

Book Report

APRIL 2019  VOLUME II



Bradley Debrick,
Early Literacy Coordinating Librarian



ROCK-A-BYE BABY READER: Language for little readers

When a baby babbles, makes funny noises with her lips and screeches and coos, she's making her first attempts to talk. At this tender age, she's also trying to learn the meanings of the sounds her parents make when they're smiling and rocking her.

Babies are ready to learn language, and parents are the best teachers. 6 by 6 Ready to Read, Johnson County Library's popular early literacy program, encourages parents to talk, read and sing songs with babies and children to help them understand and use language. 6 by 6 refers to the six pre-reading skills which kids should experience by age six. The program provides books, events and activities for parents and children aimed at developing a love of language, books and learning. And now, 6 by 6 is making its way to new parents thanks to partnerships established with local hospitals and healthcare providers.

Bradley Debrick, Johnson County's Early Literacy Coordinating Librarian, leads 6 by 6, creating events, coordinating activities in the Library's 14 early literacy spaces, mentoring Library colleagues who present storytimes for babies, toddlers and older children, and sometimes playing the autoharp during his own storytimes.

One of the 6 by 6 skills focuses on holding and handling books, so Debrick is also always on the lookout for new early

literacy books to add to the Library's collection. He discovered that Third Week Books publishes a colorful illustrated booklet called "Rock-A-Bye-Baby Reader: A first book for babies and parents" which includes similar language-building activities to those in the 6 by 6 program.

Other libraries had used "Rock-A-Bye Baby Reader" as-is, but to align the content more closely to the 6 by 6 model, Debrick worked with the publisher and designer on editing and branding it for the Library. Community America Credit Union contributed a generous \$10,000 grant to cover the cost of printing the booklet.



Now, the Library distributes hundreds of copies of "Rock-A-Bye Baby Reader" through Maternity Navigators at the Advent Health/Shawnee Mission Birth Center and the Nurse-Family Partnership Program through the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment offices at Martway and Lamar.

Based at Antioch Library, Debrick thinks of himself as a connector – connecting parents and caregivers with library resources, supportive organizations with each other, and children with a love of stories. He feels his greatest strength is his ability to communicate effectively on different levels.

He says, "I can really communicate with kids and parents at the same time, to get them both what they need and help them succeed at the library."



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March 2019

BRANCHING OUT

Blue Valley Library

QUESTION 1: Where in southern Johnson County can you pick up holds and return books at a convenient drive-up window?

ANSWER: Blue Valley Library's convenient drive-up window makes picking up holds and returning materials quick and easy.

QUESTION 2: Which Library has the highest circulation of materials?

ANSWER: Again, it's Blue Valley Library. In 2018, patrons checked out or renewed 1,234,600 items and returned 1,161,300. In one week in February 2019, Blue Valley's collection included 132,891 items total, with 81,459 items on the shelves.

Handling that volume of circulation is a big job, but Blue Valley's staff of 37, including pages, volunteers and one sorter keep everything moving smoothly.

Blue Valley Library serves the rapidly growing population of southern Johnson County and welcomes

*Stephanie Bailey,
Branch Manager
(center), with
Assistant Branch
Managers
Matt Hammes and
Dev Tillotson*



over 300,000 patrons through its doors annually. Assistant Branch Manager Matt Hammes says the Library's patrons are some of the most diverse in the Johnson County Library system. To meet their needs, Blue Valley offers materials and programs for a variety of ages and interests.

Branch Manager Stephanie Bailey oversees the public-facing librarians and the Adult Services and Youth Services departments. Assistant Branch Managers Matt Hammes and Dev Tillotson train and manage the pages, clerks and volunteers and wrangle the branch's collection.

Bailey says, "As the County gets larger and more diverse, we should expect that we, as a Library, will also continue to expand and include more people with different backgrounds, skills and life experiences."

The area includes many young families, and the storytimes for babies, toddlers and children are popular activities -- so popular that parents must come early to get tickets. For kids from birth to age six, the Youth Services staff plans and coordinates fun 6 by 6 activities designed around six pre-reading skills kids should

experience by age six to help them develop a love of language, books and learning.

Students and tutors take advantage of the Library's study spaces. "After school, not a single table is free," says Bailey.



Blue Valley Library also hosts interesting adult activities: a "Meet the Author" event in March featuring Leanne Brown, the author of "Good & Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day," Monday and Wednesday book clubs and popular yearly Legislative Coffees. A recent coffee drew an audience of 180.

How do the assistant branch managers feel about working at this busy branch?

Hammes says, "Blue Valley's busy circulation is an excellent fit for my skills and my interests, which makes it a fun place to work."

Tillotson enjoys her growth opportunities. "The staff at the Blue Valley branch are awesome, and I have been privileged to work and learn with an amazing and talented group of people."



TOP 10 HOLDS



MARCH 2019

- 911 Where the Crawdads Sing**
Delia Owens
- 591 Educated: A Memoir**
Tara Westover
- 552 Becoming**
Michelle Obama
- 477 Nine Perfect Strangers**
Liane Moriarty
- 346 The Silent Patient**
Alex Michaelides
- 289 The Reckoning**
John Grisham
- 259 The Tattooist of Auschwitz**
Heather Morris
- 251 Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth**
Sarah Smarsh
- 242 The Library Book**
Susan Orlean
- 239 An Anonymous Girl**
Greer Hendricks

MEET A FRIEND

Friends Bookstores Have Some BFFs

Library patrons may know Friends of Johnson County Library because they've seen the Friends Bookstores at Antioch, Central and Blue Valley Libraries. They may even have purchased used books there, but few people have an inkling of everything that goes into making those books available.

Julie Steiner is President of the Friends of the Library Board. She's in her sixth and final year on the Board, and she says that she's still learning more about how the Friends' activities help the Library.

It's clear that Julie grew up with a love for books and the Library. "My dad's volunteered for the Library for a long time," she says. "And I still have a library card that I'd say is vintage!"

Julie emphasizes the importance of the work of volunteers and a staff of four. They are at the heart of Friends services, from beginning to end.

Steiner explains that when used materials are weeded from the Library's collection or donated at branch libraries, volunteers sort them to determine which materials to sell online and which to send to the Friends Bookstores. There's no technology to speed up the process: the volunteers do all of the sorting by hand. The Friends operations manager oversees the process, a big job that involves many volunteers.

Couriers then deliver the selected materials to the Friends Bookstores where volunteer sales clerks sell them. Then the proceeds from sales of books, CDs and DVDs go to the Library Foundation to fund library programs.

With the rise of online content, Steiner says used book sales in general have decreased. The challenge for the Friends' Board, she says, is to keep the



Julie Steiner, Friends of the Library President

bookstores in the public's mind. To that end, the Board is working on developing five new strategic initiatives.

The new initiatives are geared to advancing the Friends' mission through

“ My dad's volunteered for the Library for a long time. And I still have a library card that I'd say is vintage! ”

advocacy, membership growth, fundraising, operational excellence and marketing and communications. That last initiative will be key, and to stretch the Friends' small budget, part of it will be to encourage patrons to talk to their friends about the Friends Bookstores. A revamp of the Friends website is also in progress, which should make information about the Bookstores and membership in the Friends more visible and accessible.

"A group of determined individuals helped give the library its start in 1952 and formed the original Friends of the Johnson County Library. Today's Friends are proud to continue this legacy through advocacy, our passion for literacy and our support of a thriving Library system," Julie said.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Lacie Griffin, Collection Development Manager

Many of us collect books. But it's doubtful that any of us have as large a collection as Lacie Griffin's -- more than 1.2 million items -- books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, reference materials and more.

Thankfully, we all have access to these materials, too. As Collection Development Manager and Inter-library Loan Manager, Griffin manages the team in charge of Johnson County Library's entire collection. How do they do it? By carefully selecting and weeding, she says.

Johnson County Library focuses on selecting materials of varying complexity and format and a range of viewpoints to serve a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, preferences, interests and physical and mental abilities. When usage falls off, when content becomes outdated or when there are simply too many copies on hand for the demand, materials are weeded out. The Friends of the Library sells the items in the Friends Bookstores, in special book sales or online.

"When a new book comes out, say a James Patterson novel, we may order up to 50 copies," says Griffin. "But after several months, when usage falls off, we weed out half of them, leaving each branch two or three copies."

To research new books for possible selection, Collection Development staff members keep up with what's new and popular with different populations and age ranges. They read publishers' announcements of new editions, professional and popular reviews, fan blogs, Goodreads, media advertising and conduct library surveys. A staff member will even attend Comic Con to find out what graphic novels are popular with teen readers.

Managing the collections at new branches during Johnson County Library's 20-year Comprehensive Library Master Plan is challenging. The Collection Development department's \$3.5 million yearly operating budget must cover an ever-growing demand for materials -- a 7 percent increase in circulation over the past five years -- and must provide materials to new branches.

In the last two years, the Library has had two major building projects.

**“ In opening
new buildings and
renovating old ones, I
see us reaching
for our vision with
open arms.”**

Equipping them with materials requires extensive preplanning -- and weeding and shuffling. Monticello Library, which opened in Shawnee in August 2018, was the first new branch needing materials.

Griffin explains the process of getting Monticello started without breaking the bank: "We were looking at plans which would have cost the Library over \$2 million. By developing a new plan to use some of the system's existing collection and focus purchasing on newly published works, we were able to cut that cost in half."

The new Lenexa City Center Library will open on June 2, 2019, which means Griffin and the Collection Development Department will be busy for the foreseeable future.

Looking ahead, Griffin says, "In opening new buildings and renovating old ones, I see us reaching for our vision with open arms. The Library system is constantly creating environments that can keep up with ever-changing technology and the ever-increasing needs of the community. I'm excited to see what equipment and spaces we develop to continue providing patrons the free materials and tools they need."



She adds, "Johnson County Library's mission is to provide access to ideas, information, experiences and materials that support and enrich people's lives. And the Collection Development Department lives this mission every day."

On the personal side, Griffin and her husband, Matt, have two boys, ages 10 and 8, and a two-year-old pit bull named Austin. The family loves swimming, board games and soccer. And for the past 10 years, Griffin has enjoyed volunteering in the nursery at Church of the Resurrection.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

"There are no hungry people in Johnson County" and Other Myths

Food insecurity was the topic of the March "Meet the Author" event at Central Resource Library. The author was Leanne Brown, author of the New York Times bestseller, "Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4 a Day."

Brown introduced the book of inexpensive recipes for every meal, plus tips for cooking, eating and shopping well. Author Michael Pollan has called "Good and Cheap" a "beautiful book full of recipes that fit a food stamp budget."

Joining Brown in a panel discussion on food insecurity were Jessica Keir, Director of Programs and Client Collaboration Initiatives at Harvesters; Mariah Friend, Volunteer Coordinator for After the Harvest; and Joey Hentzler, Director of Advocacy for Kansas Appleseed Center for Law & Justice.

All three organizations are dedicated to providing essential nutrition to people in our communities. Harvesters, in partnership with organizations that distribute donated



Representatives of Harvesters, After the Harvest and Kansas Appleseed Center for Law & Justice joined author Leanne Brown for a panel discussion.

Countians lack consistent access to nutritious, healthy food. That represents a food insecurity rate of more than 10 percent overall and 15.1 percent for children. Yet only 4 percent of Johnson County households receive food assistance.

Why the gap? Panel members cited shame and fear of judgment as reasons eligible people don't apply for the \$1.24 per day the Kansas Food Assistance Program provides. When people feel they are "supposed" to be able to take care of themselves and their families, they may go hungry rather than admit when they can't.

What becomes clear is that food insecurity is a fact, whether we choose to see it or not. But fortunately, through education, nutrition programs and advocacy, there are organizations that are dedicated to providing food to people who need it -- yes, even here in Johnson County.



food, helps feed people in 26 counties. After the Harvest rescues nutritious fruits and vegetables from going to waste and donates them to agencies that serve hungry people, mostly in Greater Kansas City. Kansas Appleseed champions laws and policies that promote good nutrition for all Kansans, especially children.

About that myth: According to Kansas Appleseed, more than 60,000 Johnson



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

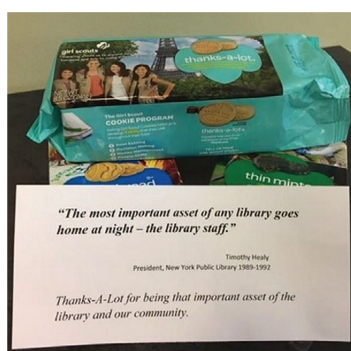
Social Media Highlights



Our interview with **composer** and **teacher**
Eddie Moore received many shares.



JoCoHistory
highlighted
Women's History
Month.



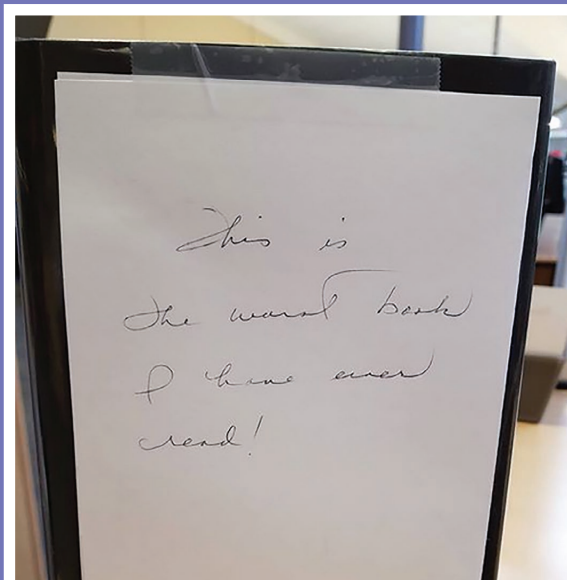
Library
staff
received a
sweet
thank-you.



Oak Park Library is ready
for **warm weather.**



For **International Women's Day**, the County featured many of its **inspiring female employees**, including some from the Library.



People like to talk about **books they love** – but they **REALLY** love to talk about **books they hate**. This post received 800 reactions and a whopping 973 comments.



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Month in Review March 2019



Monticello Library hosted a Legislative Coffee.



Young patrons brought their imaginations and costumes to Cedar Roe Library's Royal Tea Party.



Career seekers met face-to-face with employers at the 2019 KansasWorks Statewide Job Fair held at Central Resource Library.



An Earth Day display at Lackman Library



NEXT ISSUE

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-  **Staff Spotlight:** Ben Sunds, Associate Director for Customer Experience
-  **Event:** Read to a Dog
-  **Foundation Focus:** Rich Cook
-  **Branching Out:** Oak Park Library

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS

Library

BOOK REPORT

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