

Executive Director’s Report March 2025

Rolling Meadows Human Services Social Worker Hours

As part of Strategic Plan Strategy 5.8 “Explore how best to collaborate with the City’s new Human Services Department to help connect its resources and services to all residents,” the library launched drop-in social worker hours in partnership with the City of Rolling Meadows.

Reference Services Director Jennifer C. worked with the City’s Human Services Department to bring a licensed community social worker to the library from 10:00 a.m. to noon on March 19. During these sessions, residents can receive assistance with a range of needs, including financial aid applications, Medicaid and Medicare enrollment, job search support and résumé building, and connections to local social services.

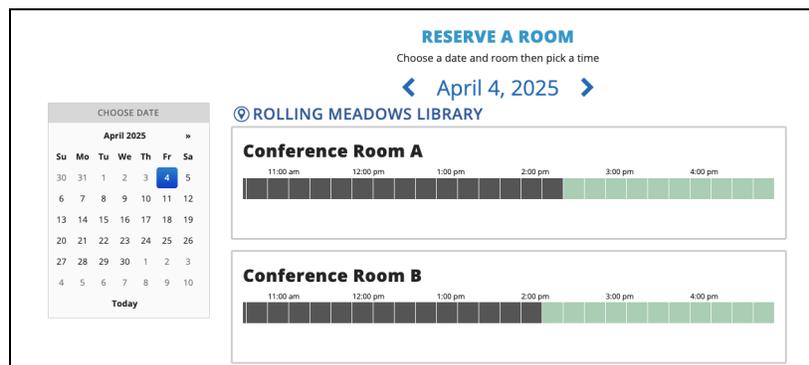
This new offering lowers barriers to access by bringing expert help into a familiar and welcoming space. The program will continue with two additional dates in April. We intend to host these visits regularly as a vital way to connect residents with services and support.

Online Room Booking Now Live

Ahead of the full website launch on April 25, we’ve introduced early access to one of its most requested features: online meeting room reservations through the new Communico platform. Previously, only one room was available for advance booking, and the process was paper-based. Now, all four meeting rooms can be reserved online by Rolling Meadows cardholders—anytime, from anywhere.

This upgrade streamlines the process, reduces staff workload, and gives patrons greater flexibility. Real-time availability eliminates the need for calls or in-person checks, making room access simpler and more efficient.

This improvement supports strategy 3.2: “Equip meeting rooms with up-to-date, collaboration-friendly technology for educational, recreational, and work-related purposes.”



Introducing the Seed Library

Reference Librarian Lauren V. has launched a seed library! The concept is simple: take seeds, grow plants, and if possible, collect and return seeds at the end of the season to help sustain the collection.

The Seed Library encourages sustainable gardening, food literacy, and hands-on learning, and the response from the community has already been overwhelmingly positive. Patrons have eagerly begun selecting seeds to jump-start their spring planting. To extend access beyond the building, Community Relations Manager Laura G. is also bringing a curated collection—with visual labels and information in Spanish—to the Neighborhood Resource Center.

Special thanks to high school volunteers whose help assembling and organizing the seed packets was essential to the project’s launch. We have big plans for this initiative and look forward to seeing how it continues to “grow” in the months ahead.

This new offering addresses our strategies 2.2 “Increase the availability of nontraditional resources”, 1.4 “Provide more volunteer opportunities inside and outside the library”, and 4.3 “Craft and distribute key messaging in languages other than English.”



Snowed Inn Winter Reading Program

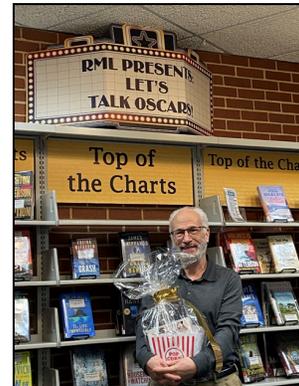
The Adult and Teen Winter Reading Program, Snowed Inn, concluded on March 16 with strong participation. A total of 67 patrons signed up, including 56 adults and 3 teens, along with 8 staff members. Thirty participants completed the challenge, and 25 patrons used the new Book Match service. Raffle prize winners received \$25 gift cards to local Rolling Meadows restaurants, helping promote small businesses while celebrating our readers’ achievements.

Let's Talk Oscars – 3rd Annual Event Recap

On March 1, the Readers Services team rolled out the red carpet for the 3rd annual Let's Talk Oscars program, celebrating the 2024 Academy Award nominees in the top seven categories. The Community Room was transformed into a festive, theater-inspired setting, complete with gold décor, dramatic lighting, and a full concession stand experience.

Attendees received a ticket upon arrival, redeemable for a complimentary bag of popcorn, a candy bar, and a bottle of water. Adding to the fun, life-sized cardboard cutouts of Timothée Chalamet and Adrien Brody made “surprise appearances,” offering a popular photo op during intermission.

After the presentation, guests were invited to fill out Oscar ballots predicting the winners. Congratulations to Fred LaManna, who correctly guessed six out of seven categories and took home the coveted Oscar Gift Basket!



Enhanced Safety in Teen Scene Area

In accordance with our security camera policy, the Board is notified whenever a new camera is installed on the public floor of the library. IT Director Mike M. has recommended installing a camera in the Teen Scene area to improve visibility, as the space is currently outside the direct line of sight from the Readers Services Desk. Trustees with questions about the library's camera system are encouraged to speak with Executive Director Jack Bower for a walk-through of current coverage and functionality.

In the Community

Computer Skills Classes at the Neighborhood Resource Center

Community Relations Manager Laura G., with support from Reference Librarian Anne J. and IT Director Mike M., presented a multi-week series of computer skills classes in Spanish at the Neighborhood Resource Center. This collaborative initiative was made possible through partnerships with the City of Rolling Meadows Human Services Department, the Cook County Digital Equity Action Committee, and FIND PI (an Early Childhood Intervention program).

Held on Thursday and Friday afternoons, the classes welcomed adult learners with a wide range of digital literacy skills—from beginners to those with some computer experience. Upon completion of the course, participants are eligible to receive a free laptop for their household through the Cook County Technology Coalition, helping to close the digital divide and empower families with vital access to technology.

This impactful partnership reflects strategy 1.2 “Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors.”



Supporting Neighborhood Book Clubs through Interlibrary Loan

Interlibrary Loan Librarian Anne J. is launching a new service to support a Rolling Meadows neighborhood book club by coordinating the procurement of multiple copies of selected titles. Working directly with the discussion leader, Anne will use interlibrary loan to ensure members have access to the book in time for their meetings. By helping residents organize and sustain their own book clubs, we reinforce the library’s role as a literary and community resource.

Welcoming New Businesses to Rolling Meadows

Executive Director Jack Bower attended ribbon cutting ceremonies for two new businesses in town—UrgentVet and ATI Physical Therapy—both located near Golf and Algonquin Roads. These visits provide an opportunity to welcome new businesses, introduce the library as a valuable community resource, and build relationships that support the broader community. This outreach aligns with strategy 1.2: “Foster and expand strategic community partnerships across both the public and private sectors.”



Department Highlights

Technical Services

- Technical Services Director Wendy F. updated the circulation parameters for several of the library’s material classifications. Flicks on Fire now goes out for 3 days, new DVDs circulate for seven days, and almost all materials can have a hold placed on them and are eligible for automatic renewal.
- All 260 items from the Library of Things (LOT) purchased in late 2023 and 2024 have been cataloged, packaged, and are available for checkout. Eighteen new items purchased in 2025, including a serger sewing machine, blood pressure monitor, and ultrasonic cleaner, have been added to the collection.

Youth Services

- Spring Break kept Youth Services busy throughout the final week of March, with programs filled to capacity, the drop-in craft table requiring regular replenishment, and outreach efforts in full swing. Programs were scheduled at various times of day to reach as many families as possible.
- The department is now fully focused on preparing for the Summer Reading Challenge and accompanying programs.
- Youth Services Librarian Kate D. coordinated with the Friends of the Library to provide local teachers with early access to the Friends Book Sale, along with a small reception in their honor.



Readers Services

- Readers Services Associate Robin S. promoted the Friends’ Teacher Appreciation Pre-Sale by distributing flyers to Rolling Meadows and Fremd High Schools, inviting teachers to connect for future collaboration. With established ties to the RMHS Summer Reading Committee, Robin continues to strengthen those relationships while using this outreach to begin building connections at Fremd. She also attended the March 13 Friends event to engage with educators in person.
- One year after introducing the game area in Readers Services, it continues to attract a wide range of patrons. On March 27, staff observed a particularly meaningful moment—a parent teaching a child to play chess. This simple interaction reflected the library’s role in fostering lifelong learning and enriching family experiences.



Reference Services

- In preparation for the upcoming website launch, department staff spent much of March learning the new online room booking system. While there’s still more to explore, staff are excited to offer this long-requested feature to patrons.
- Regular programming continued throughout the month, including Coloring Club, Jump Start Your Job Search, Computer Classes, One-on-One Computer Help, Real to Reel Book/Movie Club, and Small Business Boosters.
- The Read More, Grow More Nonfiction Spring Reading Challenge launched on March 1 and will run through the end of May. Designed to highlight the library’s robust nonfiction collection, the challenge was expanded to include families, allowing parents and children to participate together in collaboration with Youth Services



Special Services

- In March, Special Services focused on preparations for several key events, including the Volunteer Luncheon, the Summer Reading Challenge Kickoff, and the library's 65th Anniversary celebration. Summer Reading Challenge t-shirts were ordered for both staff and as participant prizes.
- The team also began developing promotional materials for upcoming spring and summer outreach efforts. In preparation for the new website launch, Special Services collaborated with departments to review and edit more than 50 web pages to ensure they are accurate and patron-ready.
- Displays/Gallery:
 - Main Level: Make Some Music & Celebrating Women for Women's History Month
 - City Hall: 2025 Spring Reading Challenge
 - Art Gallery: Roger Gates Watercolors



Circulation

Please refer to the Circulation Monthly Statistical Report for the latest data.