

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – October, 2014

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### Library Milestone

We celebrated our one-year anniversary on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Customers continue to provide positive feedback regarding the addition and remodeling.

### Grants Awarded

I am pleased to note that the Homer Township Oak Arbor has granted the library \$500 to be used for collections, programs, or equipment. Every year a recipient is chosen to be the beneficiary of grant funds. I am pleased that Homer Twp. Library is their first recipient.

In other grant news, the library was awarded a Financial Education Library Grant from the Jumpstart Illinois Coalition for Financial Smarts for Students. This grant is designed to **facilitate financial education** and will allow us to purchase more items necessary for the collection for use by our youth.

Lastly, I submitted a \$15,000 grant for the American Dream literacy initiative and should hear in November if the application was successful.

### Author Fair@ Homer Township Public Library

We had an entertaining and well-received Author Fair. I would like to commend Help Desk staff member Becky Vallejo for her successful efforts at coordinating this event. These events also showcase our exceptional staff team and their effort as they assist in supporting quality events for the community.

### ILA Conference

The annual Illinois Library Association conference is always educational. Sara McCambridge, Carol McSweeney and I attended ILA on Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> and appreciate the opportunity to network, learn the latest in library trends and issues, bring back new ideas, and see the newest in materials and items from vendors. Highlights this year included legal programs and a legislative update. ILA was a worthwhile conference.

### Levy

The draft levy is within your packets. There will be a 7 p.m. special meeting preceding the regular board meeting this month for a public hearing in taxation hearing before adoption of the 2013-14 levies.

The levy defines the categories in which tax dollars are being allocated to. The recent legal notice simply does not allow us to provide the detail necessary or the reasons that adequately describe levy intentions. Homer Township Library operates in a fiscally conservative manner. We proactively pursue grants, sponsorships, special event fundraisers, and awards that benefit our community. The library board and administration are proactive in trying to maintain our tax rate so we can operate effectively. Over the long term, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law ("tax cap") has reduced the library's tax rate from the .15 rate that was originally established in 1982. Due to the tax cap our rate has eroded down to .1268. This creates a significant loss of funds for library services and in providing for the operation of the library. The library levies a higher amount than we actually will receive in part to ensure we do not lose further ground. The levy notice cites an 11.6% increase, reduced from 12.6% the previous year. We anticipate an actual gain of approximately 2-3%, and that will be dependent on actual "new growth" monies. Last year the levy notice was essentially the same and we saw a 4% increase, again due to new growth monies. The levy request helps the library to:

1. Retain the maximum dollars that as a taxing district we are allowed by statute.
2. Insure that we capture both the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and New Growth monies. If there is new growth in the community and we are serving more people, our rate is adjusted so the library has proper

funds to operate to serve residents adequately and meet State Standards. If there is limited or no new growth we see narrow or no gain.

The increase on the corporate and special purpose levies should capture any new property in addition to the CPI increase. This 1/3 of the levy increase was to capture tax revenue for new property and, to the extent that all the new property does not materialize, then it will not be extended and collected. The other 2/3rds of the increase is for a back-up levy put into place for a new bond issue. However, the District plans to pay the bond payments from operating revenues and does not anticipate ever using this back-up levy. Accordingly, the District will abate the bond levy annually before the County extends and collects the tax.

At one time the library accounted for approximately 3% of a homeowner's tax bill. We now account for approximately 1.8% of a person's tax bill. Our Library mission is to make available to all people (from birth through senior citizenship) the materials and resources they need to participate in lifelong learning, enjoy a good quality of life, and to remain civically engaged. As a community center we take great pride in serving our community with excellence. Usage continues to increase and we continue to have approximately 600+ visitors daily. Long range budget planning continues to allow us to serve our Homer Glen and Homer Township communities well.

### **Special Events**

1. Fall Field Trips have been scheduled as an outreach endeavor to school classrooms to encourage all students to get a library card and feel comfortable visiting the library.
2. October is Illinois Arts Month. We are displaying local artist works in our display case.

### **Programs + Events**

Upcoming library events and programs include:

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|-----------------|---|
| ◆ September     | Literacy Month and Library Card Sign Up Month               |
| ◆ September     | Fall newsletter distributed via Homer Horizon Newspaper     |
| ◆ September 7   | Sunday hours 4-8p.m. resumed                                |
| ◆ Sept 21-27    | Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read          |
| ◆ October       | Illinois Arts Month   |
| ◆ October 3     | Teen Open House   |
| ◆ October 12-18 | Teen Read Week  |
| ◆ October 14-16 | Illinois Library Association Annual Conference; Springfield |
| ◆ October 20    | Author Fair   |
| ◆ October 22    | Senior Harvest with Homer Township Oak Arbor                |
| ◆ November      | Food for Fines week   |
| ◆ November 13   | Star Wars Specialty Program                                 |
| ◆ November 20   | 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten kickoff                     |
| ◆ November 15   | National Game Day   |
| ◆ November 20   | Family Reading Night  |
| ◆ December 13   | Holiday Puppet Show   |

### **In General**

1. We have scheduled School District 33C field trips to showcase our youth and library areas.
2. Sunday hours have begun and are extremely popular.

3. Homer Library was invited to be part of the Community Guide for Lockport that is created by the Lockport Township Chamber of Commerce.
4. The Library Calendar that lists all of our programs is accessible from the Web page.
5. Both fall school visits and registration have begun to promote the library's collections, services and support of teachers and students.
6. The Library Web page highlights a "quick click" homework/assignment alert form on the site at [www.homerlibrary.org](http://www.homerlibrary.org). Teachers use this as a means of sending our staff messages, questions, or comments.
7. Distribution of monthly calendars to local schools is ongoing.
8. We have scheduled a full slate of quality fall and winter programming.

### **Conclusion**

This monthly report is intended to give you a detailed overview and provide pertinent information on local, regional and state issues. Upcoming priorities include oversight and review of the working budget.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need any item in my report detailed more fully.

*Sheree Kozel-La Ha*

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Library Director

10/21/14