

A Day at the Library by Diane Klug

It's a bright, sunny but crisp February day as I head to our Columbus Public Library. Spoiler Alert – I am a huge library enthusiast! Upon entering, I spot Kelli, the Customer Service Manager, at her post. She gives me a warm welcome and we chat about the many events happening at CPL, including the extensive list of upcoming programs.

Entertaining, fun, and educational, these include speakers from the Nebraska Humanities Council, musical artists, and the Book Festival, showcasing Nebraska authors. Please call the library for more information on these events.

Making my way to the Reference Desk, I talk with Karen, the Reference Librarian. CPL offers many electronic resources available at the library, and also on your computer and mobile device. Patrons may checkout/download ebooks and audiobooks on the Cloud Library, learn a new language from Mango Languages, peruse current events with A to Z the USA and World, download or custom stream some cool tunes with Freegal Music, use NebraskaAccess to open a huge state-provided database of information, check out a new or old favorite read in audio form on Overdrive, or if you are a car buff, explore helpful information from Chilton. Phew! The possibilities are almost endless.

Walking past the meeting rooms, I notice they are all full, and make my way upstairs to the Teen Space. A colorful mural, comfy chairs, and a group of young people enjoying themselves says I've found the right place. This popular teen space hosts groups of high school students twice a month to learn about and enjoy the use of new and available technology. This includes robotics, and STEM components. Rachelle, the Young Adult Librarian, shares the excitement of the makerspace with me, which includes a laser cutter, 3-D printer, large format printer and a flatbed scanner. There are also several other items of interest for both adults and teens alike. Rachelle also leads the CPL Book Discussion Group, which meets monthly, eleven times a year. A wide and interesting variety of books are read and discussed in a group setting, providing for a fun and interesting evening.

Hearing the laughter of children across the hallway, I see that Mr. H, the Children's Librarian, is helping an excited group of young readers and their parents. While he is occupied, I admire the coloring table, LEGO table, wall mounted tic tac toe board, and fun and colorful décor. Mr. H, along with help from Miss Peggy, encourages young readers with events such as the Story Time/Art program, Monday Night Book Adventures, and Super Sensational Saturday. These enriching programs help develop a lifetime of reading. Miss Peggy handles the Outreach Program at our local parochial schools, visiting each school once per month to share her reading and storytelling skills. Some recent themes have included animals, sharing, and the holidays. Remember when we were young, the excitement these types of reading programs generated?

I check in with Melissa, the Inter Library Loan guru. What a fabulous opportunity this program provides, allowing patrons to borrow books and other items from distant libraries, universities, and even the Library of Congress. Obviously CPL cannot house or purchase every book printed, so this provides the perfect answer. The ILL services include borrowing textbooks for college students, specialty books for job enhancement, and access to rare, foreign and out of print material. For items deemed too valuable to

loan, copies can be made! Melissa is also able to obtain multiples of books for the many people of Columbus who enjoy reading within a book club.

A quick check in with Donna, CPL's Cataloger, reminds me how very important her duties are. Without proper cataloging of items received, there is no easy access of materials. All items, when received into CPL, are entered into the computer system, enabling said items to be easily accessed by CPL staff, patrons, and the public in general. She works closely with the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), which shares with the world that CPL owns a particular item, and announces its availability for lending. Maintaining an accurate and up to date catalog makes it easy for patrons to find and use these items. Donna also serves as the backup Bookmobile driver.

Stephanie and the Bookmobile were out on their appointed rounds this very day. The Bookmobile makes stops every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, visiting schools in the surrounding communities of Duncan, Monroe, Platte Center, Humphrey, Lindsay, Creston, and the Churches of St John's Lutheran and Christ Lutheran, north of Columbus. These school visits are scheduled twice a month. Summer brings stops to the areas of Indian Hills, the Country Club, Country Villa and College View. Fiction, non-fiction, magazines and encyclopedias are available for check out. Not just for students, the Bookmobile has an adult section as well.

Thank you for letting me share this wonderful resource we have in Columbus with you. I've only touched the surface of what is available – services only limited by our imagination, with the help of the great staff and technology available at the Columbus Public Library. So if you have not paid the library a visit recently, dust off your library card, or apply for a new one if you are not a current card holder. Come inside and spend a few minutes, or hours, enlightening, enhancing, educating, and enjoying! We look forward to seeing you!