

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – July, 2013

Heroes Quiet Reading Room Dedication

Homer Library will be dedicating the Michael C. Olivieri Heroes Quiet Reading Room on Friday, August 16 from 6-8pm (program @6:30pm). The invitation and art card have all been completed and printed. Dedication invites have been mailed to Township, Village, local officials, key sponsors, supplied to the Chamber, Homer Glen Foundation, etc. The dedication committee, chaired by Trustee Phyllis Levine, is actively working on preparing for a successful event.

Financial

I am pleased to report that fiscal year-end review shows we are under budget and have limited costs, spending \$1,451,752 this past fiscal year, as compared to \$1,569,898 in 2012 and \$1,584,528 in 2011. We continue to operate conservatively and have maintained a flat budget for the past several years. The new fiscal year begins July 1, 2013. The working budget does not mimic appropriation amounts, which represent our authority to spend. Instead it is an accurate picture of what we are conservatively limiting spending to. The working budget is distributed monthly at all board meetings in the compilation report and also within a comparison chart noting last year's figures. Financial advisor Robert Lewis of PMA Securities has reviewed ten years of audit and levy figures for the library and presented an overall financial success picture. The library's financial stability is lauded and recognized to be extremely solid as the current compilation report shows. Construction costs to June 30, 2013 are noted on a separate compilation report.

Budget/Appropriation

We have held spending to a very conservative financial level and pursued grant funding and sponsorships proactively to help support programs, collection development, and reduce budget costs overall. Our fiscal year-end budget reflects this commitment and the thoughtful planning of the management team. I am pleased to note that this key goal has been met. The appropriation, working budget and levy will begin to be developed and reflect what we expect to expend in FY 2013/14. The appropriation document gives us the authority to spend and allows for the possibility of expenses that may occur. Appropriation figures are not an accurate portrayal of what is spent each year, since the working budget and levy reflect what we expect to expend and plan for. The appropriation document gives us the authority to spend and allows for the probability or possibility of expenses that may occur.

At the July meeting, the board will need to pass a resolution to draft the tentative appropriation and budget ordinance. We will complete a final review with the complete fiscal year end financials (which we receive at the end of July). A final appropriation copy will be completed and forwarded to you for review at the August meeting. At the September 27th board meeting there will be a 7 p.m. special meeting preceding the regular board meeting for a public appropriation hearing and then it will be adopted at the regular meeting that follows.

1. We realized \$10,745 of additional construction savings by eliminating lights on the window tables and making some adjustments with new shelving.
2. Regarding the electricity contract with mc2Energy that we undertook in 2011 our library has saved \$7,600 (or about \$265 monthly) by moving to mc2Energy. Our current contract ends in January 2014. This summer has been cooler than expected and our energy consultant notes energy prices moved down over the last 30 days. If this trend continues, we may lock in a rate before the end of our current deal. We will be getting quotes for the period starting January 2014.
3. As the construction process continues a line item adjustment for the contingency line can be done. I have requested a chart from ICS, showing what to expect in upcoming costs. After review an adjustment can be decided on. We re-fund the contingency line item from item savings such as #1 above and have done this throughout the project.

Collection

New books are being ordered, received, and processed so our customers can enjoy some new summer reads.

We processed more than 100 new DVD movies and are ordering new music CDs. We still have to process approximately 150 more DVDs, but are running out of space to house them!

Construction

The construction is ongoing in the phase 4 remodel, with framing up, offices and story room evident, etc. The punch list is being worked on, contemporary lettering is going up, more seating (re-upholstered) has been delivered, and security cameras are active. Glass privacy panels have been installed on public computers. The building humidity level is being adjusted, and ICS consultant Dan Eallonardo is meeting with the HVAC representative. The generator proposal is lower than we expected and has been signed.

Public Relations

Positive press coverage continues from the local newspapers. The library calendar is accessible from the Library Web page. We have received articles (see links below). I hope for a feature article of the Heroes Quiet Reading Room for future consideration.

- Homer Horizon article
<http://www.homerhorizon.com/Articles-News-c-2013-07-03-265670.114133-Library-welcomes-patrons-back.html>
- Teen book club article
<http://www.homerhorizon.com/Articles-Life-and-Arts-c-2013-07-05-265748.114133-Teens-share-learn-with-Homer-libraries-book-club.html>
- Trib Local article
http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/suburbs/orland_park_homer_glen/ct-tl-0711-homer-township-library-20130710,0,1606318.story

Library Use

Usage is high and people are visiting to see the new space. Comments are very complimentary. In addition, we have a great summer reading program ongoing and 30 teen volunteers who are working with YS to register and assist visitors.

- A. 991 people registered the first week of the Summer Reading Club; this includes children, teens and adults.
- B. A door counter will be installed to track visitors.
- C. A general survey card is being created to gather customer feedback. It will be in paper and on our website.

Libraries offer resources for all ages to improve their quality of life and are often depicted as the heart of a community. With the current economic downturn library usage has increased dramatically. People go to libraries to borrow books, socialize, learn the latest technology, get questions answered, improve skills or learn something new, help grow small businesses, seek new careers with tools and information needed to reenter the workplace, bring their families to enjoy shared activities, programs, classes, and more. ALA statistics note that 68% of Americans now have a library card; the highest percent noted in the past two decades. Every day 300,000 Americans get job-seeking help at their public library. Every day 2.1 million DVDs are borrowed from public libraries. Every day U.S. public libraries circulate as many materials as FedEx ships packages worldwide: 8 million. And two-thirds of Americans have a library card in their wallet.

Homer Library has seen increasing use and is facing the challenges that this brings. Our goal to expand the library space to offer more to our residents is halfway complete. Past record attendance at our programs; demand for more programs, need for updated computers, requests for increased resources and assistance with finding the tools people need for work, careers and health have come forward and will continue to evolve as our space changes. In the past we have responded by almost doubling our program offerings, adding duplicate popular programs to meet increasing need, and adjusting staff schedules to support community use. Major issues included an escalating noise level and demand for more programming and materials. With long range planning we proactively will address the concerns generated by strong and active resident use. It is a high priority that we continue to assess how customers use the library and plan long-range to remain a vital community center of information and lifelong learning. An updated strategic plan planned for 2014 will help guide us into the future and build upon the past quarter century of first-rate library services to Homer residents.

Per Capita & Annual Report

The Illinois State Library (ISL) has provided the per capita grant application to us. Every public library in Illinois is required by law (ILCS) 5/4-10 to file an annual report with the State Library. The purpose of this report is to obtain and publish data on the resources and services of all Illinois public libraries. Our annual report will be completed when fiscal year-end statistics (after June 30th) are in. The ISL has requirements each year which must be met to receive funding. Previously we updated our Technology Plan, formalized our "Green" document and continue to review the required State Standards for Libraries.

Programs + Special Events

The StoryWalk™ literacy and fitness program partners the library with the Homer Glen Foundation (HGF), and Homer Township. Actual laminated story pages are placed along the Sendra Park walk and activities offer residents a unique experience to walk and read with family activities that tie into the stories. We envision seasonal activities and quarterly book changes. The Ribbon Cutting Celebration for this event is on Wednesday, July 31st from 11am- 1pm at the Edmond J. Sendra Park, located in the Woodbine Subdivision.

Teen Volunteers

Community based service can help a person acquire new life skills, understand their responsibility as a citizen, and provides an occasion to take on a new challenge or leadership activity. Community service promotes the positive experience of helping others and creates a learning experience in a non-school setting. We have an active and helpful group of young adult volunteers again this year. I would like to commend Reference Librarian Heather Colby for coordinating our 46+ summer teen intern volunteers. We have plans to continue to offer community service hours each quarter. We value volunteer assistance and commend Homer Teens for their volunteer efforts. The Summer Reading Club, book sale, and other activities working with library staff is an excellent opportunity for the teens to earn community service hours, as well as provide a valuable service to the Library and our community.

Employee Focus

We have an excellent staff that contributes their talents on a daily basis. We offer many programs, services and a collection that exceeds what most small libraries undertake. Managers are conscientious and assist in seeking sponsors and outside funding, including grants that help support what we provide. We are well known for our quality customer service and leadership in this community. I am proud of how much we continue to accomplish and of our excellent reputation in the community, in the System, and statewide.

Some examples of leadership and of being fiscally responsible and cognizant of budget:

- This year once again we solicited both *Summer & Winter Reading Program* sponsors to support the program and incentive costs.
- The Staff initiated *Used Book Sale*, has generated several thousand dollars over the past several years. This is a huge undertaking for staff to coordinate. We plan to hold another sale when construction is complete.
- We have initiated fundraising *Dine Days* with local restaurants (Chesdans, Mimi's Café, Cold Stone Creamery, etc.) where a percent of purchases and sales is donated back to us.
- *Donate a DVD* was marketed by staff widely and brought in 1013 DVDs to help jump start our newest collection - (1013 DVDs @ average cost of \$22 = \$22,286 savings). We now have approximately 2,181 DVDs in the collection, of which almost 46% were donated.
- *Lincolns for Libraries* (while providing nominal monetary support) was a wide goodwill/awareness success with our preschool children and parents who would bring in their pennies to the Youth Department.
- *Grant Funding* this year provided funds for collections, programs and a wide range of literacy activities that could not have all been undertaken without this monetary support.
- *Teen Volunteer Program* has 46 teens doing a variety of jobs that assist us each year.
- *Bookmobile Savings* include establishing a relationship with Homer Township for reduced gas costs; and reduced maintenance expense by having SD 33C bus barn staff and mechanics undertake general maintenance and repairs at reduced costs.

Spotlight on Staff - We extend our congratulations to Jody Olivieri and family who welcomed granddaughter Paige Noelle, who was born July 22nd.

ILEBP

Illinois Employee Benefit Plan (ILEBP) is our health insurance provider. As noted previously I have resigned as trustee and President on the ILEBP board. The ILEBP Board has reviewed plan usage for the past year and has set the rates for the next fiscal year. For the 2013-14 year there will be no increases for vision, dental and life insurance rates. There will be a 12% increase in health care costs and a cost distributive formula weighted the costs to family members with a higher increase. Year-to-date ILEBP financials show a high claim picture that reduces reserves. ILEBP had no increase in years 2009, 2008, and 2007 respectively and has averaged a 4% annual increase over the past six years. The national average is 12-14%+ for annual health care increases, so the plan is well below that. I have solicited options for the library as part of ongoing review and this includes ILEBP, LImRICC, and both a fully insured and self-funded plan. There is much long range planning underway at ILEBP and insurance change coming. Last month I asked for a vendor review of our Homer pool to review options for us that could benefit our employees and costs. I will be reporting more when that information is received.

Book Sale

The library book sale will not be held until 2014. In the past we had approximately 34 teens volunteer to assist with the preparation, including sorting and working each sale day. In 2009 the library netted approximately \$1,200 to supplement future materials purchasing and we received \$1,600 in 2008. In 2011 we netted an all-time high of \$2,092. In times of a tax-capped budget these extra funds are very welcome and we hope to undertake another successful sale day next year.

Concealed Carry Firearms

The ILA Reporter reported the news that the Illinois General Assembly passed House Bill 183. The enacted law contains a total prohibition on the carrying of firearms in many locations including all school, colleges, universities, community colleges, public libraries and government buildings. Appropriate signage will be posted.

VIP Rolling Library

The VIP outreach service is in its eighth year. Bookmobile staff provides materials to each Senior Village, promoting use of our collections and creating personalized service to seniors who may be unable to visit the library. The bookmobile is in attendance at these visits and is well received by these members in our community. We continue to proactively monitor the bookmobile equipment and service needs.

Summer Reading Program

This year we are presenting the theme: ***Have Book Will Travel*** at the main and on the bookmobile. A steady stream of children, teens, and adults has registered for this year's summer reading club: 901 the first week! We thank local organizations and businesses for their ongoing generosity. Once again we approached area schools to donate a prize basket so that students can proudly recognize their schools' partnership and reading tie-in with the library. Donations were received from many sponsors including: local restaurant gift certificates, admission passes, prize baskets, free kids meal certificates, bowling passes, and more all provide wonderful encouragement for summer reading in a fun way. The generosity of these sponsors has been a wonderful cost savings for our tax-capped budget. Many thanks go to Administrative Assistant Patti Nakutis for doing such a wonderful job in coordinating sponsors and incentives. All sponsors are being showcased in library PR and on our web site.

Conclusion

This has been an extremely busy month. My priorities for the coming months are construction, budget/appropriation, sponsorships, and long range planning. Statistics will begin to be compiled for the annual IPLAR report.

These monthly reports are intended to give you a detailed overview and provide pertinent information on local, regional and state issues. If you need anything in my reports detailed more fully, please let me know.

Sherree Kozel-La Ha

SHEREE KOZEL-LA HA
Executive Director

July 28, 2013