



Director's Report

DATE: January 23, 2023

Administrative

Interviews for the Warren Branch Library Manager position were conducted at the end of October. We had several very good candidates and was pleased to offer the position to Kandice Wever. Ms. Wever was able to train with Sandy Doss before taking over as Branch Manager and is doing an excellent job.

The check fraud saga has come to an end. Miracle Deshazer, age 23, of Monticello was arrested on November 30th by the Monticello Police Department on warrants for 202 counts of financial identity fraud, 202 counts of computer fraud and 157 counts of theft of a postal package under Act 340 of 2021. Ms. Deshazer is facing over 500 criminal charges stemming from mail and identity theft.

Technology & Branch Updates

Several of the Branches were recipients of grants this quarter. The Star City Branch was awarded the Giving Tree Grant to renovate the Genealogy room into a private meeting space with computer equipment for zoom meetings. We removed all the old shelving, painted the walls, mounted a TV to the wall. Simone ordered a new flip top table with stacking chairs.

The Warren Branch received a \$5000 grant from the Foundation for Rural Service Community Grant Program to be used towards the purchase of a new Early Literacy Computer. Eudora was awarded \$4000.00 from the Bob White Foundation for a new handicap parking area in the front of the library.

In order to better support the needs of Youth Services librarians and staff, the annual Youth Services Workshop was moved from the spring to the fall. Several of the Branch Managers attended the Workshop. The 2023 slogan of All Together Now based on a theme of Unity and Kindness can be interpreted in many different ways. To assist libraries in choosing how to use the theme, a brainstorming format was used for breakout sessions.

Community Engagement & Outreach

The celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library was a huge success! The Regional Library hosted an open house at the Monticello Branch Library during the daytime hours. Games & activities were enjoyed all over the library, including passive activities such as the Neverending Story, Black Out Poetry, & the Great Diamond Hunt! 75 diamonds were hidden all over the library & the lucky finders enjoyed a snack & a chance to win a grand prize. In the evening hours, a reception was held for previous board members, staff, & current employees of SEARLibrary. Light refreshments & cake along with a Jazz ensemble from the University of Arkansas at Monticello were enjoyed by all the guests. I want to give a special thank you to the Monticello Branch Manager, Shannon Rodriquez and her staff for all their assistance with the open house event. Another big thank you to our Digital Projects coordinator, Jennifer Knight for creating the history display and all the headquarters staff for putting together such a wonderful reception.

Meetings & Workshops Attended

Arkansas Library Association Conference Committee – November 8, 2022, via zoom

Arkansas Correctional Industries Showcase – November 10, 2022, Little Rock State Fairgrounds