



Montgomery County Library Board

September 8, 2021

ATTENDEES: Briskin-Limehouse, Christman, Duval, Lighter, Manubay, Melnick, Negro, Rippeon, Roberts, Spencer, Villar

STAFF: Anita Vassallo, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Andrea Castrogiovanni, Program Specialist II; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary; Cassandra Malik, Program Manager, Early Literacy and Children's Services

GUESTS: Gael Cheek, Chair, Potomac LAC; James Montgomery, Advocacy Committee Chair, Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County; Linda Pottern, Chair, Davis LAC

The meeting was called to order by Chair Roberts at 7:00 PM

INTRODUCTIONS:

- Roll call of Board members; guests were introduced.

MINUTES AND LAC APPLICATION APPROVALS:

- The minutes from the June 9, 2021, meeting were approved.
- The following LAC applications were approved:
 - Davis – Giese, Marcus
 - Connie Morella – Mojto
 - Potomac – McGrath
 - Silver Spring – Gales
 - White Oak - Oprisch

PRESENTATION: MCPL: From COVID to Recovery – Andrea Castrogiovanni, Program Specialist II

- MD Governor Hogan declares a state of emergency on March 5, 2020 (renewed March 17, 2020)
- MCPL locations closed to the public March 16, 2020
- MCPL Service Focus
 - Person-to-person services
 - Responding to information needs
 - March 16 through June 28, 2020: *Ask A Librarian (AAL)* telephone and email service continued during closure: 4,100+ customer transactions logged
 - June 29, 2020: Branches re-opened bookdrops and resumed telephone service (in addition to AAL)
FY21 = nearly 244,000 customer transactions logged

- Information needs as diverse as the community
 - COVID testing centers; directory and specific search questions; “homework help” questions
- Digital Library card registrations
 - Launched: March 19, 2020
 - FY21: 33,780 cards issued
- Books@Home
 - Launched: January 2018
 - New FY21 registrants: 12
 - Total customers using this service: 111
- eResource services
 - Added resources during closure:
 - *Brainfuse* [March 2021]: Live online tutoring, homework help, test prep and writing assistance; live online coaching and resources for resume, interview prep and career planning; and benefits, career, and academic assistance support for Veterans
 - *PressReader* [October 2020]: newspapers and magazines from more than 120 countries
 - *Washington Post Online* [January 2021]: Unlimited digital access to WashingtonPost.com

	FY19	FY20	FY21 [year of COVID]
Overdrive (checkouts)	1,029,777	1,175,880	1,738,068
Safari (views)	365,284	222,886	259,365
Kanopy (plays)	61,234	148,622	208,243
Udemy (lectures completed)	Not yet acquired	33,996	121,992
Hoopla (checkouts)	Not yet acquired	38,208	215,969
Washington Consumer Checkbook (logins)	1,761	1,938	3,577

- Programs
 - COVID “introduced” MCPL to virtual programming
 - First virtual program was held March 19, 2020 (African-American Book Discussion Group)
 - Virtual format opens an opportunity for individuals who may not otherwise attend a library program
 - Most popular program categories during FY21 [*highest attendance across all age groups*]
 - Storytime (53,195)

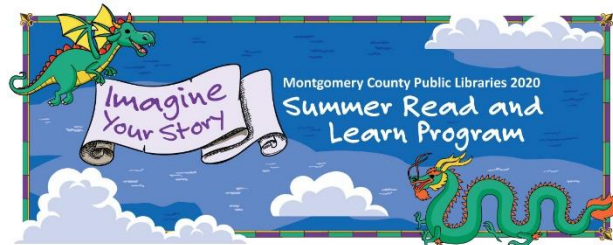
- Health & Wellness (17,932)
- Lectures/Discussions (e.g., *author talks*) (10,974)
- Performance & Dance (5,534)
- Conversation Club (4,723)

■ Days/times *programs held* during COVID

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9 AM		73	57	54	52	17	2
10 AM	43	23	16	58	107	37	61
11 AM		49	21	74	21	8	15
12 PM		11	3	47	5	4	8
1 PM	41	23	53	42	47	9	43
2 PM	9	72	104	45	64	30	23
3 PM	12	44	48	49	58	50	9
4 PM	6	47	103	143	125	67	19
5 PM	2	2	37	15	107	58	1
6 PM	1	13	172	27	100	1	
7 PM		71	61	90	117	32	4
8 PM				1	5		1

■ Days/times of *attendance* during COVID

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9 AM	6,453	7,955	8,707	7,186	2,578	333	
10 AM	1,952	685	1,475	1,066	5,512	4,254	2,943
11 AM	1,001	380	1,104	904	371	970	
12 PM	111	12	750	34	124	411	
1 PM	851	1,123	2,062	1,801	468	515	339
2 PM	705	1,048	815	2,979	638	803	122
3 PM	6,026	1,129	6,318	1,097	806	413	109
4 PM	831	1,247	2,639	1,737	660	215	278
5 PM	36	455	67	1,778	2,677	70	59
6 PM	189	3,283	442	2,527	18		492
7 PM	688	826	1,514	1,682	650	288	
8 PM			14	92	29		



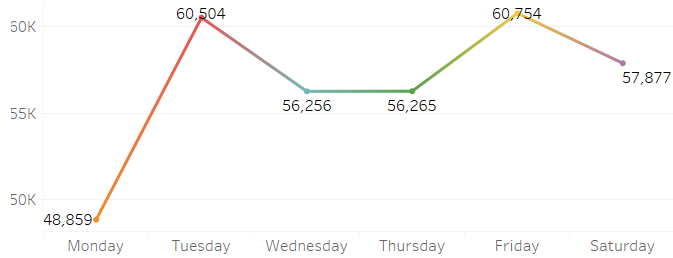
- On average, 58% of participants indicate behavioral and knowledge-based changes because of program involvement.
- In 2020, there were more newcomer registrants to the program (52%) (2019 had 44%; 2018 had 48%).

○ Physical materials services

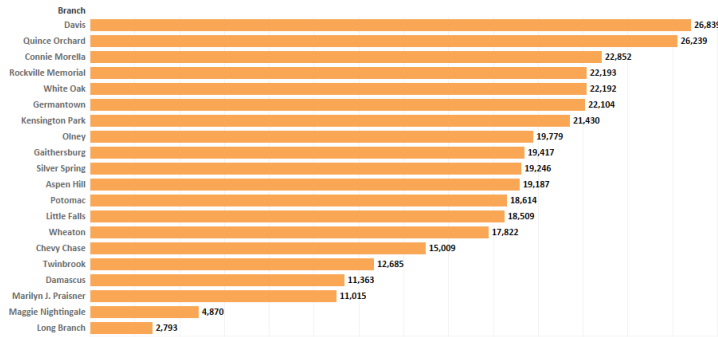
- As of June 30, 2021, MCPL had nearly 2.2 million items in the physical inventory
- Collection development continued during COVID
 - Approximately 168,000 volumes were added in FY21 (representing nearly 8% of total inventory)
 - Compare with FY20: 2.4 million items in inventory Approximately 231,000 volumes were added in FY20 (representing nearly 10% of total inventory)
- Holds To Go! (H2G)
 - Imperative to continue meeting community information needs and to maintain role in providing materials for recreational, educational and vocational use
 - Staff committee initiated, investigated, and developed a “contactless” method for bringing resources to residents

- Began July 6, 2020; ended July 3, 2021
- 377,158 customer appointments → 354,158 (94%) “successful”

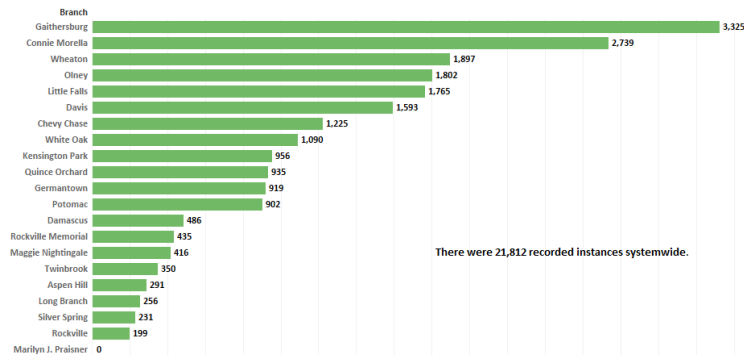
Popular Days For Successful Appointments



H2G: number of appointments by branch
July 6, 2020 through July 3, 2021



Branch walkins during H2G period
July 6, 2020 through July 3, 2021



- What about circulation?
 - H2G generated approximately 5.4 million checkouts/renewals
 - What did customers read?
 - *Where the Crawdads Sing*
 - *The Dutch House*
 - *Educated: A Memoir*
 - *Becoming*
 - *Summer Supper*
 - *Edison: the Mystery of the Missing Mouse Treasure*
 - Popular non-book items included Express DVDs and audiobooks
 - Looking ahead to COVID recovery
 - Consistent precautions + community awareness = Customers will return to utilize onsite services and resources
 - Anticipated demand for access to physical collections; helping students make up for lost ground; assistance with workforce and business-related resources

- COVID heightened awareness of eResources; anticipated increased checkout and renewals numbers for physical collection
- COVID opened new venue for programming
- Questions/Comments
 - An excellent report.
 - Are these reports shared on the website or the County Council?
 - This report will be shared.
 - What is a checkout?
 - The initial scan of an item is a checkout.
 - There was no way to have a one to one tie with appointments and checkouts.
 - Customers were often picking up for other family members.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Personnel - The following staff changes took place during the months of June, July and August:
 - New hire:
 - Brandt Van Unen, Deaf Culture Digital Library
 - Transfers:
 - Sophia Parodi, Library Desk Assistant, from Gaithersburg to Olney
 - Felicity Brown, MIII, from Chevy Chase to Collection Management
 - Jeffrey Coster, Librarian I, from Potomac to Connie Morella
 - Cassandra Harper, Librarian I, from Long Branch to Wheaton
 - Brian Rochester, Library Aide, Germantown to Wheaton
 - Danielle Deaver, Librarian II, Potomac to Davis
 - Amy King, Library Assistant I at Aspen Hill to Library Aide at Kensington Park
 - Bounkong Soumpholphakdy Library Assistant I at Gaithersburg to Library Tech at Collection Management
 - Timothy Hendricks, Librarian II, Quince Orchard to Potomac
 - Myra Remigio-Leonard, Senior Librarian, Gaithersburg to Olney
 - Jennifer Meddings, Librarian II, Gaithersburg to Quince Orchard
 - Promotions:
 - Cassandra Malik, Librarian II (Connie Morella) to Program Manager II, Central Programming Team
 - Separated from County service:
 - Lisa Navidi, Librarian, Davis
 - Ryan Abijomaa, Library Associate, Connie Morella
 - Sharat Buddhavarapu, Librarian I, Maggie Nightingale
 - Irene LaClair, Library Assistant I, Potomac
 - Carolyn Bogardus, Branch Manager (MIII), Little Falls
 - Briana Brockett-Richmond, Librarian I, Aspen Hill
 - Raul Mena, Technology Management, Central
 - Sun Chong, Library Assistant, Little Falls
- Actively recruiting for Librarian I positions now. Will be doing some more hiring throughout the year. There are a high number of vacancies.
- Substitutes have been recalled. Barbara McClayton, Human Resources Manager and Substitute Supervisor, has conducted two mini-onboarding sessions for returning Substitutes. All substitutes will need to complete in branch refresher training and shadowing before they may begin to work in the branches.

- Pages have also been recalled. Will begin recruiting for more pages in early October.
- Refresh/Construction Updates:
 - Germantown - Almost complete (acoustical tiles need to be installed), and we are identifying a re-opening date and a date for staff return.
 - Maggie Nightingale – Closed on August 2, 2021. Furniture and books were stored. ADA work in front and back of the library has been completed. A temporary stand-alone book drop was installed.
 - Potomac - Schematic design continues. Trying to address ADA issues.
 - Damascus - Facilities assessment complete. The Senior Center will be refreshed at the same time.
- Koha Aspen Discovery to rollout on October 4. The new catalog will allow:
 - Seamless integration of MCPL’s physical and digital collections to see all formats of titles
 - Creation of usernames and passwords by customers
 - Faster, more accurate searches
 - Creation of reading lists and reading histories by customers
 - Browsing of the collection from a mobile device
 - Customers to rate books
- Discontinued telephone renewal and telephone notification services as of Monday, August 2, 2021. Customers were encouraged to [sign up](#) for email and/or text notifications. Those who preferred not to receive text or email notifications can call any MCPL branch for assistance during open hours
- MCPL implemented a new policy that was effective August 1 regarding live animals. No live animals are to be housed in Montgomery County Public Library facilities for any period of time. This pertains to any and all live animals to include fish, insects, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. It is not possible to guarantee that live animals in MCPL Facilities can be kept and cared for under the optimal conditions for their species. Animals may still enter MCPL facilities when part of a scheduled program, such as a nature program displaying reptile or birds, but no animal is to be housed for any period of time in the library facilities.
- The series of Outdoor Programs at Aspen Hill, Germantown, Long Branch and Noyes has been very successful. FOLMC funded the programs at Long Branch and Noyes. They will continue to assist the Noyes Library as a sponsor for STEM and art activities being held outdoors every other week in September and October.

Branch	Program	Attendance
Aspen Hill	Storytime (June – August)	599
Aspen Hill	Family Fun Night (July and August)	159
Aspen Hill	Nature Discovery (July and August)	40
Long Branch	The Rhythmaya: Dance Group	48
Long Branch	Barry Louis Polisar	93
Long Branch	Luis Garay	68
Long Branch	Build-a-Bot	45
Long Branch	1, 2, 3 Andrés	201
Noyes	Mermaid Art Program	15
Noyes	STEM activity - make ice cream in Ziploc bags	80

- Report on the BASICS at the next Library Board meeting.

CHAIR’S REPORT:

- Quite a few openings for liaisons and Board vacancies. If you know anyone that you think would be a good fit for the Library Board, please ask them to apply.
- Special thank you to Carrie Villar, Toni Negro, and Dan Melnick for your service to the Library, your spirit and advocating for the community. You will be missed, and we appreciate you and the work you have done in support of Libraries. Please share with friends or neighbors who might be interested that we are seeking to fill vacancies. We could certainly use more people like you.

WORKGROUP REPORTS:

- Library Policy and Practices (Lighter, Duval, Briskin-Limehouse, Manubay)
 - Decided to meet the fourth Monday of every month.
 - Will review the LAC Handbook and brainstorm ideas during the first meeting.
- Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup (Rippeon, Melnick, Negro)
 - Citizens for Maryland Libraries 2021 Annual Conference for Friends, Trustees, and Library Supporters, October 16, 2021, 10 AM – 3 PM @ the Michael Busch Library in Annapolis.
- LAC and Board Activities (Roberts, Villar)
 - Committee needs to be reconstituted.

OLD BUSINESS:

- LAC Assignments

BRANCH	ASSIGNED
Accessibility	Lighter, Timothy
Aspen Hill	Lighter, Timothy (temp.)
Chevy Chase	VACANT
Connie Morella	Briskin-Limehouse, Laura
Correctional Facility	NA
Damascus	Roberts, Sonja
Davis	VACANT
Gaithersburg	Rippeon, Brandon
Germantown	Roberts, Sonja
Kensington Park	Manubay, Grace
Little Falls	Manubay, Grace
Long Branch	VACANT
Maggie Nightingale	Rippeon, Brandon
Marilyn Praisner	Briskin-Limehouse, Laura
Noyes	VACANT
Olney	Lighter, Timothy
Potomac	VACANT
Quince Orchard	VACANT
Rockville Memorial	Duval, Bill
Silver Spring	Briskin-Limehouse, Laura
Twinbrook	Duval, Bill
Wheaton	Manubay, Grace
White Oak	VACANT

- Library Board Interviews
 - Tim Lighter will serve on the Recommendation Committee along with Chair Roberts and Director Vassallo.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None

LIAISON REPORTS:

- Accessibility Advisory - Had a meeting last week. Elizabeth Lang was there and talked about staff training. There was discussion regarding accessibility and software in some of the branches. Damascus Library was visited by the AAC members. Will form workgroups to meet separately to do some of the planned work.
- Aspen Hill – Off for the summer.
- White Oak – Off for the summer.
- Damascus – Working on their annual report.
- Maggie Nightingale – Met on August 4. Group will continue to meet during the refresh.
- Gaithersburg – Last met on June 28; the meeting was well attended. Will meet again in September.
- Germantown – Not active since COVID.
- Little Falls – Met in August. Their branch manager was leaving and spoke about the transition. The LAC wants to do outreach with neighborhood newsletters, will wait until the interim branch manager is on board. The LAC will have questions regarding staff leaving; anticipate this and think about a response. Next meeting scheduled for October 7.
- Marilyn Praisner – Took off for the summer. Would like to have a virtual meeting option going forward.
- Silver Spring – Took off for the summer. Want to look at best practices for hybrid meetings.
- Noyes – Met in late May. Elected a new president, Paulette Dickerson. Will meet again on September 23; this will be the last meeting as the liaison. Hope someone will take on Noyes as the new Board liaison.
- Olney – Met last in June. Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) asked for a presentation. Acting Branch Manager Kate Sweeney did present during the GOCA, and it went well. Have a great diverse group of participants in the English Conversation groups that have been meeting via Zoom. Interested in how to recruit new members for the LAC. Nina Uzick and Maria Caswell are still co-chairs. The next meeting is September 18.
- Rockville Memorial – The LAC continues to meet. Continues to be happy with the library being physically open.
- Twinbrook – The LAC is still defunct due to being hit hard by COVID. Not sure what is happening regarding recruitment with the new branch manager.
- Potomac – It was a good meeting. Submitted feedback on the refresh and wanted to know responses. Had concerns about the fish tank being removed. Very interested in making sure the library had an environmental collection and display. Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, branch manager, will be working with the group. Gearing up for Potomac Day, which is on October 23; support from the Board would be great and welcome.
- Montgomery College – Administrative staff returned to campus mid-June and were required to work in person two days a week. Student-facing service staff began working August 2. Currently working two days a week in person until October 4, when they will return to a regular workweek. Using matrix to determine if the October 4 date will remain. The College mandates that all employees must wear masks while in buildings. Library staff are working

staggered schedules with shortened hours with both in person and virtual services. Not offering study rooms due to the challenges of being short staffed. Using them for part-time staff to meet with students and for individual students taking hybrid courses to take their virtual classes. Classes began on August 30 with 70% of courses still online. Foot traffic has been very light. Been given the go ahead to begin hiring for seven vacancies. Beginning the first stages of recruiting for a new college president; hope to fill by the end of the fall semester.

- MCPS – Started school on August 30 with five days a week, face to face in person learning. Teachers came back on August 23. This was a short week having Monday and Tuesday off. Masks are mandated to be worn in schools and offices. Quarantining COVID cases – all students that have a positive case and any student in close contact, must be quarantined until they receive a negative COVID test. State is not requiring those in close contact to be quarantined. The school system has requested rapid tests, which will help the number of students staying in school. There is a virtual academy at the elementary level (K- 6) and for 7-12. They started the same time as the in-person students and have the same schedule. They are trying to bring in some face to face opportunities for those students in the virtual academies. Parents had to apply to get into the academies by the summer, but they are still taking names for the waitlist. MCPS has great luck working with MCPL staff. Currently working with Cassandra Malik on branch contacts with schools and keeping it updated. All staff were required to return to work in person on July 6 and submit their vaccination status via the state database.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- For those of us who advocate for Libraries, our job is much easier thanks to the way Libraries have performed during this crisis period for the last year plus. I am interested in the BASICS program as an advocate. We have long advocated that Libraries play an essential role in getting more of our children ready through kindergarten, because of the Libraries role in early childhood literacy. The BASICS program is about early childhood literacy in many ways. I think there are some important advocacy opportunities there, and that is why I interested in this program, especially if this will endure past the pilot program. [Jim Montgomery, Advocacy Committee Chair, FOLMC]

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.