
		2.3.5	Look for new places to advertise jobs to bilingual community members (stores, churches,	2025	2026	In Progress
		2.3.6	Examine website for pages frequently used by non-English speakers and translate	2025	2026	In Progress
		2.3.4	Research and budget for Professional Translation Service of marketing materials, forms,			Complete
	2.4	Utilize strategic planning research data to identify and fill gaps in service, especially for working families, digital users, non-English speakers, and young				
		2.4.1	Study the strategic plan feedback from the public to identify service gaps and create a report	2024	2024	Complete
		2.4.2	In depth interviews with individuals and write report based upon interviews	2025	2025	In Progress



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action	Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
Goal 3:					
Adapt programs and collections to deliver relevant content that serves changing community needs by restructuring systems, dedicating resources to these activities, and engaging in ongoing dialogue between members and staff.					
3.1					
Create a system for intentional conversations with community members to ensure collections and programs continue to meet changing needs.					
	3.1.1	Define goals of conversations- what do we need to know? how do they want info?	2024	2024	Not Started
	3.1.2	Identify groups to reach to for feedback	2024	2024	Not Started
	3.1.3	Schedule chats for members with library staff for casual feedback	2025	2025	In Progress
	3.1.4	Create simple feedback mechanism for member interactions (programs, outreach, desks)	2025	2025	In Progress
	3.1.5	Hire staff or consultant to conduct user experience studies (heat mapping, data analysis, etc.)	2026	2026	Not Started
	3.1.3	Targeted Questionnaire after specific programs to solicit feedback. Survey available in Spanish for Spanish speakers.			Not Started
3.2					
Utilize strategic planning survey data to re-evaluate programs to attract new members and increase attendance.					
	3.2.1	Review policy around no-shows and registration. (look at other libraries)	2024	2024	Complete
	3.2.2	Review strategic plan data, library programming statistics and other libraries about programming to identify strategies	2024	2024	Complete
	3.2.3	Create social clubs (possibly use existing local clubs or outside volunteers)	2025	2025	In Progress
	3.2.4	Start workshop artist-in-residence program	2024	2025	Complete
	3.2.5	Offer more programs in Spanish	2025	2025	Complete
	3.2.6	Offer more bilingual programs in non-English languages	2024		Complete
	3.2.7	100th Anniversary Celebrations (Lego Train, Mini-Golf fundraiser) to increase attendance	2024	2024	Complete
3.3					
Ensure programming and collections staffing structure, budget, and processes are sufficient to deliver relevant content in a timely manner.					
	3.3.1	Find way to utilize volunteers to help manage programs	2024	2025	In Progress
	3.3.2	Investigate consolidating collection development into 1-2 full-time positions	2024	2025	Complete
	3.3.3	Re-evaluate newsletter cycle	2025	2025	Not Started
	3.3.4	Investigate consolidating programming into a department or team	2025	2026	Not Started



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action	Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
		3.3.5 Re-evaluate the programming committee and it's purpose	2026	2026	Not Started
		3.3.6 Hire more communication staff to lighten load and handle new work, delegate some marketing requests so they can be updated in a timely manner.	2026	2026	Not Started
		3.3.7 Added portable technology at branches (projector, HDMI cables, etc.) for ease of hosting programs.	2024		Complete
		3.3.8 Hire and train a Branch Manager at Rand with programming and collections responsibilities that meet branch needs	2024		Complete
	3.4	Increase and improve access to world language collections for non-English speakers in our district.			
		3.4.1 Provide training and update procedures for world language collection development for	2024	2024	Complete
		3.4.2 Proactively seek world language recommendations from community; create a mechanism	2024	2024	In Progress
		3.4.3 Promote world language in marketing (special webpage, newsletter)	2024	2025	In Progress
		3.4.4 Use vendor lists to aid in collection development	2025	2025	Complete
		3.4.5 Increase world language budget - tie to turnover rate	2025	2026	Complete
		3.4.6 Send collection development staff to Guadalajara book fair	2025	2026	Not Started
		3.4.7 Use census data to determine if languages need to be added	2026	2026	In Progress
		3.4.8 Add Japanese Collection (youth picture and adult fic/nf) to North Hoffman Branch	2024		Complete
		3.4.9 Add Ukrainian youth collection to Rand Road Branch	2024		Complete
		3.4.10 Refresh Youth Spanish Non-fiction Collection at Rand Road Branch	2024		Complete
		3.4.11 Move Youth World Collection at Main to more prominent location	2024		Complete
		3.4.12 Investigate new vendors for World Language materials and possible outsourcing of	2024		Complete
		3.4.13 Investigate vendors for additional/new WL magazines. Change WL magazines	2024		Complete
	3.5	Ensure Workshop Lab materials are accessible to all members.			
		3.5.1 Investigate adding more staff to increase workshop hours	2024	2024	Complete
		3.5.2 Provide instructions for workshop equipment in multiple languages, including video tutorials	2024	2024	Not Started
		3.5.3 Study and identify when people want to come into the workshop for drop-in, 1:1s, and programs and schedule as possible	2024	2025	In Progress
		3.5.4 Connect Library of Things (LOT) items to workshop equipment (flyers in LOT for workshop, signage flyers in workshop for LOT, reconsider LOT collection if we get more staff to manage it)	2025	2025	In Progress
		3.5.5 More workshop outreach - what travels well, visit Rand Road Branch more, equipment dedicated to outreach	2025	2025	Complete
		3.5.4 Part-time staff member moved to full-time in Workshop	2024		Complete
		3.5.5 Maker in Residence series of programs in Summer 2024 to increase attendance and showcase Workshop	2024		Complete



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action		Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
		3.5.8	Market materials for the workshop in the collection (Dewey 700s)	2025		Not Started
		3.5.7	Better labeling of workshop equipment	2025		In Progress
		3.5.9	Add additional part-time positions for Workshop Assistants	2024		Complete
	3.6	Invest in new books and media to ensure our physical collections remain current and meet the needs of our community.				
		3.6.1	Identify peer libraries to compare collections	2024	2024	Complete
		3.6.2	Evaluate current collection size. Do some collections need to increase or decrease?	2024	2024	Complete
		3.6.3	Increase digital budget in order to reduce hold ratios	2024	2024	Complete
		3.6.4	Develop merchandising guidelines for collection	2025	2025	In Progress
		3.6.5	Increase marketing of physical and digital collections	2025	2025	Complete
		3.6.6	Find a way to rotate collections at branches (based on data deep dive)	2025	2025	In Progress
		3.6.7	Conduct another diversity audit	2025	2026	In Progress
		3.6.4	Add Tonieboxes to Youth collection	2024		Complete
		3.6.5	Replace wifi hotspots with newer model	2024		Complete
		3.6.6	Add accessibility items to the Library of Things Collection	2024		Complete
		3.6.7	Utilize LibraryIQ for better collection stats and collection management	2024		Complete



PLD Strategic Plan 2024-26

Goal	Obj	Action	Start by Year:	Complete by Year:	Status
Goal 4:					
		Begin to understand how the library will serve the Palatine community of the future by developing a long-term plan for existing and potential new spaces.			
	4.1	Conduct a futures exercise to identify market, demographic, usage, and library drivers of change and how they may impact the ways we serve the Palatine community 10+ years from now.			
		4.1.1 Conduct conversations with local governmental units in Decennial Comm	2024	2024	Complete
		4.1.2 Conduct conversations with social service agencies	2025	2025	Complete
	4.2	Assess the suitability of spaces within the community and potential partnerships to expand services beyond current library branches.			
		4.2.2 Conduct research on branch libraries			Complete
		4.2.3 Evaluate branch leases			complete
	4.3	Develop a long-term space plan to ensure PLD continues to serve all parts of our community effectively, efficiently, and conveniently.			

Strategic Plan

Final

for 2024-2025

July 2025

Goal



Maintain high levels of service by investing in staff: providing sufficient tools and training, optimal staffing levels, advancement opportunities, and fair compensation, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

- Developed a job description and conducted benchmarking for a new Human Resources Training Coordinator.
- Promoted Maintenance Assistant Polo Jara from part-time to full-time. And gave additional hours to part-time employees.
- Board of Trustees approved the new Bilingual Compensation Policy (9-4.5). Staff have drafted procedures for employees to apply and undergo language proficiency testing.
- Administration staff met with all departments to collect feedback and ideas for the 1st floor renovation. We also formed a renovation staff committee, which officially kicked off this renovation project with the Library's architect (Engberg Anderson) in June.
- The Library's Technology Department replaced staff PCs with new Windows 11 computers. The new PCs have increased processing speeds and storage.



33% Complete
45% In Progress



38% Complete
62% In Progress

Goal



Increase visibility and remove barriers to participation for all members of our diverse community through meaningful engagement, increased partnerships, and targeted communications.

- Implemented text reminder system for programs.
- Increase conversations with branch partnerships about needs.
- Increased capacity for school visits. In May alone, conducted 51 school visits, reaching 1,236 Students.
- Hosted bilingual programs in Mandarin, Ukrainian, Spanish, and Japanese.
- Planned for additional material translations in the next fiscal year.
- Hosted new community partnerships with groups for Pride Fair, Sustainability Fair, and Native Plant Giveaway.
- Tested new promotional tactics for programs that presented itself after newsletter deadlines, such as a the Native plant giveaway.

Goal 3

Adapt programs and collections to deliver relevant content that serves changing community needs by restructuring systems, dedicating resources to these activities, and engaging in ongoing dialogue between members and staff.

- Added Comics Plus, which offers thousands of digital comics and manga with no holds, wait lists, or monthly borrowing limits
- Added the digital version of *The Economist* magazine to Press Reader, a database of digital magazines and newspapers
- The Second Year of the Maker in Residence Program began in June and will include a community photography project
- Hosted the first Library-wide Pride Fair and Sustainability Fair for all ages that included community partners
- Transitioned adult craft programs to the Workshop.

56% Complete
23% In Progress



100% Complete

Goal 4

Begin to understand how the library will serve the Palatine community of the future by developing a long-term plan for existing and potential new spaces.

- Both Board and staff attended community events to strengthen partnerships
- Elected Secretary of POC Board
- Community Engagement Director monitors village meetings and attends if warranted.
- TIF surplus declared
- Working with POC and District 15 to support community schools for FY 2025-2026

Downtown TIF District Generates \$3.9 Million Surplus

By Richard Mayer
on June 21, 2025

Palatine Village Hall, 200 E. Wood St. (Journal photo)
Palatine's downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district generated a surplus of \$3.9 million that will be distributed to other taxing bodies in the village.
Village officials established the Downtown TIF District, in hopes of generating new economic development, in 1999. In 2021, as the TIF district was nearing the end of its usual 23-year lifespan, the village received legislative approval from the General Assembly to extend the district ...

Neighbor News

Palatine Township Appoints Community Mental Health Board Members

Palatine Township Newly-established Community Mental Health Board

 Palatine Township, Community Contributor
Posted Tue, Jun 10, 2025 at 4:51 pm CT



Palatine Township Supervisor Andy-John G. Kalkounos and the Township Board of Trustees are proud to announce the members of the newly-established Community Mental Health Board, a group that focuses on ensuring funds are allocated to mental health providers in Palatine Township. The public Board Members are Karen Baker, Joseph T. Serio, Kathy Millin, Jennifer Iannuzzelli, Sarah McKillop, and Jiby A. Vettickal. Senior Trustee Michael C. Smolka will serve as the Township Board's liaison to the Mental Health Board.

Karen Baker serves as the System Director Community Impact and Engagement at Endeavor Health–Northwest Community Hospital where over the past eighteen years she has been responsible for conducting the tri-annual Community Health Needs Assessments. She designed and managed community health programs to benefit the under-resourced. Baker is also one of Palatine Township’s “very own” when she worked as Palatine Township Outreach Coordinator from 2003–2007.

Joseph Serio is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and a National Board Certified Counselor who serves as the Chief Clinical Officer and Chief Quality and Compliance Officer at Compass Health Center. Previously he worked as manager of Kenneth Young Center and a Sr. Crisis Counselor at the Bridge Youth and Family Services. He brings over three decades of leadership in behavioral health to the Mental Health Board. Serio has a Master’s Degree in Community Agency Counseling and a Master’s Degree in Cognitive and Developmental Psychology from Northern Illinois University.

Kathy Millin, who has a Bachelor’s Degree from University of Iowa, has served for the past 28 years as the Executive Director of Partners for Our Community. In that role, Millin was instrumental in working with School District 211 in guiding teenagers with developmental disabilities into adulthood and with local police departments in pretrial and diversion programming for those with substance abuse disorders. She is close to the barriers of the underserved members of the community when faced with mental health challenges. From expanding education services with Harper College and Palatine Library District to launching the I–Compete Youth program, Kathy’s legacy is one of compassion, collaboration and transformative impact.

Jennifer Iannuzzelli, who has both her Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree in Special Education, serves as the Department Chair and Learning Behavior Specialist at a junior high level where she works with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Sarah McKillop has a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Illinois-Chicago and her BS in Sociology from Carthage College. She serves as the Emergency Management Agency Coordinator for the Village of Palatine Fire Department, where she focuses on embedding mental wellness into emergency response strategies. She is the key liaison between local, county and state emergency agencies.

Jiby Vettickal, who brings two decades of financial expertise to the Mental Health Board, has an MBA from George Mason University, and for the past 26 years has coached youth of all developmental levels in schools and community organizations in Chicagoland. He has a deep understanding of the suffering and needs of those afflicted with disabilities and mental illness.

Iannuzzelli, McKillop, and Vettickal have been vital members of the Palatine Township Human Needs Committee for a combined 17 years. These individuals aren't just credentialed; they have already delivered for this community. They know the agencies, the process and the responsibility that comes with their new role. For the past twenty-five years, the Human Needs Committee has funded programs provided by accredited agencies in the Township that supply lifesaving, life sustaining and life enriching services for the most needy and vulnerable in the Palatine Township community.

Each member of the newly appointed Palatine Township Community Mental Health Board brings a unique combination of professional and personal expertise, lived experience, and demonstrated leadership in service to the community. This thoughtful composition ensures the Community Mental Health Board is well-equipped to address the complex mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse challenges facing Palatine Township residents. Their deep commitment and collective experience will be essential as this Board begins its vital work.

The Community Mental Health Board members and their terms of office:

2 years: Karen Baker and Joseph Serio

3 years: Kathy Millin and Jiby Vettickal

4 years: Sarah McKillop and Jennifer Iannuzzelli

Trustee Michael Smolka for a 4-year term and to run concurrently with his elected term to the Township Board.

Palatine Township is your primary source of humanitarian aid in our community. The Township provides numerous services and events for its 114,000 residents and supports 30 social service agencies located within its boundaries. The Township is one of the most heavily populated in Illinois, with a goal to enhance and improve the quality of life for all of its residents. The following communities are part of the Township: Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Inverness, Arlington Heights, Hoffman Estates, Barrington, South Barrington and Schaumburg.

[Community Corner](#)

Summer Book Club Launches For Students In Arlington Heights Area

State Senator Mark Walker (D-Arlington Heights) is encouraging local students in the 27th District to participate.



Eric DeGrechie, Patch Staff

Posted Wed, Jun 4, 2025 at 11:22 am CT

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL — With summer break beginning for local students, State Senator Mark Walker (D-Arlington Heights) believes reading is the perfect activity to keep them stimulated during the warmer months.

"Reading is a great way for young people to dive deeper into their passions and discover new stories," Walker tells Patch. "I encourage students in the 27th District to take part in the book club and enjoy their summer."

According to Walker's office, the summer book club requires students to read eight books of their choice during the summer break, record the names of the books on a form, and return the form to his Arlington Heights office by Aug. 15. Every child who completes the summer book club will receive a gift card to Kilwin's Ice Cream, courtesy of Walker.

The 27th Senate District contains most or parts of Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Mount Prospect, Palatine, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, and Schaumburg.

Summer book club forms will soon be available at the following participating libraries:

- Arlington Heights Memorial Library
- Rolling Meadows Library
- Mount Prospect Public Library
- Mount Prospect Public Library South Branch
- Palatine Library District Rand Road Branch
- Prospect Heights Public Library District

Summer book club forms are also available at www.SenatorMarkWalker.com/BookClub2025. If you have questions, reach out to Walker's office at 847-749-1880.

New library exhibit weaves together community, craftivism



The Arlington Heights Memorial Library's "Community & Craftivism" exhibit, which showcases how art and crafting can be a tool for activism, is on display through July 23. *Courtesy of Mareliz Gallogo*

The Arlington Heights Memorial Library celebrated the art of making with the grand opening of its newest exhibit, “Community & Craftivism,” showcasing how art can become an opportunity to build community and advocate for change, one stitch at a time.



Artist and activist Shannon Downey, left, was on hand at the opening of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library's "Community & Craftivism" exhibit, which includes the library's Pride Community Quilt. *Courtesy of Mareliz Gallogo*

Partners, community members and more stopped by the library on June 12 to be among the first to view the exhibit including community-driven quilts, art projects created through craftivism and more, all curated by the library in partnership with artist and activist Shannon Downey. In the spirit of community, 279 people contributed to the pieces that are on display in the library throughout June and July.

Many in attendance, such as Arlington Heights resident Jan Tossman, were there to view artwork they had a hand in contributing. Tossman was one of more than 60 people who created a square for the library's Pride Community Quilt, with all of the unique panels created by members of the Arlington Heights community.

"I have a trans daughter, so I wanted to honor her with a square for the quilt," Tossman said. "The panel is in the trans colors, pink and blue, and it says, 'I Love My Trans Daughter.' It is exciting to see all the other (squares) too. It's a sense of pride in our children and our families and our loved ones."

Quilters Maggie Hendricks and Heather Kinion, who both previously knew Downey through their work with the Chicago Modern Quilt Guild, assembled the Pride Community Quilt. Hendricks was in attendance to see the quilt on display for the first time.

“I hope that people really do get a chance to look at all the work that has been done on the individual squares because I was truly having my breath taken away,” Hendricks said. “They were so beautiful and thoughtful and truly evoked a lot, both LGBTQ+ pride, and also pride in Arlington Heights.”

The library’s Pride Community Quilt was inspired by the National AIDS Memorial Quilt, which is considered the largest art project in history. The AIDS Memorial Quilt remembers the lives of those lost to HIV/AIDS.



A panel from the AIDS Memorial Quilt with local ties is part of the “Community & Craftivism” exhibit at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. *Courtesy of Mareliz Gallogo*

A 12-by-12-foot panel from the AIDS Memorial Quilt with local ties is on display as part of the exhibit. Attendee Joey Airdo was able to view this panel for the first time and said he was surprised by how large it was. Airdo is the brother of Kirk Airdo, who passed away in 1992 and is memorialized in the panel.

“He was very passionate, kind, did anything for anybody, sweet, didn’t have a bad bone in his body. He was very well loved. He was always smiling, always laughing, always playing around, joking,” Airdo said, remembering his brother. “The 31 years he was on this earth, he lived. He lived, he traveled a lot. He lived his life; he lived a very, very good life.”



The Let Freedom Read Dress, created in 2023 by Rachel Jane Wittmann and Kirby Gene Anderson, is part of the “Community & Craftivism” exhibit at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. *Courtesy of Mareliz Gallogo*

Other pieces in the exhibit include Rita’s Quilt, a nationwide collaborative art project that was created by Downey; sewn blankets from the Welcome Blanket Project, which are created for new immigrants who come to the U.S.; and the Let Freedom Read Dress, created in 2023 by Rachel Jane Wittmann and Kirby Gene Anderson.

Also in the exhibit is a Freedom Quilt from Palatine Public Library, made to celebrate Black History Month. Historically, a freedom quilt was used to communicate plans and methods of escape for enslaved people. The quilt was created by Palatine Public Library staff members Selicia Applegate, Theresa Benson and Amy Lundquist after Palatine resident Tiffany Wilhoite donated the fabric in honor of her grandmother.

“When I found out they were going to make the Freedom Quilt, I was overjoyed,” Wilhoite said. “It was overwhelming to think that it was going to be made for some grand project, a community project like that.”

Downey, who has more than 163,000 Instagram followers, was also in attendance and signed books for attendees.

“Art can be such an incredible mechanism for community organizing, community building,” Downey said. “There’s a million ways to make change; anybody can participate in change making in any way that they feel comfortable with. I want people to walk away feeling inspired and ready to take action.”

Community & Craftivism is on display in the library now through Wednesday, July 23. Learn more at ahml.info/pride.



Limit flags on public buildings

Posted June 25, 2025 11:15 am

On June 5, the Daily Herald published a story about Mount Prospect officials wisely limiting the flags allowed on village flagpoles. Only the United States, State of Illinois and Mount Prospect village flags are approved. They do this to avoid political conflicts and potential lawsuits.

Unfortunately, the Palatine Library does not adhere to this practice. Recently, the library has been flying a political multicolored “pride” flag. One of the political agendas advocated by this flag is the transsexual demand that biological males be allowed to participate in female sports.

It seems odd that the Palatine library board would display this flag and any other political flags that it deems appropriate. As a taxpayer-funded institution, it should only proudly display the United States, State of Illinois and village of Palatine flags.

I urge taxpayers to contact the Palatine Library and express their opinions on this subject.

Tom Murray

Barrington

Article Comments

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Roger Tucker SUBSCRIBER · 6 HRS AGO

Thanks Tom. I will take your suggestion and indeed express my opinion to the library on this matters. I'll send them an email right now. There are probably not as many bigots in Palatine as you think.

REPLY 2 REPLIES 11 6



Lou Guagenti SUBSCRIBER · 6 HRS AGO

On January 6, 2021, the current president incited an insurrection against the United States, otherwise known as a Day Of Love or White House Tour. During the insurrection, the American Flag was used to beat police officers. The insurrectionists, also known as Patriots, proudly flew the Confederate Flag, which was not used as a weapon against police....

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REPLY 5 REPLIES 11 8



Lou Guagenti SUBSCRIBER · 6 HRS AGO

I'm glad the LW reminded us as taxpayers to contact the library and express their opinions. I will thank them for flying the Pride Flag. I will also encourage them to provide more banned books!

REPLY 2 REPLIES 12 9



Sally Mabbitt SUBSCRIBER 5 HRS AGO

I didn't realize how many folks get triggered by a colorful piece of fabric. what say the LW about those American Flags with the face of trump superimposed on it? now that is against the Flag Code.....

REPLY 6 4



David B SUBSCRIBER 5 HRS AGO

If you want to see a 'specialty' or 'cause' flag displayed, do it at your home or business.

REPLY 4 6



Lou Guagenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Pride flags are flown to remind us that millions of people have been discriminated against, stigmatized, beaten and killed simply because of how they were wired from birth. If that's a political agenda, then any remembrance of the Holocaust is a political agenda. Martin Luther King Day is a political agenda. Juneteenth is a political agenda. I guess this is what Dear Leader meant when he said we have to many government...

REPLY 1 REPLY 11 6



Roger Tucker SUBSCRIBER 5 HRS AGO

Reply to Lou Guagenti

Well said! Juneteenth, MLK Day, and Pride Month are celebrations of a people casting off the chains of tyranny and oppression in their fight for self determination, liberty and equality. It should be a very familiar story to every American.

REPLY 9 3

RT

Roger Tucker SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Thanks Tom. I will take your suggestion and indeed express my opinion to the library on this matters. I'll send them an email right now. There are probably not as many bigots in Palatine as you think.

REPLY 2 REPLIES 11 6

RD

Raoul Duke SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Reply to **Roger Tucker**

I already did the same right after reading this haters drivell earlier

REPLY 1 REPLY 11 5



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Reply to **Raoul Duke**

Me too!

REPLY 10 5



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

There are no biological males in women's sports that I'm aware of. I've heard of girls playing football on boy's teams, but I haven't heard of boys playing on girl's teams. Is the LW confusing biological males with trans females? This doesn't make sense in this context.

REPLY 9 6



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

"They do this to avoid political conflicts and potential lawsuits."

They do this to placate the stogiB.

REPLY 10 7



CONTENT REMOVED

3 REPLIES

1

SHOW OLDER REPLIES



Lou Guagenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Reply to **Roger Tucker**

Is deactivated now a bad word?

REPLY 1 REPLY 8 2



Roger Tucker SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

Reply to **Lou Guagenti**

The AI triggers are definitely a moving target.

REPLY 8 2



Lou Guagenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

I'm glad the LW reminded us as taxpayers to contact the library and express their opinions. I will thank them for flying the Pride Flag. I will also encourage them to provide more banned books!

REPLY 2 REPLIES 12 9



Dan Blackburn SUBSCRIBER 4 HRS AGO

Reply to **Lou Guagenti**

I live in central Indiana, the heart of Trump country. The library I work at has a special 'pride' display. When there is space the library also puts books banned by other libraries on display at end of aisles. I haven't heard about any patrons being offended or complaining. EDITED

REPLY 1 REPLY 6 0



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 2 HRS AGO

Reply to **Dan Blackburn**

I guess the snowflakes are only falling in June in Illinois. Maybe with summer, the lake effect doesn't affect Indiana...

REPLY 4 2



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 6 HRS AGO

On January 6, 2021, the current president incited an insurrection against the United States, otherwise known as a Day Of Love or White House Tour. During the insurrection, the American Flag was used to beat police officers. The insurrectionists, also known as Patriots, proudly flew the Confederate Flag, which was not used as a weapon against police....

REPLY 5 REPLIES 11 8

3

SHOW OLDER REPLIES



Lou Guaqenti SUBSCRIBER 2 HRS AGO

Reply to **Raoul Duke**

Yes. The answer is yes.

REPLY 2 2



i keating SUBSCRIBER 1 HR AGO

Reply to **this message**



REPLY 0 1



Stan Sroka SUBSCRIBER 7 HRS AGO

Considering the number Christians, and Catholics in Palatine, and the month of June being dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, shouldn't the Sacred Heart flag be flown if we're going to fly anything other than State and Country flags? Who could possibly be against that?

REPLY 2 REPLIES 6 7



Daniel Szwawa SUBSCRIBER 5 HRS AGO

Reply to **Stan Sroka**

Who dedicated the month of June to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

REPLY 8 5



i keating SUBSCRIBER 1 HR AGO

Reply to **Stan Sroka**

that would require a presidential proclamation, which is how june became lgbtq+ month.

...anyhow there's also the separation of church/state issue.

...get that you're just trying to point out the silliness of it all (at least I think you are?), but in this day and age folks just refuse to accept different in any way, shape or form.

REPLY 1 2