

**OSSINING PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Director's Report**

**Karen LaRocca-Fels, Library Director**

Another busy month at the OPL has come and gone! Highlights this month include work on plans for our building renovation project, prepping the public information for our budget vote in May, prepping the trustee candidate information, National Library Week, and our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

On the national front, libraries continue to come under attack, whether through the defunding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services or by the increased calls for book bans. The American Library Association and the New York Library Association have both been sharing information about these issues so that we can be informed. I attended the ALA Member Town Hall this month for their briefing.

**Board and Committee Work**

Buildings and Grounds Committee information is below.

Stephen Hamilton and I compiled the packets for trustee candidates and so far, seven packets were taken – two by current trustees and five by new candidates. I have reached out to four of the new candidates to set up meetings and to share trustee orientation information. I will reach out to the fifth.

We had an interesting problem this month with a planned program, which led me to conclude that we need a programming policy. I will be bringing some thoughts to the Policy/Personnel/Bylaws Committee for consideration.

James Trapasso, Diana Lennon, Stephen Hamilton, and I, with the help of Allison Robbins for the online calendar, have been working on recommended changes to the Use of Meeting and Performance Spaces by Outside Groups policy and procedures to help streamline and better manage our work in this area. We will bring some minor policy change recommendations to the Policy/Personnel/Bylaws Committee and we are also working on cleaning up our procedures. One goal is to have most of the request information be automated through our online programs and events calendar to help reduce some of the back and forth that currently happens between requesters and library staff. We are also working to be less loose about our policies and rules. We are finding that last minute or incomplete requests are more and more difficult to accommodate and place an undue burden on library staff.

**Budget and Finance**

The proposed 2025/2026 budget was approved by the Board of Trustees, and we are currently wrapping up the public information that will be posted. Amanda Curley and Meghan Huppuch worked with me on the budget letter, which has been finalized and sent to the school district for inclusion in their budget mailing. Mallory Marinaro has finalized the budget postcard, which will be mailed in early May. She is also working on compiling the budget letter, budget

breakdown, and tax rates for the public information that is shared on our website and in the library building. We are waiting on the school district for the tax impact numbers – once we have that, we'll have everything ready to go. Mallory is working with Guillermo Rodriguez to translate all the information into Spanish. Teamwork!

## **Building and Grounds**

We have been very busy over the last month working on various aspects of the building project. Mallory Marinaro, Molly Robbins, and I have been working with Ginnie Blake West to finalize aspects of the public information. Mallory and I finalized the mailing that was sent to our legislators. This included the Building on the Best informational packet that will be adapted for the public, as well as an invitation to attend the Community Leaders Information Session in late May. Ginnie put together a presentation to use with trustees, staff, Friends and Foundation members to help train folks on informational messaging. We have two staff training sessions set up for April 22 and April 23. We are working with the Friends and Foundation to set a messaging meeting with Ginnie. The trustees met with Ginnie during their Work Session on April 10 and the Community Outreach Committee met with her to plan the agenda for the May 28 Community Leaders meeting. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

Phil Rice reviewed and authorized approval of the SGH 50% design development plans for the retaining wall and parking lot repair. He drafted an acceptance letter, which I sent.

We sent the SEQRA documents to the Ossining Union Free School District, as well as the various other agencies on March 17. The school district asked for a meeting with us, which was held on April 10 and requested the documents again, as well as additional project information, to facilitate the resolution for the school board to approve at their April 22 meeting. I sent the requested documents to them on April 11 and confirmed their receipt. I recommend that our board have a special meeting as soon as possible after the school district passes their resolution and sends the required letter so that we can pass our second SEQRA resolution. We confirmed with the school district that the library will be pursuing a bond vote in September 2025. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

SGH provided additional information and budget items for project management, which Calgi included in the project budget. Phil Rice requested the cost of the parking lot be included in the budget (it had not been) and Calgi provided a line item for that. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

Noah Nadelson is updating the tax impact documents with the new tax valuations and will provide that to us as soon as it is complete. We will provide this to the school district as soon as we have it. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

Molly Robbins and I met with attorneys from Bond Schoeneck and King to go over what more is needed to move the project along. We confirmed that we need the school district to pass the SEQRA resolution for us, which is in progress. We should aim for our Board of Trustees to pass a resolution at the May meeting requesting that the school district hold the bond vote for us. The school district would then need to pass a resolution on their end, setting the bond vote. We discussed briefly the timing of the public hearings and notices, but that will all be dependent on the school district passing the SEQRA resolution and the resolution authorizing

the bond vote. When we met with Alita McCoy Zuber and Mary Fox Alter later in the day, we confirmed the sequence of events. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

Lindsay Crocker from Bond Schoeneck and King worked with Calgi on a contract for pre-referendum construction management. Drafts were reviewed and comments were made. I am awaiting the finalized version so that we can put it on the agenda of the April 21 meeting. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

I spoke with two realtors who had been recommended, and I currently have one recommendation to bring to the trustees. I will discuss next steps with the board. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

We met with the architects from Lothrop to go over plans for the renovation. We continue to refine plans. Lothrop is currently preparing views that we can use in our public information. We look forward to seeing these very soon. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

## **Foundation & Friends**

Thank you to Molly Robbins for attending the Foundation Board meeting on my behalf.

We are working on scheduling a meeting for the Friends and Foundation boards with Ginnie Blake West to go over informational messaging for our building project.

## **Grants**

While it is not a surprise, we were informed by Arts Westchester that one of the grants that we have in progress is on indefinite “hold” due to the federal situation. This grant was being managed by Diana Lennon and she will keep us informed as we know more.

I am working on preliminary review paperwork for the \$100,000 DASNY grant that was secured for us for the teen room renovation by Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg. (Goals 1.3, 5.5, and 5.6)

## **Outreach**

As shared above, we sent out the letters to our legislators, local, county, state, and national, about our building project and invited them to our May 28 Community Leaders Building Project Information Session. (Goals 1.3, 4.1, 5.5, and 5.6)

## **Personnel**

I continue to work on finalizing the draft of the new Employee Handbook for the Policy/Personnel/Bylaws Committee to review.

Steve continues to follow up with Westchester County Department of Human Resources on a number of open questions and requests.

I attended a workshop, sponsored by the Westchester Library System and the Ramapo Catskill Library System, about workplace violence prevention and policies. This workshop, which was given by an attorney, was very good and also was good confirmation that our policy and practices are solid.

### **Projects, etc.**

Allison Robbins is working with Quipu/PITS, the online security incident reporting software. We are currently working on configuring the software.

While we submitted the New York State Annual Report, Allison Midgley (Westchester Library System) requested some corrections and additions. I have a question about one of the corrections and am waiting to hear back from her. If it changes the report substantially, I'll request that the board re-approve it. If not, I will provide the board with an updated report. More to come.

My children and I were pleased to join the viewing of "Free for All: The Public Library" at OPL during National Library Week. What a great documentary! I learned a good deal that I didn't know and the documentary sparked discussion and debate with my children in the car on the way to get an evening snack.

James Trapasso put together another very nice Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon for our volunteers. Our volunteers do wonderful work for us and it is so nice to say "thank you" in this way.

Allison Robbins and Molly Robbins are working on planning the installation of our library materials pickup lockers. There were purchased through a grant from Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg.

### **News from the Public Library Directors Association and the Westchester Library System**

The WLS mobile app is still having issues. We are hoping to have mobile circ back soon, as it is very missed by our patrons. At least the searching problems seem to have been somewhat resolved. I'll be attending the PLDA meeting after writing this report.

### **Some Meetings, Trainings, Programs I attended:**

March 17: Board of Trustees Regular Meeting  
March 18: Community Outreach Committee Meeting  
March 20: Public Library Directors Association Meeting  
March 26: Building Project Meeting with architects  
March 27: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Workshop (WLS/RCLS)  
March 27: American Library Association Member Town Hall  
March 31: Communications strategy planning session with Ginnie Blake West  
April 1: Outside Groups Policy and Procedures Meeting  
April 7: Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting  
April 8: QUIPU/PITS (Incident Report Software) configuration meeting  
April 9: Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

April 10: Consult meeting with building attorneys

April 10: Meeting with Alita McCoy Zuber and Mary Fox Alter for SEQRA progress and bond vote

April 10: Board of Trustees Work Session

Below please find reports for our Leadership Team.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen LaRocca-Fels

**Diana Lennon, Adult Services**

March highlights include some fun events: the Friends' Mini Golf; my Conversation Group field trip to a photo exhibit about immigrants crossing our southern border; the start of the Bonnie Katz Film Series; and a discussion between Marshall Fine and Robert Klein. Mark and I were pleased to have forty people at the showing of Hitchcock's "Notorious" and James hosted thirty attendees at the talk with Marshall and Robert. Our attached photos tell the story! (Goal 2.1)

The end of March included our last session of Career Coaching with Diamond Mullings, as we used the Swope Funds allotted for that service. We are very grateful to Diamond, the OPL Foundation and the Swope Fund for being able to offer this popular program for over two years. We are continuing the English Class, also a part of the Swope funding, and it continues to be an important part of our programming. (Goals 1.1, 2.1)

In professional development, I attended a webinar with author Dan Heath who wrote and discussed his book Reset: how to change what's not working (2025). He made some interesting points, such as "overcoming the boulder" when we try to keep pushing a boulder that won't budge. The "boulder" could represent past practices, processes that no longer work or serve us, etc. and he says we need to align our resources to create leverage which can then move that boulder. Also, Mark attended a WLS webinar on the "Hoopla Patron Experience" to become more familiar with it and to better be able to promote it to patrons. (Goal 3.2)

Our community outreach continues, although due to illness Mark had to cancel a training program at Maryknoll. He plans to reschedule soon, and they are looking forward to learning more about our website and technology, as well as our programs and services. I have confirmed dates for OPL to have an info table at the Ossining Farmers' Market: June 28; July 26; August 23; and September 27. (Goal 4.1)

We continue to weed heavily and purchase new materials as part of our collection audit. As materials are "cleaned up" we are seeing a much more organized, browsable, and up to date collection. We also are working to replace the signage on the bookshelves' end panels as the previous ones were old and some were broken. The Dewey numbers are larger and clearer although not all are finished as we await new plexiglass sign holders—and we continue to

move books around on the second floor. Vicenta adjusted the 700s and 800s which means moving a lot of books! Cristella and Mark are working in the 300s, and Cristella and I are reviewing parts of the 600s. We are progressing... (Goal 2.2)

### **Ignayra Lopez, Children's Services**

The children's department started out the month with an author's visit from Danny Galán. The event was a tremendous success. Danny, a native of Girón, Ecuador, shared his new children's book, *El Señor de las Aguas y El Tesoro Escondido*. Danny captivated the audience with not only a reading from his book, but also a performance of the song, *Cuando Pienses en Mi*. One memorable moment was when Danny shared how his personal experiences, growing up in Girón, inspired his writing, leaving a lasting impression on everyone, many of whom are also from Girón. Overall, the visit was a wonderful opportunity to engage with literature and provided the message to children that "If you have a dream. Imagine it. If it makes you excited. Keep thinking about it. Then create it. Make it real. And share it. Life will bring you even more dreams!" (Goal 2.1)

As a part of my Early Literacy Initiative, I hosted the first Baby and Me Cricut program on Tuesday, March 25. With tremendous help from Jenny in the Patron Services department, we supplied all the materials for caregivers to craft while their babies played. It was a hit. caregivers used the program as a way to bond with other caregivers, new and old. (Goal 2.1)

Tricia and I welcome the First Steps Little School on Monday, March 3 to Mother Goose Storytime. After Storytime I gave a tour of the library. Guillermo and Diana spoke to caregivers about the adult programs and resources. Since their visit we have seen families return and participate in other programs as well as utilize the space and resources. (Goal 4.1)

Tricia and Alexandra collaborated with the Ossining Early Childhood PTA on their Read-a-Thon. OPL was a stop on the Read-a-Thon punch card. Children and caregivers could visit OPL for a punch and be entered into a raffle after 3 visits. A reading celebration was held in the children's room on Saturday, March 22 with a free book giveaway, a read aloud, crafts and a scavenger hunt for participants. (Goal 4.1)

I met with Julia Schonberg from Bethany Arts Community on Tuesday, March 25 to finalize details for The Big Playdate. The idea for this program came about during a brainstorming session Julia and I had in the Fall. The Big Playdate will provide engaging early literacy activities for children ages 0-3. It will also provide caregivers tips on ways to engage little learners at home while playing. The event will be held on Saturday, June 14 at BAC from 11am-1pm. Another idea that Julia and I discussed in the Fall was a Poetry Workshop for tweens and teens. I was able to loop Suzy in with Julia and I to further plan and discuss. The Poetry Workshop was scheduled to be held on Thursday, April 3, but unfortunately it was cancelled due to low registration. (Goal 4.1)

Tricia and I attended NYLA's YSS conference in Mt. Kisco on Friday, April 4. The theme of the conference was All on the Same Page. I attended three breakout sessions that I'll share more about in my conference write up: (1) Libraries Are for Everyone. How to support your rainbow families, staff, and community, (2) Let's Talk About Sex. SRH Materials and Programming for Youth, and (3) Toddler Tornadoes and Preschool Free-for-Alls, Tame your

Storytime. However, the highlight of the day was the keynote speaker Maulik Pancholy. Maulik shared his story of why he wrote his books, *The Best at It* and *Nikhil Out Loud*. He loves visiting schools and works with young children to foster a world where they can celebrate their identities.

### **Mallory Marinaro, Patron Services**

It feels like a tremendous betrayal to be typing this in the midst of National Library Week, of all things, but I say it with complete affection: there's no profession more worthy of the gentle skewering of a Michael Schur mockumentary than librarianship. Imagine some interesting patrons (and, in the interest of fairness, interesting staff members) adapted for the screen and played by an alumnus of *Saturday Night Live*, it would be a ratings bonanza! Imagine the ridiculousness of my to-do list shared with a sitcom audience; this month, my planner literally had an entry that said "1pm Meeting re: Meetings" and a Post-It emblazoned with "How to message messaging?", both of which make complete sense in context and are about as Leslie Knope as one can be, which I take some measure of pride and shame in. It was a wild month, with a lot of planning to plan and talking about talking, but there's some serious momentum taking place and it's very gratifying.

### ***Building on the Best***

The bulk of my month was spent working on our *Building on the Best* packet, which will be sent to legislators and community leaders ahead of our information session in May. Many thanks are due to Althema Goodson, who wrote an excellent letter to legislators that was mission-driven and funding-focused. With the help of Althema, Amanda Curley, Meghan Huppuch, Rachel Murphy, and Ginnie Blake-West, not to mention our fantastic partners at SGH and Lothrop, Karen and I were able to create a piece that's both informative and compelling.

I also kind of never want to see it again? I spent so much time designing, writing, and proofing this that I'm reasonably sure the color palette worked its way into my dreams; I suppose I should be grateful that I got to choose my own colors for this and wasn't dreaming in, like...puce or chartreuse, which are almost as ugly to see as their names are to say. At any rate, I was in this document A LOT, as the 64 versions of the file on my computer will attest to, but I am very proud of the final product and am grateful for the group who made it happen.

Next: adapting this packet to a public-facing version and working on a presentation for our event on May 28. Let's get the band back together, Pantone #8cb89f and #051d40.

### ***Changes on the First Floor***

(Can I seriously thank any trustee, colleague, or member of the public still reading this fever dream come to life?)

We're continuing to make the first floor a more welcoming communal space and in March, Marie and I followed through on a long-held goal of ours to condense the holds shelves onto one unit and clear the other in order to make room for seating. On a Wednesday morning armed with a playlist of millennial pop throwbacks and more Clorox wipes than I care to

count, we cleaned shelves, moved holds, and made new signage. A huge thank you to the Building and Grounds staff who physically removed the shelves, and to Jenny Meudt for creating eye-catching vinyl lettering. The change is staggering! Patrons appreciate how much brighter and more inviting the space is, and staff has loved the easier sightlines and much better lighting.

## ***Planning***

Unsurprisingly, the Building takes up the majority of my planning time, as we look ahead to information sessions for community leaders, training sessions for staff and Trustees, and all of the marketing work that's coming. In addition to the B&G Committee meeting, I've been attending the Community Outreach Meetings and last month met with Karen, Molly, Meghan, and Ginnie about messaging. I'm very fortunate to be working with excellent people across all of these teams and grateful to have a seat at the table as we embark on these big changes. I'm continuing to collaborate with Diana, Ignayra, and Suzy on intergenerational programs. We're focusing on the kickoff to Summer Reading (!) and some art programs for all ages to be hosted this summer and in the works is a community read, as well as the return of our Fall Festival. Watch this space, etc.

We are also in the final stages of having our holds lockers installed. Marie, Allison, Jenny and I met to discuss how we want the lockers to look, and we've started to think about the workflow for training staff on their use and how best to manage the holds process. There's a lot to think about, and Marie has come up with some really good systems. We're also talking to Bibliotheca, the company through which we're getting our lockers, about using their system to manage our digital screens. Our screens are all nearing the end of their lives, and the software to upload our digital content to them is, well...do you remember Angelfire websites? It's like that, but not as modern and has been a source of irritation to me and Marie for years, so we're both very relieved to be thinking about a new platform and the ability to seamlessly integrate the lockers and our marketing is really exciting.

I am happy to be working with Allison, Karen, and Molly on implementing the PITS Software for incident reporting, to make the process of creating and sharing incident reports more logical and cohesive.

## ***Allison Robbins, Technology and Training***

Bibliotheca Pickup Lockers: With the receipt of the BOT approval, we signed the proposal for these lockers, and I've had the initial project kickoff meeting with Bibliotheca. Molly is speaking with the electricians to coordinate the installation of power and data into the locker location and, once that's done, the lockers should be up and running within a couple of months. (Goals 2.3, 5.1, 5.2)

Patron Computers: After working through a few surprises along the way, I was able to install the final computers into the Teen Room. I've heard that the feedback from the teens who use the computers has been positive. (Goal 2.3)

Front Desk iPad: Many thanks to Scott Craven's advocacy for having a device at the Front Desk that staff and patrons could use to overcome language barriers together. We have



added an iPad in a “point of sale” style stand to the Front Desk for staff to grab and use as needed. We’ve had a lot of success thus far using a translation app to communicate with patrons when we don’t staff on shift who speak a patron’s fluent language. We are able speak into the app, have it translated into the target language both in audio and written form, and the patron does the same back. While it isn’t the same as always having a fluent staff member on the desk, it is certainly helpful. Many thanks to the staff and patrons who have been willing to give it a try! (Goal 2.3 “Tactic/Action: Investigate translation services for phone and tablets to allow for point-of-service translations.”)

ERate for Hotspots: I submitted our application for funding in March for service to support our 86 hotspots. (Goal 1.3, 2.3)

Outside Group Reservations: I’m collaborating with a team of multiple staff who are working on updating the process by which outside groups make reservations and staff manage the paperwork, etc. I’m mostly “tech support” as we go along, finding ways to use our calendar and other software to everyone’s advantage—a task I always enjoy! (Goal 2.3)

### **Marie Trapasso, Circulation/Technical Services**

What can I say about March? It is a long month, it’s usually still cold and gray and I am just waiting for Spring to arrive which seems like it’s so far off and thus adds to my dislike of the month. So, we make our own fun and things to look forward to at OPL.

#### **Marie Recommends**

Back in January, I put up a *Marie Recommends* display on the display stand across from the Front Desk where the Speed Reads are. This was a collection of books that I have read throughout the years that really stuck with me, and I thought others would enjoy. Much to my surprise, many patrons seemed to be interested in my recommendations, and I had a hard time keeping books on this display. So, clearly my picks were better than “Gene Picks” (*Seinfeld* reference anyone?) One of the books that I put on the display that I really liked was *Crash Out: the true tale of a Hell’s Kitchen kid and the bloodiest escape in Sing Sing history* by David Goewey. This book read like a Fiction novel and the fact that it occurred right in Ossining made it easy to picture where some of it was taking place. Having this book on display also coincided with the Foundation’s screening of the film, *Sing Sing* in February. The patron who took out *Crash Out* even mentioned the Foundation’s program when they checked out. So that made me happy. In March, I took my recommendations down and Lisa put hers up. She has a varied reading taste and I am sure her recommendations will speak to many different patrons.

#### **Sprucing Up the Holds Shelves Area**

Over the past few months and years, one goal we have worked toward is making the First Floor more welcoming and having more relevant and popular items as the first things you see when you pass the Front Desk. This has involved tons of weeding, and physically relocating collections along with, sometimes shelving units as well. Most of this has been completed by Sheena Glanville, Allison Robbins, Mallory Marinaro and myself. When we moved the DVD collection into the Cheever Room, I was legitimately shocked by the amount of dust these shelves can hold but I digress. One of our staff people suggested that we get rid of the first bank of shelving that was closest to the Front Desk. It was too tall and it obscured the sight

line of the staircase to the upper floors. So on Wednesday, March 5, Allison, Mallory and I moved the Book Group books that had been on the shelves closest to the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Study Room and put them on the shelves after the New Books. We then shifted the A-L holds to the book case closer to the First Floor Study Room and moved the M-Z holds onto the other side of the same bookcase. Jenny was then able to use the Cricut to label the shelves and B&G staff took the first book case away. It has done wonders for opening up the area around the Front Desk. What amazed me the most was that patrons didn't seem to have any trouble finding their holds in the new location. We had a few questions as to where the Book Group books are and we were happy to show the patrons. Overall, it's been a great change.

### **Washington School Tour**

The Leadership Team along with a few Board members and James Trapasso and Tricia Sabini were able to tour the old Washington School up the street to see if it would be a suitable location for when the building project ramps up. I was pleasantly surprised by how much space there was on the third floor and I could picture all of the different departments there. However, there were a considerable amount of stairs to get to the third floor as well as an unreliable elevator. Obviously we will make any space work but I would like to see some other spaces that maybe have more parking available.

### **Holds Lockers**

We are continuing to move forward with the Holds lockers and possibly having Bibliotheca provide us with new flat screens for program promotion around the building. On March 18, Allison, Jenny and I attended a demo of the software Bibliotheca provides for screens and program promotion. It seemed very straightforward and easy to use. I am excited about it because it would be a step up from Dynasign which is what we use now. Also, two of our current screens are noticeably on their last legs so this would be a great opportunity to upgrade what we have and get everything working again. I am also excited to get the holds lockers here and up and running as I think they will be used a lot during the building project.

### **WLS Tech Committee**

I attended the WLS Tech Committee meeting on March 10. It was a very short meeting with no real update regarding the app. They said that Bywater did push out an update which should have helped to prevent people from being signed out of their library card account. However, there are still slow load times and they have not gotten mobile checkout working. They are still saying that the iOS version is the version that has the most problems and there is no estimate for when the app will be fully functional.

### **Promotional Materials**

I created 17 screen graphics for promotion of March programs and schedule changes for the flatscreens around the building and 4 placards for program promotion in Aspen. I also put up a new bulletin board display on Mezzanine.

### **Circ Statistics:**

**Patrons added: 138**

**Interlibrary Loans: (received at Ossining): 1,698  
(supplied to other libraries): 1,326**

**Total Circulation (including eBooks): 17,468**

There were 0 checkouts from the Mobile App as it's still not working.

**There were 5,516 total checkouts from Overdrive.**  
**There were 622 checkouts on just Ossining Advantage titles.**

Our museum passes circulated 64 times.

**Tech Statistics:**

**Items Added: 827**

**Items Deleted: 998**

**Suzy Zavarella, Teen Services**

The Job Readiness workshop series, held in collaboration with the Youth Bureau, began this month. We've held two sessions so far, and while initial attendance was not as we hoped for, we did see an increase from the first session to the second. I'm optimistic that participation will continue to grow as word gets out that attending the workshops guarantees a summer job opportunity.

The long-awaited Teen Summit was a success! The discussion focused on the Super Bowl halftime show, its connection to current events, and the broader impact of the entertainment industry. It turned out to be a truly eye-opening conversation. The amount of research done was apparent in the questions and comments from both presenters and participants. The participants showed genuine interest and preparation through their well-composed, thoughtful comments. They were also disappointed when it was time to wrap up, which opened the door for continued conversations beyond the event.

The Teen Advisory Board continues to attract new participants, but we're not seeing many returning attendees. It seems that many teens are joining to fulfill their community service requirements, and once those hours are completed, they tend to stop attending. We're exploring ways to maintain a small, consistent core group throughout the year.

It turns out having the Escape Room on Saturday was a great idea! We had six kids participate, and they all worked together to solve the puzzles in an impressively short amount of time. The weekend timing seemed to be more convenient so it's something we'll consider doing again.

Sudha and I had the opportunity to present *Library Resources 101* to parents from Peekskill and Ossining whose children are enrolled in the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program. The Peekskill City School District is the lead implementer of this grant-funded initiative, which provides students with a unique, no-cost pathway to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree in one of four career fields. We presented to three different groups—one in English, and with the support of a Spanish translator, also to Spanish-speaking families. Many parents from both communities were not fully aware of the wide range of resources available through their school and public libraries. We were both very pleased to have the chance to share this wealth of information and help bridge that gap in awareness.

I'm excited that the YSS Conference is just around the corner! A lot of time, more than I initially expected, went into preparing for this event, so it's great to see it coming together.

**Looking Ahead to April:**

- SAT Prep
- Continuation of the Job Readiness program
- Spring Break Movie and DIY craft programs
- DIY Pizza Party
- Continuation of the Teen Summit with monthly movie and conversations
- Project Lit trip to the Museum of Natural History