

2020



Bismarck
Veterans Memorial
Public Library



ANNUAL REPORT

2020: A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

On March 20, 2020, the Library Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to temporarily close the Library. This was not an easy decision to make but a necessary action to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus to protect our community, patrons, staff, and volunteers.

While the Library was temporarily closed to the public, our dedicated staff members continued to serve our community. Our team developed virtual program opportunities, provided assistance with Library cards, helped patrons access our remotely available resources, and checked in items from book drop returns.

We remotely offered e-books, digital audiobooks and magazines, interactive books for children, and so much more. With every item returned, our staff cleaned them with an EPA-registered disinfectant for use against human coronaviruses. On May 11, we began offering a no-contact curbside pickup service providing access to the Library's collections to our community while we were closed.

After a total of 108 days, the Library re-opened to the public on July 6, with many COVID safety measures in place. Although services were provided a bit differently for most of the year, what didn't change was our commitment to providing the resources needed by the community to weather strange and uncertain times.



BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY, BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY



Thanks to local mural artist Mel Gordon, we now have two awe-inspiring murals gracing the Library's walls. One is located above the stairway in the meeting room area and depicts our version of a tree of knowledge. The mural in the main floor commons area illustrates sights and scenes of Bismarck and Burleigh County.

Our staff and patrons enjoyed the opportunity to watch Mel at work while she created the main floor mural. Thanks to the Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc. for funding this uplifting project.



SHOUT OUT TO LIBRARY STAFF

It should not surprise anyone, but it turns out our staff is really great in a crisis. The Library staff is renowned for being hard-working. This has never been more on display than during the past year. Everyone pulled together to keep the Library ship running, whether working remotely or on-site.

Our staff's extra effort and willingness to do more, do things differently, and go beyond usual expectations made it possible to keep serving our community during an unprecedented and challenging year. Our staff members faced the adversity of COVID with creativity, inventiveness and adaptability. When situations were difficult, they supported each other, constantly raising a hand to volunteer, offering suggestions and solutions, offering time, or lending a sympathetic ear.

We rarely saw each other's faces for the better part of the year. Yet, we knew that the people behind the masks were in it together, which



made the whole COVID experience much more bearable.

Said Library Board Trustee Sue Sorlie: "If we don't say it enough, thank you to [the] staff for keeping things going this past year. There is no playbook for how to run the Library during a pandemic, but [the] able staff kept it all together for [the] patrons and community. I think it really helped people carry on with a sense of hope." We, in turn, extend our sincere thanks to the Library Board of Directors for their support of our staff throughout this year.

LIBRARY STAFF



NO-CONTACT CURBSIDE PICKUP

We began offering no-contact curbside pickup service for our patrons on May 11. Though our doors were closed, patrons could place items on hold through our online catalog. Once they were notified that their requested items were ready for check-out, they could come to the Library to pick them up curbside.

Our staff worked diligently to come up with this outside-the-box way of continuing to provide books, movies, games, and more to our patrons. We provided curbside service to an average of 351 vehicles per week during the eight weeks the Library remained closed. With this service achieving such popularity, we have decided to continue curbside pickup for our patrons!



CURBSIDE PICKUP



NEW BURLEIGH COUNTY BOOKMOBILE HITS THE ROAD

In August, our fantastic new bookmobile vehicle made its debut. The construction of a new Bookmobile was made possible thanks to the Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc.'s fundraising efforts, raising more than its goal of \$150,000, and Burleigh County funds saved annually. Burleigh County students and citizens can now enjoy all the enhanced features of the new vehicle.

These features include: reliable, dependable, and enhanced vehicle safety on rural roads; an auxiliary battery bank with generator backup for more environmentally friendly and quieter vehicle operation;

adjustable shelving and floor level book bins for easier browsing for children; distributed heating and cooling throughout the interior; visually appealing graphics on the vehicle's exterior; 81" interior height for ease of movement for adults; free on-board Wi-Fi and a hi-def monitor to display information about library services and database tutorials; and new technology for patrons.

The Foundation's fundraising goal was achieved with the help of six grants, three business partnerships, a significant contribution from a family estate, board member donations, money raised at the Art of Books fundraiser, and overall donations

from more than 287 individuals and businesses.

Thank you to Bismarck Sign Co., LDV, Inc., the Bismarck Library Foundation, Inc., Burleigh County, and all other donors who have made this exciting time possible.

To make way for the new and improved Bookmobile, we had to say goodbye to the old one. The previous Burleigh County Bookmobile, affectionately known as "Betty White" by staff, was officially retired in June. After 19 years of dedicated service, "Betty" was emptied and backed out of the garage for the last time. Bookmobile staff will cherish the memories and look forward to all of the new ones to be made.



FRIENDS OF THE BISMARCK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK SALES MOVE OUTDOORS

Since the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the cancellation of their regular fall used book sale, the Friends of the Bismarck Public Library decided to take their book sales outside. Five outdoor "Flash Sales" were held on the Library plaza in July, August, and September. These outdoor sales brought in a grand total of over \$8,400, which will help support Library programs and services.

In 2020, the Friends of the Bismarck Public Library funded two significant projects: new chairs for the Library's three meeting rooms and a second self-checkout terminal located in the Children's Library. We thank the Friends of the Bismarck Public Library volunteers for generously sharing their time, energy, and creative flexibility to sustain the organization's activities during this year.



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY





STORY TIME IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

When COVID-19 shut down the Library, Miss Sparkles continued to bring stories and smiles to the young children of our community by live-streaming her story time on Facebook. From April through December, virtual story times received over 25,000 views.

Throughout the summer, Miss Sparkles took her bicycle, drum, and mushroom on the road to city parks around the community to share stories and songs with children and their families. From June to October, 49 outdoor story times were held at Wachter Park, Lions Park, Sons of Norway Park, and the Library's north lawn.

Miss Sparkles (a.k.a. Children's Program Director Jana Maher) was also recognized as a Hidden Hometown Hero by the Bismarck Larks, Scheels, and Bismarck Magazine. She was honored for bringing brightness to the lives of children during the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic.



LEGO TAKE & CREATE: DRIVE-THRU EDITION

In September, we held our first-ever "drive-thru" LEGO Take and Create event. Staff developed and packaged 500 LEGO

mini-kits, which at past events had been distributed inside the Library. This year, attendees could drive through the book drop lane to select their take & create LEGO kits to build at home. Kit choices included a hippopotamus, a barbecue grill, an ice cream truck, and others. The event was so popular, cars started lining up over an hour before start time! Due to popular demand, an additional 500 mini-kits were given out at a second Take & Create: Drive-Thru Edition event in December.



MISS SPARKLES' AWESOME READERS

As outdoor story times ended with the coming of winter, Miss Sparkles had to perfect a new way to stay connected with the readers she's gotten so close with. Her solution was to bring a bit of the Library to homes, with individualized story times and personalized yard signs letting everyone know that "An Awesome Reader Lives Here!" Thanks to the Bismarck Lions Club for sponsoring the yard signs for this program.

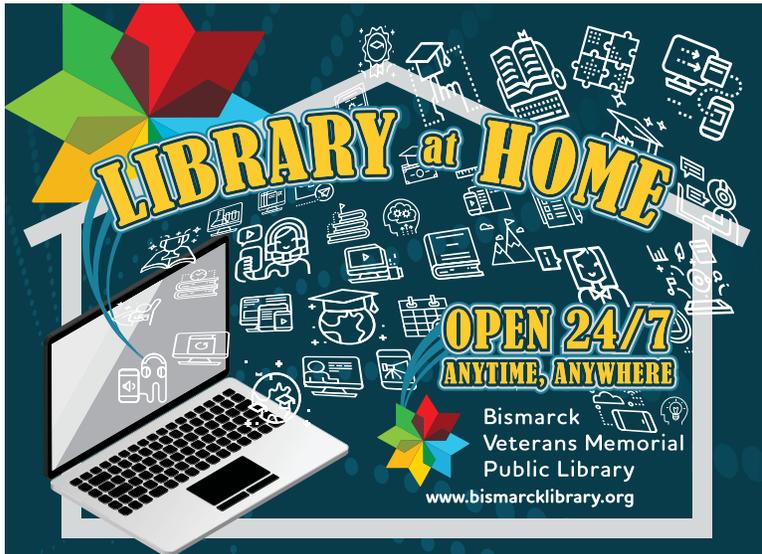


READING CHALLENGES GO VIRTUAL

The Library held several virtual reading challenges throughout the year. Using our new Beanstack reading challenge software, participants tracked their reading, earned badges, and became eligible for prizes.

Reading challenges included: winter and spring reading challenges for kids, teens, and adults; 10 To Try Reading Challenge for Adults; Star Wars Reads Challenge; 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten; and our popular annual Summer Reading Program.

For the "Imagine Your Story!" summer reading program, children and teens were offered two opportunities to log 10 hours of reading in June and July, with incentives and prize drawings for both months. Over 100 readers participated in each session of the children's reading program. There were over 40 readers for each of the teen reading programs. Collectively, they all read just over 4,000 hours!



DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN HIGH DEMAND

The Library's digital collections were a vital resource for our community in 2020. Through Library2Go and our other digital resources, patrons continued to be able to access e-books, digital audiobooks, streaming video, and more from home or any location. Total circulations of digital materials increased 22% in 2020, and 1,250 new patrons used Library2Go for the first time. The Library's digital collections were especially critical to keeping children reading and engaged when schools were closed, and distance learning was in place. Circulation of digital children's titles increased 77% in 2020 and uses of the Tumblebooks children's e-book collection increased 173%.

TOP 5 CIRCULATING BOOKS IN 2020

CHECK-OUTS

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens	77
The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides	71
Camino winds by John Grisham	67
Guinness World Records 2019	63
American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins	62

TOP 5 CIRCULATING MOVIES IN 2020

CHECK-OUTS

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood	87
Knives Out	82
Frozen II	77
Midway	73
Star Wars, the Rise of Skywalker	72

MOST CIRCULATED ITEM IN 2020

CHECK-OUTS

North Dakota State Park Passes	161
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HVAC RENOVATION PROJECT

While the Library was closed, work began on the long-awaited renovation of our 30-year-old HVAC system. Our skeleton crew of staff on duty spent sweltering days in the building without air conditioning while work was underway. Still, it was all worth getting the new and improved heating and air system up and running. The renovation included replacement and upgrade of system controls, humidification systems, dampers, pipes, and other components, along with the addition of a Halo LED air purification system.



PEACE POLE DEDICATION AT THE LIBRARY

We thank the The Gandhi Peace Network for their generosity in donating a Peace Pole to the Library and choosing us as a site.

“The Library is well-known as a major community hub and gathering place in Bismarck-Burleigh County,” said Christine Kujawa, Library Director. “The Peace Pole symbolizes our commitment to providing a space that is safe, peaceful, and welcoming to people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Peace Poles are handcrafted one-of-a-kind obelisks erected throughout the world as an international symbol of peace. Each Peace Pole is a monument displaying the message, “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in the language of the country it has been placed, along with other translations. More than 200,000 of these monuments have been placed around the world in over 190 countries.

PEACE POLE



LIBRARY HONORED WITH STAR LIBRARY AND FUTURE-FOCUSED AWARDS

The Library received a Star Library Award, presented by the ND State Library, for going above and beyond with the services provided to the community. Star Library Awards are given based on a series of criteria documented by the ND Public Library Annual Report.



Only three of the eighteen public libraries in the \$150,000+ budget tier received a Star Library Award, including the Library. In 2019, the Library circulated close to 540,000 items; were open to the public 3,692 hours; close to 46,000 patrons attended programs and events; and Wi-Fi and public computers logged 156,000 uses.

In addition, the ND Library Coordinating Council awarded the Library with the Future-Focused Library Award for achieving the Future-Focused level for the Standards for Public Libraries. To be recognized as Future-Focused, a library must meet all of the standards at Developing, Excelling, and Future-Focused levels: provide community outreach programs; be supported by a Library Foundation or a Friends group; provide opportunities for staff members to participate in continuing education opportunities; and provide programming for all ages, including STEAM and coding. Of the 83 public libraries in the state, the Library is one of three to achieve this level.

“We are honored to be chosen for these two awards, based in large part on usage of our facility” said Christine Kujawa, Library Director. “They reflect the support we receive from citizens as a result of providing a quality public library for the community.”

The Library was the only library in the state to receive both a Star Library Award and Future-Focused Award.

(A FEW) IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

We may at times forget that things were actually pretty normal during the first three months of 2020. From January to mid-March, the Library offered a vibrant slate of in-person programs for community members of all ages.

There was story time in the story room for kids, Miss Sparkles' Kindness Club, a Stuffed Animal Sleepover, and more.

Program offerings for teens included a Nerf Battle (in partnership with the Morton Mandan Public Library) and video game tournaments.

For adults, we offered a series of health education classes in partnership with Natural Grocers, the second winter of Hygge Hangout, and the new Suds & Short Stories discussion group at Laughing Sun Brewing.

All-ages events for families included the second annual Families Around the World event in January and festivities in celebration of National Handwriting Day.



PERSONAL ENRICHMENT FOR ALL

With in-person programs suspended for the year in March, our creative programming staff developed new and innovative programs. These programs kept people of all ages learning and engaged with reading during unusual times. Many new virtual, socially distant, and "take & make" programs were offered during the year:

CRAFT KITS

A new, different craft project for kids 10 and under was offered each week during 2020 to pick up at the Library and make at home. Some craft kits were also provided for teens and adults, including cross-stitch kits, birdseed cookies, and book page leaf garlands.

MOBILE LIBRARY

Our Mobile Library staff continued visiting assisted living centers and other locations around the city, as well as dropping off and picking up tubs of books and requested items in a socially distant manner.



ARMCHAIR TRAVEL VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

Participants met over Zoom to discuss titles selected to give participants a vacation without leaving home.

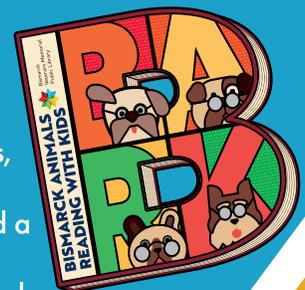


READERS' SOCIAL BOOK CHATS

Participants gathered at a designated time on a Facebook chat about what everyone was reading, got new book ideas, and shared their favorites.

B.A.R.K.

Our B.A.R.K. (Bismarck Animals Reading with Kids) Program went virtual in 2020. Our B.A.R.K. dogs, Frankie and Max, shared links to hear a story, shared a greeting, and provided opportunities for kids to read a story to them on their own web page.



ENRICHMENT





2020 • A REMARKABLE YEAR OF GROWING!

JANUARY
Suds & Stories Book Club
Green Card Voices Exhibit

FEBRUARY
Hygge Hangout
Video Game Tournament

MARCH
Spring Used Book Sale
Covid19 Shuts Down the Library

MAY
No-contact Curbside Pickup Starts
New Bookmobile Arrives

APRIL
National Library Week
Online Haiku Challenge

JUNE
Summer Reading Challenges
Miss Sparkles In The Neighborhood

JULY
Phase II Limited Reopening
Outdoor Children's Book Flash Sale

AUGUST
Outdoor Book Flash Sales
Bookmobile Open House

SEPTEMBER
Fall Used Book Sale Outdoors
LEGO Drive-thru Take & Create

OCTOBER
B.A.R.K. Goes Virtual
Battle Of The Friends

NOVEMBER
Virtual LEGO Clubs Start Online
Miss Sparkles Awesome Readers

DECEMBER
Winter Drive-thru LEGO Take & Create
Take & Make Craft Kits

 Bismarck
Veterans Memorial
Public Library



515 N 5th St
Bismarck, ND 58501
701-355-1480
Monday - Thursday
9:00 am - 9:00 pm
Friday - Saturday
9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Sunday
1:00 pm - 6:00 pm



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