

## Executive Director's Report October 2024

### **Spooky Stories and Costume Parade Recap**

Youth Services had a fantastic lineup of October programming across the library, creatively using available spaces while our usual area was under renovation. Highlights included Mad Science Experiments, Loteria, Coding Club, Jr. Picassos, and the Spooky Stories and Costume Parade for our youngest patrons.

The Spooky Stories and Costume Parade was especially charming. Preschoolers enjoyed spooky tales in the Garden Lounge before parading through the library to visit different service desks—Reference, Circulation, Welcome, and Readers—collecting treats and giveaways along the way. The event brought plenty of smiles and was a joy for both staff and patrons!



### **Hoopla and Interlibrary Loan Checkout Increases**

In response to patron feedback and increased demand, our Collection team has decided to double the monthly Hoopla checkout limit from 5 to 10. This popular digital platform offers access to video, eBooks, and audiobooks, and the increased limit will provide patrons with even more options to explore each month. Reference Director Jennifer Collette coordinated with Hoopla vendors to finalize these changes, which are available to patrons now.

Additionally, we have expanded the interlibrary loan request limit from 5 to 10 items. This enhancement will benefit patrons who regularly utilize interlibrary loans, allowing greater access to materials from partnering libraries.

These changes reflect our commitment to improving resources and access for our patrons, and we look forward to seeing how they enhance the library experience.

### **Halloween Exterior Decorations**

Maintenance Director Pete DeCicco, his team, and Readers Services Associate Elizabeth K worked together to give the library's exterior a festive Halloween makeover. With spooky spiders and lights adorning the building, the decorations created an eye-catching and fun display that delighted patrons and passersby alike. The result was truly spooktacular!



### **Lower-Level Renovation Project Update**

The Youth Services lower-level renovation is moving forward smoothly, and we are on track to reopen the space to the public on Thursday, November 14. As part of this project, we've completed the recarpeting and repainting, with brick staining underway to coordinate with the updated color scheme. On November 8, movers will reset the furniture, and our staff will spend the following days reshelving and organizing to prepare for the reopening.

While most aspects of the renovation will be in place by the 14th, a few finishing touches may continue as we gear up for the Grand Re-Opening Celebration, scheduled for Monday, December



2, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. This event will include activities for families, a special storytime, a scavenger hunt, sign-ups for our Winter Reading Challenge, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 6:30 p.m., followed by cake.

We look forward to welcoming the community to celebrate this upgrade for our Youth Services area!



### **Escape Room: Escape from the Silver Dollar Saloon**

On October 19, patrons were transported to the Wild West in the Escape from the Silver Dollar Saloon! In this immersive experience, participants worked piece together on a series of challenging puzzles and earned clues to uncover the gang responsible for the bartender’s untimely demise. With teamwork and determination, all patrons successfully “escaped” and enjoyed a sweet reward—a 100 Grand candy bar.

The program also featured a collection of Western films and books available for checkout, adding to the theme of the event. Patrons had a great time, and due to its popularity, Readers Services is considering offering this escape room again in Summer 2025. Yee Haw!



### Strategic Planning Update

The Rolling Meadows Library’s strategic planning process is on track, with a final presentation to the Board scheduled for January. In October, our consultants, Nick Dimassis and Melissa Brechon, spent three productive days in Rolling Meadows, where they held five community focus groups, including one in Spanish, and had an insightful meeting with Mayor Lara Sanoica. They also visited Schaumburg and Arlington Heights libraries to explore ideas, noting unique qualities Rolling Meadows Library can leverage to further distinguish itself.

Our community feedback phase is now complete. The community survey, which opened in late September, closed on November 8, and garnered over 750 responses, demonstrating strong community interest and engagement. Earlier in September, a staff survey was conducted, followed by in-person sessions on our all staff in-service day, culminating in a Board meeting for further input.

Nick and Melissa have identified five core goal areas, and we are beginning to develop strategies under each. Once refined, these goals will be shared with the Steering Committee for feedback before finalizing them for Board review in January. Community feedback emphasized pride in the library and a desire for it to evolve into a dynamic community hub and leader. We look forward to the exciting changes ahead.

### FY2025 Budget and Levy

On October 15, Executive Director Jack Bower presented the proposed library levy and FY2025 budget to the City Council at their Committee of the Whole meeting, where he addressed several questions but encountered no major opposition. The following week, during the City Council’s regular meeting on October 22, a public hearing was held for both the budget and levy, with no public comments received.

The budget will proceed to a “first reading” at the November 12 Committee of the Whole meeting and, if approved, is expected to be officially codified at the City Council’s November 26

## Suburbs in 60 seconds

**State house forum:**  
The League of Women Voters of the Palatine, Barrington and Schaumburg Areas will host nonpartisan, in-person candidate forums Thursday for candidates seeking seats in the Illinois General Assembly. Republican 52nd District Rep. Martin McLaughlin will meet with Democratic challenger Maria Peterson from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Barrington Area Library, 505 N. Northwest Highway in Barrington. Democratic 51st District Rep. Nabeela Syed will meet with Republican challenger Tosi Ufodike from 7:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., also at the Barrington Area Library. Capacity is limited. Register at <https://balibrary.librarycalendar.com/event>. All candidate forums are run by trained moderators who do not live or vote in the districts for which they are moderating. All candidates are given equal time to answer each question.

**Meadows library survey:**  
Anyone who lives or works in Rolling Meadows is invited to take a community survey in conjunction with development of the Rolling Meadows Library’s strategic plan. The survey, available in English, Spanish and Polish at [rmlib.org/survey](http://rmlib.org/survey) through Nov. 8, will help determine how the library can best serve the public and what the public needs, wants and expects from the library now and into the future, officials said. Created and overseen independently by Library Strategies Consulting Group, the survey contains 16 core questions and a few optional demographic questions. Individual responses are confidential and only aggregate information will be shared with the library. The survey takes on average 12 to 15 minutes to fill out.

**DuPage board forum:**  
The League of Women Voters of Naperville invites voters to attend an online forum at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9, featuring the candidates for DuPage County Board District 5. Candidates Patty Gustin and Saba Haider have accepted the invitation. The public forum is free, but guests must register in advance at [rebrand.ly/oct24-forum](http://rebrand.ly/oct24-forum). The forum will be recorded and available online afterward on the league’s YouTube channel.

**Hawthorn Woods stargazing:**  
Hawthorn Woods, an International Dark Sky Community, is hosting a stargazing class from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 13. Open to all ages and families. Participants will learn how to operate a telescope, about night sky navigation and preservation, how to identify the constellations and planets, and discuss the impact of light pollution. The class taught by local astronomical enthusiast Jim Stewart will be atop the sled hill at Community Park, Old McHenry at Quentin roads. Handouts will be provided. The fee is \$25 per family for resident and \$35 for nonresidents. If needed, a weather make-up date is Oct. 20. Contact Kirsten Stewart, [kstewart@vhw.org](mailto:kstewart@vhw.org) or (847) 847-3514.

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meeting. This final step will confirm our FY2025 budget and levy, securing our financial framework for the upcoming year.

### **Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund Update**

Since transferring \$2 million of the library’s savings into the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund (IMET), we have received excellent interest income, totaling \$8,108.38 in September and \$7,963.40 in October. This represents an annualized return of 4.8%, a substantial improvement—nearly three times higher than the 1.6% rate we previously earned in our standard savings account. These funds are held in IMET’s Convenience Fund, a money market account with rates that adjust daily. As long as interest rates remain elevated, we anticipate continued strong returns, further bolstering the library’s financial stability and supporting our mission to serve the community.



## **Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund**

### **New Payroll System Rollout**

The Rolling Meadows Library is progressing well with the transition to our new payroll system, using the ESS (Employee Self-Service) portal. October 27 marked the beginning of our first pay period under the new Sunday-to-Saturday schedule, a more intuitive setup that simplifies payroll processing.

Currently, we are in the parallel entry phase, where staff record hours in both the ESS system and on paper timesheets to ensure accuracy before full implementation. Staff have been briefed on payroll codes, updating personal information, and confirming weekly schedules, with specific guidance for emergency closure leave and other key codes.

The testing period will conclude on November 23, after which the ESS system will be fully implemented, enhancing clarity and accuracy across payroll operations.

### **Investigating More Accessible Parking**

Over the years, we have received valuable feedback—and especially through our current strategic planning process—emphasizing the need to make the library more accessible for all patrons. One key area of concern has been the location of our parking, which is set at some distance from the front entrance.

To address this, Executive Director Jack Bower has begun discussions with the City’s Public Works Department to explore adjustments for the parking spaces directly across from our entrance. These spaces are currently designated as “10-minute parking,” but Jack has proposed

changing three out of the four spaces with signage such as “Reserved For Persons with Limited Mobility.” While these would not be ADA-compliant handicapped spaces, nor would they replace our existing ADA-approved designated parking, they would offer a closer option for patrons with limited mobility, such as expectant mothers or patrons who may find it challenging to walk longer distances.

The City is currently reviewing ADA considerations to ensure this approach aligns with compliance requirements, but we are hopeful that it will offer a more accessible solution for our community. This is just one of several steps we’re exploring, but it would be a meaningful start.



## In the Community

### **Celebration of Hope Luncheon**

On October 10, the library was proud to participate in the RMPD Hope Fund’s Celebration of Hope luncheon, an event dedicated to supporting survivors of abuse in our community. Outreach Manager Laura Garcia, Assistant Director Lucia Khipple, and Executive Director Jack Bower attended on behalf of the library. The event was both meaningful and touching, as community members came together to raise funds for this vital cause. The library was honored to show its support as a \$250 Bronze Sponsor, reinforcing our commitment to the well-being and resilience of the Rolling Meadows community.





## **October Outreach Highlights**

Our Youth Services team was busy with outreach efforts throughout October. Education Services Coordinator Kate visited multiple classrooms, bringing library resources and activities to students. Community Relations Manager Laura Garcia wrapped up Hispanic Heritage Month with a successful Loteria program, celebrating cultural engagement in the community. Additionally, staff represented the library at the Kimball Hill School Boo Fest, where they welcomed a steady stream of costumed kids, adding to the festive spirit of the event.

## **Department Highlights**

### **Readers Services**

The Book Lover's Day presentation on October 26 was a full-house event, reaching its 56-patron capacity. The program featured book presentations, quizzes, raffles, and a light lunch, making it a delightful gathering for book enthusiasts.

In the Teen Area, the Halloween Candy Tier Program on October 30 allowed teens to evaluate popular candy choices using a scientific approach. Each participant rated candies based on sweetness, texture, and ingredient blend. Snickers emerged as the winner, with Hershey's milk chocolate bar close behind, while Milky Way was rated the least favorite due to its sweetness.



### **Reference Services**

The Reference Services Department is completing year-end purchasing and weeding while keeping monthly programming active. Planning for 2025 programming is underway, including a new session focused on library-subscribed investment products and databases. In conjunction with National Book Month, the department also introduced a gardening kit pickup program, with a remarkable 106 kits picked up by patrons.

### **Special Services**

During Phase II of the lower-level renovations, the Special Services Department has temporarily relocated to the staff lounge. They completed the Winter 2024-2025 newsletter, which is now at

