

## Letter to Friends of Barker Library, Annual Report 2020

Hi, Friends, it was an interesting year, but one in which your support was appreciated more than ever.

It started out pretty normally with twice weekly storytimes in the Children's Room followed by crafts around the table in the Steele Meeting Room. In February, we held our 4th Annual Kids' Takeover the Library and entertained 40 young adults on Presidents' Day with crafts, ukulele playing, video games, movies and pizza. The Friends provided funds for all of these things.

In mid March, everything changed.

Programming in 2020 presented lots of interesting challenges - gaining access to materials from the library building when it was closed and I was programming from home (or finding substitutes for books and other materials at my own house!), navigating and complying with publisher permissions, the question of which statistics to keep and how often, and, of course, trying to figure out the best and most feasible way of connecting with patrons from a distance.

Two weeks after our closure, in April 2020, we started a weekly video storytime via Facebook. We read a few weeks of Beatrix Potter because I owned a bunch of them and they were public domain! In May we read about trees. In June, we read about pets. I also recorded videos with craft and activity suggestions with STEM ideas utilizing common items that families (and myself!) may have handy around their home or neighborhood or even in their recycling bin or compost pile!

In July and August, we held 5 weeks of summer reading programming which included weekly storytimes and meetings via Zoom as well as four virtual events. I created craft supply bags for each child with instructional videos posted on Facebook. We fashioned our own crowns, we built castles out of junk, we created habitats for mythical creatures, and turned pens into swords (thereby negating the debate over which is mightier)! We held two free book giveaways outside the Library during the Fredonia Farmer's Market and gave away Scholastic Literary Partnership and donated items to about 60 kids. The Friends very generously supported our summer activities.

In September, our regular storytimes moved to the Zoom platform. I currently read to 10-15 preschool and school aged children twice weekly and provide supply bags for registrants to participate in coordinated crafts and activities. Any remaining bags are given away in the Library's Children's Room to young families. In October we held a trick or treat pumpkin patch event outside the library!

Many thanks to Friends for sponsoring the technology and subscriptions that make our virtual programming possible!

As usual, I have something to promote:

In November the Barker Library Book Club, now celebrating its 11th year, got together via Zoom to discuss the NEA Big Read title, *Pretty Monsters*. We will be meeting again, virtually, on Saturday, February 27th at 2pm to discuss Ta-Nehisi Coates' *THE WATER DANCER*. All are welcome to register by sending an e-mail to [childrenslibrarian@barkerlibrary.org](mailto:childrenslibrarian@barkerlibrary.org).

Sincerely,

Carey Caserta, Children's and Young Adult Librarian