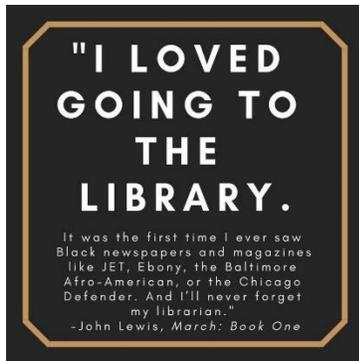


February 2021 at North Branch



*I had the distinct pleasure of a conversation with Mr. Lewis, AKA Congress' first best-selling graphic novelist, and his staff at Book Expo in 2013. He had spoken eloquently to thousands at an author breakfast that morning and was now sitting at his publisher's table in the exhibition hall. We spoke about his message: how important it is reach young people and instill in them a sense of their history in a dramatic and approachable way. Then they too will know how to be "good trouble" and bring about lasting change. It was obvious he felt this to his core, and I will treasure that conversation always.*

*Paula Keegan*

As we near a year of COVID shadowing us all, most staff continued to work alternate weeks from home and in the library. More patrons availed themselves of Quick Pick Up opportunities and hour-long computer appointments. Safety for all remained top priority.

The big highlight of February was the program Building Bridges with Ubuntu Storytellers. About 50 people listened to heartfelt stories by four remarkable storytellers of color.

Families could come and pick up fun-filled giveaway bags for Take Your Child to the Library Day the first Saturday of the month. It was also the day we kicked off Reading is Grand, a program for Grandparents and their grandchildren celebrating African American children's books. More people signed up than showed up which was disappointing but we continue to hope more people will join. We had two sessions in February with two more coming in March.

Zoomin' Little Bears continues to bring the library to our littlest patrons. Attendance varies dramatically from week to week but we do have some stalwart attendees. Bina made and posted a couple of book talk videos for our FB page.

Regional, national, and systemwide meetings, webinars, training and online classes, as well as the usual work of the library, continued. Staff attended CLC Coffee Chats, completed citywide virtual Sexual Harassment training, among other things. Bina is on the board of the CT Storytelling Center, and the steering committee for Set the Stage, a state initiative for children's librarian training.

Adult virtual programming included Valic's Finance program, Plan for 100, with David Quast. Mindfulness continued with Monika Anton, Cynthia Hilliard and our volunteer William. Tax Assistance doesn't look the same as in the past, but the dedicated volunteers of both AARP and VITA are continuing these much-needed programs this year, in a safe and mostly remote way, making it a busy time for library staff. Bina and Monika continue to post to our Facebook page and other Library social media. Cynthia Hilliard also provides links for our social media.

Our launch of the new web client version of our circulation system is imminent. Training and practice continue. We are actively planning for late spring programs and our Summer 2021 Tails and Tales theme.

Paula Keegan