January 2023 Directors Report

2023: A Year of New Approaches and Ideas
We enter 2023 with a tremendous amount of potential before us. With Passport Services coming together, the YES Project about to crest the horizon and a new approach to information services and staffing in the works, I am optimistic that 2023 will be a transformative year for the library. Thanks to the support of the staff, the Library Board, and the community who have re-engaged with the library post-lockdown.

For 2023, we are planning three “tentpole” events using a new “library as community stage” approach as opposed to the more labor intensive management & organization the library engaged in previously. In February we will have our Lunar New Year Celebration, in late June before Independance Day we will kick off Summer Reading with a “Celebrate America!” event in front of the library, and in November we will have a Diwali Celebration. In each case community groups are being engaged to present the event to the rest of the community.

Youth Services Department Head Maureen Langley, Special Populations Librarian Joyce Huang and Community Librarian Sharon Mitchell have been the primary staff members involved in this planning and outreach effort.

LMXAC - New Director Chosen
With Eileen Palmer retiring, Eric Lozaukas has been chosen to replace her. Eileen will be working as interim through February getting the new LMXAC Director in position. Mr. Lozaukas is currently the Director of Information at the Bergen County Cooperative Library System.

Passport Progress and Staffing
All Passport Acceptance staff have completed training and received their certifications. We are awaiting a background check on a new Passport Agent who comes to us with 6 years of experience at the Old Bridge Public Library. Supplies are arriving and we are cleaning out the 2nd floor desk in anticipation of setting up the Passports Desk. Passport Program Manager Neera Kothary has completed her passport program manager training.

Passport Staff and I visited the Old Bridge Passport Department and oversaw their operations; my thanks to Felish McEachern who runs the department. She has offered to come and look over our space before we launch and offer suggestions. She has already referred one trained agent with 6 years of experience to us, as they are looking for more passport work hours.

Overall the trip was very educational and served to demystify the passport workflow. I think it gave some confidence to our future passport agents seeing the process in action. We did note that despite being an “appointments only” facility, Old Bridge did accept walk-in traffic - about half of the passports processed while we were there came from walk-in patrons.

Our current timeline assuming all goes well is to promote the service and accept appointments once we get the final go ahead from the National Passport Center and launch on February 1st,
2023. The rest of January will see us finish setting up our Passport website and activate our appointment system, which Librarian Joyce Huang put together for us after visiting Old Bridge.

**Library Staffing**

We will be interviewing for a Sunday Reference Librarian in mid-January, and an open part-time Circulation position shortly thereafter as well.

**Jigsaw Puzzle Collection Report**

A review of the pilot Jigsaw Puzzle collection shows that every puzzle has circulated at least twice. We will continue monitoring the usage of this donated collection to see if it maintains strong circulation over time.

**Recreation and Community Education Meeting**

On December 6th, 2022 Youth Services Department Head Maureen Langley met with staff from the township Recreation Department and WWPSD Community Education to look at 2023 event planning and coordination amongst the three entities. Our hope is to support one another, avoid overlaps in programming, and find synergies where cooperation makes sense.

**FCC Broadband Survey**

As part of an LMXAC-wide awareness push, I sent a letter to Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman noting that in the FCC Broadband Access Map, the Plainsboro Public Library as well as many other local libraries, were not represented. I asked for her support in addressing the FCC’s blindness towards the increasingly important internet access that libraries freely provide.

**YES Project Update**

Plans and documentation necessary for us to move to the bidding phase of the project are created. I corresponded with Township Chief Financial Officer Greg Mayers and the support Township can lend the library during the bidding process and beyond for the YES Project.

Barring the township taking on an increased role in the renovation project for the 3rd floor, it seems the only way forward is to engage an outside entity with public project administrative expertise as a “clerk of the works”. I have reached out to the State Library to see if they have a list of potential retired architects etc. with public administrative experience that have been used in prior library renovations. I have also inquired with individuals who worked on the Cranbury Library project to see about rates and availability if needed. We do not have any in-house expertise in this area; most libraries rely on municipal support in projects like these, as the township usually owns the library building even if the library pays for the construction.

Once this issue is worked out, we can proceed with going out to bid and begin the larger project.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Darren Miguez*
Connect 2 Community
12/5/2022 Youth Services Librarian Kiersten Paine met with the WWPSD Curriculum Heads
12/5/2022 Youth Services Librarian Kiersten Paine met with Lightbridge Academy Staff
12/6/2022 Library Director Darren Miguez met with the Cornerstone Fellowship Church
12/18/2022 Youth Services Librarian Kiersten Paine read stories at the Wicoff House Snowfest
and distributed PPL events calendars
12/22/2022 Library Director Darren Miguez attended the Art in STEM gallery opening at the
Recreation Department and discussed further art at the library

Meetings
12/8/2022 Circulation Department Head Neera Kothary attended the LMXAC Circulation
Committee Meeting
12/9/2022 Library Director Darren Miguez met with Gulshan Mirj of HindiUSA
12/16/2022 Library Director Darren Miguez attended the quarterly LMXAC member meeting
12/22/2022 Library Director Darren Miguez attended a virtual Plainsboro Free Public Library
Foundation meeting

Professional Development
12/8/2022 Youth Services Librarian Liz Palena attended Video Games as tools for Digital and
Visual Literacy
12/16/2022 Library Associate Sew-Yeng Chong attended Handling Complaints or Protests about
Content Library 2.0
12/22/2022 Library Associate Sew-Yeng Chong attended VR and Learning: Step Right In
(Library 2.0)
12/30/2022 Library Associate Sew-Yeng Chong attended VR and Learning- Creating WebXR
Exhibit Rooms
12/30/2022 Library Associate Sew-Yeng Chong attended VR and Learning- Virtual Storytelling
for All Ages