Jewel English, who has been the library’s Facility Manager for 8 years now, will retire in May. We will miss her so much! She has always been such a caring and uplifting part of our library family. We know she will visit though and that helps ease the pain of losing her, knowing she is still close by as a member of our community.

The Comal County elections took place at the library:

- 1933 people voted during Early Voting, April 24-May 2

**Circulation Team Report**

- Number of visitors to the library: 11,890
- Total items circulated: 27,349
- New cards issued: 188
- Number of active members: 8,211
Programming, Outreach and Community Collaboration

Adult Programs (Hannah Johnson & Allison Reeves)
In April, the adult programming team finalized our summer programs schedule. We are excited about our line-up of summer programs, including an outdoor concert with Texas-based band The Peterson Brothers this July. We submitted an application in April with the Texas Commission on the Arts to request funding support for the concert.

Hannah completed a series of Workforce Solutions Alamo webinars so we can be aware of services and resources that they offer to our patrons and community.

Program Highlights
In April we wrapped up a number of our spring programs. Our most recent Great Courses series (Cultural Literacy for World Religions) ended at the beginning of the month. We are excited to start up the Great Courses program again in the summer as we explore the nation’s state parks.

AARP Tax Aide ended mid-April. In April, our AARP volunteers were able to help 96 people file their taxes. A big thank you to everyone who helped with the program - AARP volunteers and library staff! This tax season, AARP volunteers at our library site helped approximately 441 people with tax filing and contributed roughly 600 volunteer hours.

We held the first four of our eight Great Decisions classes for 2023 this month. Patrons enjoyed watching the Foreign Policy Association’s informational videos and discussing the different topics each week. Staff member, Taryn Young, moderated each of the four discussions and we received great feedback from attendees about the program. The program will return in the fall to finish out the remaining topics selected for the year.

The four-part Introduction to Genealogy series ended in April. We are grateful for the volunteer instructors from the local FamilySearch Center operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for providing their time and expertise on genealogical databases, searches, and resources.

We celebrated Earth Day on April 22nd with a film screening of the documentary Deep in the Heart, an exploration of Texas’s landscapes and wildlife. We had a total of 44 community members come out to join us for the event, and we look forward to offering additional film screenings later this year.

The programming team took advantage of the nice April spring weather as we moved outdoors for a number of programs. Caroline Broderick, a library staff member and a Master Naturalist, led a group on a Nature Walk, discussing the many native plants we have on library grounds. Our Night at the Library event this month was an all ages family game night that took place in the evening on
our back patio. We enjoyed a scenic view and snacks as the group played games. The month ended with our Exploring Art Mediums class working “en plein air”. They enjoyed the library’s outdoor spaces as they found a nature scene to paint with watercolors. We are very fortunate to have beautiful and functional outdoor spaces that allow us to expand our programming!

**Outreach (Stephanie Emerson)**

Hello April and spring showers! This month we reached 215 members of our community directly and many more through books and materials. Outreach Patrons checked out a total of 226 books for the month and the Little Free Library tallies came in at over 153 donation books placed between the 3 locations.

**ART DISPLAY:** We were so excited to have the Smithson Valley High School art students on display this month. There were 19 pieces in total comprised of everything from the classic masters, to more modern stylings, to a self-portrait. It was such a delightful display of young talent in our community!

**BOOK CLUB:** Books & Bites at the Bulverde Spring Branch Activity Center met to discuss *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. It was the longest book we’ve read so far. It was completely enjoyed by all and we had 2 brand new members as well! For the bite, I made French Palmier cookies in honor of the Count’s love of breakfast pastries.

**ASSISTED LIVING / HOMEBOUND:** The Bulverde Assisted Living visits every other week continue to serve our 10 patrons. The donated 300 piece puzzles continue to be rotated through the facility for all to enjoy. Our homebound delivery is still small but are hopeful it expands with the new web site exposure and online form. Overall a positive month with 37 books checked out.

Bella Groves has made a staffing change for the Activities Director. We met mid-month to brainstorm on what future collaborations might look like on site and potentially in the library.

**OUTREACH COLLECTIONS:**

- There were a few additions to the Trekker collection this month. Mostly comprised of new purchases to complete a series. Total number in the collection has reached 387 books.
- Large Print borrowing bookcases were refreshed with Outreach LP inventory at The Bulverde Spring Branch Activity Center, and Bulverde Assisted Living.
- The giveaway collection of bilingual and books in Spanish continues reach the community at both Provisions Food Bank and the SHARE Center. Cook book donations were placed this month as well at Provisions. The flyer in Spanish is updated each month for current dates and times on our ESL and bilingual storyline offerings at both locations.

**YOUTH OUTREACH:**

Pop-Up Library was canceled due to rain. There wasn’t another open spot to reschedule but we are ready for May!
At the SHARE Center, I was solo this time for storytime. After a couple of books, the children made fingerprint bluebonnets and received First Step reading books.

Living Rock Academy enjoyed their last month of regular “Library Day” visits. At the end of April, they had 110 books checked out. We hope to see a lot more of those students this summer at the library! The month of May will be spent collecting the entirety of the checked out books before summer begins.

At SJRC this month, the residents enjoyed making chocolate dipped saltines and coffee. A perfect pick me up for a chilly and rainy April day.

Sanctuary of Hope residents were regular attendees at the recent series of Family Place Workshops at the library. This month was our second on campus storytime and the excitement was obvious. Montana read stories, led the group in songs and brought lots of fun shapes for gluing on a long paper as a group. The residents gave us books and DVDs to return to the library which indicates they are fully utilizing their library memberships.

Comal ISD hosted an English Learner event to emphasis resources for students to continue to learn at home over the summer. Javier and I presented and answered questions on the libraries diverse and sizable digital resources as well as the in library programs for adults and children. Emphasis was placed on the upcoming summer programs and the two ESL class offerings. The Comal ISD representatives as well as the attending ESL teachers from the various local schools were excited about the resources we offer and the potential for future collaborations. Montana was manning the online session and said there were about 30 parents that joined virtually. We were even tagged and thanked on Twitter by the ISD event organizers!
LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES:

- All 3 Little Free Libraries locations had two important improvements this month:
  - Magnetic door closures were installed to help with protecting the books in rainy and windy weather.
  - New MPFL logos on the plexiglass now unify all locations visually and from a branding perspective.
- The approval for a LFL at the Guadalupe River State Park is still not finalized but we understand the process is lengthy.

OTHER NEWS:

- Unfortunately, Movies in the Park with the Bulverde Police Department was canceled due to the crazy storms we had rolling through. We are tossing around the idea of rescheduling that movie title for November at the Library in the lower parking lot.
- The Trekker is looking fabulous with reconditioned exterior trim and brightened headlights as we head into another Texas summer!

Makerspace (Lindy Hargrave, Sam Stephens, Devon Rogers)

Hello everyone! It’s your Makerspace team reporting. This month, we warmed up the 3d printers and taught 3d printing classes for teens and adults. Adults sculpted 3d representations of lunes and haikus for National Poetry Month, while teens made 3d-printed nametag fridge magnets.

As you can imagine, our 3d printers saw more use this month than in months past: 7 hours on our newly-repaired Prusa and 3 hours on our Ender (which now needs a bit of TLC). We also saw 13.5 hours of usage on our laser cutters. We had a full house for our Makerspace hours and we’re looking forward to summer and showing off our latest program ideas to our patrons. Please wish us luck! And thank you for reading!
April was the last full month of programming for teens and we went all out for it! We started the month with another Life Skills for Teens class. This class focused on Financial Literacy. A big thank you to Stephanie Emerson for leading this class! The teens that attended learned all about the importance of budgeting, how to make a budget, and the basics of money.

The monthly Teen Makerspace class focuses on 3D printing. Teens learned the basics of designing a 3D print and got to see the 3D printer in action! They each made their own personalized 3D magnet.

In April we switched up our typical Night at the Library class. Rather than hosting 3 different programs, the adult, teen, and children’s programming teams joined together to host a Games and Goodies Night for All Ages. The program included a variety of yard, board, and card games, as well as a spring-themed snack. Overall, the joint program was a success! Families enjoyed being able to spend time together at the library.

As usual, one of the more popular classes was the Teen Cooking Class. For this month’s cooking class, the teens made lava cakes! Due to a slight overcooking issue, the lava cakes were less like lava cakes and more like giant brownies, but they tasted great so we’re counting the class as a win!
In the second half of the month, we had a full class for our DIY Pressed Flower Lanterns. Teens used Mod-Podge, dried flowers, tissue paper, and recycled jars to make their lanterns. Each of the teens showed their creativity and all of their lanterns looked amazing!

Our Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPG) met twice this month and continues to be very popular among teens.

To wrap up Teen Programming, we had our monthly Teen Genre Book Club. We had 3 new teens show up to Book Club, which is awesome!

We had several teen volunteers show up to help with our Dia Celebration. They helped set up, run different stations, and clean up after the celebration. We could not have done it without them!

Stephanie and I made a trip out to SJRC and made iced coffee and a number of different desserts with the teens. They had a lot of fun making their own drinks and desserts.

Children’s (Montana Rindahl & Javier Gonzalez)
Our Family Place Workshop wrapped up on April 18th after five weeks. Feedback from families was primarily positive and all of our community partners have offered to come back for future sessions! We plan to continue offering the workshop a few times a year in the fall, winter, and spring – and already have a few ideas for how we can improve future sessions.

This month we had a variety of fun crafts and activities for our Tuesday craft program. Highlights include cute bunny bags, Super Mario themed crafts and awesome foil transfer art!

We hosted our final Wednesday programs of the school year this month. A big thank you to Briana’s brother who donated a whole bin of Legos to our program! The kids had a blast going through the bin and seeing what new things they could build. Graphic Novel Club also met this month and celebrated with a pizza party! Kids worked on their comic strips and Mr. Javier had them play a few drawing
At STEM Day kids made their own skimmers! They had to construct them using paper and straws. They even got to test them using fans in the back of the room. It was a great learning experience for all!

One new program we offered in April was a Haiku Happy Hour in honor of National Poetry Month. A small group of elementary school students enjoyed some snacks and lemonade while learning about the art of haiku, practicing syllable counts, and identifying poems as haikus or not. They even wrote some haikus of their own!

Local child author, Odelia Knaebel, donated a copy of her book “The only brown cow on the farm” to our Children’s collection. She was so excited to share her book with us and we’re sure children will love reading it!

During Tween Club this month we used our KEVA Planks, and the Tweens were able to collaborate to build various structures as well as complete building challenges. To celebrate National Library Week, the tweens also enjoyed creating and decorating their own bookmarks and wrote their own book reviews.

We wrapped up the month with our Dia Celebrations and Kids Chess Tournament! The chess tournament was a huge success with about 30 children participating. The event was hosted in partnership with Complete Chess New Braunfels. We look forward to hosting another chess tournament in the near future. On the other side of the library, families enjoyed crafts, stories and games for the Dia de los Niños (Kids’ Day) celebration. We also had nachos and sno-cones on the patio. Everyone had a great time!

Overall, April was a busy month for children’s programming! Javier, Allison, and Briana did a great job managing all of our events while Montana had some conference travel. At the Texas Library Association conference, Montana shared some of
our early literacy programming ideas and successes on a panel called “You’re a Family Place Library, Now What?” with colleagues from Austin Public Library, Houston Public Library, and Harris County Public Library. It was great to share how many things you can do, even with a small(er) staff in a single-branch library compared to a big city system. Montana also presented on our partnerships with local parks, outdoor, and agricultural agencies and how we’ve incorporated nature programming into our library offerings for children. Despite being on Friday afternoon, the room was full and we’ve (hopefully) inspired more libraries to try chick hatching at their libraries!

Marketing & Public Relations
(Marc Dunlap & Devon Rogers)
Printing with Minuteman Press has been quite smooth, and I am excited to see what they can do for our Summer Library Program calendars! We are also moving ahead with the direct mail project with Minuteman Press, which has a program that will take a lot of “grunt” work out of our hands while making the actual postage price significantly cheaper.

We have been steadily working on the Branding Book, though progression is a bit slower than anticipated. But with Devon’s help and once we have the color pallet finalized we should be able to get a reviewable product rather quickly.

On a side note, helping both the Foundation and the Friends with their Logos has gone rather smoothly. They have accepted the initial redesign, and there are only a few more details to iron out.
Collections Reports

Adults (Kristin): We loaned 4 items to and borrowed 88 items from other libraries in the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system. I proctored 4 exams in April. We worked one-on-one with 7 members to teach them how to use our electronic resources. In April the music CDs were weeded and the Texana collection was inventoried. This month I will focus on inventorying the music collection and weeding the nonfiction section.

Two adults were emailed a personalized reading list in April.

Teens (Allison): In April, we completed weeding and inventory of the entire Young Adult Collection. A big thank you to Taryn for taking over that project! Our next project will be to shift the YA AudioBooks and Nonfiction to make some more room for new YA Nonfiction on the shelf in the Teen Room.

Children (Montana & Javi): In April we inventoried Children’s Nonfiction.

Technology (Rob Lerner & Marc Dunlap)

Stand-out-Issues

Large Format Printer: Rob has decided that with the continuous issues, we need to dedicate a laptop to the printer. Once that is done it should fix all the update and sign-in issues.

The storms towards the end of the month really stressed the network’s infrastructure leading to some disappointed patrons, though many understood and were happy that we had our computers up (most of the time) even if we didn’t have WiFi.

Technology Help

April was a pretty steady month with both drop-in and scheduled tech-help-related meetings. Quite a few involved the Overdrive switch to Libby, while others were simple computer help issues. I am glad we have started the Basic Computer Help class! Several patrons showed interest in the class, but were disappointed that they didn’t register in time. Overall the move to three days has gone well and having the new setup in with the tall table has been a great help.

Rob: April had two major Technology events. The first was expected. After waiting for 3 years we received our new NVRs for our security camera system. Installation was quick and straight forward. Everything went relatively smoothly with the integration and getting staff used to the new system. We will now be able to use the built in camera AI that can show if the camera was triggered by a human or a vehicle. We also can now store more than a month’s worth of footage and upgrade to newer cameras that weren’t supported by the old system.

The second event was completely unexpected. At exactly 12:45am on Thursday the 27th, during a heavy thunderstorm, the library briefly lost power. This usually isn’t a problem. We have backup batteries to keep the systems up, but after being out for less than a minute something was “broken” in the network. Systems were no longer communicating. Some machines that were visible on the network were no longer being assigned IP addresses by the network controller. This meant that about half of all of our computers and phones couldn’t connect. We had no luck finding the cause. Nothing we did seem to fix the problem. In order for us to have some level of
functionality we began the very tedious process of manually assigning IP addresses to the staff computers that weren’t connecting. For almost three days we went through every possible fix we could think of only to have it seemingly fix itself Sunday night. By Monday morning everything was back to normal. The most frustrating thing is that we still don’t know why it happened so we can’t plan for if it happens again. The only thing we know is that the library lost power, and despite battery backups the system went down. We are now looking at ways to institute what would be a failover network in case any part of our current systems fail again.

Facilities Management (Jewel English)
Regular scheduled monthly maintenance for pest control, aerobic septic system, and grounds keeping maintenance.

Study Rooms: 452 people used the Study Rooms in April

Public Meeting Room use: 124 people used the meeting rooms in April

Fence Project: 4.10.2023, James Resendiz Construction and Welding started the fence work to enclose the new property. He completed the rod iron decorative fence and installed the gates on 4.27.2023. Installing the ranch fence continues around the perimeter of the new property.

Pictured: a view of the new decorative wrought iron fence that matches our existing fence, and the new gate. The fence continues along the property line to Hwy 281, and connects to the new ranch fence that Resendiz installed along the property line adjacent to Hwy 281. Entrance to new property is from the uphill driveway next to the front parking area at Randolph Brooks FCU. The contractors also installed a walk through, lockable, gate next to the large, drive-through gate which will have an automatic gate opener.

(Photos provided by Marc Dunlap, Marketing Specialist, MFPL)

HVAC Periodic Maintenance (PM):

4.6.2023 Beyer Mechanical completed the 3rd PM per our Planned Maintenance Agreement dated May 12, 2023, on the Diakin FCUs and McQuay AHUs; and completed necessary repairs:

4.11.2023: Diakin FCU2-6: replaced a leaking PVC 90, and repaired the drain line, returned units back into service, tested and recoded their operation.

4.27.2023: Diakin AHU: Removed and replaced blower bearings
5.9.2023: FCU Mitsubishi multi-split unit in the Server Room: cleaned blower and evaporator coil

Outside electrical outlets:

Rich Herr, retired building inspector, and Roger with Roman Electric worked out how to install electrical outlets in the east lower parking area. They installed a new panel in the pump house and (2) quadplex outlets on the outside of the pump house. They will be used for Summer Reading Programs and Events (bounce house, dunk tank, bubble machine), outdoor Movie Night, the Trunk or Treat Events, and Makerspace program.

Roman Electric is sending quotes on installing self contained switches in the lighting panel which will allow us to remotely operate the gates and outside lights. (Photos provided by our new Facilities Manager, Warren Pichon)

Team Mechanical: 4.21.2023 installed new pumps in preparation for the new Chiller: picture on the left is the old pump; picture on the right are the new pumps. Next, they will remove the old air cooled chiller, install the new Chiller, modify the pipes to connect to the new inlet and outlets. We were informed on April 25th the delivery of the new Chiller has been delayed “again” until June 9.

Front desk shelf cover: Michael Berube made a cover for the shelf at the Front Desk that not only filled in the gaps between the shelf and the Front Desk facade, but matches the Front Desk and ties everything together. The plexiglass panels that were installed during the pandemic were removed, creating a more open, patron-friendly Front Desk area.
Eagle Scout Project: 4.19.2023 Josh Grizzel presented his Eagle Scout Project proposal to build a 12’ x 10’ deck - with a railing on two sides - between the building and the storage shed (by the staff entrance). Assistant Scout Leader, Jeff Franz, will supervise the project. They will use Trex Enhance composite decking – it has a 20 year commercial use warranty. The cost to use this type of decking was only slightly more than using western red cedar, which would have to be treated and maintained after installation. Josh plans to start the project in May or early June. The Groundskeeper cleared the area in preparation for the Deck Project.

Groundskeeping:

4.20.2023: regular ground maintenance, put the stakes around the front entrance in preparation for early voting which began on April 24.

5.3.2023: cleaned debris, trimmed the trees, dug up stumps, and mowed the “new hill” in front of the new wrought iron fence down to Bulverde Crossing. Warren Pichon, who will be our new Facility Manager, when I retire on May 12, took the picture below from Home Depot – the “new hill” is the brown area on the right

Flags: May, 2023 - Tyler Singleton, Ameritex Flags, delivered new US and TX flags, and took the old flags which he will retire; this is a back-up set to have on hand when needed.

Facility Maintenance Notebook: updated on 4.18.2023; the new information was placed in both Maintenance Notebooks: at the Front Desk, and the back Check In area.

Administration (Susan/Cathy)

Warren Pichon was hired as our part time Facilities Manager to replace Jewel English when she leaves in mid-May. We are also happy that Presley Berry, who worked for us before she left for college, will return for the summer and will help with circulation and programming until she leaves again for school.

Susan spent a lot of time on Sam.gov trying to renew our entity, which is necessary to receive any federal grant funds, such as TSLAC grants which come from federal funding. Renewing sam.gov is a very frustrating process but is finally complete so we are now good to go again until next year. We will start the renewal process much earlier next year.
We received a notification that TSLAC has recommended us for funding for the MFPL Out and About grant for over $17,000 that will enable us to purchase much needed outreach materials and equipment.

Susan worked on the detail budget packets for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and sent them out to the responsible staff members for their proposals. The budget will be reviewed by the BARLD Trustees at their May meeting.

Denelle Wrightson, our Master Facilities Planner, met with the BARLD, support organization boards and the library staff for input regarding their needs and wish lists for the future. The most repeated items from staff were more space and more sinks. The new plan will be for the 2024-2034 period and will include all needs for our Library District community.