

# Director's Report

Agenda Item No. 2  
Feb. 14, 2017

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## **Young patrons driven to fun at Northwest Library**

Don't let the kids drive the bus. Unless it's at a special Drive In Theater program (January 26) for kids ages 2-5 and their families. Replicating the fun program created by Hollywood Youth Librarian Natasha Forrester, Northwest Library Library Assistant Catherine Watanabe and Youth Librarian Susan Smallsreed offered Northwest patrons the opportunity to watch a movie from the comfort of their own vehicle.

Thirty young people and their families came to trick out their rides with wheels, steering wheels, antennae, stickers, drawings and more. Then, after a visit to the "snack bar," the audience settled in to watch two short films ("Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" and "Duckling Wants a Cookie"). Vroom! Vroom!

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## **My Librarian receives Harvard Kennedy School recognition**

On January 19, Multnomah County Library's [My Librarian](#) service was [named](#) a [semifinalist](#) for the 2017 Innovations in American Government Awards by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

My Librarian is the library's signature effort to bring the person-to-person essence of library service into a digital format, connecting library patrons with personalized suggestions for their next great read. The library launched this program nearly three years ago, with support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation through The Library Foundation, the library's private fundraising partner. My Librarian has been a huge hit with patrons. Give it a try if you haven't already!

It's an honor to be included among so many distinguished and innovative public service offerings. I will provide additional updates if MCL advances in the later stages of judging.

## **A new way to serve: MCL Contact Center goes live**

On Monday, January 30, the library launched a new way for patrons to get help. By calling **503.988.5123** or visiting [this page](#), patrons will be connected with a team of specialists in the library's new Contact Center.

Contact Center staff are a dedicated group of customer service experts who will respond to the library's 200,000 annual remote patron contacts via voicemail, phone, chat and text. Staff answered over 4,700 calls in the first week alone!



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The Contact Center delivers a convenient and consistent experience that puts patrons first, connecting them with a small staff of virtual service experts who will answer the vast majority of questions on the first contact and refer the rest as needed. Contact Center staff include English and Spanish speakers, who will use interpreters as needed to help library patrons. They look forward to hearing from you!

## **Russian speakers celebrate culture and traditions of Central Asia**

Bilingual Library Assistant Gulruh Kodiriy shared that on Monday, January 30, Rockwood library hosted the Culture and Traditions of Central Asia event for the Russian-speaking community. Dr. Elena Bell, former theater actress and ballet choreographer, turned the meeting room into a very colorful and rich place, featuring a unique collection of artifacts.

Community members learned about the region's history, culture and traditions by playing, talking, dressing in authentic costumes, and dancing together to traditional music. Everyone left with souvenirs. Here are some excerpts from written comments about this program and the presenter: "Beyond amazing!" "She is a fairy!" "Marvelous, Exquisite!" "Remarkable, interesting, huge thank you!"

## **Library weathers winter storms**

As the winter weather days in December and January melted (and froze) into one another, the library was still a hub of activity. In spite of the closures and late openings, library staff worked hard to serve the community in a variety of ways.

- Account management staff worked to ensure that patrons wouldn't accrue fines as a result of the weather.
- Public services staff crammed the hold shelves to capacity to ensure that patrons wouldn't lose their place in line for that next great read.
- Some staff members braved the elements to clear book drops at most locations, to avoid physical overflow of library materials outside the buildings.
- Access Services staff tackled an enormous backlog of materials to check in and route to their destinations in the stacks or on hold shelves.

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- Numerous staff members from across the system volunteered to work evening, morning and overnight shifts at warming shelters.
- Staff who update the website and social media worked to notify the public of changes to library service and to promote digital resources.
- Executive Management Team members set early alarms to participate in weather briefings and conference calls to make decisions centered on public access and staff and patron safety.

I am grateful to everyone who contributed to this incredible effort for demonstrating their commitment, flexibility and resilience in the face of this unusual, sustained set of events.



## Hundreds attend Northwest Library Noon Year's Eve Party

The third annual Noon Year's Eve Party for preschoolers drew a huge crowd this year. An estimated 80 young children, ages 0-5, and their "big people" visited during a two-hour span. While some kids decorated party hats, others went on the "Winter Animal" hunt for nine different "animals" including snow leopards, Sno-cats (snow plow) and yeti. They also snacked, drew pictures, danced, popped bubble wrap and chased balloons from the two balloon drops.

Many thanks to the Northwest Library teens, volunteers and staff who decorated, set and cleaned up and directed traffic throughout the event. It was controlled chaos and great fun!

## Patron comments

"I'd like to commend the staff at the Holgate library. Each time we have visited we have been made to feel welcome and the staff have been exceptional. The library is clean

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inside and out and offers a lot of programs of interest to our family. We have lived in the neighborhood less than a year and are within walking distance to the library - I could not be more thrilled. Today my 4 month old son got his first library card and we intend for our local library to be a big part of his experience growing up. Also - it's super convenient that we can drop our voting ballots at the library! You rock Holgate library! Thank you for all that you do and the incredible role you play in our community!" — Avrie, Jan. 19

"I want to thank you so much for all your patience, kindness, and time on my behalf. You have been so nice and willing to help. A lot of times people misjudge my disability and assume i must be unintelligent because of it.

You treated me with so much respect and addressed me as a human being. Please let your boss know i am amazed and grateful for your great service and help to me. Hope your life brings all the luck you deserve." — Account Management patron, Jan. 20

"Sean was extremely helpful when I was having difficulty with a computer program. He was kind and respectful. He explained what he was doing to accomplish the task I need to do. He literally 'walked' me through the steps to accomplish the desired result! Many thanks to him for his patience and expertise! I also want to point out that Denise was helpful, friendly and gave me good advice! Libraries are a Lifeline..." — Holgate patron, Jan. 24

"Hello, I did offer a 'laughter therapy' workshop at the Hollywood Library on January 28th. I just would like to thank you all for giving me this great opportunity. I had a wonderful time and I was very impressed by how the everyone participated and how funny people can be. Thank you again and I hope to work with the Hollywood Library again someday." — Stefano, Jan. 30

## In the news

[After six big storms, trees have taken a beating: Hundreds fall](#), OregonLive, Jan. 12

[Everybody Reads 2017 Highlights 'Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.'](#) The Skanner, Jan. 12

[Record Number of Libraries Surpass One Million eBook and Audiobook Checkouts with OverDrive in 2016](#), Yahoo! Finance, Jan. 18

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[What's the story? How to research old homes](#), OregonLive, Jan. 26

## Upcoming events

[From the Rooftop: Thoughts About Housing in the Community](#)

Feb. 15

PCC Cascade Campus

[From This Day Forward](#)

Feb. 26

Central Library

[Piecing Me Together: An Evening with Renee Watson](#)

Feb. 17

North Portland Library

[Music of West Africa at North Portland Library](#)

Feb. 28

North Portland Library

[African American Read-In](#)

Feb. 18

Midland Library

[Free College and Career Planning for Teens](#)

Mar. 1

Gresham Library

[Poetry Slam Jam](#)

Feb. 22

St. Johns Library

[Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance \(SHIBA\)](#)

Mar. 2

Hillsdale Library

[Fashion, Costumes and Wig Design for Teens](#)

Feb. 25

Rockwood Library Makerspace

[Intro to Home Coffee Roasting](#)

Mar. 4

St. Johns Library