

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

**Karen LaRocca-Fels, Library Director**

Congratulations to our new trustee Amanda Marsh! I look forward to working with her in the coming years.

We continue to struggle with the temperature issues that are caused by the lack of AC5 and are awaiting a cost estimate for accelerating the work on that part of the new system. Once we have that, we can determine how to proceed. In the meantime, the staff have been wonderfully flexible and creative in dealing with regular closures of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and mezzanine. The work that goes into shifting services, while more streamlined now, is still significant each time it happens and impacts staff across the board, adding to our already full plates. A big thank you is due to all who work hard to help the transition go smoothly. Thank you, too, to Steve Garrett, who monitors and manages the systems that are running in order to maximize the cooling that we do have.

For the board's information, here is what happens when we close the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and mezzanine:

- The Library In Charge Person (usually me or Molly, but if we are away or busy, a Department Head) works in coordination with the Adult Services and Teen Services staff to determine whether a floor closure is appropriate and when it should best happen.
- The Adult Services team or an LICP works to set up the Carnegie Desk as a service point.
- Teen Services determines where they will provide service from – either the lower level or the Carnegie Desk (depends on the time of day)
- Notice is provided to the staff with known details (when we think we're closing the floors, when we think we might open them, if known)
- Signage is gathered and put up around the building. Mallory Marinaro prepared signage for this purpose.
- Notice is provided to the public via our website, eblast, and social media. Mallory, Allison Robbins, and Marie Trapasso work together on this.
- The second floor and mezzanine staircases are blocked off and elevator access is locked for closed floors.
- Patrons currently working on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and mezzanine are informed and relocated.
- Room reservations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor study rooms are reassigned to other rooms and programs are shifted to accommodate.
- Temperatures and forecasts are monitored to determine when the floors can open again.

Allison Robbins prepared mobile service desk kits for each department to use when relocating a service desk. These are invaluable in making the transition as smooth as possible. We have made the decision to disallow reservations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor study rooms for the afternoon and evening hours, as these are the times most affected by temperature closures. If the second floor is open, we will allow access to these rooms on a first come-first served basis. We do allow some programs to continue in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room as that room receives cooling from a different unit.

## **Board and Committee Work**

Buildings and Grounds Committee information is below.

The Policy, Personnel, and Bylaws Committee recommended revisions to the Bylaws, which had their first reading at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, as well as revisions to the Use of Meeting and Performance Spaces Policy. At the next committee meeting, we will discuss the Programming Policy.

## **Budget and Finance**

The proposed 2025/2026 budget was approved on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Building and Grounds**

The building renovation project continues to be a huge focus for myself, Molly Robbins, and Mallory Marinaro. Molly continues to work with the Lothrop architects on refining the plans for our renovations. The three of us continue our work with Ginnie Blake West and the board on plans for informational marketing. We had a very successful information session for community leaders on May 28<sup>th</sup> and we are currently preparing for the public sessions, as well as another session for community leaders if needed. We are also in contact with BOMA (thank you, Amanda Curley!) to present to their group. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

The resolutions passed by the Board of Trustees was forwarded to the Ossining Union Free School District attorneys for their review and next steps. We learned that the school board plans to approve their part of the resolution at the July regular meeting. We will continue to be in contact with them. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met with a potential realtor with whom we might work to secure a temporary space when the time comes. They will look for additional recommendations. (Goals 5.5 and 5.6)

## **Foundation & Friends**

We presented a building project information session for the Foundation and Friends on May 19<sup>th</sup>, which I thought went well. (Goals 1.1, 5.5, and 5.6)

Leslie Allen reached out to me for more information on the Swope Funding programming to help in their efforts to secure grants. I am working to prepare the information for them. (Goal 1.1)

## **Grants**

I am hoping to be able to submit a library construction grant application for a portion of the building renovation project. The timing may be tricky, but I will work with Lothrop, Molly, and WLS to see how best to proceed. (Goals 1.3, 5.5, and 5.6)

## **Outreach**

As shared above, we had a successful Community Leaders Building Project Information Session on May 28th. We are planning for other sessions over the summer. (Goals 1.3, 4.1, 5.5, and 5.6)

## **Personnel**

We are moving ahead with the process to do an internal promotion of a current Librarian I to Librarian II in Children's Services. This has been in the budget (and in the works) for quite a while and, like many other things "personnel", has been delayed in part due to delays in responsiveness of the Westchester County Department of Human Resources. It is frustrating that it took so long, but I'm happy we are moving forward. We are also waiting on several other personnel matters and look forward to being able to move ahead at some point in the future.

We received official word that our Building Superintendent position has been approved by Westchester County Department of Human Resources. We will move on to next steps to move forward with this position.

Guillermo Rodriguez is wrapping up the second round of Spanish language classes for library staff and will be starting a third round in July. He offers two sessions – beginners and advanced – and they run for eight weeks. Staff who attend must commit to practicing their Spanish between classes and I'm happy to report that they have been overheard doing just that! I am so thankful to Guillermo for providing this opportunity and to our staff for their dedication in taking on this challenge.

Congratulations to Tricia Sabini and Marie Trapasso, winners of the 2025 Westchester Library Association Bonnie Katz Award! This award is given in memory of our former librarian Bonnie Katz to library professionals who exemplify a spirit of connectedness to community, positivity, and commitment to libraries. The award is well-deserved by both Tricia and Marie.

Congratulations to Tiffany Paovella, winner of the 2025 Westchester Library Association Professional Development Award! This award is given to a library staff person who is pursuing professional development activities and courses that will contribute to a library career. Tiffany is currently pursuing her Master of Information Science and is very deserving of this award.

## **Projects, etc.**

Allison Robbins and I are revisiting the hot spot lending period. As a reminder, we implemented the lending of hotspots when we successfully applied for ECF (Emergency Connectivity Funding), federal funding that was made available during and after COVID. The funding briefly paused but then was to be reinstated next fiscal year (2025/2026). Now the funding is under threat, and it is likely that it will not be reinstated. We currently have 85 hotspots and most times, all are checked out. Because of the parameters of the federal funding, we were offering a loan period of three months with one renewal and no limits on the amount of times patrons could borrow a hotspot. We do limit lending to Ossining Library cardholders. Because of the high demand for these items, the cost, the potential loss of funding, and some limited issues with borrowing, Allison and I are revisiting these parameters and will likely recommend a lending period of three weeks, with one renewal, and a six-month or yearly limit. More to come.

We are rolling out Quipu/PITS, the online security incident reporting software, and will be transitioning to a fully online process July 1. Several of us received “train the trainer” training and the department heads are rolling out the training within their departments. Luckily, the software is easy to use and has already been successfully used for at least one incident (thank you, Mark Sacha!). Thank you to Allison Robbins for managing the implementation of this software. I think we’ll find it a tremendous improvement in the long term.

Allison Robbins and Molly Robbins are working on planning the installation of our library materials pickup lockers. The electricians have done their work and we have an install date in July. Allison, Marie Trapasso, Mallory, Molly and Jenny Meudt are working on designing a wrap for the lockers. They are also talking about a matching wrap for the book drop. I can’t wait to invite Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg for a ribbon cutting once it is installed and wrapped. This was paid for, in part, by a grant we received in 2024 that was secured for us by the Assemblywoman. (Goals 1.3, 4.3, 5.2, 5.6)

I will be presenting on a panel of library directors at the Westchester Library Association Conference on June 12. Our topic? Civil Service! I hope I provide some helpful guidance to our colleagues.

I have been invited to accept an appointment to be on the Public Library Association Annual Conference 2026 Program Subcommittee. I had thrown my name in a few years back and promptly forgot about it. While I feel like I have limited time for anything else, one thing I’ve learned is that participating in professional organizations feeds my librarian soul and provides me with a satisfaction and connectedness that sometimes gets lost in my day-to-day work. So of course I accepted. My term starts at the end of June and runs through next year’s American Library Association Conference in June 2026.

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

Molly will be attending the June PLDA meeting in my place, as I am presenting at the Westchester Library Association Conference.

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

May 16<sup>th</sup>: Meeting with Ginnie Blake West, Molly Robbins, Mallory Marinaro  
May 19<sup>th</sup>: Friends and Foundation Building Project Presentation  
May 19<sup>th</sup>: Community Outreach and Engagement Committee  
May 19<sup>th</sup>: Board of Trustees Meeting  
May 27<sup>th</sup>: Buildings and Grounds Committee Interim Meeting (realtor)  
May 28<sup>th</sup>: Community Leaders’ Building Project Information Session  
June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Buildings and Grounds Committee  
June 3<sup>rd</sup>: Meeting with Calgi, Molly Robbins  
June 3<sup>rd</sup>: Personnel/Policy/Bylaws Committee Meeting  
June 4<sup>th</sup>: PITS Train the Trainer  
June 5<sup>th</sup>: Board of Trustees Work Session  
June 10<sup>th</sup>: Meeting with Ginnie Blake West, Mallory, and Molly

Below please find reports for our Leadership Team.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen LaRocca-Fels

**Diana Lennon, Adult Services**

I think I write this every month, but the month flew by...again! In addition to our “regular” duties, and programming, ordering books, weeding and auditing, we were finalizing Summer Reading plans and working on Fall programs. We are looking forward to exciting events for Hispanic Heritage and Italian Heritage Months...and then before you know it, we will be in 2026! (Did I really write that?)

After numerous scheduling issues, Ignayra, Karen, and I met with Brian Avenius and Leslie Allen from the OPL Foundation to discuss our programs that they fund, namely the ESOL Class for Adult Services. They will work on promoting the programs and raising further funding to support our efforts. A new ESOL class began in early May and will continue through June 20<sup>th</sup>, and I am hoping to add a Citizenship class to our Foundation supported programs.

In a team effort, we replaced all the Dewey signs on the second-floor center-facing end panels with new larger plastic holders, and bigger and brighter lettering. Kudos to Norma in B&G for cleaning off the glue from the old holders; and to Vicenta and Angela in Adult Services for creating the new signs—it’s trickier than it appears! We now need to finish the outside-facing signage on the other end of the shelving units.

In our outreach efforts, Mark gave a presentation at the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers about the library’s physical and online services, digital resources and technology assistance. Maryknoll has requested further instruction on these topics (dates TBD) and has expressed interest in scheduling regular visits to the library for the brothers. This has been a wonderful relationship, and we look forward to having them in our building more frequently.

I also hosted the Ossining/Tarrytown Community Network Meeting on May 22 as we wrapped up another incredible year of sharing resources with numerous organizations, the school districts, libraries, etc. in our immediate area. Speaking of school districts, we also hosted the OUFSD K-5 Art Show in the lower-level Art Gallery. It was very successful and numerous families attended, with obvious pride in their children’s fantastic work.

We also were thrilled to have author and film critic Marshall Fine here to speak about Hitchcock’s “Vertigo” for our Bonnie Katz Film Series. The series will conclude with his (online) commentary about “North by Northwest” on June 28. We presented the films on Saturdays this year, and we think that is why attendance increased significantly—in addition to the Hitchcock film selections and Marshall’s insight. This has been a fabulous way to honor Bonnie’s legacy!

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

In May we celebrated AAPI month with some fun special programs. I hosted candy sushi on May 6. The children loved it! I had to apologize to the caregivers as a lot of sugar was eaten. Tricia hosted a Trip to Hawaii on May 7 where children and families celebrated the Hawaiian culture through activities and books. The book *Ohana Means Family* by Ilima Loomis was read aloud. On May 15 Kevin hosted another Little Critics Book Club highlighting AAPI culture, authors and illustrators. The little critics chose *The Boldest White* by Ibtihaj Muhammad as their favorite this month. (Goal 2.1)

Our ¡Día! Children's day Celebration was held on May 2 with a late over at the library. All dressed in our pajamas, we ate pizza, made special pillowcases, read books in English and Spanish, and watched a bedtime movie with popcorn. It was fun had by all. We love celebrating ¡Día! Día is a nationally recognized initiative that emphasizes the importance of literacy for all children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. (Goal 2.1)

Alexandra and I hosted a parent workshop for the Adelante Juntos program at Neighbor's Link on May 19. This first workshop highlighted the importance of reading and OPL's resources. Parents were fully invested and engaged. We've already seen some parents come into the library the following days. After the workshop the parents reunited with their children while Alexandra held a short Storytime. (Goal 4.1)

We did some rearranging of our Spanish Collection moving the Spanish Middle grade books to immediately following the English middle grade books, which opened some shelves for our expansion of the Spanish series books. We also have some room for more Spanish picture books. Our Spanish Graphic novels also moved to a space where they can continue to grow. (Goal 2.2)

We are very excited to be getting our back corner nook enclosed to be a small meeting room. Since we are losing some shelving space, we've been shifting and weeding our Easy books. The enclosed space will serve as a quiet room for young children who are over stimulated and need some uninterrupted quiet time. I also plan on expanding our Reading buddies' program so this space would also be ideal for students to meet and practice reading with their buddies. This past school year we've had a few dedicated buddies who have been meeting regularly. (Goal 5.6)

The first week in June we visited Claremont School to promote Summer Reading. The team and I visited every 3rd and 4th grade classroom. We shared program information, reading logs, book talks, and invited all students to our kickoff on June 27! We are in the midst of visiting Brookside School to promote summer reading to the 1st and 2nd graders. It's a lot of work for my small but mighty team but hopefully the work comes with great outcomes! (Goal 4.1)

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

May 28 got a rare spot of distinction on my calendar with marker *and* highlighter and loomed large throughout the month, as the majority of my time was spent on prepping for the Community Leaders Breakfast. There were numerous meetings about meetings. There were literally dozens of versions of documents. There was skepticism of my font choices (I was my

own skeptic, in all honesty) and a 3am gasp of horror when I was unsure I had actually placed the catering order. There was the rainy Saturday I spent teaching myself about Gantt Charts. It was a lot, but all in service of a very successful morning.

As you all know, the breakfast went very well and we had a great group in attendance. Karen and Molly have gotten their presentations down to a science and are both so comfortable telling a compelling story about the project. I was especially thrilled with our resident experts and how accessible and pleasant they were explaining their parts of the project to the audience; Bryan Strohman from SGH, in particular, was incredibly skilled in making a complex topic engaging. Seeing all of these experts, and our staff and board, in action was a great reminder that we have excellent people doing excellent work.

The public sessions over the summer will certainly have a different vibe, but I am confident that our messaging will land. Anecdotally, the father of a boy on my son's soccer team grew up in Ossining and when I mentioned our HVAC problems last week (a communications person is never off the clock!), he asked "How is that possible? That building's brand new!" When I—gently!—pointed out that the building opened in 2007, he said "Damn, I'm old" (the passage of time flummoxes us all); hearing that this facility is almost 20 years old completely changed the tenor of the conversation, and he said he'd encourage his parents to vote yes. It was encouraging to see that shift in mindset! I have faith that our assorted group will be able to handle even the prickliest questions with ease and, dare I say, gusto.

The next few months will be a dizzying kind of busy. It would be disingenuous to say that I'm looking forward, exactly, to what's coming next, but I'm at least ready to face the challenges with a long to-do list and paid Canva subscription.

### ***Budget***

The budget vote and trustee election was basically a blip for me and I'm usually consumed with it! Karen and I have been doing this together for seven years now and our system is pretty seamless, so we were able to get done all of the budgetary moving parts with minimal stress this time around. Congratulations to Althema Goodson, Amanda Curley, and Amanda Marsh for their election to the board; I'm happy to continue to work with Althema and Amanda C., and I'm looking forward to getting to know Amanda M. as a Trustee as well as a fantastic patron.

### ***Summer Reading***

Oh, right, in addition to all of the above, there's also a huge summer reading program coming! I've been working with Suzy, Diana, and Ignayra on a kickoff, which will be held on Friday, June 27, from 6-8pm. Diana and I have again collaborated on a reading program for adults and I hope that I can count on everyone reading this report to sign up and participate. It will be fun, I promise!

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

**Bibliotheca Pickup Lockers:** Molly arranged for power and data installation at the future locker site. We are on track for a mid-July installation. Marie, Jenny, and I are working on a "wrap" design to make the lockers eye-catching and OPL branded. (Goals 2.3, 5.1, 5.2)

**Mobile Workstation Kits:** These have been getting use since the last report! Jenny is helping me improve the visually oriented instructions and clear labeling that should help the kits remain intact and easy for any staff, regardless of how familiar they are with the kits, to use at a moment's notice. While having to pick up and move is not ideal, everyone has remained flexible, and we are thankful to have the "power" to do what we need with our technology. (Goals 5.2)

**Phone:** While the speakers have settled down, we are experiencing inexplicable and inconsistent disconnections of the phones from our dedicated voice WiFi network. E3 and Grandstream (phone handset manufacturer) are reportedly working together to investigate this mystery. In the meantime, staff are remaining patient with blips in connection.

**SonicWall (firewall) upgrade:** Installation was quick and seamless! Logically has updated their procedures to configure network equipment off-site so that it is quick on-site. We experienced almost zero down time and are all set.

**Quipu PITS (incident reporting):** Configuration is complete, and we will be going "live" with new incidents beginning in July. In the meantime, staff will be tasked with entering past incidents into the database as a means of practice and building the database upon which to build. Members from each department attended a "train the trainer" session with Quipu. (Goal 5.2)

Concise progress updates/statuses on some other projects:

- Children's Room patron computer expansion: Tables and chairs have been delivered—I plan to set the patron computers up with these new tables in July after I return from a trip at the end of June/beginning of July.
- New session management and patron print software: awaiting the conclusion of a new development with a potential vendor before making next moves.
- New Signage Software: Proposal approved, coming soon.

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

May is in the rearview mirror and that means that Summer, my favorite season, is right around the corner. But first, a recap of May.

#### **Aspen Refresh**

I have been brainstorming new categories of items to highlight on Aspen. I came up with a few but I haven't had the time to curate the lists and then get them to pop up on Aspen which is a multi-step process. That is definitely on my To-Do List for June.

#### **Baker & Taylor vs Brodart**

Although Baker & Taylor assured us that the delays we had been experiencing, were limited to certain publishers, authors, etc and should be correcting itself, we still seem to be experiencing delays with our orders. This is extremely frustrating when we are ordering titles months ahead of time and they are titles from popular authors. So I have done a few test carts from Brodart to see if their materials get delivered quicker and it seemed to be about the

same length of time. I know it's not just us that these delays are affecting but it's discouraging at the same time.

### **Circulation Committee Meeting**

I attended the Circulation Committee Meeting held through WLS on May 13. There was much discussion regarding the upcoming Evergreen upgrade scheduled for June 4 after all libraries close. There shouldn't be any major changes that staff would need training on. There is a major change to the Reports Module which is how we get weeding reports, circulation reports, etc. I attended one training session and it seems ok. Hopefully it ends up being simpler to use than the current module.

### **WLS Technology Committee Meeting**

Wilson from WLS spent a lot of time talking about switching out computers at libraries who use them for their IT and also a security update to those computers. Neither of those issues affect us. They also talked about the Evergreen upgrade that was set to take place. WLS was asked to provide us with an update regarding the app. Bywater is still working on some issues and WLS is frustrated with their lack of speed on implementing fixes they asked for. They are currently exploring other options in terms of an app vendor. I asked if this means that the mobile checkout will never come back. Lindsay Stratton at WLS said they seemed to have identified the issue with mobile checkout and hope to be implementing a fix soon. So there is still hope for Mobile Checkout. I also asked for an update regarding Message Bee since texts are becoming spottier through Evergreen. The response was that Message Bee is also still being worked on. There is a lot of behind the scenes issues that still need to be worked out.

### **Video Games**

Jefferson Quituisaca and I met on May 27 to recap the past fiscal year with the video games and evaluate where we want to go in the future as the Nintendo Switch 2 was released. I cannot speak highly enough of Jeff. He came to the meeting with lots of stats, questions and suggestions. He has skillfully curated a Video Game selection that is popular with our patrons and continues to circulate well. I am so appreciative to Jeff for seeing my vision with this collection and being just as excited about it, if not more so, as me.

### **Front Desk Display**

I had the display by the Front Desk full of new books for Get Caught Reading Month and overall 18 books were checked out from this display. We seemed to have a run on these books at the end of the month especially which may have had to do with the Memorial Day, 3 day weekend.

### **Promotional Materials**

I created 15 screen graphics for promotion of April programs and schedule changes for the flatscreens around the building and 8 placards for program promotion in Aspen.

### **Circ Statistics:**

**Patrons added: 102**

**Interlibrary Loans: (received at Ossining): 1,573  
(supplied to other libraries): 1,282**

**Total Circulation (including eBooks): 16,614**

There were 0 checkouts from the Mobile App as Mobile checkout is still not working.

**There were 5,474 total checkouts from Overdrive.**

**There were 773 checkouts on just Ossining Advantage titles.**

Our museum passes circulated 78 times and an explorer bag circulated once.

**Tech Statistics:**

**Items Added: 779**

**Items Deleted: 637**

**Suzy Zavarella, Teen Services**

May flew by! It's hard to believe summer is almost here.

The Job Readiness Program continues to grow steadily. Several teens completed the program this month, and we now have 32 active participants. To accommodate those who joined later, we extended the program with a few additional sessions to ensure everyone can complete their training. (Goal 4.1)

To celebrate the end of the school year, Project Lit hosted a Tea Party where teens enjoyed a variety of teas, including a special homemade Korean chrysanthemum tea, along with a delicious spread of homemade treats—the cucumber and cream cheese sandwiches were a favorite!

Turnout was low for the Battle of the Books information meeting, which was a bit disappointing, as both Ignayra and I had hoped for at least one or two new participants. However, three Teen Team members did attend, and their enthusiasm paid off—they recruited friends, and by the next day, we welcomed three new teens to the group! Tiffany led a craft session where teens created gifts for Mother's Day. During this month's Foodie Fun programs, participants got to try quesadillas from Mexico and spiced potato sandwiches inspired by Indian flavors. (Goal 2.1)

Joan Lloyd took her show on the road to our Project Lit meeting to guide teens in making beaded earrings to sell as Mother's Day presents. Money earned will be used to fund our trips next school year.

Our monthly beaded earring workshop had the lowest attendance ever! We were able to wrangle a few teens to participate and they enjoyed it. We hope that they will keep coming back.

SAT Prep sessions experienced a slight dip in attendance this month, likely due to scheduling conflicts, but those who attended expressed sincere appreciation for the continued support. (Goal 2.3)

Our book club continued its journey through *The Hunger Games* series. In May, the group watched *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, building excitement for our June read, *Sunrise on the Reaping*.

We've noticed a gradual decline in the number of teens needing volunteer hours, though a few last-minute individuals are still eager to jump in and contribute.

On the planning front, the Teen Services team met to finalize our summer programming. I also met with Jeanette Gerber of Smart Test Prep to confirm plans for the College Readiness workshop scheduled for August. (Goals 2.3 and 4.1)

The teens continue to keep us on our toes with their energy and unpredictability. While many moments are rewarding and inspiring, it can also be disheartening to witness the level of disrespect occasionally directed toward staff. We remain committed to fostering a positive and respectful environment and are actively exploring new strategies to address this, including collaboration with school administrators.

Finally, the month ended on a sad note as several of us attended the memorial service for Tony. It was a moving gathering, with many from the school district and Tony's fishing community in attendance—a reminder of the impact he had on so many lives.

Looking ahead to June:

- Visit to AMD to promote the Summer Reading Program
- Project Lit and Battle of the Books outreach with 8th grade ELA classes
- Pride Craft, Father's Day Craft, and a Juneteenth-themed Art Club session
- A screening of the movie A Goofy Movie, in celebration of Father's Day and the 30th anniversary of the movie
- Summer Reading Kickoff event