



- ▶ We create opportunities for connection and community participation.
- ▶ We deliver inclusive, compassionate, and high-quality customer service.

Work Highlights

Public Services & Programs



Encouraging creativity & intergenerational connections

As part of **Celebrating Seniors Week**, we hosted an all-ages **Puppet-Making Workshop on May 9 in the Creative Studio Makery**, led by puppet designer Jacky Kelsey. The event, shaped by community input and library staff collaboration, drew 16 attendees of various ages. Participants enthusiastically shared ideas, creating many puppets in just two hours. It was a great opportunity to learn new skills and foster intergenerational connections among community members.



A high-engagement community event for the Book Bike team

On May 17, the **Book Bike** visited its highest-attended event ever: **Blast Off to Kindergarten**, a kindergarten readiness event organized by the **Collaboration for Early Childhood** and **Oak Park Elementary School District 97**. **Over 300 people visited the Book Bike table during the two-hour program**, providing families an opportunity to check out books, learn about library services, and connect with library staff. Book Bike Librarian Ian Gosse and Patron Services Supervisor Cindy Sirin assisted incoming kindergarteners in signing up for library cards and engaged with recently relocated families. A memorable moment occurred when Cindy spoke Spanish with a family, leading to a meaningful discussion about library services.

Communications & Development



Raising local awareness about public library services

This year, the **Communications Team** has worked in collaboration with other public libraries along the **Metra's UP-W train line** on a targeted marketing campaign. The campaign is intended to raise public awareness about all the ways that libraries meet real community needs, including indoor play space for kids, tool and hobby rentals, and programs like book clubs that bring new friends together. During the month of May, four ads, which were designed by our Graphic Designer Gabriela Denton, were displayed in train cars — **reaching approximately 900,000 riders and receiving over 400 QR code scans**. The next round of ads for this year-long campaign went up on June 8.

Community Voice

A patron shared the following positive feedback in a Google Review submitted May 20:

“The Oak Park Main Library has everything you would expect for regular library services and more! I still have more to explore, but I've seen the gallery that displays artists work, a 3-D printer, a makers/craft room, an interactive children's library, a teen library, and of course a broad selection of books and media. **The staff are always kind, greet you with a smile, and are extremely helpful. A very pleasant library to spend time in.”**



- ▶ We encourage exploration of new ideas through diverse collections, programs, and other resources.
- ▶ We support community members and staff in developing the knowledge and skills to reach their goals.

Work Highlights

Public Services & Programs



A learning opportunity for local tree lovers

On May 27, we hosted a spring edition of a “Tree Talk & Stroll” program at the Dole Branch. Organized by Environmental & Sustainability Specialist Christine Poreba, this program featured Trinity Pierce from the [Chicago Region Trees Initiative](#) at [The Morton Arboretum](#) and Grant Jones, Forestry Supervisor from the [Village of Oak Park](#). Trinity and Grant shared helpful information about how to identify and care for trees, as well as the benefits of tree diversity, and answered many questions from the **audience of approximately 36 community members**.



An engaging & informative author visit

On May 20, author, photographer, and historian Will Quam joined us for a “Brick of Chicago” program, where he discussed his book, [Fire and Clay: How Brick Reveals the Hidden History of Chicago](#). Will shared his expertise about the brick of Chicagoland and architectural styles of different bricks throughout history, ending with a Q&A and book signing. **A total of 71 people attended this engaging program.** [Dandelion Bookshop](#) provided copies of Will’s book for sale during the book signing.

Collections



A staff training to support digital collections access

The [Special Collections Team](#) participated in an intensive, in-person training session in May with Jessica BrodeFrank, Portal Manager for the [Chicago Collections Consortium \(CCC\)](#). The goal of this session was to provide hands-on instruction in uploading and managing our digital collections within the CCC portal, as well as converting collection metadata into the required format. The next step is to upload select digital collections to the portal, making them more accessible to researchers.

Community Voice

Attendees at the Tree Talk & Stroll program (described above) shared positive feedback in a post-program survey, including the following comments:

- "I loved all of it, but especially that the two experts each had different areas of tree-learning they focused on. They were both fantastic (and I am happy to say I went away feeling like Oak Park's trees are in very good hands with Grant at the helm)."
- "It was very informative. I learned a lot about how the forestry department decides what and where to plant trees and how they care for the trees they plant."

Attendees at the Brick of Chicago program (described above) shared positive feedback in a post-program survey, including the following comments:

- "Fascinating content, excellent presentation"
- "Engaging speaker who was excited and knowledgeable about his topic. I learned so much about brick and over the last few days walking around Oak Park my focus was definitely on the variety of bricks and styles!"



- ▶ We provide broad, effective, and equitable access to resources.
- ▶ We care for community resources, library assets, and library staff responsibly, ethically, and sustainably.

Work Highlights

Finance & HR



Chatting with staff & trying something new

In May, Executive Director Elsworth Carman and Director of Finance & Human Resources Billy Treece hosted four staff chats across all three library locations (two at the Main Library and one at each branch). To further support staff well-being and engagement, **we introduced an interactive approach this quarter by using Mentimeter, allowing staff to vote on and shape the agenda in real time.**

Across all sessions, staff consistently prioritized three key areas for discussion: the new Sabbatical Leave policy, updates on the Strategic Facilities Plan, and the Belonging without Othering framework. This collaborative format empowered staff to steer the dialogue toward their top areas of interest. We will continue to refine these sessions to ensure our staff feel included and informed.

Facilities



Lighting upgrades at Main

In May, we completed the latest phase of LED improvements at the Main Library. **This multi-phase project aims to upgrade our older, less efficient lighting with LED technology.** Several interior and exterior improvements were made by removing old, power-hungry metal halide, compact fluorescent, and linear fluorescent fixtures throughout the building, replacing them with more efficient, but equal output LEDs. Many of these fixtures include daylight harvesting technology, where a photosensor measures the amount of available ambient light and automatically adjusts the LED's output to ensure that the fixture is no brighter than it needs to be, often resulting in reduced power consumption.

Technology



Technology updates at Dole

The IT Team completed a series of technology updates at the Dole Branch to improve public computing access and network reliability. Public equipment was relocated to new areas, ensuring each device was reconnected, tested, and verified for proper network and peripheral functionality. As part of this work, we also replaced an existing networking switch with a high-end managed device. This upgrade positions Dole for improved network performance, easier monitoring, and more flexible management going forward.

Communications & Development



Gathering community feedback

On May 1, the Communications Team launched a Community Survey to gather public feedback for our Strategic Facilities Plan. Thanks to a robust, multi-channel promotional campaign and months of preparation, survey response exceeded expectations: **over 1,300 surveys were submitted during the six weeks the survey was open.** Our architects are thrilled with the volume of data, which provides a representative look at how patrons experience the Main Library. The success of the survey was driven by a coordinated effort to highlight it across multiple communication streams: the May/June issue of the OP/FYI newsletter, the library's Spring Storyline, and digital campaigns on oppl.org and in e-newsletters. QR codes and paper surveys were also made available at all three library locations.



- ▶ We develop and implement library policies and practices that promote equitable outcomes and experiences for staff and the public.
- ▶ We support our diverse community through responsive and intentional resource sharing, communication, and relationship building.

Work Highlights

Anti-Racism & Equity



A celebration of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American culture

The Oak Park Public Library partnered with the Village of Oak Park to offer [Kapwa!: A Celebration of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month on May 30 at Village Hall](#). The event featured food, music, and opportunities for community connection. Manager of Community Engagement Chibuike Enyia represented the library at the event, engaging with community members and promoting library resources while celebrating the spirit of Kapwa, a Filipino value of togetherness and shared identity.

Public Services & Programs



Sharing diverse materials with local families

Youth & Family Outreach Librarian Sarah Yale engaged with families at [Oak Leyden's May 6 playgroup and parent night](#), themed around the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Families explored the [Book Bike](#), which was filled with diverse board and picture books, early readers, and family-related nonfiction, like BBQ recipes and packing lunches. To support the theme, Sarah gathered many titles by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle, including a *Brown Bear* board book and several versions in different languages and in braille.

Collections



Maintaining diverse & inclusive collections

As part of our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Collections Team conducted its annual review and update of our core equity catalog lists. These enduring resources – which include Anti-Racism Resources, True Asian American History, True Black History, True Latine History, and True Native American History – are meticulously maintained each year to ensure our community has continuous access to accurate, relevant, and empowering diverse histories.

Social Services & Public Safety



Collaborating with community partners for public health improvement

Every five years, the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) requires the [Oak Park Health Department](#) to conduct a community needs assessment called the IPLAN. Director of Social Services & Public Safety Rob Simmons represents the library on a community stakeholders committee that is helping the Oak Park Health Department identify priority public health areas and investment goals for the next five years. The committee also includes representatives from [Oak Park Township](#), the [Oak Park Community Mental Health Board](#), the [Park District of Oak Park](#), the [Oak Park Board of Health](#), and [Rush University Medical Center](#).

Community Voice

A May 7 [Chicago Tribune article](#) featured an interview with the library's new Director of Equity & Anti-Racism Shalonda Lane.