



# Book Report

OCT 2019  VOLUME VIII

## Unlocking the Mind Unlock, Engage, Recharge and Expand at Your Library

**H**ave you picked up the latest Guide? Look inside, and you'll see little pink brains scattered across the pages. Those little brain graphics show you at a glance the events and activities that follow the Library's current theme, "Unlocking the Mind."

Melissa Horak-Hern, Civic Engagement Librarian, came up with the pink brain symbols idea while dining with her family at a Kansas City restaurant. Her son pointed out symbols on the menu next to the specialties, and it clicked: Why not use brain symbols to tag "Unlocking the Mind" activities?

Horak-Hern explains how the staff team conceptualized the events and programs: "We looked for as expansive a definition of unlocking the mind and as expansive an

interpretation as we could find without cramming things in that didn't quite fit and didn't make sense."

"There were four verbs in the description we wrote up for the Guide that guided us: Unlock, Engage, Recharge and Expand," she says. "We realized that those are the four things that you can do with your mind at the Library."

"You can engage with resources, you can expand with interesting programming and information, you can come here to shake off your everyday life and recharge for a little bit, and we definitely are the best place in the world to unlock somebody's mind." She says, "That's what really drove our planning, and it fell into place beautifully because of that."

For "Unlocking the Mind" activities, Horak-Hern says, people should expect the unexpected. "Of course, we're still going to have Storytimes and book groups, but we're also doing yoga, and we're going to have dogs come in to teach us about empathy and caring for other people. We're going to have art therapy, and some of us are doing a book group experiment."

The book group experiment is a two-part project called "Everybody Reads." The first part will be an all-ages group reading a middle-grades book, and the second one will be a virtual



book group, where Horak-Hern and another librarian will interact with readers through video and audio. You can find information about the virtual book group at [tinyurl.com/virtualbookgroup](https://tinyurl.com/virtualbookgroup) or in the "Unlocking the Mind" section on the Library website.

All of the Johnson County Libraries will feature "Unlocking the Mind" activities for toddlers, kids, teens and adults. You can find a complete list of them in the "Unlocking the Mind" section on the Library website. Enjoy fun, find mind-expanding activities at one near you.



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September 2019

## BRANCHING OUT

Lisa Jordan, Asst. Branch Mgr. Monticello and DeSoto

## Movers and Shakers Freshen Up DeSoto Library

**Y**our home, your office and your garage need a good cleaning out and some rearranging now and then to make them more efficient and pleasant. It's the same with libraries.

DeSoto Library was due for a refresh. The little 3,600-square-foot Library had changed little over the past several years and was crowded with books and furniture, had shelves at different heights and was not as patron-friendly as it could be.

Lisa Jordan, Assistant Branch Manager at Monticello and DeSoto Libraries, likes to decorate and arrange, and she saw that DeSoto Library could use her skills.

The staff had been doing their best to make materials fit, and sometimes it meant moving up a shelf to accommodate one more book. Jordan says, "Maybe it's not about moving one shelf up, but everything on 20 shelves. Let's make the whole thing look nice."



*Lisa Jordan, Asst. Branch Manager  
Monticello and DeSoto*

"I could tell that things just hadn't been freshened up and moved around for quite awhile," Jordan says, "So it was time to shake things up and see what would happen if we moved the DVDs out front. What would happen if we took the table away up front and gave the kids some soft seating? What would happen if we moved the holds – would patrons be able to find them?"

"Big-picture, we needed to neaten things up and make it more accessible for the patrons coming in – not for the patrons we imagined we were coming in," she says. "I worked there so I could see for myself who was coming in and what

they were looking at, and I talked to the patrons." Once Jordan had a good idea of what needed to be done, she worked with the staff to make some changes.

The DVDs have been moved up front now -- so they're the first thing you see when you enter. Graphic novels are now with the Young Adult books. A couple of tables were removed, and soon kids will have room to hang out in soft seating there. CDs are in clear acrylic bins instead of plastic shoeboxes. There are smart little changes throughout the Library.

"We didn't spend much money doing it," she says. "It was just, 'Let's declutter this cabinet, let's look at this, do we really need all of these things, is this collection best here, or would it work better here? How could we make this look better and better serve our patrons – be more patron-friendly?'"

By looking carefully at the layout of the Library from a patron's viewpoint, Jordan saw possibilities for better service. The rearranged and decluttered environment now allows patrons to enjoy more room to walk around, neat shelves and improved convenience at their Library. And most importantly, the patrons approve.



## TOP 10 HOLDS



## SEPTEMBER 2019

915 **Where the Crawdads Sing**

Delia Owens

384 **Educated: A Memoir**

Tara Westover

368 **The Turn of the Key**

Ruth Ware

348 **City of Girls**

Elizabeth Gilbert

335 **Mrs. Everything**

Jennifer Weiner

333 **Ask Again, Yes**

Mary Beth Keane

331 **Evvie Drake Starts Over**

Linda Holmes

309 **One Good Deed**

David Baldacci

305 **Summer of '69**

Elin Hilderbrand

290 **The Silent Patient**

Alex Michaelides



*DeSoto Library*



# PATRON SPOTLIGHT

## Jane Ross, Oak Park Volunteer

Jane Ross, Oak Park Library volunteer and world traveler, absolutely loves learning about ancient cultures. She had an excellent chance to do that recently, when she and her husband, David, toured Australia and New Zealand.

She learned about native peoples' family structures in Australia and New Zealand: "[Aborigine] Mom and Dad bring in the food and money and do all the work, and the grandparents raise the children. The Māoris' culture is interesting, too," she says.

"In New Zealand, we spent time in Wellington, Queensland and Auckland," she says. "Oh, my gosh. Wonderful scenery, wonderful seafood and lamb. Lots of good memories."

Ross has seen how travel can broaden one's outlook. "We think we're the best, and we go out in the world and see that other people have some pretty good ideas, too," she says. "In Australia, you have to vote. You're fined if you don't."

During her husband's career as executive director, then COO, of the Boy Scouts -- including the international division -- the

couple traveled all over the world. "That's what allowed us to do things we never even dreamed of doing," Ross says.

The couple lived all over the U.S., too: Indiana, Iowa, New York, Texas, Kansas City, Texas (again), and now dividing their time between Arizona and Kansas.

"We moved 13 times. When you move out, you don't pack the towels. You just buy new ones for the next place," she laughs.

Ross and her husband met while both were enrolled in the Humanis Program at Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri. She graduated from MVC with a BS in Human Relations and Elementary Education; from St. Francis University with a Masters in Elementary Education with a specialization in Reading; and from Syracuse University with an MLS degree. After graduation, they married once David had completed a year of National Guard duty. Between moves, she earned her librarian certification from Texas Women's College. She was a librarian in Blue Valley schools for several years.

Besides volunteering at Oak Park Library, Ross also helps out at an independent



*Jane Ross, Oak Park Volunteer and World Traveler*

library in Arizona. "We go to Arizona in the wintertime, and I work in the library in Cave Creek, north of Phoenix," she says.

Ross also donates to support the children's areas in both libraries. She helped Oak Park Library purchase a comfy, rainbow-colored piano keyboard sofa and a rug featuring the letters of the alphabet. She says, "There are so many needs the budget doesn't cover. Angelica Reiff [Oak Park Youth Services Librarian] gave me her wish list, and I donated to allow her to buy the items."

The Rosses have three daughters and 10 grandchildren who are scattered from London, England, to Alabama, and Overland Park.. These days, she and her husband travel less frequently, but they do take trips to London to visit her daughter's family. At home in Lenexa, Ross keeps busy with her two favorite activities: sewing and reading.



*A comfy rainbow-colored piano keyboard sofa, donated by Jane Ross*



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## Lisa Allen, Information Specialist at Monticello

**P**oet, freelance writer, mother of three, student and part-time Information Specialist at Monticello Library. That all adds up to a full schedule for Lisa Allen.

Allen's writing has appeared in literary journals and two anthologies. When an essay of hers came to the attention of Reference Librarian Helen Hokanson, she interviewed her as an author -- then recruited her to work on the annual Writers' Conference.

"I taught for a couple of the Conferences and helped with some of the author visits, and I kept applying with the Library, and eventually they hired me," Allen says.

She has one MFA in Creative Nonfiction on her resume and will finish an MFA in Poetry in January at the Solstice Low-Residency Program at Pine Manor College. She travels to the campus just outside Boston twice a year for short-term residencies. "It's important to the low-residency model that you integrate writing into your life instead of making it the only thing in your life," says Allen.

"It's a two-year program, and in your third semester, you create a critical thesis," she says. "My creative nonfiction thesis was about the use of epistle (or letters) in memoir and poetry -- Like 'The Diary of Anne Frank' or 'The Color Purple.'"

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*"I love, love, love working here, and I'm really glad I'm here," she says."*

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She's always loved writing, but she didn't have time for it as a single mother of three young children working as a paralegal for several years. When she lost that job, she took on freelance writing assignments and continues to freelance while completing her studies and working at the Library.

"I love, love, love working here, and I'm really glad I'm here," she says. "But part-time doesn't pay the bills, so I fill in with freelance."

Allen's two sons are now out of the house. Adam, 23, is an engineer with a master's degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering and a bachelor's degree in Physics, both from the University of Rochester in New York. Nicholas, 19, is a freshman at Fort Hays State University after following a geoscience path at Olathe North. Erin, 16, is a junior in the Green Technologies program at Olathe West.

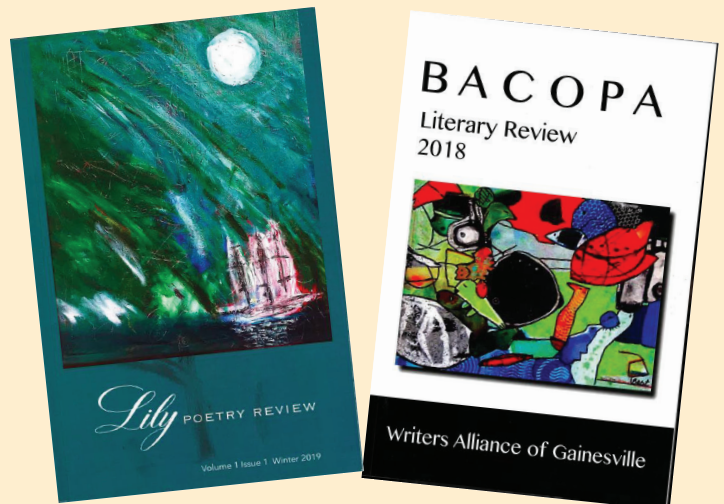
Allen uses the pronouns "they" and "their" for Erin, who



*Lisa Allen, Information Specialist*

is non-binary. The two have discussed what to think about people who criticize or say Erin is "wrong."

"I emphasize that there's nothing wrong with Erin," Allen says. "I see the child I've always loved -- and hope that others see past gender and instead see Erin as the interesting, thoughtful, creative person they are. Whatever the labels, and whatever words go with them, Erin is still the same person." She brings home books from the Library that Erin might enjoy. Because, like Lisa, Erin is an aspiring writer and poet.



# EVENT SPOTLIGHT

## What Can You Learn from a Dog?

### Em-PAW-thy teaches us to care for one another

**D**ogs can teach us how to be kind to people. That's the idea behind "Unlocking Em-PAW-thy," a September event presented at Central Resource Library. Ashley Stanley, from Wayside Waifs, brought her two rescue dogs, Missie and Walter, to help participants understand kindness from a canine (and human) perspective.

Attendees learned how to introduce themselves to a dog by holding out a closed hand for sniffing. As they gained confidence, they petted the dogs, gave them treats, and even got some doggy kisses.

Em-PAW-thy, one of the Library's "Unlocking the Mind" events, is a program Wayside Waifs created especially for the Library. Civic Engagement Librarian Melissa Horak-Hern says it's the beginning of a partnership she hopes will continue.



*Ashley Stanley of Wayside Waifs and her dogs Missie and Walter*

So, what can we learn from a dog? The Platinum Rule: Treat others as they want to be treated.



*Ashley teaching using her dogs to teach Em-PAW-thy to attendees*



## Aromatherapy Playdough

### A 'scent-illating' experience at Corinth Library

**C**orinth Library hosted "Aromatherapy Playdough," a multisensory experience for kids and parents, on Saturday, September 7.

Diana Spencer, Youth Information Specialist, divided homemade playdough into portions for each child to work with. Then children could choose to scent their playdough with dried leaves of thyme, mint, lavender, basil, sage or rosemary

plants from the Corinth Education Garden. Spencer added the herbs and some essential oils to the playdough, and the children blended it all together.

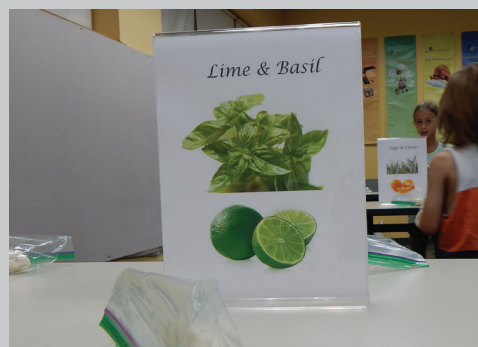
Spencer explained the aromatherapy benefits of herbs:

- Rosemary, sage and peppermint all have memory-boosting properties.
- Lavender reduces stress, decreases

anxiety and helps with relaxation.

- Thyme creates feelings of positivity and well-being.
- Basil can help with headaches, nervousness and depression.

Aromatherapy Playdough helps in "Unlocking the Mind" by engaging motor skills and the sense of smell to enhance children's cognitive growth and memory.





## TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

## Social Media Highlights

## Social media challenges from 6 by 6 birthday week

**Johnson County Library - KS**  
September 17 at 6:41 AM · 🌞

Share a picture of something that looks like a letter, but ISN'T a letter! 🌞

Our early literacy program is turning 10, and we're celebrating by reenacting the 6 early literacy skills on social media this week! The 6 by 6: Ready to Read skill we're celebrating today is #LookForLettersEverywhere #6by6

Read more about 6 by 6 and see how else we're celebrating this week »<https://www.jocolibrary.org/birth-to-six>



JOCOLIBRARY.ORG  
**Birth to Six**

Our 6 by 6 program and its anniversary celebration in 2015 are...

**Johnson County Library - KS**  
Yesterday at 12:01 PM · 🌞

What's your favorite font? Least favorite?

Our early literacy program is turning 10, and we're celebrating by reenacting the 6 early literacy skills on social media this week! The 6 by 6: Ready to Read skill we're celebrating today is #NoticePrintAllAroundYou, which is all about all of the print we see in our world on a daily basis.

#6by6

Read more about 6 by 6 and see how else we're celebrating this week »<https://www.jocolibrary.org/birth-to-six>



JOCOLIBRARY.ORG

**Birth to Six**

Our 6 by 6 program and its anniversary celebration in 2015 are...

**Johnson County Library - KS**  
September 15 at 6:02 AM · 🌞

Our award-winning early literacy program, 6 by 6: Ready to Read, turns 10 years old this week!

A brief history of 6 by 6 <https://tinyurl.com/y4t9he2q>



**Johnson County Library - KS**  
September 16 at 12:00 PM · 🌞

Challenge: Take a selfie with a book, where you're also doing something related to the book's plot in some way!

Our early literacy program is turning 10, and we're celebrating by reenacting the 6 early literacy skills on social media this week! The 6 by 6: Ready to Read skill we're celebrating today is #HaveFunWithBooks #6by6

Read more about 6 by 6 and see how else we're celebrating this week »<https://www.jocolibrary.org/birth-to-six>



JOCOLIBRARY.ORG

**Birth to Six**

Our 6 by 6 program and its anniversary celebration in 2015 are...

**Johnson County Library - KS** shared a photo.  
September 17 at 7:44 AM · 🌞

Love it!!! #HaveFunWithBooks #6by6



**City of Roeland Park, KS**  
September 17 at 7:27 AM · 🌞

Johnson County Library - KS's 6 by 6 early literacy program is celebrating its 10th anniversary this week! To celebrate, we are taking part in the library's social media challenges, starting with day 1: take a selfie with your favorite book. City Hall staff was happy to take a moment to enjoy their favorite books yesterday 🌞

**Johnson County Library - KS**  
8 hrs · 🌞

Write a rhyming couplet that describes the book you are reading. We'll see if we can guess what the book is!

Our early literacy program is turning 10, and we're celebrating by reenacting the 6 early literacy skills on social media this week! The 6 by 6: Ready to Read skill we're celebrating today is #TakeTimeToRhyme #6by6

Read more about 6 by 6 and see how else we're celebrating this week »<https://www.jocolibrary.org/birth-to-six>







## Month in Review September 2019

### 6 by 6 turns 10 with a party!

We celebrated the 10th birthday of our 6 by 6 Ready to Read early literacy program. Jay and Leslie of Laughing Matters hosted a

birthday party and Storytime at Oak Park Library, the Board of County Commissioners declared Early Literacy Week in Johnson County, and community friends joined in the celebration on social media!



Throughout the week, we celebrated the six skills every child needs to get ready to read:

- Have Fun With Books
- Look for Letters Everywhere
- Notice Print All Around You
- Take Time To Rhyme
- Talk, Talk, Talk
- Tell Stories About Everything

Learn more at [jocolibrary.org/birthtosix](http://jocolibrary.org/birthtosix)



### NEXT ISSUE

-  **Cover Story:** Fall/Winter Reads
-  **Branching Out:** Central Resource Library
-  **Staff Spotlight:** Christina Larkin
-  **Event:** Mahmood Hassan
-  **eLibrary Resources:** Coffee with Cops; Women & Money Day

JOHNSON COUNTY  
KANSAS

## Library

### BOOK REPORT

A monthly publication for government officials and residents of Johnson County

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