



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

Work Highlights

Public Services & Programs



Engaging local youth in library work

The library is now in its fifth year of hosting a summer teen internship program, which offers meaningful work experience to local youth while also supporting library operations and enhancing our role as a community resource. Led by Manager of Middle & High School Services Latonia Jackson, the program continues to grow and make a positive impact, benefitting both the interns and the library in a truly win-win situation. This year, we are pleased to be hosting **five interns working in Facilities, Material Handling, and the Creative Studio.**

Connecting with community members over lunch

On June 16, we hosted our first-ever "Lunch with Librarians" program, where families, caregivers, and children were invited to share their lunchtime with Children's Services staff on the lawn at Scoville Park. The event was very successful, with **a total attendance of nearly 40 community members.** Attendees brought their own meals, and staff also provided snacks to share. Youth & Family Outreach Specialist Jenny Jackson and Library Assistant Monica Lopez enjoyed this new opportunity to connect and engage with families over food, and there is already another lunch event planned for August.



Creating inclusive spaces for social connection

Earlier this year, Health & Wellness Librarian Claire Ong applied for and received a Building Community Trust through Libraries grant from IREX to support a program called the Menopause Social. This program aims to provide a supportive, informative, and inclusive space for individuals experiencing menopause to connect with each other. In June, Claire hosted two Menopause Social pop-up events where she passed out gift bags and books to attendees. Engagement at the events was great, and we look forward to hosting additional programming as part of this grant.

Communications & Development



A Day In Our Village

On June 7, the 52nd annual A Day in Our Village festival took place in Scoville Park. To support the event, the Main Library opened an hour early, offering attendees access to restrooms and a place to cool off. **Throughout the day, library staff and trustees engaged with community members at the library's booth.** Attendees enthusiastically participated in our whiteboard prompts, sharing their "Favorite Spot in Oak Park" (with the library receiving several mentions) and the "Best Book I Read Recently." This successful event was a collaborative effort: the Facilities Team took care of the tent and tables, the Communications Team prepared promotional materials and giveaways, and multiple staff members were present to connect with community members. **It was a fantastic day of community engagement, connection, and fun.**





- ▶ 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



Helping patrons protect themselves online

On June 12, we hosted a workshop called "Avoiding Spam & Scams," led by a presenter from [Wright to Learn](#). The session focused on how to identify common scams, such as phishing, tech support fraud, and deceptive offers, along with steps to take upon encountering them. Participants received straightforward tips to minimize spam and safeguard their personal information online. Attendees were highly engaged with the content, and the presenter fostered a positive learning environment while sharing practical advice that attendees could easily apply to avoid scams and protect themselves.

ALA 2026

The [American Library Association \(ALA\) Annual Conference](#) took place June 25-29 in Chicago. We were pleased to once again have a number of staff from multiple service areas, as well as library trustees, attend this event to network with library peers and gain insights they can apply to their work in Oak Park.

Children's Librarian Genevieve Grove gathered valuable ideas about pre-K readiness and developed new thoughts about connecting scavenger hunt activities with literature. Middle & High School (MHS) Services Librarians Alex Gutierrez and Fiona Dolce learned about emerging trends and innovative library practices, participated in professional development sessions, and networked with colleagues from libraries across the country — returning with new energy and inspiration for future MHS programming. And Environmental & Sustainability Specialist Christine Poreba attended ALA for the first time, participating in sessions about a variety of topics, from sustainability to burnout and compassion fatigue.



Collections



Sharing collections expertise

Manager of Collections Services Barbara Fitzgerald was a featured panelist at the [Library Insights Summit](#) on June 26, speaking on a panel entitled "Discovery That Matters: The Power of Collaboration." The session centered on the crucial relationship between libraries and independent publishers, exploring ways they can collaborate to elevate diverse voices and help readers discover new and unique titles. Barbara shared her expertise on innovative strategies for collection development and reader engagement, highlighting the library's ongoing commitment to expanding access to a wide range of literary works.



- ▶ 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



Library staff satisfaction

In June 2026, we completed our biannual employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) survey, with 71% participation (94/132 staff). Scores can range from -100 to 100, with 10–30 considered “good” and 50 “excellent.” **The library received an eNPS of 49. Following our scores of 47 and 52 in 2025, we view this result as evidence of stability and sustained excellence in our workplace environment.** Still, our work is never done — qualitative feedback identifies both strengths to continue cultivating (supportive peer environment, community impact) and areas for improvement to strategize around (interdepartmental collaboration, equity efforts, organizational trust).

Building a balanced overall budget

FY27 budget planning officially launched on June 9. While our focus in FY25-26 was solely on balancing our operational budget, our FY27 goal is to balance the overall budget (operational and capital). This strategic shift aims to create an operational surplus to fund capital needs, such as building repairs and technology upgrades, without straining cash reserves. To achieve this, the Leadership, Management, and Finance Teams are adopting a modified zero-based budgeting approach — building budget requests from the ground up to identify efficiencies, challenge legacy spending, and closely align resources with our strategic priorities. **The first draft of the FY27 budget will be presented to the Board at the August 2026 meeting.**

Facilities



Main Library tuckpointing project

In June, tuckpointing work began at the Main Library. This is the largest planned capital project for 2026, and the crew began working on June 15, starting with the building’s southwest corner. The scope of work, which is expected to take place over eight weeks, includes replacing failed mortar joints, caulking, and sealant around the building perimeter, control joints, and window coping; cleaning and sealing masonry and stonework; and repairing the large planter bed along Lake Street.

Social Services & Public Safety



New funding to improve library safety

We were recently awarded an Illinois State Library Security Grant in the amount of \$72,546. This award will fund a comprehensive upgrade of security camera systems at the Main Library and Maze Branch, which will strengthen our ability to monitor and protect library facilities, patrons, staff, and assets and support a safer environment at both locations. The project, which will be led by Manager of Public Safety Aaron Alonzo, is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2026.

Technology



Improving public printing services

The IT Team successfully streamlined our public wireless printing service by consolidating three print submission portals into a centralized upload interface. This strategic consolidation aims to provide a more intuitive and seamless experience for patrons across all library locations while enabling the retirement of legacy hardware at the branches. The Communications and Patron Services Teams supported the information dissemination strategy related to this project, ensuring necessary updates to all digital instructions and physical signage.



- 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

Public Services & Programs



Celebrating LGBTQIA+ Pride

Throughout June, the library celebrated LGBTQIA+ Pride Month with a variety of activities and resources. This year's staff-created Pride Display, organized by Rainbow Services Librarian Hal Patnott, featured two posters and other items in the Main Library lobby. The first poster — inspired by PRIDEChicago's 2026 theme, Free to Be Proud — shared the message “Free to Be Proud, Free to Read Proud” and highlighted LGBTQIA+ books. The second poster displayed various Pride flags. A glass table held a Pride Garden themed after the Summer Reading Program, featuring origami flower bouquets in Pride flag colors labeled with photos of real flowers and flags, alongside rocks painted with pronouns, flags, and messages. An upright case also housed a history display inspired by the Stonewall Inn.



A particularly well-enjoyed Pride Month event took place on June 24: a *Heated Rivalry* trivia night with themed drinks and decorations. Organized and hosted by Adult Services Librarian Margita Lidaka, the event featured two trivia rounds, with small prizes for winners and *Heated Rivalry* stickers for all participants. Collections Librarian Dontaná McPherson-Joseph contributed by preparing trivia questions. **Approximately 30 enthusiastic attendees, including library trustees, braved a rainstorm and arrived ready to compete** — some even wearing hockey jerseys and pins. **Everyone enjoyed the event immensely, with multiple participants saying they only wished it had been longer.**



Learning from local Black storytellers

On June 17, near the Juneteenth holiday, we hosted “Storytelling Through Photography,” featuring photographer and social media personality Malik in conversation with Shermann “Dilla” Thomas, a Chicago historian and storyteller. The event saw more than 20 attendees and was very successful. Dilla helped Malik feel at ease and asked insightful questions about his creative process. A memorable moment was when an adult and three teenagers waited patiently to connect with Malik, inspired by his work.

Community Voice

On June 16, we hosted *1619: The Journey of a People*, a theatrical experience featuring playwright, professor, and performer Ted Williams III, in the Main Library Veterans Room. Attendees shared positive feedback in a post-program survey, including the following comments:

- “**I liked how it was jam-packed as far as the structure and layout of the program.** I really enjoyed the trivia part where we were able to [...] connect with other attendees.”
- “**I enjoyed the entire program.** The Kahoot game was a fantastic twist.”