



**MEETING MINUTES
EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Wednesday, August 19, 2015
6:30 PM

Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Avenue, Board Room

Members Present: Shawn Iles, Vaishali Patel, Benjamin Schapiro, Leora Siegel, Sandra Smith, Michael Tannen

Members Absent: Socorro Clarke, Tori Foreman, Margaret Lurie

Staff: Elizabeth Bird, Karen Danczak Lyons, Paul Gottschalk, Jessica Ticus

Presiding Member: Michael Tannen, President

CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF QUORUM - A quorum was present and President Tannen called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm.

CITIZEN COMMENT – none

CONSENT AGENDA – Benjamin Schapiro motioned to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the July 15, 2015 regular meeting, the bills list and payroll.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction of Elizabeth “Betsy” Bird, Collection Development Manager. Ms. Bird, a Midwest native, comes to EPL from New York Public Library where she began her career as a Children’s Librarian in 2004. She writes a popular blog in School Library Journal and regularly reviews children’s books for Kirkus and the New York Times. She is the author of several children’s books including *Children’s Literary Gems: Choosing and Using Them in Your Library Career*; co-author of *Wild Things: Acts of Mischief in Children’s Literature*; and the author of *Giant Dance Party*. She has two children, ages one and four, and is looking forward to working and living in Evanston.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Director Danczak Lyons reviewed highlights of her monthly report (see report attached):

- A meeting to continue to discuss the 2016 budget will be convened on September 2 at 6:30. The City’s budget calendar has not been presented yet but Karen’s goal is to have the Library’s budget prepared for submission in early October.
- The Board will be asked to consider how to proceed with necessary capital improvements at the North Branch and weigh the options of approaching construction projects piecemeal or closing the North Branch for 7 to 8 weeks to complete all slated projects.

- Other capital projects for the 2016 budget include replacing computer network routers at the Main Library and waterproofing the exterior of the Orrington Avenue building. Phase 1 of the waterproofing project is in this year's budget.
- Space planning for the Main Library was approved in the 2015 budget and will begin this fall.
- Ms. Danczak Lyons and staff met with Reverend Ken Cherry, the new Director of the Fleetwood Jourdain Center to discuss opportunities to collaborate. Rev. Cherry stated that EPL was "the one and only partnership he inherited."
- The Summer Reading Program participants earned 144,016 points, exceeding the goal and as a result, residents who participated will have their fines waived the week of August 30 – September 5.

STAFF REPORTS

- A. Administrative Services Report** – Paul Gottschalk reported that EPL is in the process of hiring two part-time branch assistants. Through July 31st, Library Fund revenues exceeded expenditures by \$811,303.13. This surplus is principally due to the receipt of the second installment of property taxes. The Endowment portfolio return was 2.5% over the past 12 months.

BOARD REPORTS

- A. Development Committee Report** – The Fund for Excellence Committee recruitment is going well, with 16 new and returning members in addition to Trustees. Morton Schapiro, President, Northwestern University and Elizabeth Tisdahl, Mayor, City of Evanston, have been recruited as honorary committee members. A kick-off reception will be held at Shawn Iles's home on September 8th.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- A.** The viewing of the video "What it Means to be a Library Trustee" was tabled until the September meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A.** To meet 2015 budget shortfalls, the City of Evanston is implementing a staff furlough day on December 31, 2015. Karen Danczak Lyons asked the Board to approve a motion to institute an EPL staff furlough day on December 31. Budget savings from Library salaries will go into the Library Fund. Ben Shapiro approved the motion, Sandra Smith seconded it and the Board unanimously approved the motion.
- B.** Sandra Smith announced she will be representing EPL in the Leadership Evanston training and thanked Board members and staff for recommending her.

C. Closed Session – Motion by Michael Tannen, second by Sandra Smith – move into closed session to discuss a personnel matter. Approved on a roll call vote. The Board convened in closed session at 7:32 pm.

Motion by Michael Tannen, second by Sandra Smith – convene in open session. Approved on a voice vote. The Board convened in open session at 8:40 pm.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Lurie, Secretary

Library Director's Report

August 19, 2015

Updates:

- Reminder: Additional meeting to continue to discuss the 2016 budget will be convened on September 2nd at 6:30.
- Our Concierge desk is up and running with great results reported by both staff and volunteers. Please stop and say "Hello" to our volunteers at the Concierge desk. An example of the importance this service from this morning: A young man came into the library on his way to a job interview. His printer at home had broken this morning and he needed to quickly print out his resume. The Concierge directed him to the printers and he left with resume in hand and in time for his interview.
- I arranged a meeting this morning with the new Director of the Fleetwood Jordain Recreation Center – Reverend Ken Cherry. I was joined at the meeting by our Community Outreach Team – Jill Skwerski, Renee Neumeier and Laura Antolin. We discussed Director Cherry's new vision for services at Fleetwood, our shared concerns about services to residents of all ages, opportunities to collaborate, the Summer Reading Program and using the Harwood method to assist in learning the aspirations of the Fleetwood patrons in order to shape future programs.
- Kwamae Alexander welcomed a full house to our main community room on July 23rd. Adults and children enjoyed hearing the author speak and having their books signed. My thanks to the Dajae Coleman Foundation for their continued partnership with the Evanston Public Library. I am arranging a meeting with Tiffany Rice to discuss opportunities to partner again in 2016.
- I am exploring ways to expand our ABC Boosters program for 2016 including assessing the number of rising pre-school students that would benefit from the program, reviewing ways to deepen the connection between parents and participants with the Evanston Public Library and additional sources of funding.
- National Night Out – My thanks to Jill Skwerski and Laura Antolin and the EPL team for hosting the annual National Night Out at the Main Library. Crafts, conversations, sidewalk chalk and photographs with a fire truck and ambulance were all highlights of a lovely evening.
- Our entire EPL family lead by Renee Neumeier, Laura Antolin, Connie Heneghan and Heather Norborg created a new approach to the Summer Reading Program with one unified way to participate and special emphasis on reading to our youngest patrons. The response was very strong and we exceeded our community participation goal of 125,000 points. As of yesterday, the total points earned are 144,016 and we are still entering participation numbers. As a result, Evanston residents who participated will have their fines waived (not fees for lost items) during the week of August 30 through September 5.
- Cradle to Career and Community Literacy: Several members of EPL are participating in the Cradle to Career initiative and we are discussing the merits of using the Harwood method to conduct the focus groups that will be convened through the Community Engagement Committee.

- I want to commend Kim Hiltwein and the entire team that is producing our first Community Reading Program thanks to a Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Our programming will center on the book “Into the Beautiful North” and will kick-off on September 19th. EPL has also launched a page on our website at www.epl.org/bigread . Books will be available in print (both English and Spanish) and on CD. Partnering with Districts 65 and 202 and cultural organizations, the 9 months of programs will have many opportunities to come together. For more details about the partnerships please refer to an entry under the Teen Services section.
- In partnership with the Evanston Community Foundation and Evanston Cradle to Career, we will be hosting Dana Suskind, the author of *Thirty Million Words* on September 24th from 5:30 – 7:30 at the Rotary Building Auditorium. Based on scientific research that shows the critical importance of early language exposure on the developing child, *Thirty Million Words* helps parents enhance their home language environment in order to optimize their children’s brain development and ability to learn.

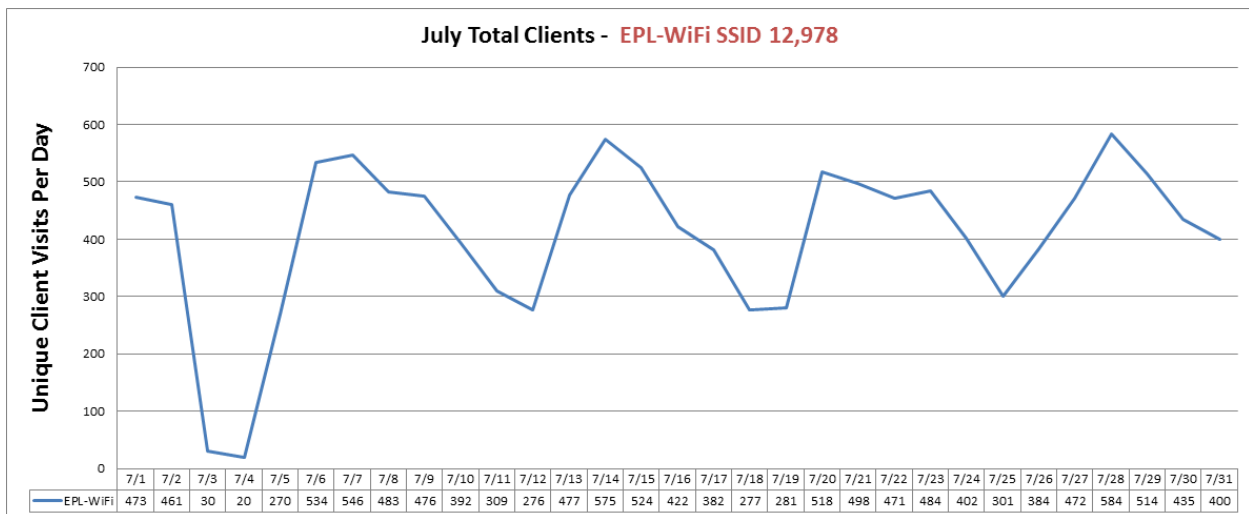
Assessments, metrics and initiative results:

Foot traffic:	July, 2015	June, 2015
Main:	48,653	49,520
North:	5,329	5,416
CAMS:	4,493	5,207
Total:	58,475	60,143

Website visits in June: 46,595 July: 40,164

Overall Computer/Internet Use – all locations: June: 7,054 July: 7,206

Wireless network. July: 12,978 total



Services and collaborations:

- We are deepening our relationships with Illinois' two accredited Library Programs: Dominican University and the University of Illinois. I am exploring the potential for interns and practicum students to work at EPL, the possibility of having courses for the Masters in Library and Information Science taught at EPL and joint grants and programs.
- The Evanston Public Library and the Book Sale Volunteers helped Tim Rhoze create "God's Library" for his production of *Maya's Last Poem* at the Fleetwood Jordain Theatre by supplying 1,000 donated hardcover books to the production.
- Our partnership with Northwestern University's Middle East and North African (MENA) Studies school will begin again on Monday, September 28:
"Transcending Nationalism in the Armenian Genocide Debate"

This panel will feature journalist Meline Toumani, author of *There Was and There Was Not*, and two respondents from the Northwestern faculty: Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (Associate Professor of Political Science and MENA) and İpek Yosmaoğlu (Associate Professor of History and MENA). Panelists will explore the perspectives of a new generation of commentators on the history and politics surrounding the Armenian genocide and its legacy, the politics of recognition, and the potential of listening to new voices and views as Armenians, Turks, and others navigate life in the present given the events of the past.

[Elizabeth Shakman Hurd](#) teaches and writes on the politics of religious diversity, the history and politics of US foreign relations, and the global politics of the Middle East at Northwestern, where she is associate professor of politics and religious studies. She is the author of *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, 2008) and *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion* (Princeton, 2015), and co-editor of *Politics of Religious Freedom* (Chicago, 2015) and *Comparative Secularisms in a Global Age* (Palgrave, 2013).

Meline Toumani has written extensively for *The New York Times* about international politics as well as about classical music; her stories and essays have also appeared in *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *n+1*, and many other publications. As a reporter she has worked in Turkey, Armenia, and Georgia, and has taught journalism in Southern Russia. Her first book, *There Was and There Was Not: A Journey Through Hate and Possibility in Turkey, Armenia, and Beyond*, was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Critics Circle Award.

İpek Yosmaoğlu (Ph.D. Princeton, 2005) is a historian of the late Ottoman Empire. She taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was a member at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton before joining the history department at Northwestern in 2010. Her research interests include nationalism, violence, political legitimacy and state modernization. In late 2013, she published her first book, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence and the Politics of Nationhood in*

Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908 (Cornell University Press), which focuses on the final decades of Ottoman rule in southeastern Europe.

- Our partnership was featured by MENA in the recent publication *Program in Middle East and North African Studies The First Two Years 2013 – 2015*:

MENA SPRING FILM SERIES

Pouran Derakhshandeh: Women and the Making of Iranian Social Cinema

One of Iran's leading filmmakers, Pouran Derakhshandeh, visited the Northwestern Evanston campus for a weeklong residency in April 2015 as a guest of the MENA Program. Two of her films – *Hiss! Dokhtarha Farjad Nemizanand!* (*Hash! Girls Don't Scream*), which Derakhshandeh directed, and *Bist* (*Twenty*), which she produced, were screened at Block Cinema to audiences of 200 people, both of which were followed by interviews and Q&A sessions. She also visited both film and Persian classes and met with a number of students and faculty during her visit, and gave a public interview with MENA Professor Hamid Naficy.

Iran boasts one of the most celebrated film industries in the world. Iranian women's influence in filmmaking has increased dramatically in the decades since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, often through a daring critique of modern Iranian society. Derakhshandeh holds a special place in the history of filmography in Iran: her film *Mate Contact* was the first feature film directed by a woman released in Iran after the 1979 Revolution. She has gone on to direct twelve feature films and eleven documentaries, winning numerous national and international awards.

Derakhshandeh's visit was a collaboration between the Program in Middle East and North African Studies (MENA) and Block Cinema. Generous support was provided by the Edith Kreeger Wolf Endowment, which brings scholars and public figures to campus with the goal of highlighting women's successes in scholarship, the arts, and public.

COLLABORATION WITH NU-Q

In September 2012, eight MENA faculty traveled to Doha to participate in a symposium with colleagues from Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q). The resulting papers were collected, expanded upon, and published in 2013 under the title *On the Ground: New Directions in Middle East and North African Studies*, edited by MENA director Brian Edwards. The topics of the chapters range from women's social and digital mobility in modern-day Egypt to a case study of how the 2011 uprising in Libya affected Libyan and Tunisian Berbers, and represent a number of disciplines, including anthropology, communication studies, history, and political science.

The text is freely available at <http://onthe-ground.qatar.northwestern.edu/>.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In January 2015, MENA established a partnership with Evanston Public Library as one of its new initiatives in community outreach made possible by a generous gift from the GPD Charitable Trust. This collaboration is built around a series of lectures and public events, all of which are aimed at improving the public's understanding of the MENA region and allowing the space for questions and discussion. Turnout at these events has been phenomenal, with the April evening lecture bringing over 120 community members together to hear a panel of MENA faculty speakers. The events provide a way for community members to interact with nationally-acclaimed experts on the part of the world that stretches from Morocco to the Arab Gulf states and Iran and from the Mediterranean into the Sahara and beyond.

EVENTS 2015

January 26 <i>Diplomacy on the Front Lines in the Middle East</i> Nabeel Khoury, Northwestern University	March 2 <i>The Rise of Sectarianism in the Middle East in an Age of Western Hegemony: 1860-2014</i> Ussama Makdisi, Rice University	April 13 <i>Four Myths about the Middle East</i> Brian Edwards, Henri Lauziere, Wendy Pearlman, Jessica Winegar, Northwestern MENA Faculty	May 11 <i>The History of Iranian Photography</i> Ali Behdad, University of California, Los Angeles
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- I will be participating in the Mather Lifeway's Telephone Topics program in September and will be reading stories to a listening audience with an age range from 65-85 years of age. Along with reading, I will be marketing our Storytelling Festival and hope to attract residents from Mather to the festival.

Children's Services highlights include: from Laura Antolin:

Ethnic Arts Fair: I partnered with Open Studios to bring the Dream Weaving/Community Web that Gigi and I created last summer to the Ethnic Arts Fair Family Arts Activity Area and to create it anew. I was stationed there on July 18 and 19 from 1:30-5:30 to explain what we were doing and to help families add to the weaving. I hung two pictures of Gigi that dedicated the project to her memory next to the Dream Weaving and lots of people stopped to admire it, to help weave and to remember Gigi. I let her family know that we were doing this and among the first people to come on July 18 were Gigi's mother and father. It was very meaningful to me and a lovely tribute. One woman told me that she felt it was the "spirit of the fair" and lots of educators talked with me about how they could replicate it. It was very affirming and fitting.





Evanston History Center Ice Cream Social:

I represented the Library at EHC's Ice Cream Social on July 25. I spoke with lots of people, handed out I love EPL stickers and bookmarks and even registered a child for SRP. It was worthwhile and a good opportunity to talk to people about what we offer at the Library, connect with families that I know and engage in positive interactions.

📊 Interactions: 102 📊 SRP registrations: 1

Janie's Fair:

This is a project that arose out of Kim Holmes-Ross' consulting with Curt's Café South. I was invited to be a part of this project as a result of networking at CNE's Breakfast at Erie Health in June. There are about 16 people on this committee including EPD, IWSE, Family Center, Literacy for All of Us and community members. "Janie" is our composite teen mom who dropped out of school, has a 1 year-old, is pregnant, in an abusive relationship with her baby's father, living at home sometimes and frequently hungry and not connected to any services.

The purpose of Janie's Fair is to hold a resource fair for teen mothers and young parents and their families and it is fast-tracked to happen on September 11 from 3-6pm at Mason Park.

Barb Jones' Home Day Care Kindergarten Graduation:

Sally Schwarlose and I were asked by Barb Jones to attend the graduation of her 4 rising kindergarteners at the Library. I helped a little with set-up and Barb asked me to speak to the families which I did very briefly and I wrote a Kindergarten song that everyone sang to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. It was a lovely event and we were both pleased to be included.



Teen Services highlights include: from Renee Neumeier:

- Teen DIY (from Kayla's report)

"I have had so much fun doing these DIY workshops this summer! It has been excellent to go out and visit the branches and make crafts alongside the kids. The groups are usually small enough that I am able to talk with the teens and build some rapport with them. I think the most successful one, by far, was the Shrinky Dinks workshop at CAMS. It had a good turnout (7 or 8 if I recall) and was a lot of fun. The

Mason Park DIYs also felt like they really served a need, for each time I brought crafts to the day camp there, the kids were enthusiastic to at least give it a try, even if they didn't think of themselves as the crafty type. The Mason Park DIYs also served the largest number of kids, about 12-14 each time, and they seemed to come from a different population than whom usually attend our arts programming. The kids seemed consistently pleased with and proud of the crafts that they made, at any locations, and this is a relatively easy program to mingle kids of differing ages."

- Art of the Handmade Book Camp: (From Jamie Thome, camp leader)

This camp combined practical hands-on papermaking and bookbinding skills with various art processes and writing exercises.

The over-arching Big Idea of Book Camp this year was Identity and Self-Portrait. Inquiry questions directed towards that theme included (but were not limited to) the following: What is something that you are quite talented at doing and do well? What makes you tick? How are you different/similar in each community (peer community; family community; school community)? What talents/gifts do you possess that you can use to better your community, and how can you use them?

In addition to individual projects (hardcover handmade paper books that they made themselves and filled with artwork; Exquisite Corpse collages; book cover collages; Attitude of Gratitude painting/collages that we hid around the library as gifts to patrons who found them, and as expressions of thanks for books and libraries; sketchbooks that they made by hand and kept all of their notes and work in during camp), campers experienced extensive collaboration on three different artworks that are now part of the Loft's permanent collection: handmade paper Treewhispers (self-portraits), Core Values stained glass window project, and an Abstract Self-Portrait Quilt (which also utilized the Core Values activity we did).

The best part of the camp for me this year was the community the campers built amongst themselves. It was a treat to watch friendships strengthen and form over the three weeks of Book Camp. Another moment that made me proud and excited was when a returning camper asked, on her last day of camp this year, if we were going to have Book Camp again next summer. When I said that we were planning on it, she said, "Great! I will come every year you do this camp!!" I looked around the room at all of the other girls nodding enthusiastically. I wish we could have spent the entire summer together; three weeks wasn't nearly enough time.

- Big Read: Kim Hiltwein and Renee Neumeier worked hard to get all the events for the Big Read on to the NEA's Big Read page, the library's event calendar and the Big Read page on the Library's website. Ashley Hamernik designed headers for the webpage, flyers and brochures and a widget that can be used on the webpage. Renee, Kim and Lesley Williams met with Mercedes Fernandez at ETHS to discuss how they could engage the Latino ETHS parent advisory group in the Big Read and the Latino Americans grant. Mercedes is interested in running a book discussion group on Into the Beautiful North in Spanish. Renee, Kim and Laura Antolin met with Lindsey Rose and Manuel Aleman from D65 to decide on complimentary titles for the Big Read for elementary and middle schools. Two titles were selected Yes! We are Latinos and The Distance Between Us. Ashley has also designed bookmarks to into the Big Read books. We're

also going to put book plates in the Into the Beautiful North copies. Flyers have been designed highlighting some of the fall's big events. A brochure that will highlight all events is also in the works. Kim and Renee will be meeting with Fine Arts chair from ETHS at the beginning of August to discuss tying some of the Fine Arts curriculum into the Big Read. Kim and Laura Antolin met with Rotary International about starting a partnership, which includes securing use of their auditorium for events. Rotary employee Rebecca Mendoza signed on to facilitate the Spanish book discussions in the community and host both an English and Spanish discussion at Rotary. Kim has been able to coordinate with the City of Evanston on their Day of the Dead event and the Hispanic Heritage festival the library will have a presence at each event.

Outreach and Community Engagement includes: From Jill Skwerski:

-The story below exemplifies the impact of having a presence at locations such as the Produce Mobile and Hillside Pantry. I met Linette Gibson at the Produce Mobile and we picked out a book for her granddaughter Shayla. I saw Linette the following week at Hillside Pantry, where she shared that Shayla loved the book, carried it with her everywhere (see attached picture) and had overcome her reluctance to read and in fact had read the book to her pre-school class!

From Shayla's Grandmother:

Hi Jill, this is Linette Gibson My granddaughter is Shayla Hunt who's 5years old and gonna start kindergarten in the Fall. Her story is below. I thank you so much for picking the book out for Shayla when I was at the (Robert Crown produce truck). To help her learn how to read. I didn't know she would advance so fast and enjoy reading. I can't thank you enough, I'm so proud of Shayla!!!! Reading is fundamental. :)

Linette Gibson
Hillside Pantry volunteer

From Shayla's Mom:

Shayla's First Book – 'Let Fat Cat', a mini story from the Now I'm Reading! Level One: Animal Antics series.

After 1 ½ days of being introduced to this book system, Shayla was reading her first book. The mini story is called 'Let Fat Cat'. Shayla received the book on Friday, July 17, 2015, which was given to her by her grandmother. Shayla read the book several times with her grandmother until she was able to read it on her own with little help. Shayla decided to take the book to school on Tuesday, July 21st, as she wanted to read it to her teachers. The teachers were so impressed with Shayla and how she is advancing, that they said she can read the book to her classmates. One of her teachers mentioned how she is so proud of Shayla and that she is so ready for Kindergarten. When I picked Shayla up from daycare that evening, her teacher informed me that Shayla read the book 'Let Fat Cat' to the class and they all enjoyed the book.



On July 28, EPL hosted Community Partners for Affordable Housing. Amy Kaufmann, Director of Community Relations for CPAH provided an informational overview including a definition of affordable housing, how to qualify for rental and ownership opportunities, potential road blocks applicants might face and how to begin to work through such blocks. She fielded numerous questions from the audience of 40+ and then provided applications for housing. As a result of the high turnout we've scheduled a second session for 11/3. Affordable housing was identified in our Community Conversations and Ask Exercises as a persistent barrier within the community to people reaching their aspirations.

In addition to regularly scheduled visits to the Produce Mobile, Hillside Pantry, Three Crowns, James, Mason, FJ and Crown, it's also high season for City festivals. I've taken the book bike out to the West

End Market, Downtown Market, Ethnic Arts Festival and the Recycling Fair. Ben Remsen has caught the book bug and pedaled over to the Ridgeville Market. During July, out in the community, I made 13 library cards, registered 19 people for SRP and checked out 97 books. Finally, we provided 60 books to 2nd Baptist Church for their Summer Reading Celebration and planted seed collections of 30 books each at Ebony Barbershop and Cutting Edge Hair Gallery, both on Church & Dodge.

On a global note, the Special Needs Family Resource Fair that was held here in November 2014 was attended by a visiting librarian from Australia, Jo Kaeding, who was participating in a study tour of US Libraries. EPL was one of 20 libraries Jo visited on her tour. She emailed earlier this week to let me know that her final report will be held by the State Library of South Australia and uploaded to the website of the funding bodies as well on her Blog. Jo will forward the link when her report is finalized, but I've attached the EPL portion to this document:

Evanston Public Library

Evanston Public Library has three branches, serving a population of 75 000.

This public library provides another very good example using partnerships to focus on creating inclusive libraries.

Partnerships and Outreach and Marketing

The Evanston Public Library was the first library in the greater Chicago area to hold a community expo for families of children with special needs.

The expo was held in a community room at the Evanston Public Library. The expo was made up of information booths from the major organizations and associations that provide services and support for children with special needs in the Evanston area. The expo was very successful, with other libraries in the Chicago-area expressing an interest in hosting something similar.

Expos are an excellent way of achieving the following:

- promoting the library as being supportive of families of children with special needs
- demonstrating that public libraries are an excellent source of information
- providing a neutral environment in which information and services can be distributed to families of children with special needs

- creating an opportunity for families of children with special needs to find out about the resources available in their own community
- providing a networking opportunity for organizations and associations that provide support and services to families of children with special needs
- providing an opportunity for families of children with special needs to connect with other families in their own community
- reinforcing the library as disability friendly place.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop partnerships with organizations and associations involved in the provision of services to children with special needs and their families.

Host or be involved in expos for children with disabilities

Adult Services highlights include:

- The Roundtable included a great article about Ben Remsen and the wonderful programs that he is creating and producing throughout the City of Evanston:
<http://evanstonroundtable.com/main.asp?SectionID=4&SubSectionID=4&ArticleID=10687>
- Also from Ben:

On July 20th, EPL hosted its first Tabletop Game Night and it succeeded beyond my greatest hopes!

“Tabletop games” is the term frequently used for board games that employ more complex rules and more fantastical elements than your typical game like Parcheesi. These sorts of games have grown in popularity recently, and last April a new store, Elysium Games, opened at 1610 Maple Street devoted primarily to Tabletop Gaming. I reached out to Jesse Reynolds, the owner of Elysium about the idea of collaborating with the store to run a game night at the library and he loved the idea. He helped promote the event in his store as well as on the store’s social media presence (thereby increasing awareness of library programs even among those who didn’t attend the event).

On the 20th he came to the Community Meeting Room with a half-dozen games for attendees to choose from. Seventeen people were signed up – which would have been a decent crowd – but 32 people attended! We started at 6:30 and at 9 over half the attendees were still there playing. I had to politely but firmly tell them that they really did need to leave because the library was closing. . . which is the kind of problem we want to have! Even better than simply having a large group, I was excited that it was the most age-diverse event I’ve been to yet at EPL. I didn’t ask people’s ages, but estimating I would say about half the crowd was in their 20s and 30s. There were also teens and people in their 60s (again, just estimating) and the six different game tables were very mixed. Many people left asking me when the next Tabletop Game Night will be. The next Tabletop Game Night will be October 5th.

- On Wednesday evening , August 12 patrons queued up in the standby line more than an hour before the author program was scheduled to start hoping to get into the program:

Authors Christine Sneed and Julia Sweeney would be sharing their latest books. Sneed would read from her new novel "Paris, He Said" which the NY Times called an "absorbing, original..., and unexpectedly poignant" exploration of love, art, and ambition. Sweeney would share from her recent essay collection "If It's Not One Thing, It's Your Mother" - her recent essay collection described by author Maria Semple as "intimate and hilarious." Copies of both books will be available to purchase courtesy of Bookends & Beginnings.

Christine Sneed's story collection "Portraits of a Few of the People I've Made Cry" won the Grace Paley Prize and was an LA Times Book Prize finalist. Her debut novel "Little Known Facts" was named a Top 10 Debut Novel of 2013 by Booklist. She teaches at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois and lives in Evanston.

Julia Sweeney is best known as a comedienne on Saturday Night Live where portrayed an androgynous character called "Pat." She has also worked as a television writer for Sex and the City and Desperate Housewives, performed in television and film productions including Frasier, Mad About You, and Pulp Fiction, and starred in three acclaimed one-woman shows that have played in theaters in Los Angeles and New York City.

As you know, a transformer failed and portions of the City, including the main library lost power. As we cleared the building, Russell Johnson worried about disappointing the patrons waiting to hear their favorite authors. Russell located the authors in a nearby restaurant, spoke with them and the owners of the Celtic Knot and quickly arranged to have the program moved across the street. I addressed the patrons that continued to wait in the darkened community room and invited them to relocate to the new location. Based upon their response it was clear that Russell's quick thinking helped to save their evening and show that the Evanston Public Library cares about our patrons and our programs. See Russell's message to me below:

Hi Karen,

Thank you so much, and I'm still so happy we were able to pull off an event given the circumstances. 63 patrons were able to fit into the Snug last Wednesday, and I'm currently in touch with both authors about a return date in the fall for the folks who weren't able to get in. I received a lot of nice feedback about the event from patrons and the authors, and you can find a sampling below.

Thanks again for your help that night!

Russell

"Thanks for making tonight's event a success. The venue change worked for me! So glad the event was not canceled."

-- Suzanne Meyering

"Thank you so much. I was able to attend and it was wonderful! I enjoyed both authors and look forward to other events in the future...if only I didn't have to pay for parking twice... :)"

-- Helene Vicker

"Russell, I was among the fortunate folks who did hear the reading last night. Appreciated your kind professionalism and calm manner in the midst of challenging circumstances. Kudos to you, as well as the authors!"

-- Heather Clark

"Thank you again, Russell, for everything! The poster you made looked great, the tickets...everything was so classy. I wish the darn power hadn't gone out.:)"

-- Christine Sneed, author "Paris, He Said"

Upcoming events of note:

- **Thursday, September 3, 4:30 pm, Community Meeting Room, Main Library**

Come meet celebrated children's author Jon Scieszka, who will be promoting his latest book, *Frank Einstein and the Brainturbo!* Children wearing a Mad Scientist Costume have the chance to win a prize! Mr. Scieszka will give a brief talk, answer questions, pose for photos, and sign books, on sale at the event by co-presenter The Book Stall. Registration is required; the event is recommended for ages 7 and up. Mr. Scieszka has written such great books as his memoir *Knucklehead*, the *Time Warp Trio* series, *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, among many others. In addition, he started the Guys Read campaign, and served as the inaugural Ambassador for Young People's Literature. [Register online](#), in person, or by calling 847-448-8610.

- **Tuesday August 18, 7pm Family Night: Father/Son Craft.** Join us for an evening of creativity working on a science/art project with your son. Boys must be accompanied by an adult. [Registration required.](#) Grades 2 -6.
- **Thursday August 20, 7pm Family Night: Jammie Time!** Come in pajamas to this stories-before-bed program. Ages 2 -9. *Drop in; no registration needed.*
 - **Working Parent Friendly programming for a great August of family togetherness at the Evanston Public Library.**
- Saturday, August 22, 11:00 AM: Meet State Representative Robyn Gabel and her staff to discuss problems and issues of concern. Main Library community room

Excerpts from Patron feedback:

- A note about the Summer Reading Program's "Band in a Bag":

Approved September 16, 2015

We had to stay in yesterday morning, my two grandchildren and I, so we finally opened our bag prizes. We spent almost two hours making a xylophone and finding the highest and lowest notes, putting together and playing a drum set, making maracas out of water bottles, using the toilet paper tube to make kazoos and, of course, putting together and playing the tambourines. We played and sang and took turns with the instruments and took a video for their parents. I can't thank you enough for this great idea!