

Fall 2025

# storyline

The Magazine of the  
Oak Park Public Library

September is  
Library Card  
Sign-Up Month!

What kind of  
library kid  
are you?  
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Learn for the  
fun of it  
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Why teens love  
the library  
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THE STORYLINE  
Fall 2025

**We love to hear how you use your public library!**  
If you have an idea or story to share with us for a future issue, or if you have any comments or questions, please contact us at [communications@oppl.org](mailto:communications@oppl.org).

**Looking for events?** Find a selection of featured events on pages 10–11. To see all upcoming events, pick up monthly print calendars for kids & families, middle & high schoolers, adults, and older adults (60+) at all library locations, and visit [oppl.org/calendar](http://oppl.org/calendar).

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**  
Find board meeting information and meet the trustees at [oppl.org/board](http://oppl.org/board).

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Featured in this issue

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ON THE COVER

Don't have a library card? Now is the perfect time to sign up for one! September is Library Card Sign-Up Month, and we want Oak Park residents of all ages, businesses and nonprofits and their employees, and school and daycare teachers, assistants, and staff to come in and get one. With a card, you can check out up to 200 physical items at a time, access tons of online books, magazines, movies, TV shows, newspapers, and music in our digital collections, borrow things like a sewing machine or a power drill from our Library of Things, and more. Sign up for a full-access digital card in minutes or stop by any branch to sign up in person: [oppl.org/card](http://oppl.org/card)

I'd love to speak with you about your experiences at the library, your aspirations for its future, and how we can ensure you feel welcomed and represented in our spaces."

—Elsworth Carman,  
Executive Director

'I'm committed to transparency and care'

By Elsworth Carman, Executive Director

It is with deep gratitude and great excitement that I return to the Oak Park Public Library as your new Executive Director. I worked here earlier in my career, and being back in a new role, with this community, feels both meaningful and energizing.

This is a moment of both continuity and change for your library. Recent leadership transitions, including the election of several new trustees, have given us a natural opportunity to reflect on where we've been and where we want to go. Our dedicated library staff, a legacy of inclusive service, and an engaged, thoughtful community strengthen that opportunity.

I care deeply about public library governance and look forward to working closely with the board to advance the library's mission. Good governance means asking the right questions, staying accountable, and always centering the needs of our community. This work can be complex, but it's vital—and I'm committed to doing it with transparency and care.

As we explore new ways to bring our core values of equity and anti-racism, engagement, learning, and stewardship to life, it's critical that we hear from as many voices as possible. I'd love to speak with you about your experiences at the library, your aspirations for its future, and how we can ensure you feel welcomed and represented in our spaces.

We are a library for everyone

Whether you come for storytimes, technology access, the Creative Studio, programs for older adults, to discover something new to read/watch/listen to, or simply to share space with others, know that you are welcome.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month

This is a great time to celebrate everything a library card stands for: access, opportunity, and community. Whether you've been visiting the library for years or are just discovering it for the first time, there's something here for you.

We all have a part to play in shaping a library that reflects, welcomes, and serves our entire community. I look forward to working together to continue making the Oak Park Public Library a library for everyone.





# What kind of LIBRARY KID are YOU?

Find yourself in these pages, and see all the ways to learn and grow with your library at [oppl.org/kids](http://oppl.org/kids).



I need help with a project or homework

Use your library card to learn and do research! We have interactive lessons and games, online encyclopedias and newspapers, and even live online tutoring.



I like to play

Use your imagination in our playspaces! Be a chef, do monthly scavenger hunts, and check out toys and games.



I like to learn with my grown-up

Sing and dance with us in storytimes full of books and puppets. Or check out one of our Social-Emotional Learning Kits to read books and talk about ideas and feelings together.



I like to make things

Create, explore, and play inside the Acorn Lab makerspace at the Main Library. Ages 4+ with a grown-up, Monday-Friday, 3-6 pm.



I like to explore new places

A library card gets you offers and discounts to places like the Cubhouse Indoor Playground, Brookfield Zoo, Chicago Botanic Garden, and much more! [oppl.org/passes](http://oppl.org/passes)



I like to visit the fish

And they love to see you!  
Fun fact: They're all named Jenny.



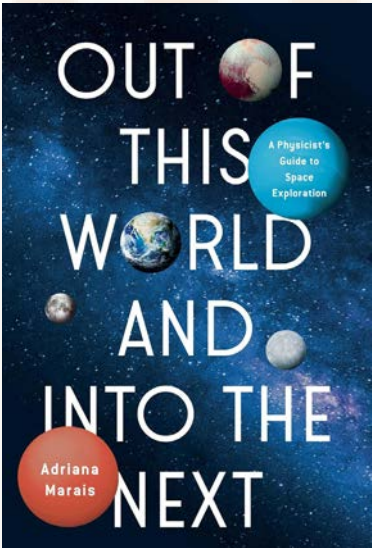
I want to learn something new

Check out a Discovery Kit with a library card. Explore nature, make art, practice coding, and even learn to play the ukulele or a steel tongue drum!



# What sparks your curiosity?

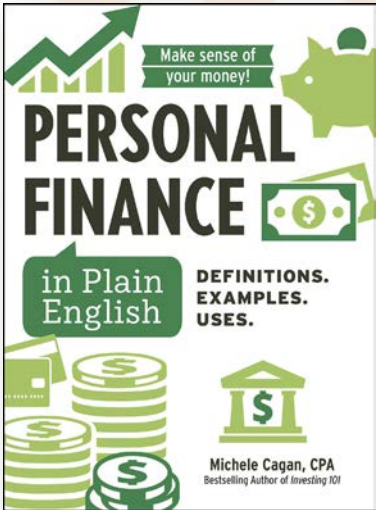
Develop a new skill, dive deep into a hobby, or expand your knowledge on a topic you’ve always wanted to explore with these books our librarians love. Check out the curated titles below, plus even more at [oppl.org/we-suggest](http://oppl.org/we-suggest).



### Outer Space

We humans are a curious bunch, driven to explore this world and wonder what else is out there. Yes, there’s the Moon and the planets, but do you know about star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies—and that you can see them with a telescope? How did life begin on Earth, and are we alone in the universe? How has stargazing shaped art, science, civilization, and humanity? You have big questions, and we have books!

- *110 Things to See With a Telescope* by John A. Read
- *Out of This World and Into the Next: A Physicist's Guide to Space Exploration* by Adriana Marais
- *The Human Cosmos: Civilization and the Stars* by Jo Marchant



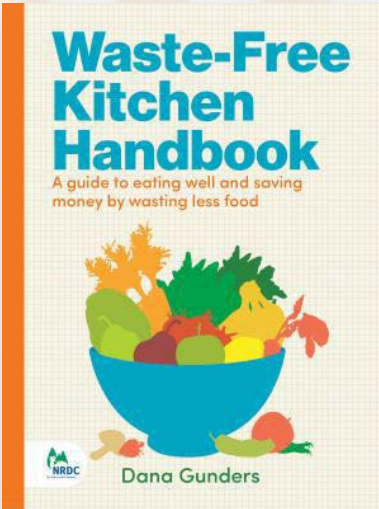
### Adulting

Remember when you couldn’t wait to be a grown-up? Well, now you have to do your taxes and navigate student loans, mortgages, the stock market, and retirement planning. Here are some books to help you figure it out. We’ve also got a book to help you find a hobby to take your mind off the other stuff, plus one about what it takes to move to a different country.

- *Personal Finance in Plain English: Definitions, Examples, Uses* by Michele Cagan
- *Economics in Plain English: Definitions, Examples, Uses* by David A. Mayer
- *Clark Howard's Living Large in Lean Times: 250+ Ways to Buy Smarter, Spend Smarter, and Save Money*
- *Get a Hobby: 365 Things to Do for Fun (Not Work!)* by Jasmine Cho
- *Moving Abroad* by Kristin M. Wilson

### MORE TO DISCOVER

> **LinkedIn Learning:** Learn business, software, technology, and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals. [oppl.org/linkedin-learning](http://oppl.org/linkedin-learning)



### In the Kitchen (or the Backyard)

If you’ve ever thrown away a bunch of slimy lettuce, you may have felt a little guilty. If you’ve ever had a cake fall, you may have felt deflated. If you’ve ever eaten a poisonous mushroom ... well, if you’re still able to read this, you don’t want to make that mistake again. Check out these books to help you grocery shop, store food, bake desserts, can fruits and vegetables, and forage for all kinds of edible plants and fungi efficiently, safely, and deliciously!

- *Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook: A Guide to Eating Well and Saving Money by Wasting Less Food* by Dana Gunders
- *Dessert Course: Lessons in the Whys and Hows of Baking* by Benjamin Delwiche
- *Canning for a New Generation: Bold, Fresh Flavors for the Modern Pantry* by Liana Krissoff
- *National Geographic Backyard Guide to Edible Wild Plants* by Mimi Prunella Hernandez
- *Hunting Mushrooms: How to Safely Identify, Forage, and Cook Wild Fungi* by Barbora Batokova



### Crafting

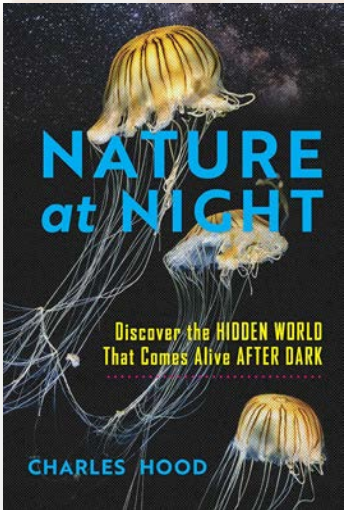
Want to learn how to mend and repair your clothes in artful, personalized ways? Or crochet yourself a pair of socks inspired by Bryce Canyon National Park? You can do this and more with the book selections here. Experiment with different ways to hand-letter alphabets to spice up your journals, gifts, and cards (and your life)! Or mold some cute little clay figures to put on your desk or nightstand—maybe a sloth hanging from a tree branch. Why? Because you’re worth it.

- *Visible Mending: Repair, Renew, Reuse the Clothes You Love* by Arounna Khounnoraj
- *Crocheting the National Parks: 20 Patterns for Accessories, Home Décor, Plushies, and More Inspired by Natural Wonders* by Krista Ann
- *Hand Lettering A to Z: A World of Creative Ideas for Drawing and Designing Alphabets* by Abbey Sy
- *Make Cute Stuff With Polymer Clay: Learn to Make a Variety of Fun and Quirky Trinkets With Polymer Clay* by Shelley Kommers

### MORE TO DISCOVER

> **Creativebug:** This inspirational online resource offers more than 1,000 award-winning art and craft video classes taught by recognized design experts and artists. [oppl.org/creativebug](http://oppl.org/creativebug)

> **Creative Studio:** Use a button maker, laminator, laser cutter, sewing machine, 3D printers, and more in the Main Library makerspace. [oppl.org/creative-studio](http://oppl.org/creative-studio)



### The Natural World

Do you ever look at a cloud and think, “I know you look like a rhinoceros, but I wish I could describe you scientifically”? Wonder what bioluminescent plankton and nocturnal squid are doing after dark? Or maybe you have someone in your life who only wants to talk about dinosaurs, and you’d like to learn more about the king of them all? Journey through the wonders of life big and small, ephemeral and ancient, with these handpicked titles:

- *Nature at Night: Discover the Hidden World That Comes Alive After Dark* by Charles Hood
- *King Tyrant: A Natural History of Tyrannosaurus rex* by Mark P. Witton
- *Clouds: How to Identify Nature's Most Fleeting Forms* by Edward Graham
- *Fishes of the Chicago Region: A Field Guide* by Francis M. Veraldi and more
- *Crystals, Rocks, and Gemstones: Exploring Earth's Treasures* by Kelsey Oseid



### The Arts

If you’d like to dive deeper into the art world, we’ve got books for you! Get to know women artists working in architecture, dance, literature, and film (many of whom have been underestimated and overshadowed). Immerse yourself in the world’s finest works of art, go behind the scenes of hit PBS series like *Downton Abbey*, *Sherlock*, and *Mystery!*, and be enchanted by all things Broadway.

- *I'm Not Your Muse: Uncovering the Overshadowed Brilliance of Women Artists & Visionaries* by Lori Zimmer
- *Break the Frame: Conversations With Women Filmmakers* by Kevin Smokler
- *Art, Annotated: Your Expert Guide to 500 of the World's Greatest Works of Art* by DK Publishing
- *Making Masterpiece: 25 Years Behind the Scenes at Masterpiece and Mystery!* on PBS by Rebecca Eaton
- *The Book of Broadway: The 150 Definitive Plays and Musicals* by Eric Grode

### MORE TO DISCOVER

> **Art in the library:** See monthly exhibits in the Main Library Gallery and at Maze Branch, and enjoy original artwork on display throughout all three library locations. [oppl.org/art](http://oppl.org/art)



# "You're always at the library. What's going on up there?"

Wondering what your middle and high schoolers are getting up to?

Check out what's happening for students in the Middle School Meetup (grades 6–8) and High School Hangout (grades 9–12) at the Main Library. We offer after-school mentoring, gaming, crafting, and more, plus a supportive team to help your students find fun, friends, and growth. Learn more at [oppl.org/teens](https://oppl.org/teens).



*Teens*



**We Are Creating  
The Future**



**friends**



**SUPPORT SYSTEM**



**Tune In to Your Feelings**



**SUPER  
FUN**



**getting creative**

**GAMING**



**THE LIBRARY IS THE PLACE TO BE!**

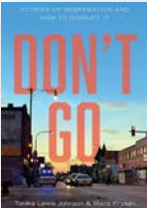
After school, kids want to relax, be with their friends, do homework, have fun, and be creative. At the Main Library, we provide structure and supportive staff, with programs including gaming, DIY projects, teen advisory board meetings, and mentoring such as the grant-supported Beyond the Books program, which inspires all students ages 13–18 to realize their fullest potential. Sign up for the monthly Middle & High School email at [oppl.org/subscribe](https://oppl.org/subscribe) to stay up to date!



# Upcoming events

Locations: ● Main Library ● Dole Branch ● Maze Branch ● Virtual

## Author Visits



● **Disrupting Segregation: Tonika Johnson & Dr. Maria Krysan**  
Tuesday, September 30, 7 pm, Main Library  
The authors of *Don't Go: Stories of Segregation and How to Disrupt It* share insights from their groundbreaking book, bringing its urgent themes directly to Oak Park.



● **Be Steadwell**  
Wednesday, October 22, 6:30 pm, Main Library  
The debut novelist, accomplished musician, filmmaker, and screenwriter joins us for a discussion about their debut novel, *Chocolate Chip City*, and the ups and downs of publishing your first book. Collection Management Librarian Dontaná McPherson-Joseph moderates.



● **Leaf Town Forever: A Reading, Haiku & Crafts**  
Sunday, November 2, 3:30 pm, Main Library  
Local Chicagoland authors Beth and Kathleen Rooney read from their debut picture book *Leaf Town Forever*. Enjoy leaf-related crafts and a brief haiku workshop. Books available for purchase through Dandelion Bookshop.

## Folk Music Series

Presented with generous support from the Friends of the Oak Park Public Library.



● **Sam Robbins**  
Monday, September 15, 7 pm, Main Library  
Sam Robbins is often described as an “old soul singer songwriter.” A Nashville-based musician whose music evokes classic 70s singer songwriters like James Taylor and Neil Young, Sam adds a modern, upbeat edge to the storyteller troubadour persona.



● **The Dangling Particles Duo**  
Sunday, October 12, 2 pm, Main Library  
The Dangling Particles are a Lansing, Michigan-based band with a diverse song set ranging from indie folk and Americana to jazz and pop. The band's soulful vocals by Tamiko Rothhorn and Austin Kaufmann give the group its signature sound, rich in harmonies. Kaufmann anchors the group on guitar, with Tamiko adding cornet and ukulele.



● **Jonas Friddle**  
Monday, November 17, 7 pm, Main Library  
Jonas Friddle is an award-winning singer, songwriter, and Old-Time banjo player. His tunes bear the marks of a musician who has done his time in pub sessions and square-dance halls, and his writing is full of imagery, honesty, and humor.



## Illinois Libraries Present

Illinois Libraries Present is a statewide collaboration among 200+ public libraries, including ours, offering premier events for participating member libraries of all sizes and budgets. Made possible in part by the Friends of the Oak Park Public Library. All events are held virtually on Zoom; visit [oppl.org/calendar](https://oppl.org/calendar) to register.

● **Finding the Clues: Then & Now With Steve Burns**  
Tuesday, September 26, 7 pm, virtual

● **Beyond the Screen: A “Wicked” Conversation With Marissa Bode**  
Tuesday, October 21, 7 pm, virtual

## Kids & Families

● **Children’s Halloween Costume Swap**  
DONATE  
September 24–November 5, Main Library, during open hours  
Drop off gently used and newly washed costumes and accessories for children ages 0–11.  
SHOP  
Wednesday, October 1, 10 am–12 pm & 3:30–5:30 pm  
Friday, October 3, 10 am–12 pm & 3:30–5:30 pm  
“Shop” the free swap—even if you don’t have a costume to swap!

● **“Being Bilingual Rocks!” Concert**  
Wednesday, October 15, 10 am, Main Library  
Join Parents’ Choice Gold Award winners Alina and Hamlet for a joyous and inclusive bilingual family-friendly musical experience. Come prepared to dance and sing!  
Únase a los ganadores del Premio de Oro de Eleccion de Padres, Alina y Hamlet, para disfrutar de una experiencia musical alegre, inclusiva y bilingüe para toda la familia. ¡Venga preparado para bailar y cantar!

## Middle & High Schoolers

● **Beyond the Books Mentoring**  
Mondays, 4–5:30 pm, Main Library  
Co-ed mentor program to inspire all students ages 13–18, with A Greater Good Foundation.  
● **Boo Bash**  
Friday, October 31, 4–6 pm, Main Library  
Join friends and library staff for Halloween thrills and chills.

● **Friendsgiving**  
Friday, November 21, 4–6 pm, Main Library  
Let’s celebrate with games, fun activities, and a tasty dinner.  
● **WinterFest**  
Friday, December 12, 4–6 pm, Main Library  
Get festive with us! We’ll celebrate with games, activities, and delicious food.

## All Ages

● **Wicked Bingo**  
Sunday, November 2, 2 pm, Main Library  
Wicked fans of all ages, join us for some classic bingo fun with a pink and green twist! Everyone is welcome; please register each player, as seats are limited.  
● **Understanding ADHD & Autism**  
Wednesday, November 12, 7 pm, Main Library and virtual  
Let’s learn facts and dispel myths about autism and ADHD by listening to self-advocates of all ages. Presented by a neurodivergent librarian.

● **Neurodivergent Nerdout!**  
Sunday, November 16, 1 pm, Main Library  
Neurodivergent kids, teens, adults, and seniors can participate in various ways, including hanging out. Fidgets and supports available. This program is run by neurodivergent librarians.  
● **Drag Bingo With Bubbie**  
Sunday, December 14, 1 pm, Main Library  
Join us for bingo, songs, treats, and prizes with Merriam Levkowitz, America’s favorite Drag Bubbie. Multiple games will be played for prizes, with performances and jokes galore. Celebrate kindness, acceptance, and being unapologetically yourself!

# OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

## MAIN LIBRARY

834 Lake St. | 708.383.8200

Monday-Thursday: 9 am-9 pm

Friday: 9 am-6 pm

Saturday: 9 am-5 pm

Sunday: 12-5 pm

## DOLE BRANCH

255 Augusta St. | 708.386.9032

Monday: Closed

Tuesday-Thursday: 10 am-9 pm

Friday: 10 am-6 pm

Saturday: 10 am-5 pm

Sunday: 12-5 pm

## MAZE BRANCH

845 Gunderson Ave. |

708.386.4751

Monday-Thursday: 10 am-9 pm

Friday: Closed

Saturday: 10 am-5 pm

Sunday: 12-5 pm



## CLOSINGS

**All library buildings  
closed all day**

- Monday, October 13
- Tuesday, November 11
- Thursday, November 27
- Friday, November 28
- Wednesday, December 24
- Thursday, December 25
- Thursday, January 1

## Library buildings close at 5 pm

- Wednesday, November 26
- Wednesday, December 31

[oppl.org/visit](https://oppl.org/visit)

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Permit No. 134  
Oak Park, IL

## ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER



### Don't have a library card yet?

Preview what your library can offer at one of our ePop-Up Library locations around Oak Park. Since summer, we've partnered with local organizations and businesses to offer free, immediate access to digital newspapers, magazines, and ebooks, no library card or checkouts needed.

Access this "on-the-go" collection from QR codes inside locations such as Addis Cafe (owner Kalki Tesfaye pictured here), Beer Shop, Beyond Hunger, Happy Apple Pie Shop, New Moms, Wise Cup, Village Hall, and more! Learn more: [oppl.org/epop-up](https://oppl.org/epop-up)

**Library card bonus:** Borrow an even wider range of ebooks, digital audiobooks, movies, TV shows, magazines, newspapers, and music—with apps or in your browser—on all of your devices with an Oak Park library card and PIN. Get a card: [oppl.org/card](https://oppl.org/card)