

PROPOSED
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES -
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
February 20, 2025

The monthly meeting of the Executive Committee of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, February 20, at the Central Library and remotely pursuant to due notice to trustees. The following members were present:

Carima El-Behairy, Chair
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq., Vice Chair
Lucy A. Candelario*
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.

Also present were:

John D. Craik, Esq., Treasurer
Kimberly Johnson
Joel Moore, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS

*Trustee Candelario attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and was considered a full participant.

Chair El-Behairy called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum for Executive Committee was present. Chair El-Behairy acknowledged and thanked the guests in attendance, including Erie County Legislator Lawrence Dupre.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. Director John Spears indicated that under Agenda Item F – Report of the Director there will be a Library Marketing Presentation presented by Library Marketing Manager Sean Piazza and Development Manager Maureen Germaine.

Trustee Moore arrived at 4:07 p.m.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of January 16, 2025. Trustee Bucki remarked upon several grammatical errors in the December Monthly Report of the Director and suggested corrections. Trustee Kelly motioned for approval of the Minutes as amended, Trustee Sasiadek seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report by thanking the Library staff, administration, and System Board members that attended Library

Advocacy Day in Albany. Next, she shared that the *Black Doll Exhibit* is now on display until April 1. The *Black Doll Exhibit* is on display at four library locations, including Central, Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., Leroy R. Coles, Jr., Branch, and Isaías González-Soto. Following that, Chair El-Behairy informed the Executive Committee and attendees that there is a screening of the documentary *Black Barbie* at the Central Library on Saturday, February 22, at 11:00 a.m. and encouraged them to attend. Finally, Chair El-Behairy notified the Executive Committees and attendees that there will be a trustee orientation on Saturday, March 15, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Central Library.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Trustee Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below. Trustee Kelly noticed she was not included as present. Trustee Sasiadek ensured this will be corrected for the February minutes.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee
February 13, 2025

Present: Executive Committee Chair Carima El-Behairy, Vice-Chair Christopher Sasiadek, Lucy Candelario*, and Sharon Kelly. Also present were Deputy Director – Public Services Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik,* Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki, and Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich

*Trustee Candelario attended the meeting remotely due to an extraordinary circumstance and was considered a full participant. ADD-Controller Patronik also attended the meeting virtually.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:02 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair El-Behairy began the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda for the Board meeting on Thursday, February 20. Next, she asked if there will be any changes to the agenda. Deputy Director-COO Marinucci proposed removing Agenda Item J.2 Resolution 2025-9 – Wide Area Network RFP Award until the March Board meeting. Discussion ensued regarding E-Rate and the closing deadline. Following that, ADD-Controller Patronik proposed removing Agenda Item E.2.a Monthly Financial Report and presenting December financials next month. Trustee Kelly motioned for approval of these changes, Trustee Sasiadek seconded and these were approved unanimously.

Following that, Chair El-Behairy shared that she is planning on reporting on her attendance at Library Advocacy Day, and the opening of the *6th Annual Black Doll Exhibit*. The Black Dolls will be on display at 4 libraries including Central, Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., Leroy R. Coles, Jr., Branch, and Isaías González-Soto. Discussion ensued about events surrounding the Black Doll Exhibit.

Next, Deputy Director – Public Services Darden shared that the ACT Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 22 at the Central Library. Chair El-Behairy asked if there will be a presentation on the Library rebrand. Deputy Director – Public Services Darden indicated that there will be. Chair El-Behairy then asked if there will be a Trustee orientation scheduled. Assistant to the Director Goodrich stated that there is one scheduled for Saturday, March 15 and she will include an informational reminder in the Board packets.

There being no further business, Trustee Sasiadek motioned to adjourn and Trustee Kelly seconded. The meeting ended at 4:11 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee. Assistant Deputy Director–Controller Emily Patronik reminded the Executive Committee and attendees that the Budget and Finance Committee met last month after the Board meeting and discussed year-end budget information. ADD-Controller Patronik plans on scheduling Budget and Finance Committee meetings after Board meetings to ensure they have a quorum and to make it easier for committee members to attend. Next, she stated that the December financials are not finalized yet and will be presented next month.

ADD-Controller Patronik went on to discuss Library Advocacy Day in Albany and notified the Executive Committee and attendees that Governor Kathy Hochul released the proposed New York State budget on January 21. She stated that a major component of attending Library Advocacy Day was to advocate for the New York Library Association’s budget asks for the state. Discussion ensued about funding.

Agenda Item F– Report of the Director. Director Spears began his report by informing the Executive Committee and attendees that the Library received a plaque from the Buffalo Musicians’ Association for its partnership with their concert series. Secondly, Director Spears also thanked Library staff, administration, and System Board members for attending Library Advocacy Day in Albany. He heard it was a successful day and well attended. Next, regarding the proposed NYS budget, he applauded the increase in operating aid. He mentioned, however, that the \$34 million proposed for New York State Construction Aid is a \$10 million dollar decrease from what was in the budget in 2024. Discussion ensued about the proposed budget and library construction needs. Following that, Director Spears announced that there is already a date secured for 2026 Library Advocacy Day which is Tuesday, February 3, 2026. Lastly, before the Library Marketing Presentation, Director Spears wanted to thank the Library administrative team for their help and professionalism while he has been out for surgery.

Finally, Director Spears introduced Library Marketing Manager Sean Piazza and Development Manager Maureen Germaine to the Executive Committee and attendees. The Library Marketing Presentation PowerPoint slides can be viewed at:

[https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/users/secretary/Library Trustee Brand Event Presentation.pdf](https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/users/secretary/Library%20Trustee%20Brand%20Event%20Presentation.pdf).

The following report was submitted by the Director and transmitted to Board members prior to the meeting:

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
January 2025**

The **45th Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** that was to be held at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on January 16 was canceled due to the weather. The Honorable Clifford Bell, affectionately known as “Brother Bell,” had once again graciously agreed to be the Master of Ceremonies for this annual community celebration in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that would have featured the African American Cultural Center Drummers and original work by students from the Buffalo Academy of Visual & Performing Arts.

Buffalo Museum of Science Check It Out Passes - The Library has partnered with the Buffalo Museum of Science on the Museum’s *Check It Out Passes* program sponsored by M&T Bank in 2025. This program offers free general admission passes for up to 4 individuals. System Borrower Services Manager **Linda Rizzo** coordinated the distribution of the passes to each of the 37 libraries for patrons to check out on their library card. Each library received two passes.

Job Fair - System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** coordinated a *Job Fair* in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor held at the Central Library on January 29. Sixty businesses and organizations were on hand to share the many job opportunities and services that are available to job seekers. In all, 716 job seekers attended the event. Attendees and participating businesses and organizations provided positive feedback about the successful event.

Online Winter Reading Contest – The *Online Winter Reading Contest* for kids, teens, and adults, with the theme *Reading is Snow Much Fun*, runs from January 1 through February 28. This year also includes a staff contest as well. Participants record their minutes read for a chance to win prizes.

University at Buffalo (UB) Humanities Series - The first of the *UB Humanities Series* in partnership with the Rare Book Room and the University at Buffalo’s (UB) Department of Romance Languages and Literatures was held in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on January 24 and was well received. UB Professor David Castillo provided a lecture entitled “*How Do We Search for Truth in a World Saturated with Illusions?*” exploring how the themes within Don Quixote can help us understand the world today.

1. Public Services

The Buffalo African American Museum (BAAM) and the *Together as One* committee announced the Black History Month regional programming schedule and weekly bus tour details during a media event at Central Library on January 30. Librarian **Carol Kowalik-Happy** and Community Engagement Manager **Anne Conable** represent the

library on the committee. Deputy Director **Dorinda Darden** participated in the program which was covered by TV channels 2, 4, 7 and Spectrum News.

Central Library:

The first of an ongoing monthly Tea Blend Workshop was created and hosted by Central Adult Services Librarian Trainee **Christina Lee** on January 15. The program featured several different teas, spices, and herbs that patrons could experiment with to make their own unique blend of tea. Handouts were given to patrons about what tea is and how to make a balanced blend, as well as a few sample recipes for those who weren't sure where to start. This program was well-attended and received positive feedback.



Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** hosted a New Year Calligraphy workshop with an invited instructor, **Chihiro Heckman**, from the University at Buffalo's Department of Linguistics, on January 18. Fifteen registered patrons and one drop-in participant learned stroke techniques used in snake “蛇” (2025's Chinese Zodiac sign) from Heckman after introducing the meaning of New Year calligraphy in Japan and sharing the equipment to be used during the class. Toward the end of the workshop, a demonstration of Sumi-e (black ink painting) also took place. Upon leaving the program, all patrons were able to take their brushes and Japanese papers home to continue practicing.



Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** was interviewed by local journalist **Jeremy P. Morlock** for *Buffalo Magazine* about the Launch Pad and all the services and tools available to the public. The feature appeared in the January/February print edition of the magazine, and is also available to read online here:

https://buffalonews.com/edition/special-sections/buffalo_magazine/page-bm008/page_a2c3584e-87f1-5657-81b6-6607fc344495.html

GOOD NEIGHBOR | People making a positive impact



Where creativity comes to life

BY JEREMY P. MORLOCK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS KUNDBAT

As you walk into the Launch Pad, you are greeted by a warm, inviting atmosphere. The room is filled with various tools and equipment, including 3D printers, laser cutters, and a variety of electronic components. The Launch Pad is a community space where people can come together to learn, create, and share their ideas.

Larger equipment sits in the mezzanine, but there is a "Library of Things" waiting to be checked out. These offerings include tools, materials, and equipment that are otherwise hard to come by. The Launch Pad is a place where you can find everything you need to bring your ideas to life.

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The idea at its core is to give access to things that people might not otherwise have for creative purposes.

Jordan has enjoyed seeing visitors develop their interests, build skills, and create something.

"We've had a bunch of different projects being produced out of the Library," she says. "You've had people do music videos and do product photography in the studio. People have done prototyping for products on our 3D printers."

The "Library of Things" concept is not limited to the Central Library. Many branches around Erie County have their own collections, often including musical instruments and other creative tools. The collection of items may reflect the specific interests of branch patrons and staff. Some have a handful of 3D printers and a Droid camera for student adventures, while others have a variety of science-based learning kits for kids.

"Come to the Library, we have lots of resources," Jordan says. "We have books, we have research materials—that's generally what people are looking for—but we have so much more than that."

Library of Things
buffalolib.org/branch-and-library-things
716-858-4853
central@buffalolib.org

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Central Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon's** 2021 interview with Japanese manga scholars has been released from Japanese publisher **Seikyusha** as part of the anthology **[Women's Manga: Regulation, Freedom and Their Challenges](#)**, edited by **Fusami Ogi** [ISBN: 9784-7872-350-3]. The anthology starts with a long interview with **Moto Hagio**, a legend of Shōjo Manga (*girls comics*), and includes interviews with other female MANGA (Japanese-influenced manga released in other countries than Japan) artists from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines on various topics, including challenges to expressions of gender and sexuality in their works. **Simon's** part of the interview occurred during the pandemic and addressed the history and size of Central Library's graphic novel collection, as well as its categorization, shelving, rating, and selection processes. One part of the interview focused on researching readers' recommended ratings and considerations involved in making manga accessible to the public from kids to adults, which relates to the anthology's focus on regulation and freedom of expression. **Simon** discussed the American Library Association's fundamental principles through the Library Bill of Rights, which supports intellectual freedom and everybody's right to learn. The last part of the interview covered everyday routines and challenges, including running the Teen Anime/Manga Club, researching public performance licenses and graphic novel rating systems, and finding patrons' requested titles using bibliographic records (a.k.a. MARC record) provided by library vendors and ISBN identification requested by our Collection Development Department to facilitate orders from book distributors.



Buffalo Branches:

Elaine M. Panty Library Programming Highlights:

- This month's guessing jar was filled with marshmallows of various sizes, and patrons could take a guess at how many were inside. The game was available for two weeks

and had 56 participants. The winner was a high school senior who took home the jar filled with marshmallows and a box of hot cocoa to help beat the chilly weather.

- The January No-Pressure Book Club participants discussed art, mystery, and children's books. Patrons had a wonderful conversation about how adult content often appears in children and YA books, without it losing its appeal to the younger reader. Each participant shared a story of a book they read as a child but re-read years later as an adult and gained a new perspective about.
- The Panty Library hosted a winter weather BINGO event on January 11. Participants played eight rounds, allowing everyone the opportunity to win at least once.
- *The Garfield Movie* was the selection for January's Movie Matinee. This movie delighted both children and parents alike as it allowed for some uninterrupted reading time for adults while their children enjoyed Garfield's antics.
- The Panty Library was happy to welcome back the local VITA group. VITA has been providing free taxes to patrons in Riverside for over 30 years and the Panty library is their longest continued partnership in the area. Beginning January 30 through tax season, they will be at the library providing their service for patrons.
- Take home crafts throughout January featured paper snowflakes, penguin thermometers, and Valentine's pillows.

Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Library Programming Highlights:

- The Library hosted Storytime with Elmwood Village Charter School (EVCS) on January 10. EVCS volunteers Kelly and Cheyenne read *I Am Stuck* by Julia Mills, a story about how to navigate frustrating emotions and practicing mindfulness. Participants ended the program by making a story-themed craft to take home.
- The Library hosted two Storytime and Play events with Hannah Bogdan of the Buffalo Toy Library.
- A Post-Holiday Tech Event, involving different aspect of technology, was held on January 4. Lance Walker of WNY Computer Coaches featured a holiday technology set-up themed class, **Brendan Chella** of the BECPL TechKnow Lab held an Android Settings class, and Coles Library Tech Trainer **Cat O'Connell** offered one-on-one technology training sessions.
- An all-day craft session on January 4 allowed patrons to make their own buttons and magnets at their own pace throughout the day.
- The take and make craft for the month of January was Paper Roll Snowmen.
- WNY Computer Coaching classes with Lance Walker were hosted on January 4, 11, 18, and 25. Walker focused on basic computers skills for adults and the program had 37 attendees over the course of the month.
- Tech Clerk **Cat O'Connell** led the all-ages monthly LEGO Club meeting on January 27. Participants enjoyed the company of others while making winter-themed creations.
- Tech Clerk **Cat O'Connell** held seventeen one-on-one Tech Trainer appointments and walk-ins covering topics such as account recovery, TikTok, file transfers, scanning and emailing.
- Branch Manager **Danielle Ptak** held two Book-a-Librarian appointments, guiding patrons on email and eBay account assistance and teaching another patron how to create a JobStack application account.

- The Library continues to provide space for weekly meetings of the No Name Narcotics Anonymous group.

System Services:

Entrepreneurs Edge Evening Series - System Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** attended the *Entrepreneurs Edge Evening Series*, the first of six sessions held in the Auditorium at the Central Library on January 28.

Genealogy Training - Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** taught the online class *Genealogy Guided: Online Western New York Church Records* on January 22. Thirty-five participants attended this class, which included a series of brief lectures followed by hands-on activities. **Rhonda** also hosted the preliminary meeting held virtually on January 30 for the *Choose Your Genealogy Adventure* group. Participants brainstormed about the activities the group will participate in over the next few months.

Storytime - System Youth Outreach Services Librarian Trainee **Amealia Brousseau** continued providing a weekly *Storytime* at the Crane Branch Library on Fridays throughout the month of January.

System Youth Outreach Services Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** conducted the *Preschool Storytime with Emily* at the Newstead Public Library on January 24 and January 31. This is a new weekly program.

Displays and Exhibits:

The 6th annual Black Doll exhibit, presented by Senator April N.M. Baskin, opened in four Buffalo libraries including Central, Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., Leroy R. Coles, Jr., Branch and the Isaías González-Soto branches. Library Graphics Manager **Dawn Stanton** and Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** helped doll collector and curator Lisa Jacobs-Watson to mount each display. A special public showing of *Black Barbie: A Documentary*, a film from Netflix, will be shown at the Central Library on Saturday, February 22 at 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., followed by a virtual Q&A with the writer/director Lagueria Davis. *Black Barbie* is the untold story of the first Barbie doll created as a Black woman and the pivotal role that three trailblazing women had in working with the Mattel Company in 1980 to produce a doll that looked like them. The program will be moderated by Channel 7 news anchor Pheben Kassahun. It is free and open to the public.

Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** created a display outside of the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library entitled “New Year, New You!” showcasing examples of self-improvement texts dating back to the Victorian era.

Rare Book and Map Librarian **Charles Alaimo** set up a new map display outside the Grosvenor Room, highlighting a few of the many pictorial maps of Buffalo in the Library’s collections. He also created a display for Black History Month, paying tribute

to the four Black newspapers in Buffalo with facsimiles and print copies of the papers on display.

Tours and Visits:

Susan Buttaccio and Special Collections Librarian **Elizabeth (Libby) Stengel** welcomed a group of seniors from Elison Independent Living of Orchard Glen for a tour of the Grosvenor Room and exhibit spaces on January 6.

Charles Alaimo provided a tour of the Grosvenor Room, Mark Twain Room, and the *Rare Books 101* exhibit for patrons on January 25.

Central Adult Services Librarian **Leslie Carr** led the first of a new set of Central Library tours on Saturday, January 25. This month's group was comprised of 12 participants, most of whom were members of a local Indoor/Outdoor Hiking Club in WNY. All areas of the library were toured and explored, with many stories and history being discussed and enjoyed. A Q & A session was held afterwards and library program info was handed out and discussed. This tour, now offered monthly, was added due to repeated requests from patrons for a general tour.

Teen Librarian **Kelly Woods** and Library Assistant **Sarah Barry** hosted Kenmore High School for a library tour in collaboration with the Launch Pad on January 13. The class consisted of 15 students and tried letterpress printing in the Launch Pad.

Kuniko Simon guided a group from the **International Institute of Buffalo** in a tour after introducing library services and events via a presentation in the Central Meeting Room while distributing new library cards. Twenty-six people, with their interpreters (Burmese, Parisian, Spanish, Swahili, and Rohingya) and caseworkers, explored the first floor and followed hands-on instructions for self-checkout and requesting printing after logging in to a public computer.

Outreach:

In addition to regularly scheduled stops, the *Library on Wheels* Bookmobile participated in special events. Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** and Mobile Services Senior Page **Loch McLaughlin** attended the Buffalo Innovators Gathering (B.I.G.) at the Buffalo History Museum on January 17. The group offers an opportunity for all current and up-and-coming innovators in Buffalo to network, learn from, and support one another, with the evening focus on helping Buffalo teens and young adults succeed through arts, education, and self-expression. Mobile Service Librarian Trainee **Olivia Adams** and **Loch McLaughlin** attended the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) Saturday Academy held at BPS #301 Burgard High School on January 25. Attendees learned about system wide library services and programs, designed and made their own buttons, and signed up for library cards.

Carol Kowalik-Happy, **Jacob Rachwal**, and Cheektowaga Library Director **Daniel (Dan) Caufield** attended the *Entrepreneur's Edge Conference 2025* at the Buffalo Niagara

Convention Center sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Association Buffalo District Office and SCORE Buffalo Niagara. They staffed a table in the vendor space and distributed information on library programs and services including business databases, *Book a Librarian*, *Book a Technology Trainer*, the Launch Pad Makerspace and the digital platforms Libby and Hoopla to those in attendance.

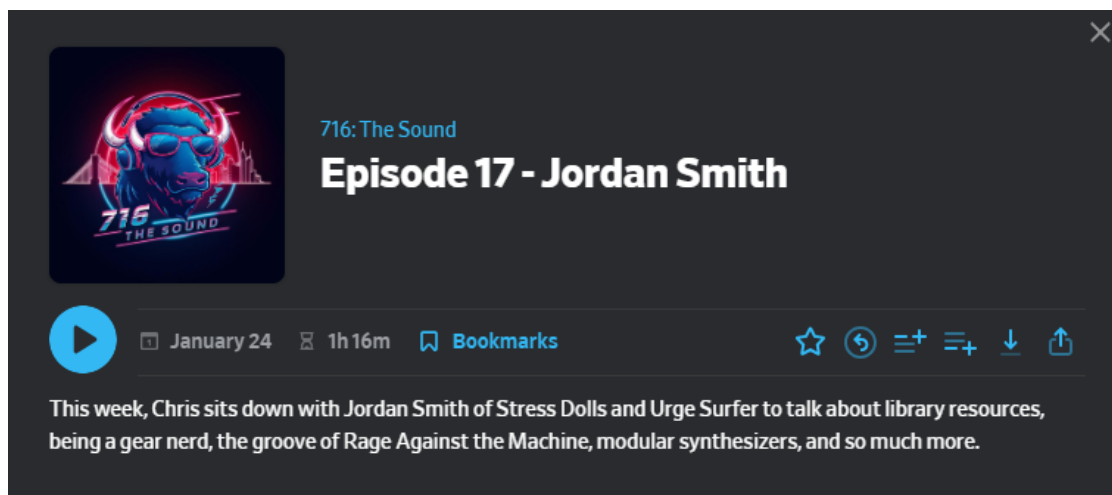
System Adult and Youth Outreach Services staff visited 13 Just for Kids afterschool program locations in Erie County throughout the month of January. The locations included the following elementary schools: Smallwood Drive, Windermere Boulevard, Glendale, Willow Ride, Maplemere, Heritage Heights, Forest, Country Parkway, Maple West, Maple East, St. Mary's and Park. They read stories, provided crafts and shared the love of libraries to students from Pre-K to 4th grade.

Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** and Children's Librarian **Jennifer Lelinski** tabled at Explore & More – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum for their *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* event on January 20. They provided information about library programs and distributed a craft titled *Take the First Step*. This craft encouraged children to think on how they could improve the world by taking "the first step." as encouraged by Dr. King. Additionally, a STEM craft was created where a profile of Dr. King was made vibrant using coffee filters, markers, and water.

TechKnow Lab Librarian **Brendan Chella** taught a class on *Securing Facebook* at the Orchard Park Senior Center.

Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** participated at an outreach event for the **Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs'** Lunar New Year Celebration at the **AKG Art Museum** where she gave away 100 "Take & Make: New Year Calligraphy" bags, including calligraphy ink, brush, and stroke instructions, along with information on library events and services to the public.

Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** appeared on local music podcast *716: The Sound*, hosted by **Chris Chavez**. **Jordan** spoke at length about the resources available in the Launch Pad for the Buffalo community to make and produce music, as well as her own personal history in music making. The podcast is available via all major podcast networks (Spotify, Pocketcasts, etc).



2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	1,490	1,490	155	155	510,604
Young Adult Print	317	317	51	51	69,459
Adult Print	3,110	3,110	622	622	1,769,102
Media	2,300	2,300	621	621	516,346
Other*	1,463	1,463	15	15	172,046
Subtotal	8,680	8,680	1,464	1,464	3,037,557

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,810	4,810	1,788	1,788	126,948
eAudiobooks	10,223	10,223	460	460	65,307
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,695
Subtotal	15,033	15,033	2,248	2,248	197,950

*The B&ECPL also provides access to all *hoopla* eBooks, eAudiobooks, videos, and music albums. These titles are not included in the collection size total, as they are not owned by the B&ECPL.

All Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Total	23,713	23,713	3,712	3,712	3,235,507

Digital Collections – Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** is working with Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold to develop a digital collection utilizing material from the

Uncrowned Community Builders exhibit “Say Their Names: Honor Their Legacies,” currently on display in the Collections Gallery at the Central Library. This will coincide with a talk by Dr. Nevergold on March 1 to discuss the project.

Rare Books and Special Collections - Libby Stengel updated the “High School Yearbooks, College Yearbooks, and School Publications” guide available on the Special Collections website. The guide reflects new acquisitions to the Buffalo Collection taken in from June 2024 through January 2025; updates to yearbook collections housed at Dudley, Eden, Angola, West Seneca, and Lancaster are also included. **Libby** is also working with patron Bryan Donovan to acquire a collection of an estimated 1,000 newspaper clippings centered on homicides committed in the 1960s and 1970s in Buffalo. Donovan inherited the clippings from former Buffalo Police Chief of Homicide Leo Donovan. **Libby** will preserve the physical collection as a scrapbook or vertical file to aid patron research in the future.

Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** purchased a framed photograph of the Buffalo Chinese Bible Class from 1920. All of the pictured students are named, providing exciting opportunities for detailed research.

Librarian **Dan Lewandowski** identified high-demand titles from the collection that were missing, lost or stolen. Dan worked with staff including librarians **Jennifer Lelinski** and **Erin Burke** as well as Library Assistant **Alyssa Johnson** to create a list and worked with Collection Development Librarian **Michelle Snyder** to reorder these titles.

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – January 31, 2025	\$177,490.83

Highlights:

A spring fundraising event (tentatively scheduled for early May 2025) is being planned called *In Conversation*, in partnership with the Library Foundation. Sponsorships are available. This will be a ticketed fundraiser; more details to follow.

Mass email sent in January:

Honoring Black History, and our annual Winter Reading Contest – sent to all library cardholders (over 246,000), 36% open rate.

4. Funding/Facilities

Funding:

New York State Proposed Budget – On January 21, Governor Hochul released her Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (the State fiscal year runs from April 1, 2025 – March 30, 2026). Highlights may be found at:
<https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/press/2025/fy26-executive-budget.html>

More information about the State Budget may be found at:
<https://www.budget.ny.gov/pubs/archive/fy26/ex/index.html>.

The State FY 2026 Budget provides library operating and construction aid for our calendar year 2025 Budget. The Proposed Budget increases library operating aid from what was provided in the FY 2025 Enacted Budget by \$0.7 million to \$104.6 million statewide. The Proposed Budget also includes \$34 million for Library Construction Aid to fund various capital projects and \$3 million to ensure continued access to NOVELny, a free online library of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference books available to all New Yorkers.

The Library community will advocate for improved support.

5. Staff Development

Mental Health First Aid Certification Online Training Series Begins - Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses are nationally recognized training programs developed by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. This 7-hour online course, with both on-demand and live instructor components, teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders. **Maria Lowe**, the Assistant Deputy Director of Buffalo Libraries, and **Aaron Swan**, the Director of Security for Central and City Branch Libraries, have been working in collaboration with Human Resources Staff Development to put their teams through this program, which is being conducted for free courtesy of the Mendocino County Office of Education (in California) and their credentialed MHFA trainers. On January 30, ten employees completed the Youth MHFA certification. Four more sessions for Adult MHFA will be conducted through February and March that will result in at least 40 more staff members gaining this certification, which is valid for three years.

NYLA 2024 Annual Conference Attendees Present on "Inspiration Meets Action" - The New York Library Association (NYLA) 2024 annual conference was held in November in Syracuse, New York. Staff members who attended were asked to each deliver a five-minute presentation on the best of what they learned at the January 2025 Managers & Directors Meeting. Presenters were given the theme of "Inspiration Meets Action" and asked to talk about what from the conference inspired them the most to take action when they were back in their libraries and departments. Employees who presented were **Susan Buttaccio** (*The Creation of Digital Exhibits to Highlight Library*

Collections and the Work of Partner Organizations), **Chelsey Lonberger** (*Revitalizing and Reengaging Library Support Staff*), **Amealia Brousseau** (*Creating Dramatic Play Areas in the Library*), **Carol Kowalik-Happy** (*Using Seed Libraries in New Ways to Help with Community Outreach and Engagement*), **Jennifer Lelinski** (*Practical Programming Ideas for Youth on Any Budget*) all from Central Library, **Meagan Carr** (*Revamping Summer Reading Programs with Fresh Approaches*) from Lancaster Library, **Alexandria Dotegowski** (*Adding More Resources in the Library for People Struggling with Addiction or Going Through Recovery*) from Orchard Park Library, **Katherine Pizzuto** (*Book Challenges and Hostile Political Views: Tips to Combat Workplace Burnout in Today's Stressful Work Environments*) from Audubon Library, **Rowan Narvaez** (*Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certification Program*) from West Seneca Library, and **Matthew Best** (*Leading with Empathy, Compassion and Intuition*) and **Jeff Matrachisia** (*Running a Dungeons & Dragons Program at the Library*), both from Anna Reinstein Library. All presentations were recorded, and afterwards shared with all B&ECPL employees on the Staff Intranet for ongoing learning.

Webinars - Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in January, with several staff members attending these sessions: *Digital Equity Academy* (from New York State Library), *Digital Reference Resources to Help Library Users* (from Central New York Library Resource Council), and *Handling Complaints or Protests About Content* (from Library 2.0).

6. Communications

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Earned Media	Buffalo Magazine: Central Library's Launch Pad Makerspace, interview w/ Librarian Jordan Smith - highlighting the Library of Things.	January 5, 2025 LINK (pp 8-9)
Press Release	The Xi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® donates books celebrating African American life to B&ECPL	January 10, 2025 LINK
Media Advisory	Job Fair at Central and Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library	January 8, 2025 LINK
Earned Media	Daytime Buffalo (WIVB):	January 14, 2025 LINK

	B&ECPL resources & upcoming events, with Librarian Carol Kowalik-Happy	
Earned Media	Buffalo News: interviewed Development Clerk Melissa Burgess who posted a Dr. Seuss inspired poem on social media, following the viral photo of a Philadelphia Eagles player reading on the sideline.	January 17, 2025 LINK
Earned Media	Librarian Jordan Smith joined the local music podcast 716: The Sound, speaking about the Launch Pad and music-related topics	January 2025 LINK
Earned Media	WGRZ: What 2 Do: Community Job Fair	January 27, 2025 LINK
Press Release	Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Announces Strategic Leadership Appointments and 2025 Board of Trustees	January 28, 2025 LINK
Earned Media	The Buffalo News: Buffalo and Erie County Public Library names Angela J. Marinucci Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Director	January 28, 2025 LINK
Earned Media	Lancaster Bee: Lancaster Public Library adds Accessibility Support Collection	January 30, 2025 LINK
Media Event	Central Library was the backdrop for the "Together as One - Black History Month" regional programming media event. Deputy Director Dorinda Darden opened the program.	January 30, 2025

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	107	107	3,747	3,747	200	14,234
Flickr	-	-	3,786	3,786	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	3,143	3,143	N/A	N/A
Instagram	25	25	9,891	9,891	134	7,199
Pinterest	10	10	55	55	3	2,054
X(formerly Twitter)	47	47	236	236	-60	10,602
Bluesky	29	29	137	137	216	765
YouTube	5	5	4,009	4,009	25	760
TikTok	-	-	596	596	3	1,006
Total	223	223	25,600	25,600	521	36,679

¹ Google Ads is provided to the Library through a grant. Monthly activity based on public clicks.

7. Partnerships

Alliance for Rights and Recovery - Jacob Rachwal worked with Adam Selon, WNY Regional Coordinator for the Alliance for Rights and Recovery to set up their *WNY Regional Forum* that will be held at the Central Library in February.

Buffalo History Channel - The partnership with the **Buffalo History Channel** continues to grow and flourish, both at the Central Library and throughout the system. As part of Black History Month, the Director's cut screening organized by the Grosvenor Room as part of the Special Collections Department last fall has been made available to all libraries. Currently, three libraries have scheduled screenings: Newstead, Lackawanna, and Dudley. In addition to this, four new Director's cut screenings will be held at the Central Library throughout the year.

Collins Correctional Facility - Andrew Maines met with New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Senior Librarian Cara Bradberry to select discards from the Library collection to supplement the collections at Collins Correctional Facility.

Dictionary Society of North America - Heather Gring continues to develop the upcoming dictionary exhibition with local members of the Dictionary Society of North America, professors Lisa Berglund and Walter Hakala, from Buffalo State University and the University at Buffalo, respectively. This exhibition was largely influenced by Berglund, Hakala, and the Dictionary Society of North America's upcoming conference in Buffalo.

Erie County Department of Health - Carol Kowalik-Happy and Deputy Director **Dorinda Darden** met virtually with Public Information Officer Kara Kane, Community Coalition Coordinator Lindsey Wright, and Public Health Communications Fellow Annika Smith from the Erie County Department of Health. They discussed collaboration opportunities between the Library and the Erie County Department of Health, including health literacy projects.

New York Genealogy and Biographical Society (NYG&B) - Susan Buttaccio and **Rhonda Hoffman** have been working with **Dorinda Darden** to establish a partnership with the New York Genealogy and Biographical Society (NYG&B) to join their *Digitize New York* project. Both parties have developed and signed a partnership agreement. NYG&B volunteers will gather and scan items from around the Western New York area to preserve historical records for future generations. The Grosvenor Room will serve as a site for operations. The NYG&B purchased a CopiBook OS A2 scanner for the project and delivery is expected in February. As part of the agreement, the Grosvenor Room may use the scanner for library projects.

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County - System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** attended the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County's *Starting Line Thrive by 5 Coalition* meeting on January 22. The meeting focused on the upcoming release of their organizational plan.

Public and System Services staff were also in contact or attended meetings with representatives of the following groups and organizations:

- Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Child Care Resource Network
- Erie County Department of Senior Services
- Industrial Labor Relations Cannabis Workforce Initiative
- Just for Kids
- Live Well Erie Working Groups
- Peaceprints of WNY
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees

8. Planning for the Future

Chelsey Lonberger met with Federica Bulgarelli, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the departments of Psychology and Learning and Instruction at the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) on January 13. They discussed resources available from System Youth Outreach Services to help with a *Bilingual Storytime* at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library. Afterward a connection was made via email between Dr. Bulgarelli and Isaías González-Soto Branch Manager **Christine Webb**.

Jacob Rachwal met with Assistant to the Director **Caitlin Goodrich** and Homeless Alliance of Western New York Community Engagement Coordinator Daniella Gallego

on January 17 to discuss planning a community resource fair at the Central Library in July 2025.

Libby Stengel continues work with Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton** and Assistant Library Display Artist **Helen Shandraw** on an upcoming Erie Canal exhibit, exploring the City of Buffalo's socioeconomic and cultural changes throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as the geographic terminus of the Canal. The exhibit also features items from the Buffalo Collection of the Grosvenor Room and local ephemera, including a collection of Erie Canal postcards loaned by Special Collections Senior Page **Joseph Rennie**. The exhibit will be installed in the Ring of Knowledge in May 2025.

Rhonda Hoffman is coordinating the donation of the Glenn Atwell genealogy collection, which will be part of the Western New York Genealogical Society's (WNYGS) Collection. Atwell is a local genealogist and a founding member of WNYGS. The collection will consist of 450 family and local history vertical files; a 98-drawer card file that indexes early Erie County church and cemetery records, *Amherst Bee* marriages and obituaries, and other materials; 120 research notebooks of transcribed rural Erie County cemetery records and Erie County church marriages; maps; and microfilmed church records.

Appendices

A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1162	1162	3625	3625
Children 5 and under	1308	1308	4311	4311
Children 6-11	2021	2021	3953	3953
Intergenerational/Combined	4015	4015	6631	6631
Teens	240	240	435	435
Regular Total	8746	8746	18955	18955
Regular Total	8746	8746	18955	18955
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	12	12	129	129
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	0	0	0	0
Intergenerational/Combined	5	5	67	67
Teens	1	1	1	1
Live Virtual Total	18	18	197	197
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	4	4	266	266
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	3	3	317	317
Intergenerational/Combined	8	8	1016	1016

Teens	0	0	0	0
Recorded Virtual Total	15	15	1599	1599
Virtual Total	33	33	1796	1796
Grand Total	8779	8779	20751	20751

*Regular programs include group programs, one-on-one programs, and self-directed programs (including individual take & make crafts).

Other Statistics:

Consolidated statistics on library visits, website visits, circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and program attendance and a summary of open hours can be found at www.buffalolib.org/about-becpl/monthly-statistics.

Detailed reports on circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and library visits can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2025-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

Elma Public Library – submitted by Stephanie Molnar, Director

Chair Yoga– With the help of New Sky Coaching, we offered six chair yoga sessions from December-February with an average attendance of 11 patrons. Chair yoga is good for strengthening and lengthening muscles and is particularly helpful for seniors to increase their mobility.

University Express – In December we wrapped our fall “semester” of University Express through the Erie County Department of Senior Services by offering programs taught by local volunteers aimed at patrons 55 and over. From September-December, we had speakers on such topics as plants, WNY history, and pickleball.

Local Author Jan Hess – On December 14 we hosted local author Jan Hess where she discussed her journey to authorship and signed copies of her books.

Book Club – We continue to see success in our Book Club. Patrons gather to read and discuss a book each month, with the goal of increasing attendance through voting on future titles and book-themed snacks.

Kids No-Bake Holiday Treats – Kids from grades 1-5 made some no-bake holiday treats with help from two of our teen volunteers! The kids learned how to read recipes and use the proper measuring tools. A yummy, good time was had by all.

Dance With Me – A toddler dance class was led by an instructor from the Buffalo Dance Center. Miss Stacey donates her and her instructors’ time to help our little ones work on their gross motor skills and have a fun time dancing!

Graham Cracker Houses – Our yearly program was a hit yet again! Children of all ages came in and created these holiday decorations to take home and display for the holiday season.

Book Boxes – We had a combined 11 middle and high school students sign up for the December Book Box. We curate the boxes based on a theme (December was hot chocolate and lip balm) and select two books based on genre choices the teens pick. This is a popular program that we offer six times a year.

Solstice Craft – We celebrated the Winter Solstice and made Yule Logs (the craft, not the dessert)! We had a full class of 20 teens and adults decorating their yule logs for the holiday season.

Waffles and a Movie – Who doesn't want to eat waffles and watch a movie? Over the Winter Recess we like to offer a low-key night at the library – this time with breakfast food. We had a fun group who enjoyed their waffles with fun toppings and watched the movie *Shrek*.

Family Story Time – We now offer a Family Story Time for ages birth-5 on three days a week. Choral reading, movement songs, and yoga moves are included.

Bubble Party – We invited children ages 3-6 to our Bubble Party where we had a bubble machine and disco lights, along with some instruments and scarves to keep the beat. Our three teen volunteers helped keep the party going by blowing bubbles and helping the children use bubbles to make art.

Lackawanna Public Library – submitted by Pamela Edholm, Director

Programming – Our programs include two very popular weekly toddler times, monthly family and teen programs, LEGO club, and all-ages bingo on the first Saturdays of the month. For adults, we offer a monthly book club, an adult craft circle, and our Spice Explorers Club which includes a free sample of the monthly spice, recipes, and cookbook recommendations.

Special Events – On **February 8**, we will be hosting the African American Cultural Center's Drum Workshop for ages 6 and up. This interactive workshop will help bring cultural awareness, and develop confidence and creativity for all participants.

During February break, we will be hosting daily "Crafternoon" events from 1 - 2 pm for families looking for a free, fun, creative, and engaging activity.

On **February 22** we will be hosting a Pre-Ramadan Iftar Event. This event highlights how Ramadan is a time of reflection, community, and gratitude for Muslims around the world. Along with crafts and activities for families, delicious iftar treats like samosas and chai will be served.

Partnerships – In partnership with Literacy Buffalo Niagara, the Lackawanna Library hosts a weekly English Language Conversation Group to help English Language Learners improve their skills.

Agenda Item G – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer informed the Executive Committee and attendees that the annual ACT Workshop will be held at the Central Library on Saturday, March 22 beginning at 9:00 a.m. with an 8:30 a.m. breakfast. Discussion ensued regarding previous ACT Workshops.

Agenda Item G.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). None.

Agenda Item H – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item I – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item J– New Business.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-8 – Librarians’ Association Contract. Deputy Director –Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci introduced proposed Resolution 2025-8 as presented below. She notified the Executive Committee that this contract has already been ratified and voted on by the Librarians’ Association on February 7. Deputy Director–COO Marinucci then explained that newly negotiated pay rates for librarians will be retroactive to the beginning of 2025. Discussion ensued regarding several components of the negotiated contract.

RESOLUTION 2025-8

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has statutory authority to manage its budget and has sole authority to negotiate fair settlement of labor agreements with its employees, and

WHEREAS, Librarians employed by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library are represented by the Librarians’ Association of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, and

WHEREAS, the current labor agreement between the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and the Librarians’ Association expired December 31, 2024, and

WHEREAS, representatives of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and the Librarians’ Association have negotiated the terms of a successor agreement for the years 2025 through 2028, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees and Library Administration have consistently expressed a need to achieve sustainability in the future while ensuring the level of

service which our patrons demand and recognize the hard work and dedication of our employees who provide such service, and

WHEREAS, the tentative Agreement includes salary increases for librarians effective January 1, 2025, January 1, 2026, January 1, 2027, and January 1, 2028, and

WHEREAS, the tentative Agreement provides for changes to several provisions relating to employee leave and hours of work; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Librarians' Association ratified the tentative Agreement on February 7, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has been briefed on the Agreement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library endorses the Agreement under the terms and conditions discussed and authorizes the Library Director and/or her designee to execute the Agreement.

Trustee Kelly motioned to approved Resolution 2025-8 as presented, Trustee Sasiadek seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Sasiadek with a second by Trustee Kelly, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher
Sasiadek
Vice-Chair