

New & Noteworthy



\$70K Grant Brings Mother Goose to Town We are partnering with United Way to increase kindergarten readiness for area children. A two-year \$70K grant will enable hiring a half-time “Mother Goose” dedicated to visiting early childhood education centers, providing highly engaging, research-based [Mother Goose on the Loose](#) storytimes, training, and resources, and putting thousands of books into the hands of preschoolers.

New Adult Services Manager Michelle Sawicki has been hired to head the Adult Services department beginning February 5. Most recently, she’s worked as Reference Department Manager at the St. Louis County Library. Michelle told us, “I love libraries, guiding staff in a positive manner, and I have a heart to serve the public.”

Strategic Planning Committee Meets The Strategic Planning Committee will meet with consultant Stu Wilson of [Library Strategies](#) on January 30. The committee includes:

- Mark Ballard, Library Board
- Katie Blakeman, Library Board
- Lynnette Dodds, Library Foundation
- Dave Whitford, Library Foundation
- Katharine Jones, Library Friends
- Paula Kaufman, Library Friends
- Sam Banks, Community Member; Executive Director, Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club
- Sue Grey, Community Member; President and CEO, United Way
- Donna Pittman, Director, Champaign Public Library
- Brittany Michaels, Deputy Director, Champaign Public Library
- Essie Harris, Douglass Branch Manager, Champaign Public Library
- Evelyn Shapiro, Promotions Manager, Champaign Public Library

Star Status In early December, *Library Journal* awarded us Star Library status. Our 3-star recognition places Champaign Public Library in the top 3.5% of public libraries nationwide. And we are one of only 69 to have been named a Star Library every year!

Program Highlights



NYT Bestselling Author Jamie Ford Evokes Laughter and More

In November, Jamie Ford delighted community members by sharing historical background on his books and reading from *Love and Other Consolation Prizes*. [The News-Gazette ran an interview with him](#) on the day of the talk. Ford enjoyed meeting Technical Services staff member Mara Bandy who also writes for *Library Journal*. Her top historical fiction picks placed his newest novel on the [Library Journal Best Books 2017 list](#).

Life-sized Candy Land Draws Nearly 600 Participants and Kid Crafters

On December 16, we hosted 583 community members to play a game of life-sized Candy Land. In addition, 237 kids enjoyed crafting after in the Nate & Lillie Story Room and multigenerational groups played old-fashioned, table top board games. Volunteers from the University of Illinois iSchool donned costumes and donated their time to help out. The event went viral on social media, reaching 72,000 people via Facebook.



Jr. Paleontologists Brave Cold, Make Fossils On a chilly Saturday in January, 175 kids and family members learned about paleontology and tried their hand at making fossils, presented in collaboration with Orpheum Children's Science Museum staff.

"Getting Ready to Read" Preschool Workshops Reach 1.5K Monthly

In November and December, we presented 13 weekly pre-reading workshops and drop-in play times reaching 3,059 children and families.

Douglass Branch Highlights



DIY Kids workshop participant Olivia Elam, 2, and Library Associate Esther Yi appeared in a Facebook image published by News-Gazette photographer Stephen Haas.

DIY Kids activities bring families and other groups to the Douglass Branch on Wednesday afternoons after school to enjoy do-it-yourself projects. November and December drew 262 participants. Upcoming workshops include snowy day crafts and making slime.

Teen Chess Tournament Our inaugural tournament drew 24 participants.

Table Talk Book Club met to discuss *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James W. Loewen. The club is thrilled to host *New York Times* bestselling author Colson Whitehead in September.

Community Collaboration Douglass staff member Amanda Raklovits attended Booker T. Washington STEM Academy's Family Reading Night, sharing information about library services and events—and making buttons with 150 children and adults.

What Library Users Are Saying

"I came into the children's area seeking assistance in finding a book for my eight-year-old grandson. I was hoping to find one there to read, then go out to buy it for Christmas. **The two librarians in the area were wonderful—going out of their way to help me search, while offering good suggestions.** They even went so far as to look up the address and phone number of the Jane Adams Book Store. I was not familiar with it, so nice to know!

I also want to send kudos your way for allowing the Edison students to wait for their rides in the library, even providing ways to help them pass the time. Not only is this a safe place for them but, who knows, maybe you are shaping the librarians of the future!"

—LIBRARY LOVE from Lynn Laskowski

Told to Staff Members:

While checking out materials after storytime, a new Toddler Tales mom told us, "We just moved here a few weeks ago and **we have fallen in love with the library.** That storytime was so much fun today." (Amanda R., Douglass Branch)

I helped a customer submit her homework for an online class. When she left, she thanked me and said, "**You're a blessing!**" (Esther Y., Douglass Branch)

Following the Babies Love Books storytime, one mother commented: "**You make storytime so tactile and engaging.** My daughter might not shake the eggs when you first pass them out, but she just watches you so intently and copies you when you do it." (Linda K., Children's Services)

A fifth grader who I regularly help with homework told me, "**You know the multiplication you helped me with? I had a test last week and I got 100%.** My mom gives me problems at night, too, and I do them. After my test I said, if it wasn't for my mom and Ms. Amanda, I wouldn't have gotten 100%." (Amanda R., Douglass Branch)

A Douglass Branch customer shared a wonderful memory: "I saw the banners as I came in and I said to myself, '**It can't be 20 years since this building opened—I cut the ribbon at the grand opening!**' I was part of the ACE afterschool program next door. When they opened the library, there was a big red ribbon right in front of the door, and my cousin and I each got to hold one end of the big scissors and we cut the ribbon. Everybody clapped and all the cameras took pictures. It's been 20 years, and I still come here to print and fax, and now my kids come here to use the library." (Amanda R. & Alexis N., Douglass Branch)

After helping two children find books, write words, and spell their Pete's Words throughout the morning, their dad stopped by the desk before leaving and told us: "**I really appreciate the way you take the time to really listen to my kids and teach them when you are helping them.** We love visiting the library!" (Laurel H. & Linda K., Children's Services)