

Community Connections – Outreach

Community Partners

Senior Fair

Date: October 1

Attendance: 162

Partner: Village of Lombard

Staff: Katie Cortesi (Senior Outreach Librarian), Kimberly Sipek (Community Engagement Coordinator) & Kelly Simms (HPL Trustee)

Helen Plum Library joined community partners to provide local seniors with resources, health screenings and information about community programs and services. HPL handed out large print crossword puzzles, informational handouts on programs and online resources, and provided a demonstration on how to use the LED 3X lighted desk magnifier.

Fall Fest

Date: October 4

Attendance: 400+

Partner: Lombard Park District

Staff: Cate Hoadley (Youth Services Assistant Manager), Emily Bradshaw (Content Coordinator), Steph Koblich (Graphic Designer) & Kimberly Sipek (Community Engagement Coordinator)

Helen Plum Library attended the Lombard Park District's annual Fall Fest. Activities included a large coloring page station and a "Vote for Your Favorite Fall Thing" station where visitors could place pom poms into the jar that matched their favorite fall item or activity. Staff gave away youth program calendars and HPL branded snack bags.

Preschool Visit

Date: October 7

Attendance: 120

Partner: St. Pius X Parish School

Staff: Chris Sowl (Youth Services Library Associate II)

Chris Sowl visited St. Pius X Parish School's 3 and 4-year-old preschool classrooms for a fall storytime.

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Kindergarten Classroom Visit

Date: October 29

Attendance: 71

Partner: Madison Elementary School

Staff: Deidre Winterhalter (Elementary Services Librarian)

This October's story and craft kicked off the second year of quarterly Youth Services staff visits to kindergarten classrooms. Students listened, learned, danced, and made an extremely spooky bat craft (see above right image).



Kindergarten students at Madison Elementary School and their spooky bat crafts.

Program Highlights

Early Literacy Program Highlights

Drop-in and Dance Monster Mash

Date: October 31

Attendance: 169

Staff: Tricia Nelson (Early Literacy Librarian) & Cate Hoadley (Youth Services Assistant Manager)

Staff welcomed 179 patrons dressed in their best costumes to the 1-hour drop-in dance party for Halloween (see right image).



Kids enjoying the *Monster Mash*.

Elementary Program Highlights

3D Printing: Name Plate

Date: October 9

Attendance: 16 (two sessions)

Staff: Deidre Winterhalter (Elementary Services Librarian)

Third through fifth grade students learned to design name plates in Tinkercad, an entry level 3D design software. Two classes of kids enthusiastically learned, navigated, and designed. Participants picked up their printed creations later that week.

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Halloween Science K–2 and 3–5

Date: October 13

Attendance: 40 (two sessions)

Staff: Deidre Winterhalter (Elementary Services Librarian) & Chris Sowl (Youth Services Library Associate II)

Elementary school students played “Frankenstein” and grew three different monsters, experimenting with acid-based reactions, density, solubility, and chemical reactions (see right image). The students then learned about energy and launched “eyeballs” with catapults.



Students growing monsters at the Halloween Science program.

Teen Program Highlights

Haunted Escape Room

Date: October 22

Attendance: 11

Staff: Mark Smith (Youth Services Library Associate II), Jeannie Arinyanontakoon (Youth Services Library Associate II) & Caitlin Atkinson (Teen Librarian)

Teens enjoyed a spooky-themed escape room. When the teens entered, staff told them the haunted escape was cancelled only to surprise them with a twist: they couldn't escape the room. Staff received an email shout-out from a happy participant's caregiver after the program.

Family Program Highlights

Nature Art

Date: October 29

Attendance: 55 (two sessions)

Staff: Julia Kindelin (Youth Services Library Associate II) & Chris Sowl (Youth Services Library Associate II)

Early learners used natural materials in unconventional ways and created several crafts (see right image). During the two registered sessions, participants made stick figure masterpieces (with real sticks) and sun catchers with leaves.



Patrons create stick figures with natural supplies during Nature Art.

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Adult Program Highlights

Computer Classes

Sessions: 14

Attendance: 85

Staff: Erin Bigger-Goldlust (Digital Services & Instruction Librarian) & Lance Garrison (Adult Library Services Librarian)

Popular classes in October covered ChatGPT, Canva, and Excel.

Senior Program Highlights

Senior Social: The Women Who Measured the Stars

Date: October 20

Attendance: 34

Staff: Katie Cortesi (Senior Outreach Librarian)

Historical Interpreter Rebecca Tulloch highlighted the scientific contributions made by Henrietta Swan Leavitt, Annie Jump Cannon, and Cecilia Payne.

Presentations and Performances for Adults

A Tale of Two Chicagos: The White City and the Murder Castle of Englewood

Date: October 1

Attendance: 70

Staff: Courtney Rose Welsh (Adult Library Services Programming Librarian)

Clarence Goodman returned for a presentation on H.H. Holmes and the Chicago's World Fair (see right image).



Skywatching Using Only Your Eyes

Date: October 6

Attendance: 52

Staff: Courtney Rose Welsh (Adult Library Services Programming Librarian)

Michelle Nicols of the Adler Planetarium taught patrons how to observe the skies without a telescope.

Clarence Goodman presents to a full house on H.H. Holmes

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Designer Hacks for Easy Flower Arranging

Date: October 22

Attendance: 64

Staff: Courtney Rose Welsh (Adult Library Services Programming Librarian)

Heather Coughlin from Pure Bloom Flowers demonstrated how to make various flower arrangements.

Sunday Music Series: Halloween

Happening with Zazz Jazz

Date: October 26

Attendance: 37

Staff: Courtney Rose Welsh (Adult Library Services Programming Librarian)

Zazz Jazz entertained patrons with some spooky tunes (see right image).



Zazz Jazz performs (in costume!)

Genealogy Club: Using AI to Amplify Your Genealogical Work

Date: October 27

Attendance: 22

Staff: David Gogo (Genealogy and Local History Librarian)

Genetic genealogist and speaker Kate Penney Howard presented on how AI can help with genealogy work.

Singing Bird and the Importance of Native American Women in Illinois History

Date: October 29

Attendance: 52

Staff: Courtney Rose Welsh (Adult Library Services Programming Librarian)

Ojibwa author and speaker Kim Sigafus presented on historical Native American Women in Illinois, including Black Hawk's wife, Singing Bird (see right image).



Kim Sigafus presents to patrons.

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Studio 411 Program Highlights

Studio 411: Halloween Quilted Table Runner

Date: October 3 & 10

Attendance: 14

Staff: Melisa Martinez (Studio 411 Supervisor) & Afra Siddiqui (Library Associate II)

Patrons worked on a quilted table runner. This program was two sessions to allow for time for completion.

Studio 411: Needle Felted Fall Leaves Garland

Date: October 7

Attendance: 17

Staff: Melisa Martinez (Studio 411 Supervisor) & Afra Siddiqui (Library Associate II)

Patrons used wool to create a felted garland.

Studio 411: Create a Custom Sweatshirt

Date: October 21

Attendance: 17

Staff: Melisa Martinez (Studio 411 Supervisor) & Afra Siddiqui (Library Associate II)

Patrons used heat presses to make custom sweatshirts.

Studio 411: Drop in Hours

Date: October 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27 & 29

Attendance: 48

Staff: Melisa Martinez (Studio 411 Supervisor) & Afra Siddiqui (Library Associate II)

The Studio expanded drop-in hours. On most Mondays and Wednesdays, the Studio is open for drop-in patrons from 10:00am–8:00pm. Limited appointments are still available on days without open studio.



HPL patron, Kristen, learned how to sew with the help of Melisa at an October drop-in.

Collection Management

Baker & Taylor Update: In early October, one of the largest library vendors for books and AV material, Baker & Taylor (B&T), announced that they will be shutting down their business by the end of this year. While a small number of staff remain to wind down operations, over 800 people were

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laid off immediately, including 318 at B&T's warehouse in Momence, IL. Unfortunately, there was no advance notice of this closure for either B&T employees or customers.

B&T has struggled both financially and operationally for several years. Staffing challenges and business disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic were followed by a serious ransomware attack in 2022. Growing debt to publishers and other creditors has also limited B&T's ability to acquire books and fulfill orders in a timely manner. In September, an acquisition offer by the international wholesale book distributor ReaderLink appeared that it might allow B&T to continue operating. However, the deal was called off due to ReaderLink's unwillingness to assume responsibility for B&T's outstanding debt.

The sudden closure of B&T is causing significant disruptions for libraries across the country as alternative vendors struggle to onboard hundreds of new customers at once. Fortunately, HPL has proactively transferred almost all our business from B&T to Ingram in recent years, and we do not anticipate any issues continuing to acquire books for our collection.

However, one B&T service we were still using is their eBook lending platform, Boundless. We are members of the eRead Illinois cooperative, sponsored by RAILS, which has used Boundless as their platform for over 10 years. Despite the extremely short notice that Boundless will shut down in December, RAILS staff have already selected an alternative platform for eRead Illinois content that will provide unique advantages for us.

The new platform for eRead Illinois is the Palace Project. Palace is an open-source mobile app and e-content marketplace operated by Lyrasis, a library-led nonprofit organization. In addition to migrating all the titles previously available in Boundless, the Palace Marketplace will provide us with more favorable e-content licensing terms as well as access to Audible-exclusive audiobook titles, which are not currently available to libraries through any other service. Palace has already been successfully adopted statewide in California, Washington, Georgia, and New Jersey.

We anticipate the Palace app will be ready for patrons in December.

Shifting and StackMap: Stephanie Howes (Adult Library Services Assistant Manager) completed the bulk of the shifting in Adult Library Services in October. Nonfiction was shifted back to allow for more room in the Spanish collection. Periodicals are now at the start of nonfiction. Our next step involves expanding the biography collection.

As shifting is completed, additional sections of the collection on the 2nd floor are being added to StackMap. In October, the adult nonfiction shelves from approximately the 600s–Reference were mapped.

Patron Engagement

Marketing Engagement

Top social media post of the month: On Instagram, the post that continued to see the most activity in October was posted at the end of September, a video called [“Sounds millennial bookworms are trained to hear,”](#) with audio clips from book-themed 90s TV shows. It has over 60,400 views. The video with the most views posted in October featured staff sharing their [audiobook listening speeds](#). It has 9,460 views and counting. On Facebook, the post about Taylor Swift’s new album being available on Hoopla Digital on the day of its release had over 4,000 views.

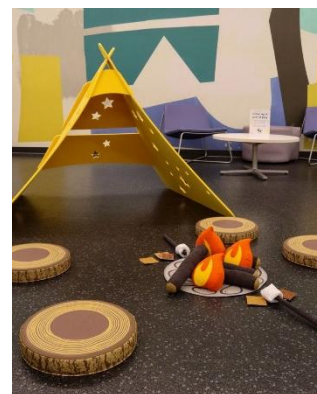
Email Newsletters: Email newsletters are delivered to patrons every other week. We have a total of **27,084** email subscribers. Individual subscribers may receive more than one targeted email newsletter. For example, a parent may receive Elementary and Middle School Newsletters for their children as well as the Adult Newsletter. Additionally, the NextReads newsletter is a reader’s advisory service with a total of **353** subscribers. Adult patrons can sign up on our [website](#) and select from a number of reader’s advisory tracks.

Facilities Updates

Robin’s Nest Theme: The Robin’s Nest received a revamp in early October. Families have enjoyed this quarter's Camping Theme (see right image).

Building Updates: Phil Lucas (Facility & Security Services Manager) coordinates building maintenance, repair, and ongoing testing.

- We passed our fire inspection on Oct 24.
- Lower interior windows were cleaned.
- The snowmelt system was turned on for the season.
- Exterior seasonal lighting was installed.
- Vinyl window coverings were installed along the book drop drive.
- Extra walk off mats for the lobby were ordered for the winter months.
- Ordered chair rail for the north meeting rooms and study rooms.
- Opened accounts with Sunrise Electric and Ferguson Plumbing.



Staff Updates

New Staff:

- Ellen Brooks, Home Delivery Specialist
- Michelle Moreno, Patron Services Assistant

Transitioning Staff:

- Abi Caskey was promoted to a Youth Services Library Associate II.
- Joey Vichio, Patron Services Assistant, is moving to Youth Services as a Library Associate II.

A current list of job openings is available on our website: [Employment Opportunities | Helen Plum Library](#).

Meetings, Training, & Continuing Education

Staff Training

Staff Emergency Training: The annual Staff Emergency Training Day was held this month on October 24, conducted after closing to the public at 1pm. The training included:

- Fire drill
- Tornado drill
- Code Adam (missing child) drill
- Missing Vulnerable Person drill
- Active shooter training (Run, Hide, Fight)

iCAMP: Tim Mayse-Lillig (Cataloging & Systems Librarian) is again participating as a mentor in the Illinois Cataloging Mentorship Program. iCAMP is a nine-month program which pairs experienced catalogers with early-career professionals to develop their cataloging skills, provide networking opportunities, and establish lasting professional relationships. Tim will be working with two mentees this year, both employed at public libraries in northern Illinois.

Meetings and Professional Development

October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Arrangements Committee Meeting for the IUG 2026 Conference in Chicago (Tim Mayse-Lillig)
October 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illinois State Library FY2026 Per Capita Information Session (Anne Luzeniecki)

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October 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with DuPage Art League to promote 2nd floor exhibition area and list Helen Plum Library on their Call for Artists page (Kimberly Sipek)
October 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented at the RAILS Data Conference: Libraries Count on the topic of “Algorithms & Analytics: Harnessing Social Media to Create Library Programs” with Misty Jump from Batavia Public Library (Emily Bradshaw)
October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with the new Development & Marketing Coordinator at Outreach House to provide HPL resource materials and discuss an ongoing slatwall display at HPL (Kimberly Sipek)
October 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAILS Consortia Committee Meeting at the Burr Ridge service center (Alex Vancina)
October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WILIUG Steering Committee Meeting (Alex Vancina & Tim Mayse-Lillig) First meeting with iCAMP mentees (Tim Mayse-Lillig) Board of Trustees Meeting
October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LACONI Governing Board Meeting (Alex Vancina)
October 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Emergency Training RAILS Board Meeting at the East Peoria service center (Alex Vancina)
October 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Meeting ILA Marketing Forum Meeting (Emily Bradshaw)
October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff Meetings
October 7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended AspenCon in Nashville (Tim Mayse-Lillig)
October 14–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illinois Library Association Annual Conference (Tabatha Anderson, Nancy Bartl, Katie Horner, Tricia Nelson, Chris Sowl, Alex Vancina & Deidre Winterhalter)

Staff Glossary:

Tabatha Anderson – Youth Services Manager

Deidre Winterhalter – Elementary Services Librarian

Nancy Bartl – Patron Services Assistant Manager

Emily Bradshaw – Content Coordinator

Katie Horner – Patron Services Manager

Anne Luzeniecki – Executive Director

Tim Mayse-Lillig – Cataloging & Systems Librarian

Tricia Nelson – Early Literacy Librarian

Kimberly Sipek – Community Engagement Coordinator

Chris Sowl – Youth Services Library Associate II

Alex Vancina – Technology & Metadata Services Manager