



Book Report

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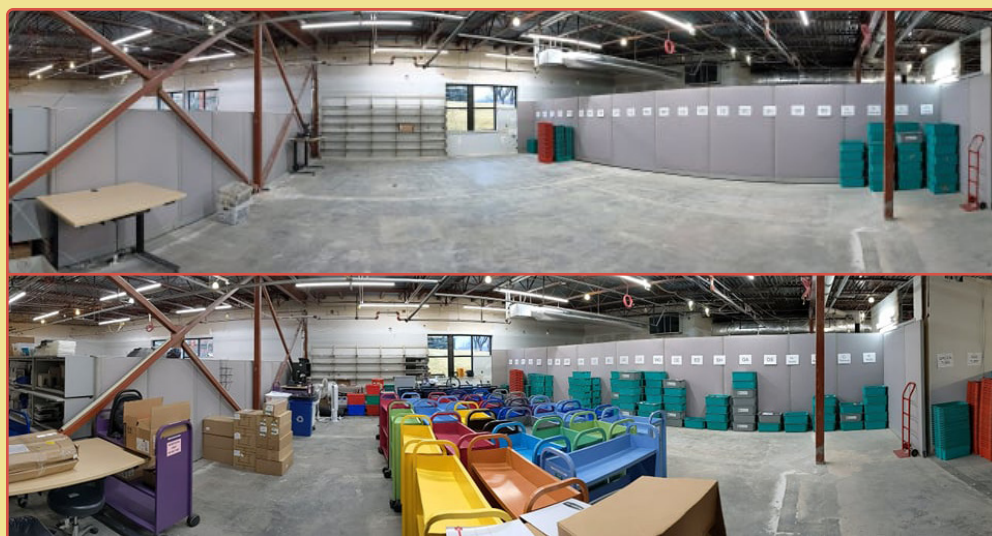
Making Magic Happen: Materials Handling Team Refines their Approach

While the Central Resource Library is being renovated this year, Johnson County Library's collection development, interlibrary loan and bibliographic services teams have relocated to a temporary space at 6000 Lamar Ave. in Mission.

The relocation to Johnson County's Northeast Office Building gives these separate departments an excellent opportunity to work in close proximity as a single materials handling team. It sets the stage for the teamwork that will be possible once they are up and running in Central's new offices in 2022.

Lacie Griffin, collection development and ILL manager, and Jason Barnes, bibliographic services manager, are excited about their temporary digs.

Griffin oversees purchasing and collection development for all 14 branches. Barnes' employees ensure that the materials Griffin's team acquires makes it onto shelves. Their departments weren't situated for maximum efficiency under the old Central configuration, so the redesign will help them perform much more effectively.



The Northeast Office Building's old crime lab warehouse is updated and now filled with the tools and supplies utilized by the Materials Handling team.

The temporary space, in the old crime lab warehouse, is a useful interim step.

"I think it's given us an opportunity to look at what resources we have and what our folks actually do. Since we're all going to be working together next year in the new space, it's given us a chance to do some dry runs on who does what, and how can we be more efficient," Barnes said. "If we can get it figured out now and through the summer, it'll make moving back in this fall or next year much easier."

Griffin agreed. "I think it's a great way for us to be able to have combined our teams in a working space that we wouldn't have been able to do while we were still separated and all over Central," she said.

Finding a suitable temporary space that had dock access was a challenge. Griffin commended Abby Giersch, with Johnson County facilities management, for finding the team a wonderful spot. The building also houses a motor vehicle bureau and mental health offices, but the Library staffers have their own secure space, with room for 20 different work stations.

The actual move occurred swiftly in late January and staffers are now getting settled in.

"Once we get used to the space we can start actually working on the efficiencies of it," Griffin said.

One big challenge is figuring out the best way to process huge amounts of deliveries and mail, including ILL mail, postal mail and administrative mail.

Griffin said they are starting to identify good processes and workflows that can be adapted once Central reopens. The new Central will have a state-of-the-art mail processing area.

As Barnes said, "That's what we're working on right now. Who's doing what? Can we share duties? How can we work better together?"

Griffin's team is passionate about providing the most vibrant collection possible for education and entertainment and to help patrons improve their lives. Barnes' team is devoted to getting materials in patrons' hands as quickly as possible, "making them delighted to be able to come into the Library and get free stuff."

If they do their behind-the-scenes jobs well, Griffin said, it's wonderful for patrons but also invisible to those users. "It magically shows up to them," she said.

Griffin and Barnes and all their colleagues are delighted to be the magicians making that happen.



WHAT'S INSIDE



- Branching Out:** Corinth Gets Crucial Repairs
- Top 10 Holds:** February 2021
- Patron Spotlight:** Civic Activist Finds Johnson County Library a Great Resource
- Staff Spotlight:** From Clerk to Trainer, Staffer Adapts to Changing Roles
- Event Spotlight:**
Finding Joy and Divinity in Our Bodies
Movie Highlights Extraordinary
Native American Story
- Taking a Closer Look:**
Social Media Highlights
- Month in Review:** February 2021

BRANCHING OUT

Corinth Gets Crucial Repairs

Corinth Library is a much-loved branch in Prairie Village, but it's a 58-year-old building, so it is receiving some welcome upgrades.

The building at 8100 Mission Road is getting four new HVAC condensing units, plus piping and electrical work, to improve the temperature control, mostly in the summer season.

"The staff have really been excited about getting this project," said Branch Manager Amy Barclay.

In the past, temperatures in the staff break rooms and offices could sometimes be uncomfortable. A work room with a sorter that checks in the books has historically been the most uncomfortable.

"The staff work so hard to keep up with all the materials, and it's difficult when it gets so stifling back there," Barclay said.

Work should be completed by the end of March.

Fortunately, the repair work is mostly done outside or in the mechanical rooms so it hasn't impacted service to the public.

The roof also leaks, and buckets must be placed in strategic locations to catch drips during heavy rains. A replacement of the sloped roof is also coming, as weather conditions permit.

Barclay lives in Mission and came to Corinth as branch manager in January 2019, after serving as



Corinth Branch Manager Amy Barclay.

a Mid-Continent Library branch manager. She previously was a page at the Antioch branch in 2011-2012.

Corinth, located near the Prairie Village Shops, is a busy neighborhood branch. Patron visits have stayed steady even during the pandemic, with families browsing the stacks and regulars continuing to use the available computers and printers.

In her time at Corinth, Barclay has come to realize what a special asset it is for Prairie Village. She said patrons and staff alike "feel really passionate about being part of the family of Corinth."

She said some patrons have been coming there for decades. They grew up in the Library and now bring their kids and grandkids. And some staffers have worked there for more than 15 years.

"People really feel an attachment to that branch and to that community," she said.

The pandemic halted the popular in-person Storytimes but staff now offer those programs online.

"Something cool they've started doing recently is they created Storytime kits that families can

come in and pick up, so they have things like musical shakers that can be manipulated and played with while they are attending Storytime," Barclay said. "That's part of the fun."

In the past, Corinth was known for its "Edible Discussions," in which patrons bonded over potluck dishes and discussions about the vibrant local food scene. The pandemic curtailed those gatherings, but the information specialist who coordinated them, Caitlin Perkins, is now a presenter with the Library's online book groups and book talks.

The current Corinth branch opened its doors Feb. 24, 1963 and expanded to its existing size in 1967. A renovation in 1988 added an elevator and east side windows.

The branch's long-term future is under review. The 2015 Library Master Plan identified the need to replace Corinth with a new Library. Very preliminary discussions with the city of Prairie Village raised the possibility of building a community center and new branch on land closer to Harmon Park, near 77th Street and Mission Road. But no site or timeframe has been announced, and planning is paused during the pandemic.



TOP HOLDS



FEBRUARY 2021

- **The Four Winds** - Kristin Hannah
- **The Midnight Library** - Matt Haig
- **A Time for Mercy** - John Grisham
- **The Duke and I** - Julia Quinn
- **The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue** - Victoria Schwab
- **Anxious People** - Fredrik Backman
- **Firefly Lane** - Kristin Hannah
- **The Wife Upstairs** - Rachel Hawkins
- **Greenlights** - Matthew McConaughey
- **The Push** - Ashley Audrain

PATRON OF THE MONTH

Civic Activist Finds Johnson County Library a Great Resource



Cheatham and her sons Stone, 9, and Ben, 6.

Melissa Cheatham of Overland Park is a passionate advocate for her neighborhood, kids' school, city, county and region.

And Johnson County Library is one of the treasured amenities that helps her feel more connected to the community.

Cheatham grew up in Phoenix, AZ, where her mother took her regularly to the Library.

After college she moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked from 2007-2011 for U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman of California. There, as Cheatham says, she took advantage of one of the world's best collections, the Library of Congress.

"I could order books online and they would be delivered to my desk," she recalled.

Cheatham met her husband Chris in Washington. He grew up in Overland Park and knew it was a great place to raise a family. After the couple had their first child, they moved to Johnson County in 2011.

One of the first things Cheatham did was get a Library card, and she and her 6-month-old son attended Storytime at Corinth. On her first visit, she struck up a conversation with another woman and child there. It was the start of a wonderful friendship.

"She invited me for a turkey sandwich," Cheatham said. "She and I, and her son and my son, are still very good friends."

Corinth is still the branch where Cheatham takes her sons Stone, now age 9, and Ben, age 6. Her sons aren't shy about speaking to the staff as they search out books.

"I've tried to encourage my kids how to use the Library and how to feel comfortable talking to the Librarians," she said.

Stone said he finds his favorite books at the Library, like "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" and "Big Nate," and sports stories like "Football Record Breakers."

Both boys enjoy reading. And reading aloud to her sons is one of Cheatham's great joys as a parent. She uses the "Suggest a Purchase" option on the website to recommend selections for Librarians to add to the children's collection.

She also appreciates how the Library provides free access to newspapers and magazines; she used Library access to Consumer Reports while researching new TVs.

Cheatham devotes her time and talents to making things better in her community and to improving the environment. When she first moved into the Empire Estates neighborhood near 95th and Mission Road, she joined the board and helped persuade the city to paint a crosswalk to provide safer access to Empire Estates Park.

She is active at Trailwood Elementary, where Stone is in fourth grade and Ben in first. As the PTA's legislative chair, she has invited elected officials to talk to teachers and parents about local issues.

She does consulting work to build political support for clean energy and environmental action. She has volunteered with Climate Action KC and, pre-pandemic, sometimes used Johnson County Library meeting rooms for those gatherings.

For her family, Cheatham realizes Johnson County Library is a tremendous asset.

"If I were to tabulate the monetary value of every book and DVD and video game and article that we check out in a year, we for sure are getting good value on our taxes," she said. "It would be irreplaceable."

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

From Clerk to Trainer, Staffer Adapts to Changing Roles

Lucas Kirkendoll has been with Johnson County Library for a little over two years, during a profoundly challenging time for the entire Library system, especially since the Coronavirus pandemic struck.

But he has adjusted to changing job roles and responsibilities and appreciates how his colleagues have also adapted and risen to the occasion.

Kirkendoll was hired in late 2018 as a learning and development clerk, providing support for the training specialists. He assisted two specialists with in-person presentations, preparing rooms, printing materials and running reports. And then the world changed.

“When the pandemic hit, initially it was really overwhelming,” Kirkendoll said. But the Library managed that change more smoothly than he had expected.

“I think part of it is just the nature of Library staff in general,” he observed. “How intuitive they are and hungry for learning opportunities. Initially we had to get a real grasp of what we could and couldn’t do and what was best for the organization.”

Some training responsibilities got put on hold, he says. But that generated opportunities to provide support in other ways such as running online meetings and taking notes to keep everyone on track.

He was part of a team working on the diversity and inclusion initiative. “We worked with an

outside consultant to train all of our managers,” he said. Kirkendoll acted as a moderator or producer, the person behind the scenes running the online meetings.

Then in November 2020 the position got re-graded as a training specialist, allowing him to facilitate and host meetings and to be a point of contact for new employee orientation.

Kirkendoll brings varied life experiences to this role. He grew up in Parkville, Mo., where he attended Park Hill South High School and initially was more preoccupied with sports than academics. He played soccer at Maple Woods Community College but realized sports weren’t going to be his career, so got a degree in psychology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

He later got a job as a Johnson County Mental Health case manager. He worked with adolescents dealing with substance abuse and then assisted adults coping with persistent mental illness. He personally witnessed how adolescents in residential treatment valued the Library’s incarcerated services program.

“Those kids would go through books like anyone’s business,” he recalled. He sometimes met adult clients in Library meeting rooms and realized how important Library branches were for community outreach.

Kirkendoll took seriously the advocacy he could provide for clients, to show them “their voice is important.”



Training Specialist Lucas Kirkendoll.

While studying in college, one field he found interesting was industrial organizational psychology, focusing on ways to improve the work environment, including job performance, communication and professional satisfaction.

At Johnson County Mental Health, he transitioned from working with clients to working with staff on training and support, which was very rewarding. Then he saw the opening at the Library and applied.

Kirkendoll has enjoyed the Library work, although much of it has been from his home in Leavenworth since the pandemic hit in March 2020. He’s also taking advantage of the county’s tuition reimbursement program to pursue information technology studies at Johnson County Community College.

“I could see that being beneficial for the organization, understanding the application of different software systems,” he said.

EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

Finding Joy and Divinity in Our Bodies

Long-time friends Rebekah Taussig and Charlesia McKinney have had intense conversations over the years about body image, identity and the journey toward self-love.

On Feb. 16, they welcomed an online audience of Johnson County Library patrons to share in that exploration in a program called Body Talk. The audience responded, via chat, with heartfelt praise and appreciation.

Taussig, who has been paralyzed since age 3, is a Kansas City writer, teacher and disability advocate. She is the author of the 2020 book “Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary, Resilient, Disabled Body.”

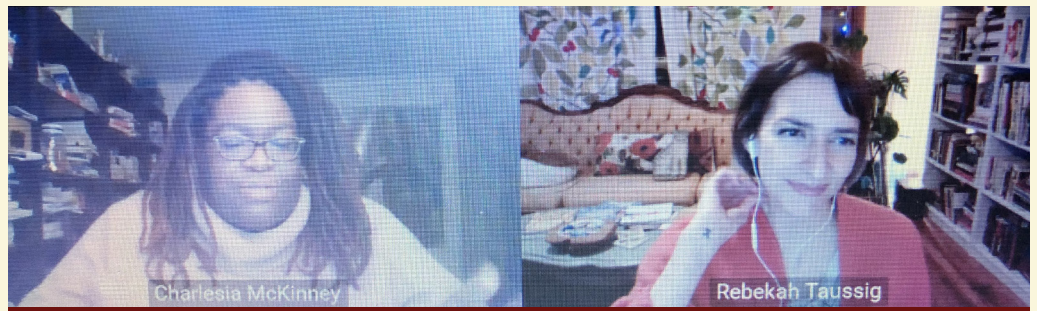
McKinney is a PhD candidate in rhetoric and composition at the University of Kansas. She teaches composition and other classes and describes herself as fat, queer and Black.

Both Taussig and McKinney said they started out joyful in their bodies but later, beginning in third grade, wrestled with feelings of difference and societal judgments.

McKinney noted that babies often marvel at their own bodies, but something often disrupts that self-acceptance and creates a sense of deviant bodies, whether it be about fatness, queerness or disability.

Through reading, inspirational teachers and great friends, she said she now embraces the “joy and even divinity” in these marginalized identities.

Taussig agreed it’s so important to share these stories of transformation and self-worth. “The experience of disability to me,” she said, “has become wrapped in so much more in things like creativity, and innovation and imagination and connection and community and even whimsy.”



Charlesia McKinney and Rebekah Taussig talk about body image, identity and the journey toward self-love.

Movie Highlights Extraordinary Native American Story

Johnson County Library’s Past is Prologue program highlights topics that are neglected or misrepresented in history books.

On Feb. 4, filmmaker Steven Lewis Simpson offered insights about his movie adaptation of Kent Nerburn’s acclaimed 1994 novel, “Neither Wolf nor Dog,” drawing on Nerburn’s travels with a Lakota elder.

Local History Librarian Amanda Wahlmeier started the online discussion by paying homage to Native American tribes that lived at the juncture of the Missouri and Kansas rivers.

The movie’s soul radiates from Lakota actor Dave Bald Eagle, who was 95 when the footage was shot in 2014. The actor was also a tribal leader, rodeo cowboy, stuntman, war hero and much more.

His ancestors were at the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre. Simpson says that for the film’s climactic scene filmed there, they threw away the script and let Dave pour out his heart.

“Dave had a closer link to that in his personal life than even the character he was playing,” Simpson observed. “He put his spirit on screen. It was a special thing that he gave me and gave us all.”

Dave Bald Eagle died at age 97 in 2016, but his extraordinary presence lives on in the movie. A key takeaway from the film, Simpson said, is “just please waken up to the history. Waken up to the reality.”

Simpson has spent considerable time filming on the Pine Ridge Reservation. What’s missing in most depictions of Native American life, he said, is the humor, charisma, vibrancy, fun and tremendous narratives of success in art, business and culture.

But he sees a blossoming and the breaking down of barriers. “It’s being done in spectacular fashion by a lot of people,” he said. “So, it’s great to see.”

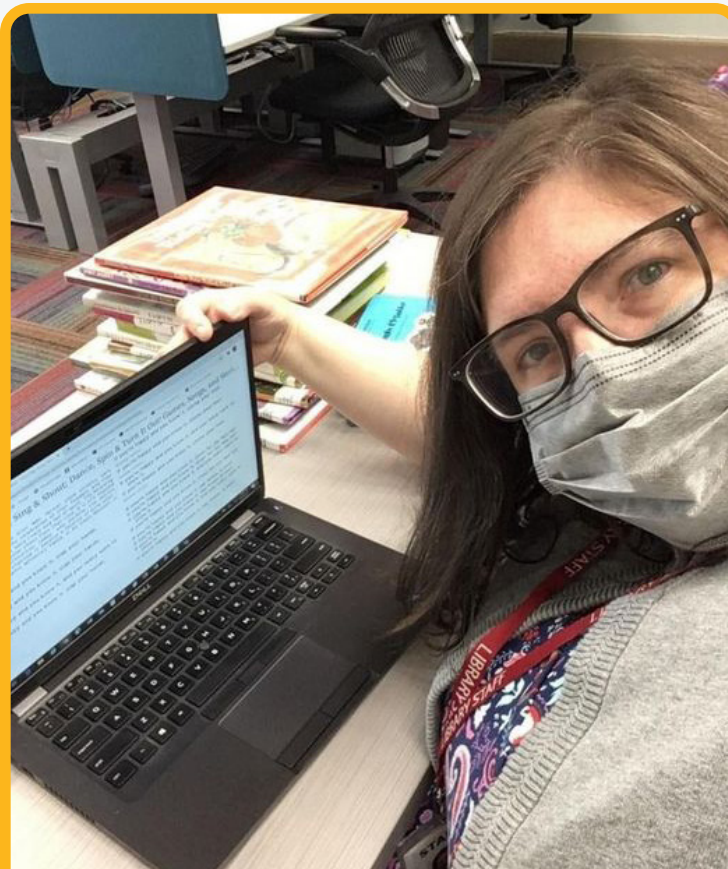
TAKING A CLOSER LOOK


Social Media Highlights

As you can see by the posts below, the Johnson County Library system continues to thrive even in these difficult times! **Thank you for your support!** *Click the captions to view full posts online!*



 This photo of Antioch's new building with information about its history reached nearly 6,000 people.




 A librarian's post about Axis360's dyslexia font, designed to help those who have difficulty reading, reached more than 4,000 people.



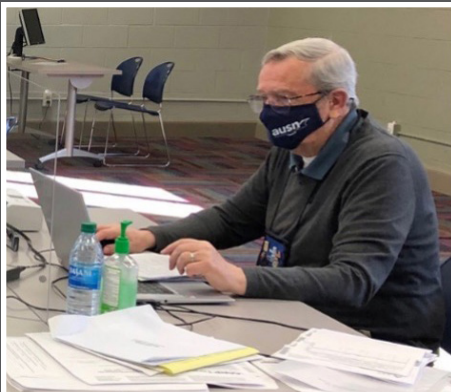
 Corinth's non-human supervisor was a hit on Twitter.



 We reached over 700 people on Instagram after inviting them to recommend books to one of Monticello's feathered friends.



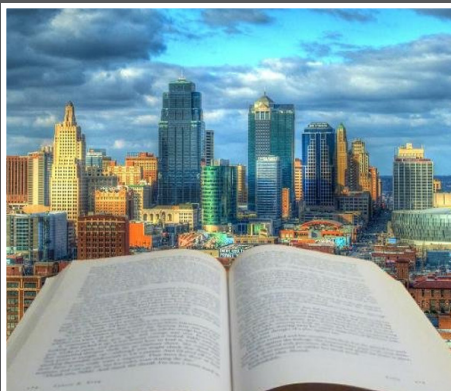
Month in Review February 2021



AARP's popular Tax-Aide program began February 1 at the Oak Park branch. Tax-Aide offers free tax assistance and preparation for low- and middle-income taxpayers, with special attention to those ages 60 and older.



After clearing the Library of furniture and equipment on the staff side, "Little Central" was opened on February 15 to give patrons access to some resources and modified services during the building upgrade.



The Local Writers Committee put their heads together and developed a method for staff and patrons to find books by local authors in our catalog, Bibliocommons. Just search for the tag ReadLocalKC to find items by authors from the KC Metro Area!



Johnson County Library staff offer booktalks through YouTube on some of their favorite tween and teen reads, including authors Jason Reynolds, Steve Sheinkin and Amie Kaufman.

13th Annual

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
Lecture Series

IBRAM X.
KENDI



AUTHOR OF *How to be an Antiracist*

Johnson County Library was honored to partner with the Division of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Missouri, Kansas City on their annual Martin Luther King Jr. lecture series, featuring National Book Award Winning Author Ibram X. Kendi.

Free Speech Doctrine (1)





- **The State Action Requirement**
 - First Amendment Only Limits Government Actors
 - Does Not Apply to "Private" Actors
- **Content-Based Laws**
 - As Especially Problematic
 - More Likely to Reflect Abuse of Power
 - Distorts the Marketplace of Ideas
 - Application of "Strict Scrutiny"
 - Must Serve Compelling Governmental Purposes
 - Must be Narrowly Tailored
 - Usually Invalid, but May Survive
 - *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project* (Terrorism)

Freedom of Speech: Contemporary Issues

During the Civics 101 program, Feb. 18, Richard Levy, J.B. Smith Distinguished Professor of Constitutional Law, reviewed the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution, why the framers chose to protect free speech, free speech doctrine and contemporary issues.

NEXT ISSUE



-  **Cover Story:** elementia Magazine Highlights Youth Creativity
-  **Branching Out:** Plans proceeding for Antioch branch replacement
-  **Patron Of The Month:** Anne Scott Loves Library Services, Especially Game Nights
-  **Staff Spotlight:** Lori Ross has deep family ties to Libraries, De Soto history

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS

Library

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