

December 7, 2020

As we come to the end of a very tumultuous year, the libraries of Hardin County continue to create a new playbook on how to best serve our patrons while keeping our staff and community safe. Within the constraints of public health guidelines and tightening budgets, the Hardin County Libraries continue to provide needed resources to strained communities.

Creativity was key this year to providing library services to the community. When the Governor closed library buildings for visitors, the libraries acted by offering and promoting curbside service, home delivery, and the use of online resources. Libraries also made it easier to obtain a library card by not requiring patrons to physically come inside.

While the buildings were closed to the public, most of the library staff worked diligently on long put off projects, inventory, cleaning & organizing, and developing alternative programming options.

As we look to 2021, we hope to continue as many services as possible. As city budgets and private donations tighten, we look to the county for help in continuing our services and programs. Though we may not know what the future will bring, we hope to return to a more normal schedule of hours open and in person programming. Any support from Hardin County will help us achieve these goals.



# HARDIN COUNTY LIBRARIES

## 2020 REPORT TO HARDIN COUNTY

### GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION

- Mandated to close library buildings to the public from April 7-May 1, 2020
- Staff continued to work even though buildings were closed
- Many projects completed such as inventory, deep cleaning, organizing, weeding, decorating, staff trainings, updating policies, etc.



### CIRCULATION OF MATERIALS - PROVIDED BY CURBSIDE OR HOME DELIVERY

- Requests through email, phone calls, or social media
- Hand picked items for regular patrons
- Provided "no contact" pickup at arranged time
- Home delivery if needed



### AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

- When we could not meet in person, turned to online programs
- Provided make and take activity bags
- At home Lego challenges with pictures posted or emailed
- Crafts with materials at home
- Limited numbers & masks when can meet in person



### SUMMER READING PROGRAM

- In person programs had to be reconfigured into at home or virtual programs
- Libraries offered challenges, art & science activities, virtual programs as well as the traditional reading programs
- Many libraries compiled and distributed kits to adults, teens and children participants



### ONLINE BOOKS, AUDIOS & MAGAZINES

- Expanded marketing of online electronic resources
- Large increase in usage of electronic books, audios, magazines, etc.
- Development of additional instructional materials to assist patrons with access and utilization of this resource



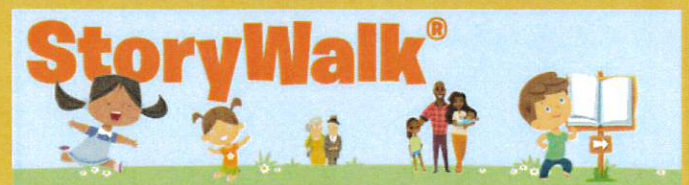
### SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE/RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

- Provided links to updated information about COVID
- Promote online resources & updated instructions for users
- Increased number of posts to promote library resources
- Posting authors reading books & other online ideas



### STORYWALK

- Several local libraries provided Storywalks in their communities
- Encouraged outside fitness and literacy
- Very successful and well received by community



### WIRELESS INTERNET SERVICES

- Expanded hours for outside access OR
- 24 hour 7 day per week access from outside areas such as parking lots, benches, patios, etc.





## STORYTIMES

- Virtual story times with library staff either recorded or live
- Outside story times in parks, patio, etc.
- Sharing authors or other celebrities reading books



## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS (LIVE AND/OR RECORDED)

- Local library online events, contests, story time, craft demonstrations, etc.
- Blank Park Zoo
- Educational Entertainer, Martina Mathisen
- Sharing of free educational events to patrons



## LITTLE FREE FOOD PANTRY

- In partnership with Greenbelt Home Care at libraries
- Stocked with non-perishable food items, toiletries, etc.
- Community members can donate food items to directly help their community



## INCREASED CIRCULATION OF "OTHER ITEMS"

- Puzzles
- Games
- Kits



## GRANTS FROM HCCEF

- Steamboat Rock Library – repair of basement wall and floor on the main level
- Alden Public Library – partial painting of the “adult section” of the library
- Friends of the Alden Public Library – funds to help with Library Literacy
- Hubbard Public Library - grant for computers (one laptop and 5 desktops)



**HARDIN COUNTY  
COMMUNITY  
ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION**

## SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- Offered assistance to schools about online resources
- Temporarily issue library cards without being required to come into the library
- Offering wifi access outside or with special arrangements for students without access at home
- Offering printing/faxing/lamination services without having building open



## CHALLENGES

- Accessing cleaning supplies for increased cleaning requirements
- Had to be very CREATIVE to still provide services to community following Governor's orders, CDC guidelines and best practices
- Developing pandemic policies to keep staff and patrons safe while offering services
- Redoing all the plans for upcoming Summer Reading & other programs
- Quarantining library items and sanitizing upon return
- Exploring online options for meetings such as Zoom or Go To Meeting
- Extra cleaning duties
- Keeping up-to-date on all the changes from the State, the CDC, etc.
- Movies not being released in theaters & home which led to lower DVD circulation
- Threat of less funding from decrease in Local Option Sales Tax revenue
- Installing plexiglass barriers at circulation desk



For more information or questions, please contact Lisa Liittschwager at 515-859-3820  
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# Thoughts from Hardin County Library Directors

## WHAT WAS SOMETHING THAT YOU DID REALLY WELL DURING THE PANDEMIC?

"We created a safe and efficient curbside service, allowing us to provide numerous services during these uncertain and unusual times. Although our doors have not always been open, we have always had staff available to provide information and services. We also utilized our online presence via our website and social media to reach out to our patrons with Covid-19 information as well as entertainment and educational materials."

- Barlow Memorial Library

"We kept our patrons involved in the library in safe ways."

- Union Public Library

A Friends of the Steamboat Library organization was established this year and they have been working hard to do things for the library.

With the building being closed, curbside and home delivery was the best thing. I would call patrons when books come in that I think they would enjoy and ask if they are looking for anything to read.

- Steamboat Rock Library

"Our patrons were so happy we stayed open, even if only curbside. Since we were closed, we had to pick out their books and movies. They commented on how impressed they were that we know what they like. We also introduced them to different authors that we knew they'd enjoy."

- Hubbard Public Library

"It was definitely a year of creativity for us at the library having to rethink how we could provide services to our community without having the library building open or with limited access. We worked really hard to ensure that our patrons were still provided with materials and provide online activities for all ages. We made Summer Reading Take Home kits for different ages (0 to adult) that matched up with our online software for reading, crafts and activities. We also recorded staff reading books for the elementary school since we were not able to go in the school and mailed/delivered the books that we normally distributed at school."

- Dr. Grace O. Doane Alden Public Library

"Starting March 17th, we were pleased to offer curbside service. We reached out to patrons who did not feel comfortable coming in, and delivered books. We also provided free, weeded books to local students when they picked up lunches last spring. While summer reading was online, we offered take & make bags, virtual crafts, and story times. We were proud to present 4 different story walks at various locations through out Eldora. Several patrons commented we "saved" them during the pandemic by keeping our library services available."

-Eldora Public Library