

Reflections on the Year

By Paulina Poplawska, Library Director

This is my last Off the Shelf of 2020. As 2021 approaches, I'm reflecting on the year that we've had, the fantastic staff at the library, and the devoted library patrons in our community. As I mentioned in April, I didn't think that the future ever held closing a public library, our community gathering space to its patrons, our public. It's been a year unlike any other for the library.

When the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to close in the spring, we found new opportunities in the library to organize contactless pickup, answer reference questions over the phone, find unique ways to connect patrons to library cards, information, and much more. We were able to complete three planned projects while we were closed: the re-carpeting of the first floor, the painting of the Youth Services department, and the final preparations for the Memory Lab to debut. As we started to reopen over the summer, we were overwhelmed by the warmth of our library patrons excited by what we had to offer, from assisting with job applications and questions to scheduling appointments for the Memory Lab to running a Summer Reading Program virtually for the first time.

We remain appreciative for our patrons' understanding as we strive to be flexible, resilient and imaginative in how we provide library services as we head into the winter season. I'm so indebted to the fantastic library staff this year (and every year) for being open, spirited, creative, and resourceful.

Libraries are an integral and essential part of the mental health of many readers and users in the community. We are always so excited to see you, to keep you informed and engaged with the information we can provide you on your quest for lifelong learning, imagination, and discovery. We're thankful that we can remain open right now due to ardent users who have followed library procedures we have established during this time.

The library is open our current hours of Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The only door that is presently open is the southwest entrance by the library's book drop. The outside library book drop is open daily. Computers are available for only 30 minutes. No seating is available at study tables. All of our programming continues virtually. Our contactless pickup at the lobby door is available to all patrons who prefer not to come into the library. Give us a call to set your contactless appointment at 507-359-8331. Patrons are welcome to browse the collection, check out items, pick up holds, ask reference questions, or apply for a library card. We ask that everyone wears a mask, limits their visit to 15 minutes, keeps a distance of six feet from other patrons, and sends only one member of the family. We continue to quarantine materials so if you have overdue items on your account don't fret. If they still remain on your library account a week after you returned an item, please reach out to us.

We couldn't do any of this without you – our patrons. Thank you for your support and understanding. We are so thankful for you and are committed to serving our community with passion and gratitude. We wish you and your loved ones, a safe holiday season, full of rest and delightful stories, and a happy New Year. As always, we look forward to seeing you in the library, safe and healthy, soon!