

New & Noteworthy



Want to start and grow a business? Win up to \$5,000!

Sign up opens Nov 1!

Young Entrepreneur Program

February–May 2026

Free + open to all area high school students champaign.org/YEP

The banner features a group of eight diverse high school students and one adult woman standing behind a whiteboard. Several students are holding large ceremonial checks from Champaign Public Library for amounts like \$1,000, \$2,000, and \$5,000. The students are dressed in a mix of casual and semi-formal attire.

Young Entrepreneur Program Connects Area High School Students with Mentors & More

The Young Entrepreneur Program (YEP) is returning! YEP workshops and mentoring sessions will run from February–April 2026, and culminate in a pitch competition on May 3 judged by area business leaders. The program will guide participants through every step of developing an idea from concept to pitch. Winners will take home seed money—up to \$5,000—to grow their business. Students can sign up starting November 1 at champaign.org/yep.



October 25–31

Halloween Booktacular Giveaway!

Stop by to get your *treat* at the Main Library's Children's Desk or Douglass Branch

The poster has an orange background. It features a black cat silhouette in the top left, a black book titled 'KIDS ADVENTURES' with a jack-o'-lantern on its cover in the center, and a small black bat silhouette in the bottom right.



Opening Reception!
FriendShop Bookstore

The Art Connection
SCHOOLS TO LIBRARY

Artwork by students from Champaign Unit 4 School District

The poster has a yellow background. It features a photograph of a young boy in an orange shirt standing in front of a wall with several colorful children's drawings. The text is in purple and black.

Book "treats" and The Art Connection

During October, we will give away thousands of book "treats" (10/25–10/31), and in November, The Art Connection Schools to Library initiative will host an opening reception in the FriendShop Bookstore from 2–3 pm (11/2).



Medicare Help and Community Networking

Nicole Mitchell, Senior Services Specialist for Champaign County Health Care Consumers, will be available to answer customer questions about Medicare's Open Enrollment, Tuesdays from 1–5 pm, October 21 through December 2. In November, our Career Librarian, Cat Purcell, and Business Specialist, Lauren Gramly, will host a community networking event (11/18).

Program Highlights



650+ Library Cards During Library Card Sign Up Month

During Library Card Sign-up Month, we issued new cards and renewed accounts for 661 community members, for a total of 35,469 cardholders. In addition to getting a library tote and free book coupon for the FriendShop, new cardholders also got a free beverage from the café. August is typically our busiest month for new card sign-ups with back-to-school season in full swing. We issued 693 new cards in August alone, bringing the total for August and September to an impressive 1,354!

Saturday Storytime Welcomes a New Partnership

In September, The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center at UIUC presented Russian folk tales to 74 attendees at Saturday Storytime.



September Job Fairs Provide Meaningful Connections for Community Members

We hosted another successful Community Job Fair (9/15), welcoming 204 community members and 20+ employers and organizations. Additionally, we hosted a Manufacturing Job Fair in partnership with Champaign County EDC and Parkland College welcoming 121 community members (9/29).



Tuesdays at Ten Draws a Crowd

Part one in the six-part fall Tuesday's at Ten series on the Santa Fe Trail drew a crowd of 50 (9/2). To kick off the series, the group discussed the land, the people, and the origin of the trail.

Celebrate Genome Day with Illinois Scientists

On September 27, we welcomed 219 customers of all ages to celebrate Genome Day with scientists from The Institute of Genomic Biology.

Teen Lounge Community Partnerships

The Teen Lounge welcomed partners who provided services and activities afterschool including MEDLIFE UIUC who led teens to create DNA models and tested the DNA of strawberries, Champaign Park District who taught teens to interact with live snakes and turtles, and Women in Nuclear who worked with teens to build model atoms.

Douglass Branch



Coffee and a Craft participants recently enjoyed black glue art crafting.

Storytimes & DIY Kids

During September, we hosted popular storytimes for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, including our new Pajama Storytime! Wednesday afternoon DIY Kids crafts included slime, Tech Toys, Nazca Lines, and Musical Instruments and welcomed 61 kids throughout the month.

Friday Night Jam Sessions

During Friday Night Jam Session in September, 22 participants enjoyed spending time together, learning about library programs, and listening to community members perform spoken word and songs. After the October 24 gathering this month, Jam Sessions will take a break over the winter and continue again in the Spring.

Unit 4 Parents Get to Know Their Library

Librarian, Elise Feltman, hosted Unit 4 Parent University Getting to Know Your Library event and shared about the programs, services, and spaces the Douglass Branch has to offer. They concluded the afternoon with a tour of The Makerspace.

Scavenger Hunts at the Branch

September scavenger hunt themes included snakes, zodiac signs, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Autumn, and provided self-paced activities to children and their families.

Customer Comments

5-star Reviews

During September we received two outstanding reviews online. Community members shared, "Let's give these people at the library in Champaign the respect they deserve its ALWAYS clean, safe, and inviting. In today's times that's definitely worth 5 stars 🌟" and "Great atmosphere, resourceful and something for everyone young and old. Beautiful murals, art work, Cafe, comfortable seating, teen lounge, children section, great business accommodations upstairs with computers. They have extensive collections of books, CDs, movies etc. If you're bored look no further!!"

Curbside Service Supports Immunocompromised Customer

A customer shared how much she appreciates curbside delivery services. She said she liked it before but is especially appreciative of it this year as she goes through cancer treatment. She shared she is comforted to know she does not have to come in the building to receive her library materials.

Customer Feedback on Friday Night Unbooked

Friday evening programs at the library are beginning to develop a strong core of consistent attendees at Unbooked. The intergenerational groups have been intermingling and having a great time socializing and participating in activities. Attendees voiced appreciation of the snacks provided during the event. Recently, a large group of young adults came in led by one of the attendees from the month prior. As they were all walking in he said, "I've been talking up this card game event all month!"

Excitement for Fall Reading Challenge

A mom and her 10-year-old came to the desk to sign up for the current reading challenge. Her daughter was so excited! The mom said, "Thank you for doing this. I've been bringing her and she's been doing the challenges since she was five. She's a great reader! These challenges and the prize books have really motivated her!"

Inter-library Loans Make a Customer's Day

A customer was looking for a book that we didn't have in the collection. A staff member shared with this customer about interlibrary loans and about how he could still get a library card even if he didn't have a permanent Champaign address yet. He was very happy to learn that and shared, "It's been a great day. I try to make every day a great day, but any day I go to the library I know it will be a great day."

The Makerspace at Douglass Branch

Overview | June–September 2025

Juneteenth Open House

During our annual Juneteenth Emancipation Day Celebration, the Douglass Branch Library was open for tours and technology demonstrations. We had a lot of interest in the space and community members were excited to learn more about what The Makerspace had to offer.



Kids & Teens

DIY Kids met on Wednesdays from June through September, utilizing the Makerspace and meeting room for programming totaling **248 visits**. Club Fred held their Summer Drop-in Hours on Fridays from 1–3 pm through the second week of August and then resumed with their normal scheduling afterschool on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 4 pm, recording **198 kid and teen visits**.

Adults

The Makerspace held its monthly introductory creative workshop on the third Wednesday of the month from 6–7 pm. The workshops remain at a capacity of 4 adults with full attendance recorded in July, August, and September in their rotating workshops of Intro to Cricut, Intro to Sewing, and Intro to Glowforge.



Open Hours on Saturdays

The Makerspace continues to be a popular place for gaming and VR during their Saturday drop-in hours. From June through September, the bi-monthly drop-ins recorded a total of **115 visits**.

Unit 4 Parents Get to Know Their Library

On September 23, the Douglass Branch hosted a Unit 4 Getting to Know Your Library event and shared about the programs, services, and spaces the Douglass Branch has to offer with parents in the community. They concluded the afternoon with a tour of The Makerspace.

The Studio at the Library

Overview | June–September 2025

Kids & Teens Summer Drop-in Hours

In June and July, we recorded **1,335 visits** to the Studio during our weekly Kids in The Studio Summer Drop-in Hours. School-aged kids 1st through 5th grade with their caregiver or parent participated in activities, games, and crafts on Wednesdays. Teen Week in The Studio was a big success with **222 teen visits** recorded during the first week of June and **722 teen visits** throughout June and July on Tuesdays and Thursdays for Teens in The Studio Summer Drop-in hours.



Teen Lounge

Teen Lounge restarted on August 12, and met after school in August and September with **6,692 recorded teen visits** across **35 programs**. Community Partnerships in September totaled over 80 volunteer hours and included: 6 volunteers from VIP Daycare who inspired teens to create and test packaging that would be safe to use to ship eggs, 9 volunteers from MEDLIFE UIUC who created DNA models and tested the DNA of strawberries, 2 staff from Champaign Park District who taught teens to interact with live snakes and turtles, 6 volunteers in Nuclear who worked with teens to build model atoms, 6 volunteers from Engineering Ambassadors who worked with teens to create LED embroidery constellation frames, and 6 volunteers from REACT Chemistry Club who prepared 3 hands on chemistry experiments for teens.

Restoration of Friday Night Hours in July Brought Extended Hours to Drop-ins

Beginning in July, we extended our drop-in hours in the Studio to Thursday and Friday nights from 5–8 pm. On Friday evenings, library staff prepares approachable, self-guided crafts available for customers to participate in at their own pace. This has been well received by our community and, with it coinciding with Unbooked programming, library customers often meander from library programs down to The Studio.



Adults

We present creative workshops for adults in the evenings year-round. From June to September, we hosted **19 programs**, including Crafty Adults, Studio Workshops, Specialty Tech Workshops, and Writer's Workshops totaling **342 adults** in attendance. As part of the monthly Studio Workshops series, community members have a chance to learn how to use Studio creative tools in our introductory workshop series.



Crafty Adults participants enjoyed Flower Arranging in The Studio in June (left) and Cookies and Canvases in August (center). Writer's Workshop participants gathered for Open Mic Night in July (right).

First Friday Coffee in The Studio

The library hosted Champaign County Chamber of Commerce's First Friday Coffee event in September. This event is hosted at different organizations throughout the community monthly. Staff members joined for networking and had the opportunity to showcase The Studio space and all it has to offer the businesses in our community.



Book-A-Librarian Appointments

We also provide one-on-one instruction and guidance during Book-a-Librarian appointments in The Studio. We met individually with **49 community members** from June–September, answering questions and teaching people how to use new technology including the Glowforge laser cutter, Cricut machines, recording booths, sewing machines, and 3D printers.

Weekend Reservations & Walk-in Appointments for Studio Equipment

We continue to offer the option for reservations and walk-in appointments for the most popular Studio equipment and tools. Customers can reserve the use of a Glowforge, Cricut machine, or recording booth for up to 2 hours at a time during weekend open hours. Or stop by during open hours and we can help!