



Library Director’s Report to the Library Board of Trustees for May 28, 2020

Tredyffrin Township Libraries closed to the public March 14, 2020 and are currently closed due the “stay at home” order from the Governor in conjunction with a mandate from the Deputy Secretary of Libraries for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which stipulates that all public libraries in the state are to cease all public service operations until further notice. Staff are permitted to conduct “essential” but limited business operations on-site, such as, invoice processing and payroll, or to retrieve work to complete at home. When the current situation began to unfold, we assessed how to continue offering library services in a virtual environment. Our focus has always been on the libraries’ physical space and this change to a virtual service model required a number of changes to library operations and presented a number of challenges.

One of the first decisions made was to shift collection expenditures to e-materials purchases. E-materials borrowing continues to grow and under the current circumstances. We will likely continue this increase in e-materials purchasing for the remainder of 2020 and beyond. Recent e-materials use in the Chester County Library System indicates that throughout the system more than 60,000 e-materials items have been borrowed each month in 2020 and there was an increase in circulation of e-materials in April of approximately 25%. The table below totals checkouts of library materials for January through April of 2019 and 2020. Overall, there has been a 32,591 (-26%) decrease in checkout comparing 2020 to 2019. This is to be expected since we rely heavily on print circulation and have only recently begun shifting more collection expenditures to e-materials.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	TOTAL
2019	32444	30670	33220	31319	127653
2020	32884	33602	20374	8202	95062

We also shifted our attention to developing online content that features and promotes our online resources available which include: e-materials, digital magazines, databases through Chester County, and databases through Power Library (<https://powerlibrary.org/>). Library programs, events, and activities were cancelled and then redeveloped for online participation. Until this year, we had used our YouTube channel sparingly and had only uploaded a total of 6 videos. The channel now has more than 130 videos featuring: book talks, story time songs, instruction on using library resources, and some recorded webinars (yoga and a college essay writing workshop for teens).

We’ve been using a mix of Facebook and Instagram Live content, static “challenges” on social media and live webinars which incorporate the “Kahoot!” application for social engagement. We’ve also developed activities for kids to do at home (writing, crafts, and reading challenges) that are posted/promoted through social media outlets. All Instagram Live videos for story times are available for 24 hours after the event then they disappear. All other videos are edited with closed captioned and saved on the TTL YouTube channel, then shared to the children’s Instagram and Facebook pages. The Summer Reading Program this year will be shifted to an online model using a software platform called Beanstack. Teen programs have been shifted to online platforms.

We’ve had two system meetings to discuss current issues and scenarios for reopening the libraries. I have drafted a plan for reopening the libraries that takes into account a number of scenarios that emphasizes the safety of the staff with incremental steps to return operations to pre-pandemic status. On Friday, May 15th the Office of Commonwealth Libraries sent out a memorandum titled “Framework for Reopening Libraries” to aid libraries with establishing guidelines to begin library work again and offering library services to the public. The memorandum includes a list with links to state and federal guidelines that apply to community organizations

and businesses to follow when reopening. We are also currently working on obtaining proper PPE for staff under any “return to service” scenario and looking in to group purchases for supplies (with other libraries in the system) to keep costs down. At the latest system meeting (5/12/2020), Susan Banks, Director of the Bureau of Library Development for the Office of Commonwealth Libraries responded to questions. We will be exploring options for limited services and coordinating services throughout the system as Chester County moves to the “Yellow” status.

Highlights from the Libraries Virtual Service Model since Closing:

- Our website is continuing to see an increase in use and page views are up 16% over the last 30 days.
- Our AdLib newsletter is opened by approximately 30% (open, we averaged 23-26%) of recipients and we’re seeing around a 10% click-rate every week.
- Katherine Shaw, our Head of Reference coordinated our online chat and remote reference services, is serving as administrator for Zoom, and has created a Google Calendar for staff to post programs and events (<https://www.tredyffrinlibraries.org/virtual-calendar/>). Kate also wrote and coordinated the production for the popular “We Got that Database” YouTube video (which now has over 24,000 views) promoting electronic resources during the closure.
- Children’s programs have been integrated into a variety of social media and content platforms. Statistics are more difficult to track because the synchronous/asynchronous nature of the platforms. There is a mix of “attendees” for live online programs being recorded or “views” for posted content.
 - Attendance for live story times averages at 40 attendees per program
 - Kids live bingo games register between 15 and 25 attendees
 - The Children’s Department librarians (Angie Andre and Stephanie Bragg) have been developing YouTube content such as activities, crafts, and songs for kids
 - Staff are also currently developing the Summer Reading Program in an online application
- Teen Librarian, Laurie Doan continues developing online library services for young adults that facilitate social engagement including:
 - Meetings with the teen advisory group online
 - Working with teachers from our summer camp to facilitate a performance of a radio play online
 - Using Google Hangouts for online pet shows and gardening as a way for students to spend time together and support each other during “social distancing”
 - Coordinating a book discussion group for the book "Unbroken" by Laura Hillenbrand
 - Just finished "Roundtable Discussion: Your Bill for the United States Congress" online
 - Our annual "Understanding and Demystifying College Education" program with former Assistant Dean of the College and Admissions Counselor, Swarthmore College, Cigus Vanni in now online
- The Adult Programs and Community Outreach Librarian (Zoey Mills) is now hosting online trivia every Saturday and has started adding additional games throughout the week. The trivia is factual, entertaining, and an excellent way to promote library services and programs.
 - Trivia teams for March, April, and May average 55 teams per game
 - Language Learning sessions (using Mango Languages) average 5 participants per session
 - One-on-one tech help sessions are being offered once a week (we are looking into increasing these)
 - In April we started an online yarn club and an ESL program and in May we started offering our Zen Meditation program online. We are currently working to bring additional outside organizational programming through Zoom, coordinated by library staff