



Book Report

JUNE 2019  VOLUME IV



TEENS "BREAK FREE" OF EXPECTATIONS AT *ELEMENTIA* RECEPTION

On Friday, April 26, the Carmack Community Room vibrated with beats provided by a DJ from Break Free Hip-Hop School. The occasion was the *elementia* issue xvi "gala" honoring teens who worked to produce the issue during the 2018-2019 school year. The issue's theme was "Breaking Free."

An entirely teen-produced arts magazine, *elementia* features the work of greater Kansas City area teen writers, poets, editors and artists.

About 50 teens, family members and friends enjoyed refreshments and picked up free copies of issue xvi before taking seats in the lobby for contributors' presentations. The rapt audience applauded *elementia* team members who read their writing and showed their artwork.

Ada Heller, in a poem called "This Generation," argued against the notion that teens are "lost" or "failures."

*The only thing strange about my generation
is that we will not tell the generations to come
That they've failed
Before they've been given a chance to become
A found generation*

In her story, "April 20," writer Kaitlin Green talks about her experience preparing to lead a 17-minute school walkout honoring the victims of the April 20, 1999, Columbine High School shooting:

*10:17: 17 minutes of gathering for 17 students
who couldn't outrun bullets. My friend and I
use our voices. Our presence brings silence to
the crowds. We don't speak of the violence but
instead use our time to spread the message
of peace. Yet, even in the 17 minutes of shared
peace, all 300 of us cannot seem to understand
why people decide to end students' lives.*

Months later, I still don't.

Vic Kepner, a high school senior, said, "I've always loved *elementia*, and finally I was able to come up with a piece for this theme." She read her poem, "What's In a Name?" In tune with the "Breaking Free" theme, the poem related how she broke free from her troubled family and chose the name Victoria instead of her given name, Madeline.

Allen Vilshus, an artist from Mill Valley High School, came to *elementia* via an AP studio class. Next year, he plans to study art at the University of Kansas.

A writer from Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, Madeline Bell, said the project gave her a chance to bond with other contributors from her school that she'd never really talked to before.

Each issue of *elementia* celebrates one champion of the arts. Issue xvi celebrates award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson, the 2018-2019 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. After the students' presentation, she spoke about her writing journey and thanked the *elementia* staff for choosing to honor her.

elementia is published by Johnson County Library and is generously supported through the Joan Berkley Writers Fund of the Johnson County Library Foundation. Issue xvi is supported in part by the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 Branching Out**
Gardner Library
- 2 Top 10 Holds**
May
- 3 Staff Spotlight**
Kinsley Riggs: From the Front Lines to Service Lines
- 4 Patron Focus**
Fran Warden
- 5 Event Spotlight**
May the Fourth Be With You!
- 6 Taking a Closer Look**
Upcoming News & Events
- 7 Month in Review**
May 2019

BRANCHING OUT

Gardner Library



John Keogh, Gardner Library Manager



TOP 10 HOLDS



MAY 2019

926 **Where the Crawdads Sing**

Delia Owens

514 **Educated: A Memoir**

Tara Westover

326 **The Silent Patient**

Alex Michaelides

280 **Redemption**

David Baldacci

237 **Becoming Michelle Obama**

Michelle Obama

231 **Normal People**

Sally Rooney

215 **Run Away**

Harlan Coben

214 **Daisy Jones & the Six**

Taylor Jenkins Reid

213 **The Tattooist of Auschwitz**

Heather Morris

206 **Lost Roses**

Martha Hall Kelly

The town of Gardner, Kansas, reminds Branch Manager John Keogh of home – Fargo, North Dakota, where he grew up.

“Gardner has a small-town feel” he says, “and this library has the feel of a local library.” But he notes that, unlike a small-town library, Gardner Library shares the resources and overall strategy only a large system like Johnson County Library can provide.

“Because we are a county Library system, we focus on stretching those tax dollars,” says Keogh. “We do proof of concept for new services in one location, then expand it to other libraries. It encourages inter-branch cooperation.”

“Out here, it’s easy to feel isolated,” he says, “but we actively engage staff on teams that involve staff from other libraries. It’s empowering and motivating.”

Keogh came to library work in a roundabout way: through a Northwestern University bachelor’s degree program in theater, followed by freelance tech work in Chicago area theaters. After more than a decade, he switched gears to study library science and earn his Masters of Library and Information Services from Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois.

“There’s a connection between libraries and theater: both understand the importance of telling stories,” says Keogh.

Speaking of stories, Keogh says the Library’s Storytimes are hugely popular with Gardner’s many young families. But the staff works to make the library services relevant to all interests and all ages, from babies to mature adults – including patrons who grew up in the area when it was rural.

“We focus on the whole family,” he says. “We have solid early literacy, solid Storytimes, and we’re working on building services into the teen years. Sometimes when parents bring in kids for Storytimes, they forget about themselves, so we remind them that we have stuff for them, too.”

Gardner Library serves a community that’s experiencing rapid growth. New residents are drawn here by affordable housing and employment opportunities at the 1,700-acre distribution and warehouse facility in nearby Edgerton. Keogh knows he can rely on his staff to keep up with the needs of Gardner’s growing population.

“The staff is phenomenal,” he says. “I’m here to make sure everything is done the way it’s supposed to be done, but I trust them to know how to do it. They’re experienced and professional, and they know their jobs inside and out.”

PATRON FOCUS

Fran Warden



A Shawnee Library visitor asks where to find volunteer Fran Warden. A librarian points toward the “holds” shelf, grins and says, “She’s back there, causing trouble.”

Sure enough, there is Warden, loading new holds on the shelf. She turns and offers her hand with a smile. At age 93, this lively, well-turned-out lady keeps active rather than taking it easy. Her hair is coiffed, her makeup is done, and she wears jewelry with an attractive sweater and slacks. She volunteers at the library on Monday and Friday mornings.

“I love the people, and it’s so easy,” she says. “I just shelve the new books, and then I get a list of overdue books and pull the overdue books. Friday there were a lot of books, and I worked three hours. It’s usually only about two hours.”

She laughs, “They’re always surprised I get it done so fast – this old gal.”

After marrying a successful printing shop owner, she says she never had to work. When he died in 2000, she began volunteering, starting as a greeter at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Missouri, a role she

now plays at St. Mary’s Food Kitchen once a month.

“I’m the greeter of 350 people or more,” says Warden. “I love that job.”

About volunteering at the Shawnee Library, she says, “I don’t know how I chose this one, but they’ve been so nice. I just love it here. I’ve gotten to know all the people coming and going. It’s convenient, just 10 minutes away.”

She plays bridge at the Lenexa Community Center, which is near the planned community living property where she lives, and also at St. Ann’s in Prairie Village.

Obviously, Warden gets around. Which leads some people to ask, “Do you still drive?” She bristles at the suggestion she might be too old.

“Yes, I still drive. Do I seem like someone who shouldn’t be driving?” she asks. Indeed, she does not. She’s sharp as a tack and quite a conversationalist.

She grew up in upstate New York, the daughter of Italian parents.

“They were very strict,” she says. “When Catholic school ended after freshman year, my parents weren’t going to let me go to the public school. All the Italian parents were taking their kids out of school after ninth grade. But they let me go. Every time I meet someone new, I ask them if they went to college, and if they graduated.”

Warden has the curiosity of a reporter, which she was at one time. While her husband served in the Korean War, she looked for a job in the small Oklahoma town where they lived.

“I looked for a job at the telephone company for two weeks. Then someone suggested I ask for a job at the newspaper, and they hired me! The next day, I was going out interviewing people,” she laughs. “I loved that job.”

If loving what you do and giving back to your community are the secrets to living a long life, then Warden is the proof.

“I just have a lot of fun,” she says.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Kinsley Riggs: From the Front Lines to Service Lines



Kinsley Riggs, Manager of Adult Services

Kinsley Riggs began her Johnson County Library career out in front as an Assistant Branch Manager and Branch Manager. But now she has an inside job: JCL's Manager of Adult Services.

"In this job, I'm more behind the scenes," she explains, "managing a large budget, overseeing the types of programming and services we're delivering, working in unison with youth services and our event producer to make sure we're all stepping in the same direction."

or focus area and run a committee," she says, "and Information Services specialists throughout the county serve on those committees."

Those small teams create programs, provide services and handle focus areas that include civic engagement, local arts and incarcerated services. Riggs and the librarians lead the 60 or so Information Services staff working in JCL libraries.

JCL provides a vast amount of information, in many different formats -- and the Information Specialists in each library make sure patrons can access it. They help patrons access digital resources, use the Library's technology, look up books in the catalog, research using library databases, search for a job, obtain online tax forms and more. And patrons still request services libraries have always provided.

"We have the traditional Library users -- people still request book recommendations, either in print or audio or digital download," says Riggs.

"On the information side," she says, "there's been an uptick in job search since the recession. A lot of people are still unemployed and have never applied for a job online. We help people apply online, create email accounts for them and teach them basic computer skills."

she realized teaching wasn't what she wanted to do. One night, as she worked as a student supervisor in circulation at Washburn University's Mabee Library, a new door opened.

"One of the librarians mentioned, I don't think very seriously, 'Why don't you go to library school?' I hadn't ever considered it, and I looked into it, and I was sold. So I went to the University of Illinois for my Masters in Library Science, moved back home and got my first job."

Riggs has worked in branch management at five of the Library's locations since 2008. She started her current position in 2016.

I'm really glad I ended up in libraries," she says. "No two days are the same. It's always kind of a mini-adventure."

Outside of work, Riggs and her husband, Daniel, enjoy doing home improvements, planting and tending their vegetable garden and attending Royals games. (Their first date was a Royals game.)

At home, Riggs reads stories with her daughter, Lydia, who's nearly four. Right now, they're reading from the complete Beatrix Potter Peter Rabbit collection Lydia received for Easter. Riggs also belongs to a nonfiction book club and loves baking and decorating cakes for her nieces and nephew.

"I also read cookbooks," she says. "They tell a story."

"I'm really glad I ended up in libraries," she says. "No two days are the same. It's always kind of a mini-adventure."

Riggs manages a team of 12 professional staff: eight librarians and four MakerSpace facilitators. "The eight librarians each have a specialty

Riggs came to library work while she was pursuing a teaching degree. Her classes in history and political science were interesting, she said, but



EVENT SPOTLIGHT

May the Fourth Be With You!



In case you didn't know, May 4 is the day each year when "Star Wars" fans the world over celebrate the popular space movie series. Since "A Universe of Stories" is Johnson County Library's theme this summer, the Monticello Library's May 4 "Star Wars Takeover" event was a natural fit.

Youth Services Librarian Jennifer Reeves and Youth Services Specialist Julia Belcher planned the event, while

Youth Services Specialists Jeni Cosgrove, Emma Fernhout and Grace Bentley supervised the afternoon's activities.

Kids ages five through 12 were invited to come dressed as their favorite "Star Wars" characters. The staff transformed the meeting room into a "Star Wars" land where the children played games, enjoyed snacks, did crafts and honed their Jedi light saber skills.

Members of the Star Wars 501st Legion and the Rebel Alliance -- costumed characters from various "Star Wars" movies -- landed at Monticello for a visit, too. Darth Vader and Obi Wan Kenobi from the original "Star Wars" movies were there, along with newer characters like the villain Kylo Ren from "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and Rey, the female lead of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story."



Jennifer said, "We have a lot of patrons and staff who are 'Star Wars' fans. We enjoyed putting the event together and calling all Jedis to have fun playing putt-putt golf with Darth Vader's head or making Leia buns and Yoda ears."

There were healthy snacks like light sabers (grapes on a stick), and kids could make TIE Fighter s'mores with graham crackers, marshmallows and chocolate frosting. A shelf displayed all kinds of "Star Wars" books to read or check out, and the stairs to the second floor provided a perfect staging area for the "Star Wars" characters to pose with kids while parents captured photos.

Until next May 4th, may the Force be with you!

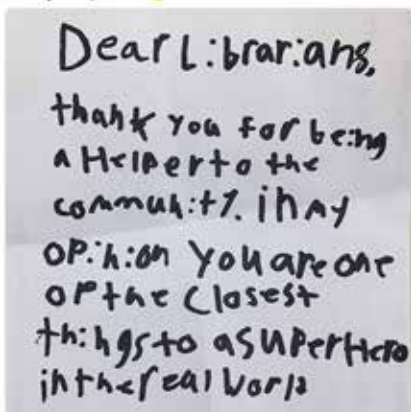


TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

Social Media Highlights

Johnson Co. Library

A sneaky patron left this on our desk at Gardner when we weren't looking. What a lovely surprise! 🥰



9:18 AM · 23 May 2019

21 Retweets · 156 Likes

This "love note" from a young patron received 100k reach.



Johnson County Library (KS) shared a post.

May 1 · 🌐

Our friends at the Olathe Police Department captured such a beautiful shot yesterday!



Olathe Police Department
April 30 · 🌐

Gorgeous rainbow spotted over our station.

May was filled with crazy weather, including a beautiful double rainbow captured by many of our staff and other local city and county agencies. We shared Olathe Police Department's photo and got almost 500 reactions.

Johnson County Library (KS) shared a link.
May 31 at 7:16 AM · 🌐



KANSASCITY.COM

Johnson County's newest library is 'a natural fit' for growing Lenexa City Center

👍👍👍 203

56 Shares

The KC Star's story on Lenexa was a great share for our page, and was shared out 56 times from our page, meaning many of our patrons and our patrons' friends saw the story.

Johnson County Library (KS)

May 31 at 7:48 AM · 🌐

Did you lose your ... claw ... at Leawood Pioneer Library? Never fear, it's in our lost and found.

When you come to pick it up, we are definitely going to ask you what animal this came from. Inquiring minds want to know!



A "lost claw" at Leawood Pioneer's Lost and Found generated many reactions!






We surpassed 10k followers on Twitter!

Month in Review
May 2019

Summer Reading launched with a space theme called "A Universe of Stories."



NEXT ISSUE

-  **Cover Story:** Lenexa City Center Library
-  **Top 10 Holds:** July, 2019
-  **Staff Spotlight:** Ken Werne, Lenexa City Center Library Manager
-  **Event:** Blast Off Through the Solar System with JoHo
-  **Branching Out:** Cedar Roe

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS
Library

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