

2020 OCPL Annual Report to the Community

2020 was off to a great start! We had a new Executive Director, 2020 Library Journal Librarian of the Year, Christian Zabriskie.

Then... the pandemic.

We really have to stop writing reports like this.

Two weeks quickly turned into months. Libraries quickly pivoted to virtual storytimes and purchasing more electronic collections. Library takeout was huge when we could not let folks into the library.

All libraries continued to work together with one card, 32 libraries. Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, OCPL was still recovering from the massive cyberattack in 2019. OCPL continued to provide services remotely. The ILS Review Committee met regularly throughout the pandemic to address some issues found in 2019.

E-content usage increased dramatically during the pandemic. Funds were allocated into purchasing more digital materials to meet the demand.

We were able to increase the number of digital magazines titles from 15 to 3,000 titles. We negotiated with vendors to allow more flexibility of use for databases such as Ancestry (normally had to be used at a library site) as well as Mango languages and Tumblebooks database for the entire system.

As soon as we hired for our new delivery position, the pandemic took over. This position was to allow for more flexibility in staffing assuring our community has the resources they need more efficiently. We gradually reinstated delivery in June and implemented Low-Contact Delivery procedures. Since we did not know how the COVID-19 virus could possibly live on materials, we quarantined items once they were returned. Items did not move as quickly as pre-covid, but materials were still moving around the system to fill hold requests.



Since all our locations were closed physically, we utilized virtual library cards, assuring that our communities could access the library any time, any where and did not have to leave their homes.

The Beginning of Hybrid

2020 had 3 "normal" months before COVID-19. The Liverpool Public Library unveiled their brand new building design in January. Advocacy Day in Albany had record breaking attendance and we began working on our new Plan of Service.

When the pandemic hit, we realized that we were not going to be able to meet in real life for a long time. We reworked many of our meeting through Zoom and had great attendance. The system purchased Ryan Dowd's Librarian's Guide to Homelessness Training Academy that was available on demand from March 2020-March 2021. 19 Sessions were viewed by 15,045 staff members in 2020. We plan to keep the subscription through 2021.



Many other organizations were also quick to move into the Zoom climate. We made new virtual partnerships to expand our reach, such as moving Shakespeare in the Park to Shakespeare on the screen!

The COVID-19 pandemic made great use of the Techpacks that were purchased with the extra funding in 2019 that we received from the county. The Techpacks included a hotspot and chromebook for patrons to access the internet anywhere. Additional techpacks were purchased through a grant from the Early Childhood Alliance.

We continued our partnership with OCMBOCES and were able to meet more regularly with our school library counterparts through Zoom. This helped tremendously as schools and libraries were shut down and provided a bridge to connect with students and their families adjusting to the remote climate.

OCPL and CLRC continued to work together to offer professional development opportunities for our members. Member Services started distributing a biweekly calendar of events to assure our staff members are aware of continuing education opportunities available to them. OCPL government relations committee met virtually with several local and state legislators to promote library services and provide them with a better understanding of what the library means to communities in today's environment.



Grants and State Projects:

Through the Adult Library Literacy Services Project, we continued to offer system-wide TASC study LMS and provide training and support for patrons and staff using the product. In March conversation classes went virtual and we assisted member libraries in starting their own class, which will continue in-person when they are able.



Due to COVID, in person visits to Jamesville Correctional, The Justice Center and Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center had to stop, but meetings were regularly held via Zoom to plan for 2021. Materials were continued to be purchased for all locations.

Through the Family Literacy Library Services Aid funds and following the guidelines of Ready to Read in NYS, member libraries applied for mini-grants to use the funding to reach families with young children virtually. A bulk purchase of portable flannel boards allowed many youth services librarians to easily conduct remote storytimes.

More and more libraries are taking advantage of the New York State Library Construction Aid. In 2019, we were able to recommend 80% of aid for the FY2020 cycle for the following projects:

Baldwinsville Public Library:

Repair & Repaving of the Parking Lot
Total project cost: \$350,000
Construction Program Award: \$262,500

Liverpool Public Library:

Children's Room Renovation
Total project cost: \$249,217
Construction Program Award: \$186,913

Marcellus Free Library:

Building and Technology Renovation
Total project cost: \$19,089
Construction Program Award: \$14,317

North Syracuse:

Adult Room and Restroom Renovation
Total project: \$142,481
Construction Program Award: \$106,860

Beauchamp Branch Library:

Parking Lot Paving
Total project: \$41,279
Construction Program Award: \$30,959

Hazard Branch Library:

Parking Lot Paving
Total project: \$42,180
Construction Program Award: \$31,635

Salina Free Library:

LED Lighting Upgrades
Total project: \$12,400
Construction Program Award: \$9,300

Skaneateles Public Library:

Restoration and Upgrades
Total project: \$182,385
Construction Program Award: \$136,789

Central Library:

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and unfortunately the majority of our staff became furloughed. However, with fewer than 10 of us left at Central, we nevertheless exceeded expectations on all of our 2020 goals, including scheduling overhauls, new partnerships, and new services. We began partnerships with the Food Bank and the county foster care program, to deliver quality virtual programming and support the Downtown Farmers Market; we started a new Library Takeout service and delivered telephone and email reference while the building was shut down; and Central staff helped support system services like ILL and sorting/delivery. In addition, our staff lent help to other branches and member libraries, and created a regular schedule to keep up with shelving and holds that used to be handled by our page staff. We also met goals for increased staff meetings and training sessions, and staff learned many new tech skills on the fly while working from home. A lot has been asked of staff and they are always up for the challenge!



In Conclusion:

The COVID-19 pandemic made communications difficult throughout 2020, but not as difficult as 2019! The upgraded email server allowed for a more collaborative workspace for meetings. Zoom accounts were purchased and meetings/trainings quickly adapted to Zoom and Microsoft Teams workspaces. The pandemic taught us many lessons. We learned how to adapt quickly to serving our communities, it was the start of libraries going fine free, it was the beginning of a new decade and we are ready for whatever 2021 throws at us!

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