

PROPOSED
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
September 18, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, September 18 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
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq., Secretary
Michael Amodeo, Esq.
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Kimberly Johnson*
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.
Joel Moore, Esq.
Elaine Panty

Chair El-Behairy called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Before a call of the roll was taken, Chair El-Behairy initiated a moment of silence in remembrance of Director John Spears.

After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

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

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. There was one proposed change to the agenda. Agenda Item K.1 – Election of Search Committee will come out of Executive Session. Trustee Amodeo motioned for approval of the change. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of July 17, 2025. Trustee Bedenko motioned to approve the Minutes. Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report by sharing that the Board of Trustees have received a new parking pass for the Oak St. lot. Next, she reminded the Board that the Angola Public Library is holding their *15th Annual Harvest Dinner* on Saturday, October 18. She encouraged everyone to attend and opined how wonderful of an event it is. Following that, Chair El-Behairy wanted to thank the staff

at Central Library for their help with Director John Spears' *Celebration of Life* that was held on Wednesday, August 20.

Next, Chair El-Behairy distributed copies of the "Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Spaces within City of Buffalo Libraries" as presented below to the Board. She explained that the Executive Committee met and discussed guidelines that should be followed in conjunction with the "Renaming Library Buildings, Spaces, and Programs Policy." Trustee Bartholomew noticed a grammatical error in the guidelines. This was corrected.

Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Spaces within City of Buffalo Libraries

These processes apply to those libraries within the City of Buffalo (Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries).

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Patron(s) wishing to submit a request to name interior or exterior spaces within a City of Buffalo Library may do so in accordance with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's "Renaming Library Buildings, Spaces, and Programs Policy."

Submissions should include:

- The specific Library location and space within that location that the Patron(s) is requesting to name;
- The name of the local prominent individual, organization, or company after which the space would be named;
- The Patron(s) reasoning for requesting the space be named after that individual, organization, or company, such as: a brief biography, notable achievement, community support, etc.; and
- An explanation of why the space chosen in that Library location is best suited to be named for that individual, organization, or company.

SUBMISSION REVIEW PROCEDURES:

- Patron(s) shall submit a written request addressed to the Chair of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (BECPL) Board of Trustees for a space to be named for a local prominent individual, organization, or company:

[Enter Name] Chair of BECPL Board of Trustees
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203

- Upon receipt of the request, the Chair of the BECPL Board of Trustees shall inform the full Board of the request at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting.
- The BECPL Board of Trustees shall make a determination of whether to set a Public Meeting to discuss the request in more detail, including: the date, time, and location of the Public Meeting.
- If the BECPL Board of Trustees elects not to set a Public Meeting, the Chair of the BECPL Board of Trustees or designee shall inform the Patron(s) that made the request in writing of the Board of Trustees' decision.
- If the BECPL Board of Trustees elects to set a Public Meeting, the Chair of the BECPL Board of Trustees or designee in coordination with the Library Director and appropriate staff shall notify the following in writing of the date, time, and location of the Public Meeting:
 - The Patron(s) that submitted the request;
 - The Mayor of the City of Buffalo and the Common Council Representative of that Library location for buildings owned by the City of Buffalo or the County Executive and the Legislative Representative of the Central Library; and
 - The patrons and community surrounding the Library location where the space is located via a public post at the Library with the request and Public Meeting information for at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.
- At the Public Meeting, the requesting Patron(s) shall be provided up to ten (10) minutes to present their request and additional time as needed to answer any questions from the Board of Trustees. Members of the public will also be provided time to speak for up to three (3) minutes following the requesting Patron(s) presentation.
- After the conclusion of the Public Meeting and upon due consideration, the BECPL Board of Trustees shall hold a vote on whether to name the space as requested.
- The Chair of the BECPL Board of Trustees or designee shall inform the Patron(s) that made the request in writing of the Board of Trustees' decision.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Trustee Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee reports as presented below. Regarding, Resolution 2025-30 - Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. Contract Renewal, Trustee Sasiadek noted that there would be a slight increase in their administrative fee from 10% to 13%. Following that, Trustee Sasiadek stated that the Peacemakers will now be asked to collect data on their interactions with the youth. Trustee Bucki noticed in the August Executive Committee report that ‘tenets’ was spelled as ‘tenants.’ This error was corrected.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee
August 14, 2025

Present: Chair – Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair – Christopher Sasiadek, and members Lucy Candelario, Sharon Kelly and Elaine Panty. Also present were Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki, Development & Communications Clerk Melissa Burgess and Robert Patterson of Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC. Member Candelario attended the meeting remotely via Zoom.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:01 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair El-Behairy reminded members that a *Celebration of Life* for Library Director John Spears is being held in the Central Library Auditorium on Wednesday, August 20 at 5:30 p.m. Attendees are asked to enter the Library at Clinton St., between Washington and Ellicott streets. The celebration is also being live-streamed via Zoom at: <https://bl.buffalolib.org/SpearsAug20>.

The Central Library and all city of Buffalo libraries that typically have Wednesday hours will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 20. Several contracting libraries, working with their respective boards, have also altered their hours to allow staff to attend.

Expenses incurred by the Library for the Celebration are being covered by the estate.

The family has requested that donations in John’s honor be made to the Library’s *Freedom to Read* fund here: <https://bl.buffalolib.org/SpearsMemorial>.

Finally, Chair El-Behairy remarked that she attended a screening of *The Encampments* film hosted by Buffalo SUNY BDS at the Central Library on Saturday, July 26. The educational event ran smoothly and without issue. The Library received positive feedback afterwards for allowing the use of the Auditorium for this purpose.

Library legal counsel, Robert Patterson of Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC, suggested the Executive Committee enter into Executive Session to discuss two personnel matters. A motion was made by Chair El-Behairy and seconded by Vice Chair Sasiadek. The Executive Committee entered into Executive Session at 4:06 p.m.

The Executive Committee exited Executive Session at 4:46 p.m. on a motion by Vice Chair Sasiadek and a second by Trustee Kelly. No action was taken.

At this time, the Executive Committee voted on proposed Resolution 2025-29 – Authorization to Negotiate Settlement – Personnel Matter. This is a time-sensitive resolution which requires the Executive Committee to take action in lieu of waiting until the next full Board meeting in September. On a motion by Trustee Panty and a second by Vice Chair Sasiadek, the resolution was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.

RESOLUTION 2025-29

WHEREAS, in May 2025, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) terminated an employee who was a member of the Civil Service Employees Association, Inc. (CSEA), and

WHEREAS, the former employee filed a subsequent grievance and demand for arbitration per the terms of the governing Collective Bargaining Agreement, and

WHEREAS, the Labor Relations Specialist for CSEA indicated to the B&ECPL Chief Operating Officer that the former employee is interested in a settlement prior to arbitration, and

WHEREAS, the Chief Operating Officer recommends settlement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Library Interim Director, or her designee, to negotiate a settlement agreement in this matter, and

RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library authorizes the Library Interim Director, or her designee, to transfer budget funds as necessary to accomplish payment of settlement.

Next, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci explained Resolution 2025-30 – Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. Contract Renewal. The contract renewal would begin with the upcoming school year, which makes this a time-sensitive resolution that needs to be voted on by the Executive Committee. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci reiterated that she and Interim Director Dorinda Darden support this continued partnership. She also noted that the Peacemakers have recently been brought into Patron Reinstatement Hearings for youth to further reinforce their relationship.

Vice Chair Sasiadek suggested that data be made available in future years, such as statistics for how many youths were reached. Being able to quantify the value of the

contract will be in the best interests of both the Library and the Peacemakers. It was agreed that the Peacemakers will be responsible for collecting this data going forward.

On a motion by Trustee Kelly and seconded by Trustee Panty, the resolution was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.

RESOLUTION 2025-30

WHEREAS, over the years, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) has undertaken programs to reach out to youth and young adults to encourage their use of the Central Library, and

WHEREAS, after research and consultation, in June 2023 B&ECPL issued a Request for Proposals for trained facilitators to provide mentoring services and life management skills onsite and to monitor the Central Library building and grounds, helping to maintain decorum and educate the young adults on proper library rules and behavior while using library services, and

WHEREAS, after review of the RFP Response, B&ECPL Administration recommended and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL (Board of Trustees) approved entering into a two-year agreement with Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. for the 2023-24 and 2024-2025 school years, with three options to renew covering the 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 school years, and

WHEREAS, B&ECPL Administration recommends renewing the Agreement for the 2025-26 school year, and

WHEREAS, funds were allocated and are available for the agreement renewal in the 2025 B&ECPL Budget, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees authorizes the Library Interim Director and/or her designee(s) to execute the necessary documents to enter into an agreement renewal for the 2025-26 school year.

With Interim Director Darden on vacation, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci read the below *Report of the Director*:

**Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Report of the Director
Reported by Interim Director Dorinda Darden**

On behalf of Library Administration, it is with a heavy heart that I express our deepest sympathy on the passing of Library Director John Spears who, as we are aware, sadly lost his courageous battle with cancer on July 20, 2025. There has been an outpouring of kind words and tributes for Director Spears locally, nationally, and internationally.

A *Celebration of Life* in honor of John's memory will be held in the Central Library Auditorium on August 20 at 5:30 PM. A special thank you to Assistant Deputy

Director Joy Testa Cinquino, and System Board Chair Carima El-Behairy for their dedicated efforts in planning this public, onsite, and (streaming) online celebration. Director Spears' passion and commitment in providing free and open access to all, and his tireless effort to promote intellectual freedom has left a lasting impression on all of us.

The Library's Freedom to Read campaign in memory of Director Spears was established and has raised nearly \$5,800 to date. Donations are going to the Library's intellectual freedom and advocacy efforts -- including for the purchase of materials to ensure patrons can explore different perspectives and have the free access to choose what they want to read and learn; as well as for ongoing education, training, promotion, policy, and programming in support of the tenets of intellectual freedom rights.

Chair Carima El-Behairy, myself, Assistant Deputy Director, Controller Emily Patronik and Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki presented at the Erie County Mid-Year Budget Hearing on July 24.

Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Emily Patronik, Facility Operations Manager Andrew Wiede, and I attended the Erie County Capital Projects Committee Meeting on July 31. I presented on the funding request for 2026 in the amount of \$4 million for the Central Library's Various Improvements and Upgrades and Angela responded to questions from the committee regarding this funding. This request includes, but is not limited to, replacement of the Central Library chillers, contingency funds for the ongoing Green Roof Project, replacement of the existing HVAC system in the Rare Book Room, and miscellaneous interior/exterior renovations; hazardous materials abatement; general building upgrades and repairs; and miscellaneous site improvements.

On July 29, we successfully launched the new WNY Digitization Center at the Central Library with a media and community event. Under the direction of the Library's Special Collection's Manager Susan Buttaccio and Genealogy Specialist Rhonda Hoffman, we partnered with the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and Chair El-Behairy were also in attendance.

I met virtually on August 1, with Rachel Martin, Executive Director and Cornelius Delaney, Director of Housing and Homeless Services for Restoration Society, Inc. Rachel informed me that they are transferring their Coordinated Entry contract to HAWNY (Homeless Alliance of Western New York), which also affects the space currently utilized at the Library. I will be meeting virtually with HAWNY on August 21 to discuss them moving into this space.

I attended the Library Foundation meeting on August 12.

Natalie McDonough, Library Development Specialist for New York State Library (NYSL) Division of Library Development will be visiting the Central Library on

September 17 and September 18. She also plans to attend the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting on September 18.

Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci noted that to date, nearly \$6,000 in memorial donations have been received by the Library for the *Freedom to Read* fund.

Discussion ensued about a recent meeting on August 6 with Mark Cornell, Erie County Director of Budget and Management. The meeting was attended by Interim Director Darden, Library Administrative Manager Palicki and Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik. The Library recently submitted its budget request for 2026, which includes a 2.4 percent increase for a total request of \$35,901,639. This would cover contractual obligations for wage increases as well as potential increases in operating costs with rising prices on items such as toner & paper.

Discussion continued about the Library's tentative plans for various budget scenarios in 2026.

There being no further business, Trustee Panty motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Kelly seconded. The meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee
September 11, 2025

Present: Chair Carima El-Behairy*, Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek, members Sharon Kelly, Elaine Panty and Ex-Officio member Kimberly Johnson. Also present were Interim Director 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 Cait Goodrich.

*Chair El-Behairy attended the meeting remotely due to an extraordinary circumstance and was considered a full participant.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:00 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Vice Chair Sasiadek began the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda for the Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 18. Chair El-Behairy stated that the Budget and Finance Committee will meet immediately following the Board meeting.

Next, Interim Director Darden shared that the *Celebration of Life* honoring Library Director John Spears was held at the Central Library on Wednesday, August 20. Interim Director Darden reflected that it was a lovely and heartfelt tribute. There were over 300 in-person attendees and 100 via Zoom. In addition, proclamations in Director Spears honor were received from Erie County Legislature, New York State Senators April N.M. Baskin and Sean Ryan, and New York State Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera. Interim Director Darden stated that she will share the proclamations at the Thursday, September 18 Board meeting. Finally, Interim Director Darden shared that Director Spears' family expressed their sincere gratitude for the heartwarming tribute.

Following that, Interim Director Darden notified the Executive Committee that Restoration Society, Inc. no longer has an office at the Central Library. The Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) moved into its office on Monday, September 8. It will provide in-kind services to Library patrons in need of housing resources, referral services, and support to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Next, Interim Director Darden shared that she, Deputy Director – COO Angela Marinucci, and Facility Operations Manager Andrew Wiede will be attending the City of Buffalo Citizens Planning Council's *2026 Capital Budget and 2027-2030 Capital Improvements Program Hearings* at Buffalo City Hall on Friday, September 12. They will present the Library's capital project funding requests for \$430,000 for the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Replacement at the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library and \$349,888 for the Boiler Replacement at the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library.

Finally, Interim Director Darden reported that the *15th Annual Hispanic Heritage Kick-Off* presented by the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York, Inc. will be held in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on Monday, September 15 at noon. She will provide welcoming remarks.

Vice Chair Sasiadek expressed his sincere appreciation to Library staff and Board members that participated in the *Celebration of Life* for Library Director Spears. He stated that it was genuine, and heartfelt.

Following that, ADD – Controller Patronik summarized proposed Resolution 2025-31 - Amend 2025 Operating and Grant Budget. She stated that the purpose of the proposed resolution is to offset the use of fund balance by the funds received from New York State.

Next, Deputy Director – COO Angela Marinucci summarized the following proposed resolutions and their purposes, Resolution 2025-32 – NYS Construction Aid Request – Elaine M. Panty Branch Library, Resolution 2025-33 – NYS Construction Aid Request – Central Library, Resolution 2025-34 – NYS Construction Aid Request – System Recommendations, and Resolution 2025-35 – Accept CREST Fund – Crane Branch Library Phase III. Discussion ensued regarding confirmation of funds received from the City of Buffalo.

Following the review of the proposed agenda for next week's Board meeting, member Johnson shared that she received a letter from the Angola Public Library regarding their *15th Annual Harvest Dinner* on Saturday, October 18. Chair El-Beairy received the same letter and encouraged Board members to attend.

Next, discussion ensued regarding the potential creation of an Ad Hoc Search Committee. Chair El-Beairy stated that it should be added to the agenda for the Board meeting. Member Kelly suggested adding it under Agenda Item K – Executive Session. It was agreed by the Executive Committee to move forward with that suggestion and make the change to the proposed agenda.

Following, that discussion ensued regarding the Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. Contract Renewal, and a proposed increase from a 10% administrative fee to 13%.

Deputy Director – COO Marinucci stated that this would not be an increase in the budget for the contract, but a reallocation. Further discussion ensued regarding the Peacemakers, and their duties moving forward, such as collaborating with the Central Library Teen Services staff.

Next, the Executive Committee discussed proposed guidelines for naming spaces in the libraries within the City of Buffalo. Vice Chair Sasiadek began by stating the Board received a letter requesting to name the auditorium in the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library. After discussion, it was agreed that these proposed guidelines will be shared at the Board meeting scheduled for next week, and a plan should be in place by the Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 16.

There being no further business, Chair El-Behairy motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Johnson seconded. The meeting ended at 4:43 p.m.

Agenda Item E.1.a – Resolution 2025-29 – Authorization to Negotiate Settlement Personnel Matter. This resolution is outlined in Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee.

Agenda Item E.1.b – Resolution 2025-30 – Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. Contract Renewal. This resolution is outlined in Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik summarized the monthly financial report ending on June 30, 2025 and July 31, 2025. Chair El-Behairy asked for a reconfirmation that the 2026 budget was submitted. Assistant Deputy Director - Controller Patronik stated that the 2026 budget was submitted and the proposed 2.4% increase was adjusted to 3%.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Interim Director Dorinda Darden began her report by acknowledging Library Development Specialist for the New York State Library Division of Library Development and Program Manager for State Aid for the Library Construction Program Natalie McDonough. As the Regional Liaison for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Natalie met with the Library Administrative Team and toured the Central Library. Natalie also visited the Kenmore Branch, Crane Branch, and the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Libraries, which have benefited from construction projects awarded by the State.

Following that, Interim Director Darden, on behalf of the Library Administration, including Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Director – Human Resources Judy Fachko, Assistant Deputy Director – Buffalo Libraries Maria Lowe, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik, Assistant Deputy Director – Development and Communications Joy Testa Cinquino, and

Assistant to the Director Cait Goodrich, she thanked everyone for their outpouring of kind words and tributes for the passing of Director John Spears. Director Spears' passion and commitment in providing free and open access to all, and his tireless effort to promote intellectual freedom has left a lasting impression locally, statewide, and nationally. She stated that she is grateful for the 3 years that he led the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, and that he will be missed. Next, she shared that the Library's *Freedom to Read* campaign that was created in memory of Director Spears has raised \$9,053.59 to date.

Next, Interim Director Darden stated that Casimiro D. Rodriguez, Sr., President of the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York provided a lovely tribute to Director Spears and asked for a moment of silence in Director Spears' honor at the *15th Annual Hispanic Heritage Kick-Off* at the Central Library on Monday, September 15. The festive annual event was well attended, including elected officials or their representatives from New York State, Erie County, and the City of Buffalo.

Following that, she shared that on Saturday, September 21 the Central Library will be participating in the *2025 Doors Open Buffalo* with daylong free tours, and the *Buffalo Humanities Festival* presented by the University at Buffalo's Humanities Department will hosts a series of free programs at the Library. Next, Interim Director Darden shared that a tour of the Central Library will be provided to Executive Director of the Western New York Library Resources Council Sheryl Knab and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and New York State Librarian Lauren Moore on Tuesday, September 23, and for New York Library Association Executive Director AnnaLee Dragon on Wednesday, September 24. Both Lauren and AnnaLee will be guest speakers at the Western New York Library Resources Council *Annual Meeting of the Membership* held on Tuesday, September 23, that Interim Director Darden will also be attending.

Interim Director Darden alerted the Board that the Central Library will be closed for a major electrical upgrade on Saturday, September 27 and Sunday, September 28. The Library will reopen to the public on Monday, September 29. Following that, she shared that plans are underway to replace the intercom on the outside door of the Library Administrative offices with a telephone so that patrons can directly call the department they need. This will be beneficial to both the staff and patrons.

Moving on, Interim Director Darden announced that the Library's *Books, Bites & Banter Happy Hour* fundraiser will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Big Ditch Brewing Co. in their 2nd floor space, stair access only. Tickets are \$35 each and available online at <https://bl.buffalolib.org/Bites-2025>.

Lastly, Interim Director Darden proudly announced that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has been selected to receive Literacy Buffalo Niagara's 2025 Literacy Leads Award. This award will be presented during their *60th Anniversary Event: Cocktails*

in Character on Thursday, October 23 at the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens. Chair Carima El-Behairy, Assistant Deputy Director – Buffalo Libraries Maria Lowe, and Interim Director Darden will attend the event.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
July 2025**



On Sunday, July 20, 2025, it was with great sadness that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was notified that Library Director **John Spears** had passed away after a courageous battle with cancer at the age of 51. **John** was appointed Library Director in Buffalo in April 2022 following a national search. He brought with him more than 25 years of library management experience having worked in libraries in Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah.

John Spears will best be remembered for his leadership in advocating to protect intellectual freedoms. He was known for taking a prominent stance in encouraging funding for libraries to continue to provide free, equal, and equitable access to information for everyone.

Here in Buffalo, **John** is also credited with taking immediate actions in early 2023 to ensure public safety at the downtown Central Library when the difficult decision was made to close temporarily in the wake of safety concerns caused by an influx of teenagers each afternoon.

In 2024, Director **Spears** was honored for his work by the New York Library Association (NYLA) for innovative leadership in fostering relationships with all sectors of the community and libraries. He was also an active member, advocating for library funding and resources, through multiple speaking engagements, committee work, and published articles for the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC), New York Library Association (NYLA), American Library Association (ALA), Library Leadership and Management Association, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and *Public Libraries Magazine*.

John leaves behind his partner, Brian Dimit, his father, brother, and sister, and many friends in the library, Elmwood neighborhood and the Buffalo Quaker communities. A public Celebration of Life was planned for August. A donation page in honor of **John**

Spears was set up for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System's Freedom to Read campaign at: <https://bl.buffalolib.org/SpearsMemorial>.

Library Board Chair **Carima El-Behairy** and Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** followed the Development & Communication's updated *Crisis Communications Plan* in an effort to respect the Spears family's privacy while managing the flow of information about his passing. Library trustees, administrators, staff, elected officials, the Association of Contracting Libraries Trustees, the media, peer organizations, members of the community, and more were either emailed or called.

Taste of Orchard Park - Mobile Services staff joined the Orchard Park Public Library at the 20th Annual Taste of Orchard Park on July 23. Over 1,200 attendees visited the library's booth, drawn by the Friends of Orchard Park Library book sale, children's crafts, a prize wheel, and the Library2Go van. Patrons received the Library on Wheels Bookmobile *Passport to Reading* stickers and received behind-the-scenes van tours.

Western New York Digitization Center - The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library in partnership with the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society (NYG&B) celebrated the opening of the Western New York Digitization Center at the Central Library in the Ring of Knowledge on July 29. Speakers included Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio**, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, President of NYG&B D. Joshua Taylor, and Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman**. City of Buffalo Historian Lindsey Lauren Visser, representing Acting Mayor of Buffalo Chris Scanlon, provided a proclamation that declares July 29 *Digitize New York Day*, and Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz also provided a proclamation celebrating the opening of the Western New York Digitization Center. The center is located in the Grosvenor Room and features a CopiBook scanner generously funded by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. In addition, some in attendance visited the Grosvenor Room to view a demonstration of the scanner.

The **Central Children Services** Department, in collaboration with the **Central Teen Services**, **Launch Pad**, and **Central Adult Services** held its *Summer Kickoff Party* on the library's front ramp on July 3. Activities included listening to underwater sounds, tie-dye, painting, and bubbles! Participants also made buttons, which served to promote the summer badging program. A total of 150 patrons turned out to welcome in the start of summer reading.

Central Adult Services presented a new wellness program with the Parkside Yoga Foundation, *Noon Yoga Recharge* on July 30. The event participants were made up of staff, county employees, and community members. Basic yoga positions were demonstrated, with embellishments for those wanting to go further, making it accessible to everyone. The session ended with a Reiki healing by the instructor. This will become a monthly event, with classes scheduled for August.

Central Teen Services Staff created a BINGO board for teens to participate in this year's Summer Reading theme of "Color Your World." Teens are able to complete most tasks anywhere; however, some tasks are specific to Central such as: Ask the

Grosvenor Room staff how the room got its name, Find Conan the Crusted Librarian, and play a game of giant Connect 4 in the Teen Space. Participants who complete a row receive a prize and those that complete the entire board will be entered into a raffle for a grand prize.

1. Programs and Outreach

Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

- *Book a Tech Trainer*
- *Virtual Reality*
- *Art Break*
- *Trivia @ the Central Library*
- *Cookbook Club*
- *Speculative Fiction Book Club*
- *Blind Date with an International book*
- *The Bowed Revolution*, Lecture and performance by Alex Cousins
- *Chess Clinic and Club*
- *Universal Anime Saturdays*

Central Library – Teen Services

- *Teen Advisory Group*
- *Brain Sparks*
- *Crafts programs*

Central Library – Children’s Services

- *Hawk Creek Wildlife Center, Inc.*
- *Magician Nick Mambretti*
- *Bad Guys Book Club*
- *Sensory Playtime*
- *Pint-Sized Picasso*
- *Nickel City Reptiles*
- *Baby/Toddler Storytime*

Central Library - Special Collections/Rare Book Room

- *Genealogy Training: Finding Western New York Holland Land Company Plots - Akron Senior Center*
- *Author Visit and Book Talk: Spiritualism’s Place: Reformers, Seekers, and Séances at Lily Dale* by Dr. Sarah Handley-Cousins, Dr. Averill Earls, Dr. Elizabeth Garner Masarik, and Dr. Marissa Rhodes
- *Family History Day - Concordia Cemetery in Buffalo*
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*

Central Library – System Adult Outreach Services/ TechKnow Lab

- *Book a Librarian sessions*
- *Book a Technology Trainer – Williamsville Branch, Grand Island Memorial Library*
- *Wellness @ Central*

- *District 2 Carnival* sponsored by Erie County Legislator Taisha St. Jean Tard – Richardson Complex in Buffalo
- *Internet Privacy & Safety Technology, Using Google* – Clarence Senior Center
- *Basic Device Maintenance*- Cheektowaga Senior Center
- *Google Account Recovery Virtual Technology Training*
- *Instacart*- Lancaster Senior Citizens Center
- *Intro to Excel*- Orchard Park Senior Center
- *Walk-up Tech Help*
- *Queen City Jazz Fest*

Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services

- Brown Kids with Disabilities *2nd Annual Children's Diversity Awareness Day* - Johnnie B. Wiley Amateur Athletic Sports Pavilion in Buffalo
- *Anderson Inside Out Annual Summer Celebration* - University at Buffalo Anderson Art Gallery
- *National Summer Learning Day* - Canalside in Buffalo
- *Disability Pride Festival* - Buffalo RiverWorks
- Calming Nature Doula Services & Center's *Brunch for Bumps 2025!* - Foundry in Buffalo

Mobile Services - Library on Wheels Bookmobile/Library2Go Van

In addition to regularly scheduled stops throughout the month, the Library on Wheels Bookmobile and the Library2 Go Van participated in the following special events:

- *Neighborhood Day* – Buffalo Dream Center
- *The Bidwell Park Concert Series* in Buffalo
- *Disability Pride Festival* - Buffalo RiverWorks

City Branch Libraries

The Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library has continued to participate in food assistance programs for their patrons. Beginning July 7, the Library participated in the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) *Summer Lunch Program*, supplying lunch to 108 children to date. Additionally, Hearts for Homeless continued its program of distributing meals from its Mobile Kitchen outside the Library each Tuesday.

Crane Branch Library hosted their first *Twilight Zone* program on July 7. Patrons came to watch two episodes of the classic show, "Time Enough at Last" and "Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up," and lead discussions afterwards. The program will continue each month.

Elaine M. Panty Branch staff created and offered a STEM series for youth. The first session, on July 7, focused on Geodes and Crystals. Participants learned how to make DIY crystals with a few basic ingredients, were given a craft kit with materials to replicate the craft at home and cracked open geodes. Participants learned about physical reactions, crystallization, solutions, and super saturated solutions.

In the second program, on July 21, kids learned about chemical reactions, oxidation, and phosphorescence. Participants watched a demonstration of how to make

something glow in the dark, and helped prepare a demonstration of Elephant Toothpaste.

The third program, offered on July 28, was about tactile, sensory learning. Participants learned about chemical versus physical reactions, liquids versus solids, and polymers, by making putty, oobleck, and slime using simple ingredients and supplies from the home pantry.

Displays and Exhibits:

Rare Book Room staff created new displays celebrating summer in exhibit cases on the main library concourse of the Central Library including Rare Book Room materials about sites of natural scenic beauty in the area and camping around the region.

Tours and Visits:

A Rare Book Room tour was provided to Gabe DeMaio of the International Institute of Buffalo on July 9 and Special Collections Department staff provided the monthly Special Collections tour for patrons.

2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,958	17,051	352	1,940	508,996
Young Adult Print	341	2,702	111	589	69,671
Adult Print	3,971	25,275	833	4,925	1,760,850
Media	1,860	14,486	198	2,069	513,134
Other*	1,504	12,307	14	132	172,885
Subtotal	10,634	71,821	1,508	9,655	3,025,536

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,054	29,156	1,242	9,687	123,652
eAudiobooks	8,361	53,870	410	2,777	60,820
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,110
Subtotal	12,415	83,026	1,652	12,464	190,582

*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	23,049	154,847	3,160	22,119	3,216,118

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – July 31, 2025	\$296,590.54

Highlights:

In the month of July, the Library's **Online Store** had \$1,269.03 in sales.

Give 716:

On July 15, members of the Development & Communications team attended the *Give 716* kickoff event hosted by the Buffalo Bills Foundation and the Buffalo Sabres Foundation. At the event, Library t-shirts were given to select attendees as marketing collateral. Among those that received shirts, DeWayne Carter (Buffalo Bills Defensive Tackle) and Martin Biron (Sabres Live) both highlighted the Library and t-shirt on social media and Sabres Live respectively.



Photos – (Left) Buffalo Bills Defensive Tackle DeWayne Carter wears a Library t-shirt on his Instagram live (Right) Martin Biron shows a Library t-shirt on the Buffalo Sabres livestream

During *Give 716*, a 24-hour online giving campaign, over 140 participants donated to the Library online, raising over \$12,000 to support the purchase of new reading materials.

Upcoming events:

- Author and Buffalo Bills Cornerback Christian Benford will be hosting a very special storytime and book signing on Monday, August 25 at the Crane Branch Library! The public program starts at 11:30 am and will feature his book *Stylish Safari: The Adventures of Being You*. Books can be purchased through Alice, Ever After Bookstore before and at the event.
- *Books, Bites & Banter* fundraiser will be held on Tuesday, October 21 at Big Ditch Brewing. Details forthcoming in September.

Mass email sent in June:

- July Public Periodical - Sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 90,000), 42% open rate.
- Give 716 - Sent to all active donors (those that have given in the last 3 years), 53% open rate.
- Support Your Neighbors with a Give 716 Donation to the Library - Sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications, 40% open rate.

4. Facilities

On July 7, work commenced on the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library skylights. This work will include replacement of the deteriorated gaskets between the panes of glass on the main and two small skylights as well as installation of a solar control film on the main skylight to reduce heat transfer through the glass into the building.

Additionally, Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library staff worked to ensure services were disrupted as little as possible. A circulation desk with laptop printing was set up in the vestibule; printing and PC access was available in the computer lab for all ages; the auditorium and meeting spaces are hosting events as originally planned; regular open hours were able to be kept reducing the amount of change necessary for patrons to adapt to. Some Merriweather staff assisted with Summer Reading programming at other libraries.

On July 16, Library staff met with Watts Architects to discuss the upcoming roof replacement/green roof project. Items discussed included connection routes of the solar panels to the Central switchgear; review of the drawings that are approaching 90% complete; air monitoring, work hours, and general planning for daily clearances within the library; and estimates for the cost of work. The next meeting is planned for August 21.

On July 23, parking lot replacement work began at the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library. This work included total replacement of the asphalt parking lot as well as the concrete apron at the parking lot entrance. New bollards were installed, and parking spot lines were painted as well. This work also included the replacement of the concrete ADA ramp at the main entrance of the library.

On July 28 and July 29, Bostwick Design Partnership conducted a site visit for the Central Library's Space Utilization Study. The firm met with multiple departments over the course of two days to review possible reconfiguration options and gather more information from staff. Future elements of this study will include in-person community engagement, a public online survey, and focus groups. The next site visit is currently being scheduled.

On July 31, Library staff attended the Erie County 2026 Capital Projects Committee hearing. This was an opportunity for the Library to present its requests to the

committee. The Central Library's 2026 Capital Project Request totaled \$4 million in order to address the Library's end-of-life chillers and cooling towers; provide a contingency account for the upcoming Central Library roof replacement project; and request funding to replace and upgrade the Rare Book Room HVAC system to a museum quality system with improved temperature and humidity control.

5. Staff Development

B&ECPL Sponsors Staff Members to Attend ALA Annual Conference – From 6/26 – 6/30, five employees attended the American Library Association's Annual Conference held in Philadelphia, PA. The theme of the conference was "For Our Libraries" and emphasized support and recognition of the importance of the library profession in a time of uncertainty and hostility. In attendance from B&ECPL were North Park Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark**, Amherst Library Director **Kristi Dougherty**, Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger**, Assistant Deputy Director **Maria Lowe**, and Elma Library Director **Stephanie Molnar**. Popular sessions included, *Don't Just Shake it Off: Debriefing Tools to Support Front Line Library Staff*, *Food for Thought: A Model for Food Justice in Public Libraries*, and *PLA Legal Issues in Public Libraries Forum*.

Webinars - Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in July, with several staff members attending these sessions: *How Public Libraries Can Better Serve People with Developmental Disabilities (Or Any Other Type of Disabilities!)* (from New York State Library), *Resources and Strategies to Protect Older Adults From Fraud and Scams* (from WebJunction), and *The Manager's Guide to Difficult Conversations* (from LinkedIn Learning).

6. Communications

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Statement	The passing of Library Director John Spears	Buffalo mourns passing of Library Director John Spears
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	WGRZ: Buffalo mourns passing of Library Director John Spears (7/21)
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	The Buffalo News: John Spears, Erie County library director known for his vision, grace and optimism, dies at 51 (7/21)

Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	WBEN: Library Director Spears dies of cancer (7/21)
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	WGRZ: Buffalo and Erie County Public Library colleagues remember late director, John Spears (7/22)
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	WIVB: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library director dead at 51 (7/21)
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	BTPM: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library director John Spears dies at 51 (7/21)
Earned Media	The passing of Library Director John Spears	Amherst Bee: Head of County library system dies following cancer battle (7/24)

The Library also organized and announced a public celebration of life, held at the Central Library's Auditorium on **Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.**

On July 29, the Library's Special Collections joined with the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society (NYG&B) to mark the opening of the new **Western New York Digitization Center** - located in the Central Library's Grosvenor Room. The Center houses a scanner. It will be critical to genealogists looking for missing links -- all helping enrich our understanding of local history. There is an open call for volunteers to aid in this effort. The media interviewed Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** and Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman**.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Joint Press Release	Western New York Digitization Center	New Western New York Digitization Center Officially Opens at Buffalo's Central Library (7/24)
Earned Media	Western New York Digitization Center	The Buffalo News: A genealogist's dream: New scanner at Buffalo library will be used to digitize historical records (7/29)

Earned Media	Western New York Digitization Center	WGRZ: Buffalo library unveils center to boost access to history records
Earned Media	Western New York Digitization Center	BTPM: Digitization project means historic documentation throughout region

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	97	730	4,379	25,512	94	14,946
Flickr	44	112	1,422	19,391	0	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,583	18,285	N/A	N/A
Instagram	16	122	5,059	55,747	222	8,304
Pinterest	0	171	35	355	0	2,047
Twitter (X)	76	352	141	1,754	-3	10,439
Bluesky	18	131	76	779	41	1,214
YouTube	3	43	20	8,898	7	845
TikTok	0	5	1,050	5,491	9	1,053
Total	254	1,666	14,765	136,212	370	38,907

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

7. Partnerships

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

- The Colored Musicians Club & Jazz Museum
- Daughters of the American Revolution - Buffalo Chapter
- Erie 1 BOCES
- Erie 2 BOCES
- Erie County Department for the Aging (formerly Erie County Department of Senior Services)
- Erie County Historical Commission
- Every Person Influences Children (EPIC)
- Mental Health Empowerment Project (MHEP)
- New York Library Association LAMS (Leadership and Management Section) Committee
- Partnership for the Public Good
- Taoist Tai Cho Society of WNY
- Western New York Digital Equity Coalition
- Western New York Library Resources Council Committees

8. Planning for the Future

Planning for the next Rare Book Room exhibition is well underway. The next exhibition opening in January of 2026 is entitled “AP Gorny: Different than the Others” This exhibition will explore the work of artist Anthony Petr Gorny, a (living) multi-disciplinary artist well known as a printmaker and book artist, who was born and raised in Buffalo. Gorny’s work has recently been added to the Rare Book Room collection.

9. Director Activities

List of Meetings and Events

Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden

July 2025

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
July 1, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
July 1, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
July 1, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
July 2, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
July 2, 2025	Meeting - Dr. Geraldine Bard and Dr. Elizabeth Cappella from Project Flight
July 2, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
July 3, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
July 3, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
July 3, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
July 3, 2025	Event - Summer Reading Kickoff Party at Central Library
July 3, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
July 7, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
July 7, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
July 7, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci and Emily Patronik regarding Peacemakers Contract Renewal
July 7, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines
July 8, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
July 8, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
July 9, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
July 9, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
July 10, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
July 10, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
July 10, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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July 10, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Angela Marinucci along with Robert Patterson and Charles Grieco from Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC
July 10, 2025	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees Executive Committee
July 15, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Marta Aracelis, Angela Marinucci, Rebecca Castañeda, and Brian Hoth regarding a Library project
July 21, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
July 21, 2025	Meeting - Judy Fachko, Angela Marinucci, Tracy Palicki, and Emily Patronik
July 22, 2025	Lunch with NYLA! event at Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC)
July 22, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
July 23, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
July 23, 2025	Lunch Meeting with Sheryl Knab from WNYLRC, Angela Marinucci, Jennifer Northrup, and Janice Dekoff
July 23, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Michael Tritto, Jr., and Pastor James Giles regarding Peacemakers Contract Renewal
July 24, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
July 24, 2025	Meeting - Sean Piazza and Joy Testa Cinquino
July 24, 2025	Meeting - 2025 Erie County Mid-Budget Hearing at the Chambers of the Erie County Legislature
July 25, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
July 25, 2025	Virtual Meeting - ALA Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA) Ecosystem Subcommittee
July 28, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
July 28, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines
July 29, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
July 29, 2025	Media Event/Demonstration - WNY Digitization Center Grand Opening
July 29, 2025	Lunch/Wrap Up - Bostwick Design Partnership
July 29, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
July 29, 2025	Meeting - Mark Kross, Angela Marinucci, Emily Patronik , and Andrew Wiede regarding Central Library Capital Projects
July 30, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
July 30, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
July 30, 2025	Virtual Meeting - ALA and PLA Ecosystems Discussion with Dorcas Hand
July 30, 2025	Meeting - Mark Kross, Angela Marinucci, and Andrew Wiede
July 30, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
July 31, 2025	Meeting - NYS Correctional Facility Aid Signing Agreement

July 31, 2025	Meeting - 2026 Erie County Capital Projects Committee
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Appendices

A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1351	8814	2910	26493
Children 5 and under	1554	9494	7663	38663
Children 6-11	4879	23025	8566	38153
Intergenerational/Combined	5338	37974	17314	84038
Teens	357	2264	809	4307
Regular Total	13479	81571	37262	191654
Regular Total	13479	81571	37262	191654
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	55	172	107	1196
Children 5 and under	1	6	15	144
Children 6-11	2	5	7	156
Intergenerational/Combined	8	37	52	348
Teens	1	26	1	54
Live Virtual Total	67	246	182	1898
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	0	21	0	1803
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	3	16	780	3651
Intergenerational/Combined	13	65	971	7886
Teens	0	10	0	10
Recorded Virtual Total	16	112	1751	13350
Virtual Total	83	358	1933	15248
Grand Total	13562	81929	39195	206902

*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, program attendance, and a summary of open hours can be found at <https://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

Boston Free Library – submitted by Lydia Herren, Director

Pavilion Party – The library hosted a ribbon cutting event for the newly constructed pavilion on June 26 with live music, a food truck, yard games and bubbles. We were excited to welcome the community into this new space and have been using the pavilion for many of our summer programs. The pavilion construction was made possible thanks to a New York State Aid for Library Construction Grant and matching funds secured by Assemblyman David DiPietro.

Summer Jamboree – The Boston Free Library held its annual Summer Jamboree on Thursday, July 24 at the Boston Town Hall Lions Shelter. The evening featured 30 local craft/art vendors, several community organizations, music by Back Porch Brass and the Boston Town Band, hot dogs for sale, Nick Charlaps Ice Cream Truck, games and activities for kids and a large basket raffle. Approximately 380 people attended the event to support the library. The Friends of the Boston Library raised funds that will be utilized for programming and building improvements.

Summer Programming – The library's summer schedule has been busy with weekly Preschool StoryTimes, Adult Tai Chi Classes, Ukulele Club, and monthly Lego Clubs. Our Teen Book Club has met weekly to discuss 3 different young adult book titles throughout the summer. Four Craft Friday programs over the summer featured a variety of crafts suitable for all ages. Special programs included the ever-popular Bubble Day, Kids Karate classes, a pond life program with the NYS Parks and Recreation Department, and a Kids Hip Hop Dance Class.

Passport to Reading Program – Boston has been enjoying visitors from all over Erie County thanks to the system-wide Passport to Reading Program. Visitors comment on how much they enjoy seeing the variety of unique offerings at each library location.

Library of Things – The library recently added a paper shredder, laminator, fax machine, and Epson printer to our collection of items available for public use. These additions and our new convertible picnic table/benches in the pavilion are thanks to Equipment and Technology Funding generously provided by the B&ECPL. Our community is excited to be able to utilize these new items.

Lancaster Public Library – submitted by Kara Stock, Director

Summer Kick-off Party – 200 people attended this party on Thursday, June 26. Glenn Colton provided a lively concert and *Clifford the Big Red Dog* made an appearance! Children made a variety of crafts, played a duck game, enjoyed a sensory table, and stopped by a face painting station.



Photo – Clifford the Big Red Dog mascot with library patrons

Outreach – Part-time Librarian **Genevieve Maynard** helped 102 people make a bookmark craft after the Village of Lancaster Independence Day parade. Library Director **Kara Stock** staffed a table at the Depew Founder's Day event on Saturday, July 19 and spoke with 50 people about the library's many free resources.

Partnerships – The library participated in the Lancaster Garden Walk on Saturday, July 19 and Sunday, July 20. A special thank you to our Building Caretaker, **Joshua Strell**, for taking such good care of our gardens. Also, Assemblyman Patrick Chludzinski read *Pete the Cat's 12 Groovy Days of Christmas* by James Dean to 18 children on Tuesday, July 8. Our library was a drop off location for his Christmas in July toy drive for John R. Oishei Children's Hospital of Buffalo.

Programming Highlights – Youth Services Librarian **Meagan Carr** taught 28 children how to "Rock on with Colors" by making their own mosaic stepping stones on Wednesday, July 9. Part-time Librarian **Michael Green** held meetings each Saturday for the 9 teen members of our Book Battle club. They are reading *Scary Stories for Young Foxes* by Christian McKay Heidicker and *The Ruins of Gorlan* by John Flanagan to prepare for a Lancaster versus Lancaster Battle-of-the-Books-style trivia competition in early August. Library Assistant **John Benzee** held 7 one-on-one technology appointments, assisting adults with the Libby app, PC computer basics, the cloud, scanning, iPhone use, Chromebook use, and Apple computer basics.

Reading Race – Patrons of all ages are celebrating the *Color Our World* summer reading theme by filling out a reading race ballot based on minutes read. They can choose a crayon color and help move it to the finish line. Will the winner be red, orange, green, yellow, purple, or blue?

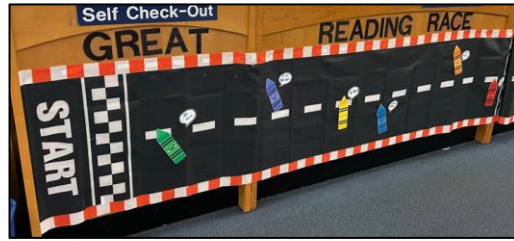


Photo – Color Our World interactive race ballot for library patrons

B&ECPL Monthly Report August 2025



Celebration of Life – A public *Celebration of Life* for Library Director **John Spears** was held in the Central Library Auditorium on Wednesday, August 20, 2025. It was a very touching tribute in honor of the late Director **Spears** who lost his battle with cancer a month earlier. The event, hosted by Library Board Chair Carima El-Behairy and coordinated with Central Library staff, included orchestral selections performed by high school students under the direction of Lancaster Public School's Director of Orchestras Lynne Ruda. Speakers included Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Interim Library Director **Dorinda Darden**, Library Trustee Kimberly Johnson, Director **Spears'** sister Katherine "Keitt" Mobile, Just Buffalo Literary Center's Executive and Artistic Director Barbara Cole, and two members of the Buffalo Quaker Community -- Sue Tannehill and Kathleen Lindell. The *Celebration of Life* also featured a slide show and taped video presentations provided by Library Trustee Elaine M. Panty; Association of Contracting Library Trustees President Martha Buyer; Western New York Library Resources Council Executive Director Sheryl Knab; American Library

Association President Sam Helmick; Toronto Public Library City Librarian Vickery Bowles; Nusantara Arts Founder & Executive Director Matthew Dunning; Equitable Libraries Division Director Erin Jones; Alameda County Librarian Deb Sica; North Dakota State Librarian Mary Soucie; Los Angeles Public Library City Librarian John Szabo; and Friend & Former CEO & Chief Librarian Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, North Carolina Marcellus "MT" Turner.

In addition, proclamations honoring Director **Spears** were displayed in the Auditorium lobby from the Erie County Legislature, New York State Senators April N.M. Baskin, and Sean Ryan, and New York State Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera. There were 300 onsite attendees and 100 who viewed online streaming via Zoom. Director **Spears'** family expressed their gratitude for the warm welcome and heartwarming celebration. A video of the *Celebration of Life* can be streamed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BIIdHBgmvnI>.

Blues Memorial: A 5/14 Community Project - Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** and Rare Book Clerk **Andrew Semo** installed displays of flags from the *Blues Memorial: A 5/14 Community Project* with assistance from Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton** and Library Assistant Display Artist **Helen Shandraw**. The *Blues Memorial: A 5/14 Community Project* involved over 80 art-making sessions in 2024 that created thousands of flags as a way to process the grief of the May 14, 2022 racist Buffalo Massacre at the Tops supermarket on Jefferson Avenue. The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is honored to have some of the blue flags created by the community on display at the Central library.

Erie County Fair – System Adult Outreach Services and System Youth Outreach Services staff provided an Information Table in the Marketplace building at the 185th Annual Erie County Fair in Hamburg on August 9 and August 16. The library staff interacted with over 1,500 attendees of the fair. They provided information about library events, resources, and distributed reading material donated by Project Flight.

Road Less Traveled Theater – Special Collections staff welcomed over twenty members of the cast and crew of *The Book of Will* on August 30, for a viewing of the Library's Shakespeare folios. The ensemble, which will perform the play about the compilation of Shakespeare's First Folio in 1623 at the Road Less Traveled Theater at the end of September, was thrilled to see the 400+ year old text. The play is about how the book came to be (or not to be)!

Summer Reading Programs - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations participated in the *Online Summer Reading Contest* for children, teens, and adults held throughout the summer. There were 388 participants with a total of 720,091 minutes read. There was also a staff contest with 124 participants and 479,864 minutes read. The new *Summer Reading Badging Program*, and the summertime *Passport to Reading* program were well received. The *Summer Reading Badging Program* had 2,001 participants and the *Passport to Reading* program had 349 participants with 5,846 visits to Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations. Sixty-three patrons visited all 37 Library locations.

Storytime with Buffalo Bills Player and Author - The Crane Branch Library hosted Buffalo Bills cornerback Christian Benford for a special storytime on August 25, with him reading his new children's picture book, *Stylish Safari*. Approximately 150 attended! The Library partnered with *Alice Ever After Bookstore* to sell the book and Benford signed copies for attendees. He also sat for media interviews. The program was in partnership with the Development & Communications Department, Christian Benford and the Crane Branch Library.



Photo – Buffalo Bills cornerback and author Christian Benford sits at a table signing his autograph for Library patrons

Chautauqua Institution Presentation – Assistant Deputy Director **Maria Lowe** co-presented with Jamie Lyn Smith (PEN America) at the Chautauqua Institution. The presentation, *Books Bans: Fighting Censorship and Celebrating our Diversity*, was sponsored by the LGBTQ+ & Friends Group at Chautauqua. **Maria** presented on the history of, and current issues around, book challenges and bans in libraries.

1. Programs and Outreach

Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

- *Cookbook Club*
- *Universal Anime Saturdays: 2025 Studio Ghibli Program*
- *Chess Club and Clinic* by Buffalo Chess Association
- *Noon Yoga Recharge* by Parkside Yoga Foundation
- *Tea Blend Workshop*
- *Speculative Fiction Book Club*
- *Trivia @the Library*
- *Afternoon Art Break*
- *3D Printing Certification Class*

Central Library – Teen Services

- *Teen Advisory Group (TAG)*
- *Jewelry Making*
- *BINGO for the mentoring group Health, Empowerment, Attitude, and Teamwork (HEAT)*
- *Brain Sparks Art Group*
- *Mini Canvas Painting & Exhibit*

Central Library – Children’s Services

- *Bad Guys Book Club* (early elementary)
- *Children’s Librarian of the Month* (child recipient)
- *Sensory Play*
- *Toddler Storytime*
- *Pint-Sized Picasso Saturday Art Program*

Central Library - Special Collections/Rare Book Room

- *Buffalo Stories: The Buffalo History Channel*
- *Explore Buffalo Speaker Series: Life in the Original Larkinville*
- *Zine Making Workshop- Western New York Book Arts Center*
- *Genealogy Virtual Training: Google Earth Pro for Genealogy* for Fairport Public Library in NY, *Cool Tools for Genealogy* for the Central New York Genealogical Society
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*

Central Library – System Adult Outreach Services/ TechKnow Lab

- *Mental Health Empowerment Project (MHEP) WNY Wellness Conference*
- *Peaceprints of WNY Community Resource Fair*
- *Wellness @ Central*
- *Goodskills Career Builder Presentation & Workshop*
- *UB HEALS Free CPR and Narcan Training*
- *New York State Department of Labor Job Fair*
- *Back To School Wellness* event sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association – Imperial Market in Buffalo
- *Technology Training: Streaming Media, Canva*
- *Walk-up Tech Help*

Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services

- *Preschool Storytime with Ms. Emily* – Newstead Public Library
- *Night at the Museum* – Buffalo Museum of Science
- *Back to School Bash-* Westminster Community Charter School
- *Backpack Giveaway and Community Fair* - Community Access Services
- *Summer Camp* – Childtime of Buffalo
- *Storytime* – Crane Branch Library
- *37th Annual Taking it to the Streets* - Martin Luther King, Jr. Park in Buffalo
- *Family Night* – Shea’s Smith Theatre in Buffalo
- *Back to School Family Fair* - Residential Treatment Program

Mobile Services - Library on Wheels Bookmobile/Library2Go Van

In addition to regularly scheduled stops throughout the month, the Library on Wheels Bookmobile and the Library2 Go Van participated in the following special events:

- *The Bidwell Park Concert Series* in Buffalo
- *Harvest Festival*- Harvest House Buffalo
- *Town of Tonawanda Literacy Nights*
- *Walk to Cure Arthritis* sponsored by Arthritis Foundation – Delaware Park
- *Ready Freddy* event – Buffalo Public School (BPS) #61 Arthur O. Eve School of Distinction
- *Back to School* event – Cleveland Hill Elementary School in Cheektowaga
- *Family Fun* event - King Urban Life Center in Buffalo
- *African American Veterans Arts and Culture Corporation Parade* in Buffalo

City Branch Libraries

Crane:

- *Thursday afternoon Lego Club*
- *Nintendo Switch Gaming* (kids 12 and under)
- *Adult & Children's Chess Clubs*
- *Storytime*
- *The Princess Bride Trivia Night*
- *Lit Fic Book Club* (adult book club)
- *Twilight Zone* (film and discussion program)

Leroy R. Coles, Jr:

- *Benjamin Berry, Circus for All*
- *Summer Lunch Program* (providing lunch for children)
- *Movie Thursdays*
- *Book-a Tech Trainer*
- *After Lunch Art Printmaking* (Merriweather guest librarian)

Branch and System staff attended Back to School Bash at Westminster Community Charter School as well as the Beyond Balance Community Wellness Event held at Gerard Place. Staff engaged with approximately 200 people, talking about library programs and services and signing people up for library cards.

Dudley:

- *Chapter Book Storytime*
- *Lego Club*
- *Cinema Saturday*
- *Adult & Child Craft Nights*
- *Shakespeare in the Park*
- *Dudley Detectives* (adult book group)
- *Teen Gaming*

East Clinton:

*Closed August 18 for renovations

- *Tie-dye*
- *Mess Mondays* (kids crafts)
- *Scavenger Hunt*

Isaías González-Soto:

*Currently closed for updates and renovations

Outreach:

Isaías González-Soto staff attended the West Side Community Services' *5th Annual Rock the Block* party interacting with over 500 participants.

Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.:

Librarian **Heather Birmingham** assisted branches with Summer Reading programming during Merriweather's period of reduced services.

- *The Mobile DMV*
- *The Western New York Law Center* (free legal services and referrals)

Outreach:

Heather Birmingham was a guest reader at *Reading in the Park* at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. Sponsored by Second Chapter Bookstore.

Isaías González-Soto and Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branches worked together to attend the *Cold Spring Free Spirit Community Day* to promote the libraries programs and services.

North Park:

- *Craft n' Chat*
- *Experimental Printmaking Workshop* with Artist Marsha Mis
- *Circus Arts and Performance Workshop* by Benjamin Berry
- *Afternoon Tea Book*
- *Bingo and Bundt Cakes*
- *Paint a Giant Donut*
- *Storytimes* with visits by *SPCA Paws for Love* therapy dog Mindy

Elaine M. Panty:

- *STEM Summer series: Robotics and Electronics, Gross Chemistry, Food Science* (an edible science experiment),
- *Saturday Summer Arts and Crafts Series: sand art in a bottle, sidewalk chalk event, mini canvas painting*
- *Storytime*
- *Boondoggle Club*

Outreach:

Elaine M. Panty and North Park Branches staff tabled at Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority's (BMHA) *One Stop Family Services Fair* at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center to talk about library program and services as well as provide free books.

Displays and Exhibits:

A display was created in front of the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library featuring the music of the Erie Canal. It contains items from the Rare Book Room and the Buffalo sheet music collections, covering music from the many eras of the Canal.

A display was created, in the Ring of Knowledge, in partnership with the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper organization to celebrate **National Water Quality Month**.

Tours and Visits:

Special Collections staff provided tours throughout the month. They included a tour of local history and genealogy resources in the Grosvenor Room to Gary and Anne Neureuter who donated a collection of the *Mariners Log*, staff newsletters from the Marine Midland Bank; tour to staff from Native American Community Services; tour of the Grosvenor Room, and the Mark Twain Room to ESL students and their teacher from SUNY Erie; and a tour of the Grosvenor Room's genealogy resources to members of the Iroquois Genealogy Society. In addition, photographic works from the George Nathan Newman Collection in the Rare Book Room, as well as pictorial works and scrapbooks from the Grosvenor Room were presented to members of the photography camp from the Hunt Art Gallery during their visit to the Central Library.

2. Collection Development**Physical Collections:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,577	19,628	269	2,209	509,591
Young Adult Print	616	3,318	106	695	70,127
Adult Print	3,912	29,187	855	5,780	1,762,018
Media	1,489	15,975	168	2,237	512,036
Other*	1,686	13,993	27	159	173,833
Subtotal	10,280	82,101	1,425	11,080	3,027,605

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,302	33,458	1,272	10,959	123,235
eAudiobooks	7,038	60,908	380	3,157	59,240
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,201
Subtotal	11,340	94,366	1,652	14,116	188,676

*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
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	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Total	21,620	176,467	3,077	25,196	3,216,281

Rare Book and Special Collections:

Books were donated by University at Buffalo Professor Emeritus Dr. Phillips Stevens, Jr., an anthropologist with a large African History collection. The books will be processed and shared with the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library for possible inclusion in the William A. Miles Center for African and African American Studies.

As part of the *Spin It Forward* campaign, the Grosvenor Room has received several large record donations, including recordings from local bands.

Materials acquired from The Buffalo History Museum include 19th and 20th century railroad, highway, and US atlases. Pan-American Expo and Buffalo Metro Rail histories and pamphlets, and church histories.

3. Fundraising

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal	January 1 - August 31, 2025	\$321,917.53

Highlights:

In the month of August, the Library's **Online Store** had:
34 orders, 53 items sold, \$1,402.26 in sales.

Upcoming:

The annual library fundraiser, *Books, Bites & Banter* will be held on Tuesday, October 21 at Big Ditch Brewing. Tickets will be available for purchase through the Library's website in mid-September.

The Annual **Bucks for Books** fundraising appeal is being planned for the end of September. The mailing will be sent to 10,000 households – made up of a combination of past donors and names from a purchased list.

4. Funding/Facilities**Funding:**

2026 Budget request submitted on time- Between supply chain and other inflationary factors, costs are forecast to increase significantly faster than in recent years. The combined impact of recently settled Erie County labor agreements and another expected minimum wage increase will also impact expenses. We are seeing increases in other operating accounts, as well. Overall, net expenses are expected to increase approximately \$1.4 million (4.1%).

Feedback from the Erie County Budget office to date has been supportive. The next major 2026 budget event is the release of the Erie County Executive's Proposed Budget, expected in mid-October of 2025.

We will keep you informed as the budget process continues.

Facilities:

The Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library reopened with full services on August 18. Branch Manager **Joshua Mitch** worked with IT and Maintenance to allow the Branch to operate with limited services available in the vestibule, computer lab, meeting room, and auditorium spaces during renovations and updates, saving the Branch from a complete closure during this period.

The Graphics Department continued to work on the Library's new Rebrand & New Logo ordering business cards, creating designs for Library Card Sign-up Month, updating Mission Statement/Core Values signage, and creating designs for new library cards. Freedom to Read marketing collateral was also produced including a poster promoting upcoming public events taking place in October.

5. Staff Development

Annual Security Guard Training – *8-Hour Annual In-Service Security Guard Training* was provided for all Library security personnel on August 3. This all-day program included presentations on the B&ECPL Building Guard Manual, authority and legal limitations, building lock-down, patron accessibility issues, the patron suspension and reinstatement process, and more. Training was facilitated by **Aaron Swan**, Director of Security & Safety Management and **Amanda Hernandez**, Senior Building Guard.

Progressive Discipline Training for Supervisors - On August 19, the Human Resources department hosted a presentation on progressive discipline for Buffalo branch managers and Central department heads. The class focused on how to address problematic work behavior/performance in a positive, constructive, and graduated way. The class was presented by Assistant Deputy Director for Human Resources **Judy Fachko**. There were 15 supervisors in attendance at this hybrid event, held concurrently in-person at Central Library and virtually via Zoom.

Webinars - Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in August, with several staff members attending these sessions: *Building Community Through Craft Programs* (from WebJunction), *Canva Power-Ups: 10 Must Have Apps That Turbo Charge Your Designs* (from Tech-Talk), *Turning the Page: ADHD and Employee Policies* (from CLRC), and *Utilizing Outcome Measurement to Improve Library Services* (from PLA).

Central Adult Services Senior Page **Tyler Whitehead** is attending the NYLA's online Library Skills Academy for an 8-week curriculum paid for by the WNYLRC Library Support Staff Committee

Assistant Deputy Director, **Maria Lowe** taught a session on Reference for the [NYLA Library Skills Academy](#).

6. Communications

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Press Release	Spin It Forward	'Spin It Forward' campaign launches to revitalize vinyl record collection for first time since 1989 (8/5)
Earned Media	Spin It Forward	WGRZ: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library looking for vinyl record donations for 'Spin It Forward' campaign (8/6)
Earned Media	Spin It Forward	The Buffalo News: Archiving Buffalo's sound: 'Spin It Forward' launches to revitalize library's vinyl collection (8/8)
Earned Media	Spin It Forward	Analog Planet: Playing Some Favorite LPs in Celebration of National Vinyl Record Day, Along With Supporting a Most Worthy Spin It Forward Campaign (8/12)

Coverage related to Christian Benford Storytime Event (*see Development section*)

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Christian Benford Storytime	Buffalo Rising: Storytime with Christian Benford at the Crane Branch Library (8/13)
Content	Christian Benford Storytime	The Buffalo Bills: In the Community Christian Benford Book Reading & Backpack Distribution (8/25)
Earned Media	Christian Benford Storytime	WKBW: 'I'm blessed': Buffalo Bills' Christian Benford and Damar Hamlin give back to the community (8/25)
Earned Media	Christian Benford Storytime	The Buffalo News: Buffalo Bills cornerback Christian Benford finding his voice (8/31)

Earned Media	Libraries Supporting Adult Literacy	Spectrum News interview with Maria Lowe (8/27)
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Marketing:

Spin It Forward Campaign



Image – LP vinyl record graphic indicating “Donate to Our Vinyl Collection” and “Support Independent Record Stores.” This is part of the “Spin It Forward” initiative

On August 5, and ahead of *National Vinyl Record Day* (8/12), Buffalo & Erie County Public Library launched *Spin It Forward* – an ongoing campaign announcing the first donation drive for vinyl records since 1989.

With the onset of cassettes and compact discs, vinyl records were no longer collected as the format was increasingly seen as obsolete. This effort intends to address the format’s growing popularity over the last decade among younger patrons, who wish to unplug with purpose.

A result of collaboration between the Grosvenor Room and the Development & Communications Department, this effort showcased this little-known asset available to patrons -- vinyl checkout -- while also appealing for contemporary music records after 1989. As an added call to action, the Library encouraged donations from local independent record stores and teamed with *BTPM - The Bridge* radio to spread the word.

[Donations](#) and [special merchandise](#) will also directly support the purchase of records.

Mass emails sent in August:

Public Periodical - Sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications, (over 90,000), 36% open rate.

Celebrating the Life of Library Director **John Spears** – Sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications, (over 90,000) 41% open rate

Social Media

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	63	793	1,582	27,094	77	15,023
Flickr	-	112	3,248	22,639	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,539	20,824	N/A	N/A
Instagram	21	143	9,487	65,234	329	8,633
Pinterest	59	230	48	403	1	2,048
Twitter (X)	53	405	86	1,840	-1	10,438
Bluesky	5	136	7	786	3	1,217
YouTube	2	44	169	9,067	11	856
TikTok	1	6	877	6,368	3	1,056
Total	204	1,869	18,043	154,255	423	39,330

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

Highlighting the below Instagram post, which included a collaboration with Buffalo Bills cornerback Christian Benford. The post was boosted into a paid ad as well. It was viewed over 22,000 times, was shared 227 times, and had 841 likes and 11 comments.



Image – Instagram post of Christian Benford and his book

7. Partnerships

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

- 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition
- Atlas Obscura

- **Brown Kids with Disabilities**
- **Child and Family Services**
- **Child Care Resources Network**
- **Erie 1 BOCES**
- **Erie County Department of Health's Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHCN) Program**
- **Erie County Historical Commission**
- **Live Well Erie**
- **New York Library Association LAMS (Leadership and Management Section) Committee**
- **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**
- **Dennis Galucki - IMAGINE Buffalo**
- **Synergy - Community Access Services**
- **Golden Goldman Philanthropic Fund**
- **Buffalo Humanities Festival**

8. Director Activities
List of Meetings and Events
Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden
August 2025

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
August 1, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Restoration Society, Inc.
August 4, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
August 4, 2025	Administrative Team Meeting
August 4, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines
August 5, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
August 5, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
August 5, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
August 6, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
August 6, 2025	Meeting - 2025 Year-End Projections and 2026 Budget Discussion with Erie County Division of Budget and Management
August 6, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
August 7, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
August 7, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
August 7, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Bostwick Design Partnership
August 8, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
August 8, 2025	Meeting - 2026 Budget Review with Angela Marinucci, Tracy Palicki, and Emily Patronik
August 11, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
August 11, 2025	Administrative Team Meeting
August 11, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines

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August 12, 2025	Meeting - Mike Grabek, Amanda Hernandez, Mark Kross, Justin Rosado Aaron Swan, and Joy Testa Cinquino
August 12, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci and Erin Vest
August 12, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
August 12, 2025	Meeting - Library Foundation
August 20, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
August 20, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
August 20, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
August 20, 2025	Event - Celebration of Life for Library Director John Spears
August 21, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY)
August 21, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
August 25, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
August 25, 2025	Event - Storytime with Christian Benford at Crane Branch Library
August 25, 2025	Virtual Meeting - ALA Committee for Library Advocacy (COLA) Ecosystem Subcommittee
August 26, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
August 26, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
August 26, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
August 27, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
August 27, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
August 28, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
August 28, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Michigan Street Preservation Corporation Officers
August 29, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Enterprise Fleet Management (EFM)
August 29, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino

Appendices

A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1082	9896	3895	30388
Children 5 and under	1711	11205	6408	45071
Children 6-11	4110	27135	10307	48460
Intergenerational/Combined	5387	43361	15053	99091
Teens	392	2656	1123	5430
Regular Total	12682	94253	36786	228440
Regular Total	12682	94253	36786	228440
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	14	186	311	1507

Children 5 and under	2	8	25	169
Children 6-11	2	7	37	193
Intergenerational/Combined	5	42	293	641
Teens	5	31	42	96
Live Virtual Total	28	274	708	2606
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	3	24	27	1830
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	18	413	4064
Intergenerational/Combined	9	74	886	8772
Teens	0	10	0	10
Recorded Virtual Total	14	126	1326	14676
Virtual Total	42	400	2034	17282
Grand Total	12724	94653	38820	245722

*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 <https://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 Report

Alden Ewell Free Public Library – submitted by Rebecca Moe, Director

Highlights of events and activities at the Alden Ewell Free Library (ALD) this summer:

- Science Heroes brought their interactive program “Adventure of the Missing Color”
- The Aquarium of Niagara taught attendees all about sharks with their hands-on program “Shark Shiver”
- Winterberry Homestead’s Traveling Farm entertained patrons with several heritage breeds, including a miniature horse, a goat, and an angora rabbit
- Barb’s Book Buddies staged a campout on our front lawn
- The “Summer Badging” program and independent reading logs had participants from all age groups, from under 5 to adult

We also started a Pokémon Club and Lego Free Build Night this summer that will continue all year long

Our year-round drop-in activities continued to be popular this summer

- Scavenger hunts in the Children’s Room
- Make and Take craft table (summer crafts included crafting a crown, a sparkly dragonfly, and a fluffy axolotl)

- All ages puzzle table
- Take and Make crafts for home continue to be popular (the paper plate beluga whale and grouchy ladybug crafts went especially quickly)

Marilla Free Library – submitted by Shannon Thompson, Director

- We just finished an exciting and fun summer full of programs and reading! Programs this summer reflected the *Color Our World* theme. To encourage reading we had **Independent Reading Programs** for children, teens and adults.
- We had weekly **Storytime with Ms. Shannon** for ages 3 to 5. Each week we focused on art or colors. Children had fun sculpting a creation and making messy art masterpieces as well as mixing colors and learning about rainbows.
- We had a **Tie Dye Program** where everyone created a tie dye t-shirt. We had **Lego Nights**, a **Taste the Rainbow Program**, and **Glow Paint Programs**. We finished the summer with a **Hydro Painting Program** for ages 7 to 15. Using nail polish, water and dipping techniques we created marbled designs on coasters, sun-catchers and mini clay pots.
- We had family events that included a visit from the **Buffalo Zoo's Zoomobile**. **Cris Johnson** presented his *Magic and Balloon Twisting Experience*. There was an interactive magic show, and he taught families how to make balloon animals.
- On September 14 the Marilla Library will have games with small prizes for kids at the Annual Town of Marilla Agricultural Day held at the Marilla Firemen's Grounds.
- The **Book Club** meets on September 23 to discuss *A Family Affair* by Robin Carr.
- We have several **Take and Make Kits** planned for the fall. These kits are very popular with families. The kits include suggested reading list, learning & coloring worksheets, family activities and a craft. We started this month with a **Back to School Kit** and will have a **Buffalo Bills Kit** next.
- Our Friends of the Library **Book Sale** will be held on October 3 and October 4. The sale will be held at the Marilla Community Center along with a bake sale.
- We are looking forward to a fun filled fall. We are planning a **Halloween Party with Ms. Shannon** for children ages 3 to 8 years old. We are also planning a **Haunted Graham Cracker House Program** for families, a **Glow Paint Program** and a **Lego Night**.

Agenda Item G – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the ACT Fall meeting will be on Saturday, October 18 at the Kenmore Branch Library. She stated that they are working

on the agenda now. Next, she shared that the spring meeting will be at the Central Library in March, with another meeting following in Alden or North Collins.

Agenda Item G.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Panty shared an anecdote with the Board regarding Board packets, and how in the past they were printed on a single-sided sheet of paper. She also shared a story regarding when the Board had to travel to Angola Public Library for a meeting on the same evening of a Buffalo Bills game. Following that, Chair El-Behairy asked if any Board members visited their member libraries. Discussion ensued regarding member libraries and the Library's *Passport to Reading* program.

Agenda Item H – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item I – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item J – New Business.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-31 – Amend 2025 Operating and Grant Budget – New York State Recurring Aid. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Patronik summarized proposed Resolution 2025-31 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-31

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library receives recurring state aid to support various library activities, some of them budgeted in the library operating budget and some in the library grant budget, and

WHEREAS, final amounts for the State's 2025-2026 fiscal year are now known, and

WHEREAS, the combined recurring operating and grant aid will increase by \$124,405 from the 2025 budgeted amounts, and

WHEREAS, the Library wishes to adjust the operating and grant budgets to reflect the above changes, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Executive Committee approves amending the 2025 grant and operating budgets to implement the following revenue and expenditure budget increases:

Grant	Revenue Increase	Expense Increase
Central Library Services Aid	9,038	9,038
Coordinated Outreach	4,547	4,547
Library Services to County Corrections	208	208
Library Services to State Corrections	1,083	1,083
Total NY State Recurring Grants	14,876	14,876

	Revenue Change
408140 State Aid - Library System	102,137
408150 State Aid - Member Libraries	7,392
402190 Appropriated Fund Balance	(109,529)
Total Operating Change	-

Trustee Amodeo made the motion to approve. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item J.2 – Resolution 2025-32 – NYS Construction Aid Request – Elaine M. Panty Branch Library. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized proposed Resolution 2025-32 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-32

WHEREAS, up to \$2,011,297 in the New York State \$44,000,000 Public Library Construction Aid Program funding is available to support up to 90% of eligible costs for projects benefitting libraries located in economically disadvantaged/ distressed communities and up to 50% of eligible project costs for other libraries located within Erie County, and

WHEREAS, this aid provides an opportunity to leverage local funds to increase the amount available to finance badly needed capital rehabilitation and improvement projects, and

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL)'s Elaine M. Panty Branch Library is in need of multiple improvements, and

WHEREAS, estimated construction related costs for this work total \$1,114,944.25, with the amount eligible to be requested from State Aid totaling \$836,208, and

WHEREAS, a 2025 Capital Project Request for \$650,000 has been approved by the City of Buffalo, which will serve as local match for this project and cover the cost of the project, less the grant award, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, pursuant to the requirements of the New York State Library Construction Aid Program, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library assures that:

- 1) It possesses the legal authority to submit this application including all understandings and assurances contained herein and to direct and authorize the person identified as the construction project manager to act as the official representative of the applicant in connection with this application and to provide such additional information as may be required;
- 2) The Library fully expects the project will begin construction, or continue construction work in the case of a project that has begun but is not complete as of the date of application to the Library System, within 180 days after receipt of written notification from the State Education Department that State Aid construction funds have been approved for the project and that the conditions of the funding have been met;
- 3) The project will be conducted in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, including New York State Library Construction Aid Program rules; and
- 4) Pursuant to the terms of Chapter 768 of New York State Laws of 1953, under which the B&ECPL was established, the City of Buffalo-owned Buffalo & Erie County Public Library building is a public library operated by the B&ECPL, which the B&ECPL fully expects and intends to operate as a public library for a minimum of 10 years from the date of the anticipated completion of construction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the above proceeds will be made available to reimburse the City of Buffalo for project related expense undertaken by the City as owner of the building, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Library Interim Director or her designee to submit a NYS Public Library Construction Aid Program request for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library – Elaine M. Panty Branch Library Improvements project in the amount of \$753,554.

Trustee Bucki asked how the metal roof overlay works. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci explained that it acts as the first step for protecting the roof. It will ultimately extend the life of the roof to approximately 10 to 15 years. Next, Trustee Bartholomew asked about the repeat of numbers in Resolution 2025-34. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci explained the purpose of that. Lastly, Trustee Bucki noticed that the resolution stated that Erie County owned Elaine M. Panty Branch Library. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that she will change that to correctly say City of Buffalo owned. Trustee Bucki also suggested removing “his” before designee.

Trustee Panty made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item J.3 – Resolution 2025-33 – NYS Construction Aid – Central Library. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed Resolution 2025-33 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-33

WHEREAS, up to \$2,011,297 in the New York State \$44,000,000 Public Library Construction Aid Program funding is available to support up to 90% of eligible costs for projects benefitting libraries located in economically disadvantaged/distressed communities and up to 50% of eligible project costs for other libraries located within Erie County, and

WHEREAS, this aid provides an opportunity to leverage local funds to increase the amount available to finance badly needed capital rehabilitation and improvement projects, and

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL)'s Central Library is in need of rehabilitating the exterior building envelope, and

WHEREAS, estimated construction related costs for this work total \$1,300,000, with the amount eligible to be requested from State Aid totaling \$1,170,000, and

WHEREAS, a 2025 Capital Project Request for \$1 million was approved by the County and will serve as local match for this project and cover the cost of the project, less the grant award, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, pursuant to the requirements of the New York State Library Construction Aid Program, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees assures that:

- 5) It possesses the legal authority to submit this application including all understandings and assurances contained herein and to direct and authorize the person identified as the construction project manager to act as the official representative of the applicant in connection with this application and to provide such additional information as may be required;
- 6) The Library fully expects the project will begin construction, or continue construction work in the case of a project that has begun but is not complete as of the date of application to the Library System, within 180 days after receipt of written notification from the State Education Department that State Aid construction funds have been approved for the project and that the conditions of the funding have been met;
- 7) The project will be conducted in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, including New York State Library Construction Aid Program rules; and

- 8) Pursuant to the terms of Chapter 768 of New York State Laws of 1953, under which the B&ECPL was established, the County of Erie-owned Buffalo & Erie County Public Library building is a public library operated by the B&ECPL, which the B&ECPL fully expects and intends to operate as a public library for a minimum of 10 years from the date of the anticipated completion of construction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the above proceeds will be made available to reimburse the County of Erie for project related expense undertaken by the County as owner of the building, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Interim Library Director or her designee to submit a NYS Public Library Construction Aid Program request for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library - Central Library Building Envelope project in the amount of \$1,170,000.

Trustee Bucki suggested removing "his" before designee.

Trustee Panty made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Bucki seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item J.4 – Resolution 2025-34 – NYS Construction Aid – System Recommendations. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed Resolution 2025-34 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-34

WHEREAS, up to \$2,011,297 in the \$44 million state-wide New York State (NYS) Public Library Construction Aid Program is available to support up to 90% of eligible costs for libraries serving economically-distressed/disadvantaged communities and up to 50% of eligible project costs for other public libraries in Erie County, and

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) in its role as a Library System must evaluate and recommend approval of construction applications submitted by public libraries or public library systems, and

WHEREAS, a total of four projects were submitted for this program, supporting the Boston Free Library; the Central Library; the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library; and the Newstead Public Library and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2022, the B&ECPL Board of Trustees in Resolution 2022-29 set the criteria for qualifying for up to 90% funding as:

- Libraries whose chartered service areas are located in communities with an average poverty rate equal to or greater than the NYS average poverty rate using federal census data, and/or

- Libraries physically located within the boundaries of a school district whose student population's participation in the federal free and reduced lunch program is 30% or higher, and

WHEREAS, two of the four libraries qualify to receive up to 90% Construction Aid Program funding as they serve economically-disadvantaged/ distressed communities, specifically: the Central and Panty Branch libraries qualify under both criteria while the Boston and Newstead Libraries qualify to receive up to 75% Construction Aid funding under the school lunch participation criteria, and

WHEREAS, Construction Aid Program funding requested totals \$2,093,951, which is \$82,654 above the \$2,011,297 allocation available under this program, and

WHEREAS, after review, the following allocation method is recommended: 1) fully fund the 2 libraries requesting less than \$77,000; and 2) reduce recommended funding for the 2 libraries requesting over \$77,000 to balance the total allocation available, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that pursuant to NYS State Aid for Construction Program requirements and the above criteria, the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL recommends approval of the requested projects, in the following amounts:

LIBRARY	TOTAL PROJECT COST	AID REQUEST	RECOMMENDED AWARD
• Boston Free Library LED Lighting Installation	\$14,511	\$10,883	\$10,883
• Central Library Building Envelope Rehabilitation	\$1,300,000	\$1,170,000	\$1,170,000
• Elaine M. Panty Branch Library Building Improvements	\$1,114,944	\$836,208	\$753,554
• Newstead Public Library HVAC Replacement	\$102,480	\$76,860	\$76,860
TOTALS:	\$2,531,935	\$2,093,951	\$2,011,297

and be it further

RESOLVED, that subsequent to this resolution's passage should any of the above projects or individual components of said projects be: 1) withdrawn; 2) determined by B&ECPL or NY State Library reviewers to be ineligible for Construction Aid and/or local match; and/or 3) should the NY State Library reallocate additional funds for projects, any share of the funding allocation freed up and/or additional funding provided is recommended to be distributed proportionally to the remaining projects whose request was not fully funded, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Library Interim Director or her designee is authorized to transmit the necessary online grant application, forms, and documents in time to meet the October 8, 2025 filing deadline.

Trustee Sasiadek asked how the Central Library qualifies for 90% of NYS Construction Aid Program funding. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci explained in detail how it is determined and is associated with free school lunch criteria. Following that, Trustee Panty wanted to show her appreciation for NYS Construction Aid.

Trustee Amodeo made the motion to approve. Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item J.5 – Resolution 2025-35 – Accept CREST Fund – Crane Branch Library Phase III. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized proposed Resolution 2025-35 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-35

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) has received confirmation of a \$160,000 capital-funding grant award from the Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Technology Program (CREST), sponsored by New York State Senator Sean M. Ryan, for construction of Rooftop Public Access and Gathering Space at the Crane Branch Library, and

WHEREAS, this project will create an accessible rooftop public space on the two-story Crane Branch Library, accented with planters, usable for public meetings and gatherings both in conjunction with or independent of the adjacent second floor public meeting space, and

WHEREAS, the rooftop access work will be the third and final phase of a multi-phase project to improve the Crane Branch Library, with construction estimated to begin in Spring of 2026, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL gratefully appreciates Senator Ryan's continued support for these needed improvements.

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees approves establishing a Grant Budget as shown below:

Crane Branch Library Rooftop Public Access Improvements - CREST

Revenue:

Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Tech. Program	<u>\$160,000</u>
Total Revenue	\$160,000

Expense:

A&E, Construction and Equipment/Furnishings	<u>\$160,000</u>
Total Expense	\$160,000

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees authorizes the use of grant proceeds to pay project expenses, including reimbursing the City of Buffalo for construction-related expense made by the City of Buffalo as owner of the building, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees authorizes use of up to \$160,000 in Library Fund assigned fund balance, if needed, to advance funds to allow the project to proceed until CREST funds are available, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees designates the Interim Library Director or her designee as authorized officer able execute necessary documents needed to effectuate CREST grants.

Chair El-Behairy asked if the Crane Branch Library will have to close for the roof project. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that it will remain open.

Trustee Panty made the motion to approve. Trustee Bucki seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K – Executive Session. Trustee Sasiadek made the motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Trustee Kelly seconded, and the Board moved into Executive Session at 4:37 p.m. The Board exited Executive Session at 5:25 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Amodeo, and a second by Trustee Panty. No action was taken.

Agenda Item K.1 – Election of Search Committee. Chair El-Behairy shared the proposed members of the Ad Hoc Search Committee. Members are proposed to include Chair El-Behairy, Michael Amodeo, Christine Bartholomew, Kathleen Berens Bucki, John Craik,

Kimberly Johnson, Joel Moore, Elaine Panty, and Association of Contracting Library Trustees Representative Martha Buyer. On a motion by Trustee Amodeo, and a second by Trustee Panty these members were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Amodeo with a second by Trustee Kelly, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew
Secretary