

New & Noteworthy



Homeschool Fair and Panel Discussion

We are collaborating with 11 area organizations to help connect families with resources for homeschooling and introduce what the library can offer (January 25, 10 am–Noon). We hear from parents that our event makes them realize homeschooling could be a viable option for their family. We have been presenting a biannual Homeschool Fair since 2008. Participating groups this year include the Champaign Park District, Developmental Services Center, Parkland College's Early Transfer Academy, Urbana Free Library, and WILL-TV.

Writer's Workshop Spring Season Starts in February

Building on the success of last year's Writer's Workshops, we are collaborating with area experts to offer a new season of 5 workshops designed to help build community. The series kicks off in February with "Where to Begin" taught by Corey Van Landingham (February 19, 6:30 pm). Each workshop focuses on supporting the writing process and sharing the approach of expert instructors from a variety of genres. In addition, the series includes a Celebration of Women Authors with a panel discussion featuring six authors (March 22, 2 pm). The series culminates in our second annual Short Story Contest, with the awards ceremony including a public reading of the winning stories (April 29, 7 pm).

Curbside Delivery

In a new initiative designed to make library services more convenient and accessible to customers, we are offering Curbside Delivery (champaign.org/curbside). We invite community members to give us a call (217-403-2000) before coming to the library, so staff can retrieve items from the hold shelf and deliver them once the customer has parked in Clara Lane. This new service targets anyone who wants to quickly pick up an item without coming inside—families with babies asleep in carseats, those who find winter weather makes entering on foot challenging, or someone simply in a hurry heading across town.

Program Highlights



750+ Frozen Fans Enjoyed a Magical Winter Celebration

Coordinated with the release of the *Frozen 2* movie, our Frozen Party drew 750+ fans who enjoyed activities throughout the first floor. We heard many compliments, especially about the level of organization and activity choices. One gentleman told us he had not known there was going to be an event that day. He and his family were amazed and impressed and understood that it took a lot of effort to plan. Another family shared that their daughter now thinks Elsa and Anna live in town—and she talks about them all the time.

Author and Columnist Lori Borgman Fills the Hall!

Lori Borgman’s “What Happens at Grandma’s Stays at Grandma’s” visit was a huge success, with standing room only. The gracious author greeted everyone like a long-lost friend and was truly a delight. Attendees were excited to meet her and have her sign their books.

Get that Job! Series Brings Success to Community Members

A Get that Job attendee told us he started to be contacted for interviews after we worked together on his resume. He sent an appreciation via email: “This reflects our hard work on the resume. The job market feedback is positive. Thank you for your time and consideration.” This participant demonstrated such a positive progression throughout the November Get that Job! series. He was receptive to feedback, used (and promoted) library resources during the workshops, and performed brilliantly during practice interviews, incorporating guidance and suggestions gleaned from the workshops.



Douglass Branch Highlights



Our third annual Chess Competition included 51 participants! Lark took home the first-place trophy.



DIY Kids Weekly Workshop Draws a Crowd

DIY Kids meets Wednesdays after school at the Douglass Branch to enjoy a hands-on activity designed especially for school-age kids and their families. Highlights during November and December included building and stacking with cups during the Plastic Cup Challenge (52 participants); making melted snowman slime (30 participants); and creating a zoetrope animation toy (50 participants). This successful series launched as a Spring Break intensive in 2014 with weekly workshops starting in 2016.

Partnering with the University of Illinois Astrollini Club

During December, faculty and student members of the AstroIllini Club led activities designed to teach Tween Scene participants about the solar system, including using playdough to make scale models of the planets.

Douglass Branch Manager Presents at iSchool Conference

Essie Harris was an invited panelist at the 29th annual Mortenson Distinguished Lecture and iSchool Indaba, "Why Libraries, Why Librarians?" on the University of Illinois campus. She spoke about the history of the Douglass Branch and librarianship.

Overall attendance at Douglass Branch programs topped 500 participants during November.

Library Love from Our Customers

■ A new customer marveled, “I’ve lived here for 15 years and I don’t know why I’d never been to the library before—and I’m so glad I finally came to get my card. You have such wonderful things!”

■ Library Love via a card sent to the Children’s Department: “You are unsung heroes. Thank you for helping me find endless apocalyptic novels! Hope your holidays are exactly what you need.”

■ A retired teacher commented: “I will really miss the Battle of the Books! We had SUCH a great time reading together, we had a great team, and I am so proud of the trophy! Best of luck this year and have lots of fun with this wonderful event! Your work is amazing!”

■ Library Love via Facebook from Julie Pryde, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Administrator: “A treasure in our community!”

■ A customer asked for gift book suggestions with very specific details. When I told her I’d email her some ideas, she said, “You’re like a miracle.” Her response to the list? “Thank you so much! These look really good!! I appreciate your help and it’s so neat to have a librarian who can find so many books that are just what we’re looking for.”

■ About the Frozen Party: From a teen: “This is so cool!” From a mom: “Sweet madness.” From a grandparent: “Your program planners must be pleased. You’ve had a great response!” From another parent: “Thank you for doing this. It was just great. So much work obviously went into this and we loved it! Thank you!!”

■ A Douglass Branch customer complimented, “You are always in a great mood and willing to help me whenever I come in. I appreciate it!”

