

New & Noteworthy



Hosting Our Innaugural Pitch Competition During Small Business Week

The library's Young Entrepreneur Program Pitch Competition will take place May 5 during Small Business Week. Up to eighteen entrepreneurs will compete in two categories—age 18 and under, and ages 19–25. Our keynote speaker will be Chicago-based Ashley Moy, CEO of Cast21. Named to the "20 In Their 20s" list by Crain's Chicago Business, Moy raised nearly \$1 million in venture capital funding and has won numerous international awards for design and research.

Launch at the Library's Great First Year

Since March 2018, Launch at the Library has engaged 1,055 area entrepreneurs and business owners at Launch seminars, workshops, and monthly roundtable discussions, including a Money for Your Business event that drew 54 participants. The walk-in coworking space on the second floor is busy every day of the week—buzzing with activity and helping build community. We've advised more than 100 entrepreneurs this past year, including three of the top prize winners of this year's Cozad New Venture Challenge at the U of I. The second-, third-, and fourth-place winners all sought market research assistance from our experts, and garnered \$32,500 in prize money. We've also added marketing and other online business tools dedicated to supporting those interested in starting and growing a business. Next month, the library's business specialist, Stephanie Pitts-Noggle, will give the keynote address at the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (IESBGA) annual conference.

Program Highlights



*New York Times bestselling author Aaron Reynolds presented a hilarious show to a standing-room-only crowd on April 9, as part of National Library Week celebrations. His visit to Champaign included inspiring 800 schoolchildren at Kenwood and Carrie Busey elementary schools. We also had the opportunity to gift 300 copies of his Caldecott Honor book, *Creepy Carrots!*, to young readers. We love helping build home libraries!*

Tech Workshops Rated “Excellent” by 375 Participants

Our Getting Started Workshop series launched in March 2018. Since then we’ve presented 58 hands-on workshops for 366 community members, with topics including how to use a keyboard and mouse, demystifying social media, obtaining an email account, and how to read ebooks and listen to audiobooks on a smartphone or tablet. In addition, 135 people have enjoyed 11 Specialty Tech workshops taught by local experts—3D printing, getting started with Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and more. Instructor ratings have been high, with 75% of participants rating “Excellent,” 25% selecting “Good,” and no ratings of fair or poor.

Children’s Librarians Organized Local Lit Events for Community

Children’s Services and Douglass Branch staff helped organize the C-U Read Across America community event (March 2) at Lincoln Square, and read stories and made crafts with 562 participants. In addition, library staff helped organize the University of Illinois Youth Literature Festival (March 30) at the iHotel, booking entertainment for the day, including Capoeira dancers, the Edison Middle School Jazz Band, and a puppeteer—and meeting 366 people at their table.

Connecting with Seniors Outside the Library Adult Services staffer Lavana led activities and stories for 67 participants in February and 64 participants in March at area senior centers. We offered our first “Tales and Travel” presentation at Carriage Crossing—about Japan. This initiative was developed by the Gail Borden Public Library and named a 2017 Library of Congress Best Practices Honoree.

Douglass Branch Highlights



Award-winning author Sharon G. Flake spoke to 90 community members during a visit to the Douglass Branch on March 29, sharing her stories and inspiring young readers as part of the University of Illinois Youth Literature Festival. Participants included fifth-graders from Booker T. Washington STEM Academy. Everyone took home a book thanks to a generous grant from our local Jack and Jill of America chapter.

Parent Lab @ Douglass

At the February and March meetings of Parent Lab @ Douglass, Champaign Unit 4 parents met with Project READ tutors at the Douglass Branch, while their children participated in library-led activities. Parent Lab is presented in partnership with Project READ and the Champaign Unit 4 School District.

DIY Kids activities bring kids and families to the Douglass Branch on Wednesday afternoons after school to enjoy do-it-yourself projects. In March we offered a weeklong series of DIY Kids events during Spring Break, including a workshop on making lava lamps that drew 50 participants!

Douglass Staff Forge Community Partnerships

Douglass staffer Dante met with community leaders to lay the groundwork for collaborating on activities at the Branch, including Dr. William Patterson from the University of Illinois School of Music, William Jones from WEFT Community Radio, Joan Wall from City of Champaign Neighborhood Services, Samuel Smith from Krannert Center, and award-winning illustrator Stacey Robinson, who teaches at the U of I School of Art + Design.

Tech 4 Kids Open Lab During both February and March, 15 participants experimented with coding apps, circuits, robots, and creating videogames.

Branch staff are part of the library's **social media** team and were responsible for posts that reached 22K people via Facebook, with 1,140 responses.

Amanda attended **BTW Family Reading Night** and made buttons with 150 children and grownups on March 6.

Library Love from Our Customers

A participant at the Intro to Microsoft Word workshop remarked she would happily pay more in property taxes if it continues to support wonderful programming like the technology classes. (Susan, Adult Services)

I love coming here on grey weather days. The parking lot is full and people with smiles are just streaming in and out. (Lavana, Adult Services)

A first-time customer to the Douglass Branch told us, "This place is phenomenal. I love how you know all the kids' names who come in after school." (Amanda, Douglass Branch)

At a Babies Love Books storytime, one set of parents said, "Thank you so much for all the songs. We're new parents and struggling to remember the kids music from our childhoods. This was a great reminder." (Kristin, Children's Services)

I reached out to the CU Autism Network to share our upcoming Sensory-Friendly Storytime and received this response: "Thank you so much for providing this for our kiddos! I have already posted it on our Facebook page and will forward it to our IT director to post on our website. Thanks again!" (Laurel, Children's Services)

A family visited our table at the Read Across America event in Lincoln Square and shared how when they were visiting San Francisco, they stopped at the library to find a nice place to rest and enjoy with their children. They were sad to discover this larger city's library did not have anywhere near what we provide for families. Our Playspace offers a wonderful place for children to play and enjoy reading with their parents. (Linda K., Children's Services)

Via email from the International Prep Academy enrichment teacher and coach for their Battle of the Books team: "It was a wonderful event, the library did a great job!! Thank you again for this opportunity, the kids just LOVED the experience and the books so much!" (Amanda, Douglass Branch)

