



# Annual Review 2018



# Osceola Library System

## Annual Review 2018

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2018 was a spectacular year for the Osceola Library System. In this annual review, all the events, achievements, updates and initiatives will be outlined to give a monthly overview of how the Osceola Library System creates a dynamic, welcoming and innovative space for the citizens of Osceola County. From partnerships and improved services, to one of a kind events and updated collections, there is something for everyone at the Library.

### January

#### *Check-It-Out Campaign*

This month we launched our Check-It-Out program in partnership with the annual Kissimmee Valley Livestock Show & Fair to promote both the fun of the fair and the fun of reading! The Check-It-Out campaign rewarded every kid who checked out five books or more with a free child's fair ticket. We distributed over 200 tickets system-wide. To support the Check-It-Out campaign, the local 4H club brought animals into our storytime. The 4H kids had an opportunity to show off their animals from roosters to rabbits while entertaining 87 storytime attendees.

#### *WEE Read Family Nights*

WEE Read is an Osceola Early Learning Coalition initiative focusing on integrating literacy into all areas of development and promoting social emotional education to all ages. The goal is to increase quality of care and education and provide effective feedback. This program is a yearlong initiative designed to help educators and providers with the skills necessary to provide a rich and nurturing environment. We joined the Osceola Early Learning Coalition to provide Family Night at three community child care centers participating in the Wee Read initiative. This was an opportunity for the staff to engage children in storytelling and provide insightful information about the importance of reading at home. We reached over 100 people through these Family Night events.

#### *Book Give-Away Program*

A recent partnership with County Human Services Department has led to a support of their Crock Pot Initiative. The Human Services Department works directly with underserved populations in the community to place them into permanent housing. Part of this initiative includes families receiving a crock pot when they have achieved permanent housing. In an effort to encourage reading for these families, we donated boxes of books for the initiative so that families not only receive a crock pot but also books for the entire family.

## American Dream Literacy Initiative

The Osceola Library System has been selected as one of 20 public libraries nationwide to receive a \$10,000 American Dream Literacy Initiative grant from the American Library Association (ALA) and Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

With the funding, we will deliver highly effective English as a Second Language (ESL) opportunities to residents offered at convenient times by certified instructors, improve access to important ESL services and resources for Spanish-speaking residents through enhanced public service and partnerships, and promote these services and resources via community and media outlets aimed at the Spanish-speaking population.

Newcomers, such as those displaced by Hurricane Maria, and long-time residents who are non-English speaking, will be able to choose from a broader array of ESL classes and opportunities to practice English during regular conversation classes and social events that are facilitated by teachers, tutors, and volunteers. School District of Osceola County's Adult Learning Center of Osceola will provide certified teachers for conversation classes that meet strict district criteria. The Adult Literacy League will offer training classes for new volunteers desiring to teach beginner, intermediate and citizenship classes. The learning and speaking opportunities will be offered during evenings and weekends at three convenient Library locations – Hart Memorial, Poinciana and Buenaventura Lakes.

## February

### Celebrate Black History Month

#### *Back in the Day with Willie Mae*

Adult storyteller Willie Mae has captivated audiences at author talks for both the City of St. Cloud and the City of Kissimmee. This year we invited her to help us celebrate Black History Month with her firsthand account of what life was like as a black youth in Osceola County long ago. She shared humor and passion through her unforgettable stories with almost 90 customers after visiting multiple Libraries in the system.

#### *African American Read-In*

The City of Kissimmee and Osceola Library joined thousands of organizations across the country and around the world in participating in the 29th National African American Read-In celebrating history with a wide range of inspirational and humorous selections from African American literature read aloud. The event featured special guest readers from local government and community as well as musical selections. The Library provided 300 books to attendees, all of which were written by African American authors or were featuring an African American.

### Remembering Paradise Park

The Osceola Library submitted an application for funding from the Florida Humanities Council in honor of Black History month and received \$500 to fund a visit from Lu Vickers. In 1949, when African Americans did not have access to many of the nation's recreation areas, Silver Springs owners did something no other Florida attraction did: they opened a parallel attraction called "Paradise Park for Colored People," which became one of the most popular places for African Americans to visit until it closed in 1969. Lu Vickers, author of one novel and several books on Florida history, including *Weeki Wachee*, *City of Mermaids*, and *Cypress Gardens: America's Tropical Wonderland* presented a meaningful program using vintage photographs, video, and brochures.

### Orisirisi African Folklore

This is an awe-inspiring African adventure rooted in the history, culture, and traditions of Africa, inclusive of folktales, legends, and myths, spirited drumming, dance and song, children's games, lectures on special topics, and a healthy dose of the obligatory African tradition of audience participation. The nationally and internationally acclaimed performing arts and educational initiative was founded in 1985 by husband and wife team Don and Tutu Harrell, with the expressed purpose of sharing the beauty and poignancy of African life and culture.

### **14th Annual Ready, Set, Grow Early Educators Conference**

The Library partnered with the Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County to host the 14th Annual Ready, Set, Grow Early Educators Conference. Over 300 early educators participated in an all-day conference to enhance STEAM based knowledge and expertise through several activities. The Library provided 17 interactive STEAM stations from ozobots to wigglebots for the early educators to gain hands-on experience. The Library showcased an insightful overview of how to provide STEAM programming through technology and DIY activities with basic household items like shaving cream and baking soda. After the activities, the Library provided a PowerPoint presentation filled with ideas and techniques for basic storytimes applicable for all ages. The Library then finished the day as part of the panel of speakers.

### **1st Annual Bridal Expo**

The Osceola Library hosted its first Bridal Expo partnering with local businesses to showcase the many services locally owned that help make a wedding a true success. The St. Cloud Library had 14 local businesses from bridal/tuxedo shops, bakeries, venues, DJ providers, photographers, invitations/stationary designers, health and wellness, musicians, and travel agents. The event entertained 256 customers. In addition to the expo, we also hosted an Escape Room: Bridal

Boutique Breakout. The bride needed help picking out dresses in just a few hours before the wedding. It was a race against the clock and 43 successful customers helped the bride.

### ***Nonfiction Friends Podcast***

This month saw the launch of the Nonfiction Friends bi-weekly podcast. A podcast is a digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device. Within the last year at least 112 million Americans have listened to podcasts and 67 million of those listen to podcasts monthly. The Library's new program capitalizes on that momentum and expands our reach to different demographics through this newer, exciting medium. Nonfiction Friends covers topics featured in non-fiction books and features interviews with interesting guests. Episodes are available to download on iTunes, SoundCloud and Google Play.

## **March**

### **Living Women's History**

March is Women's History Month! To commemorate the incredible contributions of women throughout civilization, the Library presented "Living Women's History" with guest speakers and immersive experiences across the system. Brave and important figures as Corrie Ten Boom and Unsinkable Molly Brown were brought to life by presenters in period costume, while community groups like the Society for Creative Anachronism and the Daughters of the American Revolution recreated periods of history and the stories and handicrafts of women during those times. These presentations educated 55 persons on the significant contributions of women in history.

Women's history was also a compelling topic of innovation in our children's programs. Members of the Kissimmee Girl Scouts joined the Hart Memorial Library's Edison Club for a special edition of History with an Attitude celebrating the scientific contributions of Marie Curie and Amelia Earhart. At the West Osceola Library, school age children learned about the evolution of women's suffrage over the last 100 years through creative hands-on learning and games. St. Cloud Library featured women's history in their American Girl and Homeschool Library where kids learned about the role women played during WWII, and the impact scientists such as Jane Goodall and Hedy Lamarr had on the fields of anthropology and military weaponry. In all, more than 125 school age kids and tweens embarked on these educational journeys through history.

### **Escape Room: Wrinkle in Time**

The Library offered another exciting and clever Escape Room to the delight of kids and adults alike. This month's theme featured elements from the children's fantasy book, Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle, which is also a major motion picture in theaters now. Guests entered the tesseract to rescue Dr.

Murry with our very own Mrs. Whatsit guiding you through the challenges. It was great Saturday afternoon fun for 65 adventurers. Look for more Escape Room fun during the Summer Reading Club at all branches!

## **DVD Checkout Allowances Increased**

Starting March 1, limits on DVDs -- how many DVDs may be checked out per library card and how many may be placed on hold -- have been increased. Patrons may check out up to 50 items on a card, regardless of the type of item (book, DVD, CD, etc.). Patrons can now place up to 20 holds per library card with no restrictions on item type. This change has definitely been embraced! As a result of this policy switch, DVDs checkouts in March 2018 showed a 45% increase over this same time last year and a 20% increase over the previous month. The Library is committed to seeking out more ways to ensure that the resources patrons need and want find their way into their lives and homes.

## **April**

### **International Festival**

On April 11 at the Buenaventura Lakes Library and April 18 at the Hart Memorial Library, an International Festival was hosted that engaged 574 people over both Libraries. The two-day event was a cultural bonanza representing many countries and traditions. Staff and volunteers showcased the pride in their cultures as they interacted with attendees over various crafts, foods, and activities. Customers enjoyed belly dancing, Native American dancers, a sampling of authentic foods from many countries, henna tattoos, and photo opportunities with famous landmarks from around the world. Hands-on crafts from countries included: China with a Chinese puppet, Denmark making a Danish Christmas heart as an ornament, Italy with pasta necklaces using colors from their flag, Japan with origami, Russia with Babushka face buttons, and Egypt with soccer/foosball game.

This event compliments a key element associated to the American Dream Literacy Grant we recently received. This event was a cultural celebration that encouraged our language learners from throughout the community to get to know their neighbors, interacting one on one to practice language skills and improve overall community literacy.

### **Literary Magazine Publication and Presentation**

Our first LitMag was published this month. Tween and Teen authors were encouraged to submit their original short stories, poems, and essays over the course of several weeks for inclusion in the magazine. Final judging was performed by local authors Peter Raymundo, Vivi Barnes, and Brandon Goode. The result was a beautiful, glossy publication featuring six winning

works printed and distributed by the Library to schools, branch Libraries and online. At the LitMag Reception on April 28, the winning pieces were read aloud and the authors were congratulated by the judges and Osceola County Commissioner Cheryl Grieb with 66 people in attendance.

## **Arts & Crafting Programs for Adults**

Arts & Crafting programs continue to be a large draw for patrons. These programs not only teach functional skills that can be passed down generations, but they also give a welcoming environment for those seeking comradery or community connections. They can be challenging for the experienced artist or crafter, or present a brand new skill that keeps the hands, eyes, and brain sharp. In April we featured several ongoing programs at multiple Libraries: Machine Sewing 101 at Hart Memorial, Acrylic Painting for Seniors at Poinciana, Crafty Crew at Buenaventura Lakes, and Let's Get Knitting at St. Cloud are just some of the classes presented with 175 attendees. St. Cloud staff has also embarked on a new partnership with the Council on Aging and the Senior Center to provide activities, crafts, and other engagement for seniors in addition to promoting Library services and resources. 18 seniors participated in the first Library outreach.

## **STEAM Pilot Program**

The STEAM Pilot program was created by the Buenaventura Lakes Library and the Early Learning Coalition to bring hands-on STEAM activities to the Life Academy Preschool. The goal of this program was to show teachers how they could implement these types of programs into their classroom and engage students in experiential learning, and was intended to span a school year. We successfully met that goal by the last lesson in April.

The Library created lesson plans and taught topics on engineering, color science, circuitry, art, and technology. The children loved engaging with each of the lessons. Particular favorites were raising butterflies from caterpillars, making circuits with conductive play dough, and making music with bananas using makey makey. The teachers were very helpful running different stations for the children and eager to learn more STEAM activities. The preschool staff was excited at the last lesson when the Library provided a gift of some items we used in our lessons to get them started with applying STEAM in their classroom. The gift included a complete set of squishy circuits, two wiggle bots, and Lil' Engineers construction blocks set.

## **Walk Into History**

On Saturday, April 28 we hosted the second St. Cloud History Walk. 27 participants enjoyed the one-hour history talk by local historian Mike Urell and the walk itself. The group stopped for a

presentation hosted by The Women's Club and had the opportunity to visit several different locations that were not available to see when the event was first held two years ago.

### **Osceola Animal Services Community Appreciation Day**

The Library was invited to join the Community Appreciation Day at the Osceola County Animal Shelter. Youth staff provided a skit/storytime for the families in attendance. They also provided information about Library programs, emphasizing the upcoming Summer Reading Club, as well as signing up those interested in library cards. The event was well attended with over 500 people.

## **May**

### **American Dream Literacy Initiative Update**

As a learning journey made possible by the American Dream Literacy Initiative, two librarians traveled to Puerto Rico to meet with area librarians, educators, and cultural ambassadors and brought back with them a wealth of information on the reading and educational habits and interests for Puerto Ricans on the island. This will better inform our programming, outreaches, and collection building as we gather greater insight into how best to offer library services and resources to this large and growing population in Osceola County. This year, the Osceola Library System adopted a local high school library through a program sponsored by the American Library Association. Through arrangements made by the school's media specialist, our librarians toured the San Juan campus of the University of Puerto Rico, visited a local library in Dorado, engaged school children in Loiza and spoke with many in the fields of education and libraries. Our librarians even live streamed their journey on Facebook to the delight of our social media followers. It was truly a moving and informative experience that they plan to share with the Library and local community.

Also in May, we held our first workshop to train volunteers to become teachers or tutors for English as a Second Language. The Adult Literacy League presented strategies and techniques for effective learning, and all class attendees who successfully completed the 3-hour class at the Buenaventura Lakes Library are now able to volunteer on behalf of the Adult Literacy League as a tutor or teacher.



## Prime Time Wrap Up

The Prime Time Family Reading Time program, made possible by a grant from the Florida Humanities Council, held its third and last round of programming by taking the family literacy evenings “on the road.” Programming was held at the Museum of Military History in west Osceola County in an effort to reach families in transitional housing on along Highway 192 who may not have access to a local library or know about library services. Over five weeks, 20 families were involved in sharing in a meal often donated by local restaurants, stories and activities by Library storytellers, presentations and contributions by support agencies such as the Osceola Angels and the School District, and offers of transportation to and from the event provided by the grant. Although the Prime Time grant is ending, the Osceola Library System is researching ways to continue providing this type of support to at risk families along the 192 corridor. Over three Prime Time events, the Library System reached hundreds of people in an effort to improve family literacy. Surveys from participants confirmed that experiencing the gift of family-centered reading and engaging in the Prime Time program improved attitudes toward reading and learning, fostered a desire to share stories together, and that this was “the best experience ever!”

## Continued STEAM Engagement

Staff was busy traveling around the county and region, exploring and promoting STEAM activities. The Library presented at the 2018 Library MakerFest sponsored by the Northeast Florida Library Network, where successful programs like Crafty Crew, Fab Lab, and Edison Club were showcased. The Osceola team networked and learned from other librarians’ successful STEAM endeavors, getting inspired for what could be the next big STEAM thing!

The Fab Lab went on the road to Partin Settlement Elementary as a reward for students who participated in the 2018 Sunshine State Reader program. 61 kids worked with fun technology like squishy circuits, makey makey, and ozobots.

The Early Learning Coalition held their Ignite Steam Family Night and several Osceola team members showcased hands-on learning activities and engaged up to 250 attendees. It was also a great opportunity to plug the Summer Reading Club kicking off in June. Everyone learned something new and feedback about the Library was positive: “Loved the Osceola Library activities!”, “Love the way the presenters were interacting with the kids,” and “Great family activities we can do at home” were some of the takeaway comments.

### Notable STEAM events and activities in May:

- 3D Printing Workshop – exploring hands-on how 3D printers work

- Homeschool Libratory Science Fair Exhibit – science fair projects on display from homeschool groups
- Full Steam Ahead for Homeschoolers: with a special visit by Osceola County Animal Services – STEAM activities coupled with a visit from some furry friends
- Kids Makerspace: Mommy & Me – jewelry making for the perfect Mother’s Day gift
- Starting Your Own Podcast – learning podcast basics like choosing topics, generating listeners and self-promotion

### *Coming to America*

Eight Osceola High School students presented their touching stories of courage as they celebrated the publication of their book, *Coming to America*. Teacher Manuel Hernandez encouraged his students to write about their personal journeys as part of his English curriculum and the result was powerful and moving, and has achieved the feat of being the first book published by ESOL students in any high school in Florida. 35 attendees at the Hart Memorial Library enjoyed the night of stories and kinship.

## **June**

### *Summer Reading Kick Off*

Our two-month long Summer Reading Club kicked off in June as we encouraged kids of all ages to beat the heat, fight the summer knowledge slide and “Rock the Library” with fantastic events and activities.

Gatorland was on hand at the Buenaventura Lakes, West Osceola, St. Cloud and Poinciana libraries to rock your world with some close encounters of the scaly kind. Gator Wranglers educated everyone on Florida’s fun critters and everyone had the chance to touch snakes, lizards and even a Florida alligator. Nearly 700 kids and grownups squirmed, screamed and smiled with these great science presentations that got everyone in the groove for learning.

STEAM Day was back and bigger than ever as the Hart Memorial Library kicked off their Summer Reading Club. Nearly 500 kids and grownups worked through 11 different technology and maker-type stations using Spheros, Squishy Circuits and Solar K’NEX, followed by fun and interactive science presentation by Professor Christina Wilson. Outside the library, kids ran a giant hamster wheel configured to make human-powered snow cones. Everyone who

participated in events received a Minecraft keychain printed using the library's FlashForge Finder 3D printer which was one hand for display.

## **Ongoing Adult and Kid Summer Reading Programming**

Creativity was out of bounds as Summer Reading for Adults and Kids took flight in June. The theme for 2018 is "Libraries Rock!" and the calendar for June is filled with engaging and informative programming that has been a big hit with our patrons.

### Highlights for adults include:

Rockin' Summer Beginning Guitar where participants bring their own guitars for an introduction to chords, tuning, finger-picking and tab reading. This evening program at the Hart Library brought together nearly 60 strummers led by our Adult Services Librarian.

Rockin' Summer Swing and Latin Dance had participants strapping on their dancing shoes and learning the basics of swing and Latin dance, featured at the Hart Library and BVL Library respectively. Nearly 20 attendees boogie-woogied and samba'd the night away.

Escape Room: Escape the Green Room had participants role playing as rockstars who find themselves trapped backstage in the green room but late for a gig! Bandmates at the Poinciana, BVL and Hart Libraries worked together to solve puzzles and free themselves to get to the stage for their big show. Things took a slightly more dramatic turn where participants had to Escape the Phantom of the Opera's Masquerade ball and get to freedom before time ran out.

### Highlights for kids include:

Let Us Entertain You is our "featured performer" event of the Summer Reading Club. Some examples of programs included school age kids being thrilled and amazed by Mad Science as they explored sound traveling through solids, liquids and gases to make beautiful tones through resonance tubes, sushi chefs from Benihana introducing kids to "Kabuki Sushi" with hands-on sushi-making instruction, Actors Reaching Out presenting Dr. Seuss, the Moogician hoofin' around with magic comedy, and Extreme Animals bringing the "wildlife" to the library.

Families Rock the Library brings kids together with their grown up to learn and build and chill out with great activities like watching movies, making healthy snacks, "petting" musical instruments, "touching" big trucks, "digging" up the science of archaeology, conserving nature with the Nature Conservancy, and getting up close and personal with a doggy detective courtesy of the Osceola Sheriff's department.

Kids Rock the Library and Storytime keeps kids connected to reading, science and their community with experiments galore, visits from local heroes in law enforcement and Animal Services, telling “twisted fairy tales,” and exploring the science of bubbles, candy and more!

In total, our June attendance for the Summer Reading Club is approaching 6,500 people across five libraries.

### **ELC Award**

On June 14, the Osceola Library System received an award from the Early Learning Coalition for the hard work, commitment, and dedication in extended by library staff for the ELC’s 14th Annual Ready Set Grow Early Educators Conference. Staff created 17 different interactive STEAM stations to create a hands-on learning experience for nearly 300 early educators, created presentations with techniques to enhance storytimes and served as a panel of speakers for the early education conference.

### **Stories Fit for a Queen**

In conjunction with the City of Kissimmee’s annual PrideFest celebration, the Library presented “Stories Fit for a Queen” with local drag queen Jem Stone hosting a special Saturday storytime. Topics included the importance of inclusion, being yourself and celebrating what makes you fabulous. 45 kids and grownups danced, sang, and read along with Jem.

### **3D printing workshop**

May saw the launch of our first 3D printing workshops, and programming has continued through June. These workshops feature the FlashForge Finder 3D printer which is a home-sized model of 3D printer available for purchase through Amazon or other retailers. Each month a new project is tackled in addition to providing time to work on individual items. A video tutorial has been posted on the Library’s YouTube channel that provides the basics of 3D printing, from loading the filament to sending simple print jobs. Classes continue through the fall.

## **July**

### **Summer Reading in July**

So many wonderful programs were planned for this month’s Summer Reading Club. Here are a few highlights:

Central Florida Community Arts showcased pieces of an orchestra for a hands-on family learning experience in their “Instrument Petting Zoo.” Examples from the brass, string, woodwind, and percussion family were available to “pet” or play. Over 100 kids and grownups tested their musical skills.

Deputies from the Osceola Sheriff’s Department brought along their good buddy Murphy the K9 dog to the Poinciana and West Osceola Libraries to discuss stranger danger and how to prevent crime in your neighborhood. More than 80 kids and grownups learned important lessons and visited with Murphy. At West Osceola, Murphy even pitched in with shelving and checking out!

The Buenaventura Lakes Library gathered together important members of the community, local health providers, and businesses for their 2<sup>nd</sup> Change 4 Life Health and Safety Fair. 55 participants received information on wellness and wellbeing, and professionals were on hand to provide free vision screening, blood pressure checks, and other healthy family opportunities.

Osceola County Government lent their amazing support for two family events. At the Poinciana Library, Road & Bridge let kids and grownups “Touch a Truck” when they rolled up in their GRADLL Excavator, and 28 kids and grownups got close and personal with this impressive machine. The Hart Memorial Library enjoyed this event in June. At the St. Cloud Library, Animal Services discussed responsible pet ownership and the importance of adoption with 94 kids and grownups, followed by the opportunity to pet a precious pup.

### **Summer Reading Wrap Up**

Our two-month long Summer Reading Club ended in July with a rockin’ good time for adults and kids. Summer reading favorites Bucki & Gigi clowned around at all five libraries with their “Cruisin’ into Comedy” show featuring magic, mime, physical comedy, dance, and a darling doggo named Zeus.

On the adult side, the St. Cloud and Hart Memorial Libraries danced the night away at their Sock Hop Summer Wrap Up parties, sponsored in part by the Friends of the Library. Attendees dusted off their poodle skirts and letterman jackets and had a blast with dancing and themed activities. Nearly 650 kids and grownups celebrated the end of another great summer at the Library. Between programs, classes, outreaches, tours and camp activities, the Osceola Library System reached over 11,000 kids and grownups with its message of summer reading and learning rocks!

## ***Makerbot Unveiling***

Commissioner Viviana Janer celebrated the launch of the new Makerbot Replicator+ 3D printer with patrons and staff at the Buenaventura Lakes Library. Commissioner Janer generously donated the cutting edge technology so the community could gain knowledge about and benefit from what's new in STEAM technology. Samples of 3D-printed technology were presented to patrons as a take-away and classes are scheduled to kick off in August to teach the ins and outs of how to work with the Makerbot Replicator+.

## **August**

### **Back to School Bashes**

The Summer Reading program officially wrapped up in July, but the summer fun kept going in late July and August. Both Buenaventura Lakes and Hart Memorial Libraries celebrated the impending return to school with book back giveaways, refreshments, stories and even a princess.

On July 30, the Buenaventura Lakes Library was the place to be as Commissioner Janer coordinated the generous distribution of 500 book bags and school supplies to parents and children. The following Friday, Commissioner Grieb presented a "royal" storytime complete with crowns and a knight from Medieval Times, after distributing over 100 backpacks and supplies to a packed children's library. We are grateful to the commissioners for their commitment to ensuring school age children have the tools they need to be ready to learn at the start of the school year and for partnering with the library for these back pack giveaways.

### **The Living Library: Diversity in Our Community**

This month we kicked off our series entitled Living Library with the goal of encouraging participants to engage in conversation with others to learn more about different aspects of life in Osceola County and the diversity of its citizens, challenge stereotypes, get informed about the community, and, most of all, practice conversational skills in a friendly and safe environment. The Living Libraries are made possible by a grant from the American Library Association and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

August's Living Library was focused on "Diversity in Our Community" and featured several prominent community members speaking about their personal experiences and how those experiences have shaped their lives and world view and in turn what impact it's had on the growth and development of Osceola County. Guests included:

Dr. Kausik Mukhopadhyay: a scientist originally from India and now currently UCF faculty member who also has a joint appointment with BRIDG, representing the advanced technology aspect of our county.

Victoria Laos: a transgender activist representing the LGBTQA community. She is an advocate and Contigo Fund Decision Maker, which helps to strengthen and support grassroots causes of the Latinx and LGBTQ community.

Richard and Melissa: a homeless couple who are consistent patrons of the Hart Memorial Library and volunteers at Daily Bread of the Christian Service Center.

Jeremy Lanier: representing one of our pioneer families, the Laniers. Jeremy works at Lanier's Historic Downtown Marketplace, and brought a host of memorabilia and photos representing the history of Kissimmee.

Dayivet Velez: a student at Osceola High School and survivor of Hurricane Maria who relocated to Osceola the storm with her family. She is a published author along with fellow Osceola High School students who contributed to the book *Coming to America* about their immigration journeys.

It was very much a moving experience for everyone involved and will hopefully be repeated in the future.

## **Prevención de Diabetes (Diabetes Prevention) and Physician Lecture Series**

The Poinciana Library has found success with offering health-related programming presented by experts in the field. In August, they presented two series that resonated with audiences in that community: Prevencion de Diabetes and Physician Lecture Series.

The Diabetes prevention program is sponsored by the Hispanic Federation and consists of weekly meeting with health sponsors and diabetes prevention specialists who help design and encourage healthy living strategies en Español!

The Physician Lecture Series brings doctors from the Poinciana Medical Center to the Library for Q&A sessions on heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and more.

Libraries are a fantastic way to bridge the knowledge gap for citizens when it comes to their health. With these informational health programs, the Library becomes a place the community can turn to for factual and timely information to enable them to take an active role in managing their health and well-being.

## **TBLC VIP Conference**

Branch Manager Candice Casey and Youth Specialist Jonathan Robbins Leon traveled to the University of South Florida to present at the Tampa Bay Library Consortium VIP Conference which focuses on professional development for Library paraprofessionals. This year, the Osceola Library System sent two staff to attend workshops and make connections.

Having partnered together on several multi-generational events, they gave pointers on planning programs that appeal to a range of ages. After discussing techniques for engaging kids vs. adults and sharing some of their favorite successes, they discussed how to tell when a program could work as a

multi-generational event and how to tell when something works best when it's offered exclusively to one age group. It was a very well received presentation!

## September

### *Accio Harry Potter Month!*

Talented wizards casted the Homenum Revelio spell over the St. Cloud Library during the month of September as hundreds of muggles streamed in to enjoy Harry Potter-themed events and displays. Kicking off the festivities was the after-hours event, Sorcerers at Sunset: an Evening of Muggles & Magic, on September 1 to commemorate the start of the school year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Nearly 400 “students” played games like Quidditch Pong, enrolled in “Potions Class,” attended Care of Magical Creatures (Hagrid and his hippogriff stayed home) with special guest Amazing Animals, and competed in the staff-conjured Harry Potter Dark Arts Dash escape room. The creativity of the St. Cloud Library staff was on full display as events continued throughout the month for all ages, reaching over 800 kids and adults engaged in a variety of Harry Potter-themed programming like “Are you Smarter than a Potterhead?” and “Hedwig’s Heroes: the Owls of Hogwarts” with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

### **Career Online High School Launch**

A very exciting new program launched in September – Career Online High School. With access provided by the State Library of Florida, Career Online High School enables public libraries to provide scholarships for attendance in an accredited online high school program that when completed will result in a full high school diploma awarded by the State of Florida. Participants must have an Osceola Library card and have completed at least one year of high school to be eligible to participate. The program is entirely online, includes the opportunity to be mentored to success by professionals provided by the program, and includes access to important career training in addition to traditional high school curricula. The program is free to participants and has the power to be transformative to the life and livelihood of someone seeking to better themselves but lacking the financial means to do so.

### **Longing for Africa**

Celebration-based author Annie Schrank wrote her first memoir, *Longing for Africa: Book One: Ethiopia* about the time Jane Goodall inspired her to take her own adventurous journey as a young woman. In her presentation to 25 attendees at the West Osceola Library, Annie detailed her time spent in Ethiopia as a direct result of that inspiration – a year of civil war, a country-wide famine, and a Communist-backed military coup that toppled the 400-year-old monarchy led by Haile Selassie. Attendees enjoyed her slide show highlighting scenes from her adventures. She will be back at the West Osceola Library on November 13 at 7pm to talk about memoir-writing in general. All writers (or aspiring writers!) are



encouraged to attend as Annie will embark on another safari to Africa, and sharing excerpts from her upcoming memoir, Book Two: Kenya.

## **Volunteer Fair**

The Volunteer Fair is an annual event that brings together various organizations in one to highlight local places where volunteers are needed. Each year results in a different array of organizations, and different crowds of attendees. This year our organizations included For Our Future, Bookmark Buddies, Helping Paws Humane Society, CAAIRE, The Center Orlando, Snit-It Clinic, Adult Literacy League, Spay the Strays, Central Florida USO, Bishop Grady Villas, Help Now of Osceola County, and Cornerstone Hospice.

The organizations were arranged based on the minimum age required to volunteer, with cards on each table showing their age requirement. Word was sent to the local high schools about the event and shared by guidance counselors and teachers. There was also a teen summit occurring at the Civic Center next door, so many of the teens were able to attend both events, ultimately bringing in 87 attendees total.

## **Great Gatsby Poker Night**

The Great Gatsby Poker Night was really an afternoon multi-generational affair co-hosted by the Kissimmee Paranormal Investigators. KPI happened to have a variety of equipment needed to host a poker night, as well as skilled people to teach the public, and an interest in theming it to the 1920s. They provided tables for roulette, Texas Hold 'Em, and Blackjack, as well as prizes for winners of the poker tournament that they made. The Library linked the theme to the Great Gatsby in celebration of F. Scott Fitzgerald's birthday by providing photo ops (including a guest appearance by a model A car parked outside), playing the movie for atmosphere, mocktails (non-alcoholic versions of drinks popular in the 1920's), snacks, and activities including making 1920's style headbands and bowties made from discarded books. The event was a success with 58 in attendance of all ages, many of which dressed up for the occasion.

## **The Living Library – Welcome Home**

The Living Library series continued at the Poinciana Library in support of the American Dream Literacy Initiative's goal of creating informative and welcoming opportunities for new learners of English to practice their skills while engaging with members of the community. The focus this time was connecting new residents with all the available services one may need to make their new home in the Poinciana community. 22 participants spoke with representatives from Access Outreach Center, Help Now of Osceola County, Osceola Sheriff's Department, and more.

## October

### *Caturday Cat Faire*

Over 600 attendees celebrated all things cats at the Hart Memorial Library's Caturday Cat Faire. This unique library event featured cats available for adoption through Spay the Strays, a nonprofit animal rescue who brought fully vaccinated, spayed/neutered, micro-chipped cats that were ready for their forever homes. Aspiring cat owners or those who already owned cats (as they like to think, but we know the cats really own them) had their medical questions answered on-site by a vet from Tender Hearts Animal Hospital. Featured guests included Mitchell Osborn, Pet Psychic and Intuitive Soul Coach, speaking about animal communication, and New York Times Bestselling Author Ali Brandon (Diane A.S. Stuckart), sharing her experience and advice on writing using an animal's voice. Cat-related games and activities enjoyed by all ages included a "Cattify Yourself" Station, face-painting, cat photo-ops, obstacle course, robot mouse coding game, create your own cat toys, and cat card games. Patrons also browsed vendor stations and spoke to local cat-book authors. The event closed with a Crazy Cat T-Shirt Contest and raffle prize drawings, which included tickets to Big Cat Rescue as well as staff-made cat houses.

### **New Services Launched**

October saw the launch of four new services at the Osceola Library System. Notary service is now offered by staff at each library. Eight notaries at all 6 libraries have completed or are in the process of completing coursework and gaining certification to perform notary services. This is a free service to the community.

Patrons now have a more convenient method of paying account fees. Credit card readers have been installed at each service desk. Previously patrons could only pay by credit via the online catalog, but now patrons can use credit cards to resolve account issues while visiting the library and checking out materials.

Another exciting service launched in October was our new Educator Card, which gives classroom teachers in public and private schools the opportunity to take out up to 100 resources and place 50 holds for their classrooms. This is a huge bonus for schools lacking a comprehensive media center or for schools where classroom materials are limited. So far 19 educators have taken out Educator Cards.

The Library also launched access to a new media streaming service, Kanopy. With a library card in good standing, patrons can check out up to 8 items each month and offerings include classic films, independent films, children's media, documentaries and more.

### **3D Printing On Demand**

The BVL Library began offering access to a new technology -- 3D printing on demand – and it has inspired an interest in design, discovering of how technology is changing how we imagine and create, and has encouraged customers to use their talents to bring their creations to life. The community has shown a keen interest in this new service with the BVL Library now receiving daily 3D printing requests for a variety of projects, such as animals, Christmas decorations, unique characters, and even Friends of the Library badges. To promote learning and creativity with this exciting technology, the Library launched 3D Tech Tutoring sessions where patrons receive individualized training on how to use popular 3D printing software and the basics of the Makerbot Replicator+. The BVL Library is able to offer 3D printing on demand and workshops on the use of 3D printing technology due to the generous support of Commissioner Viviana Janer.

### **Arte Bajo la Sombrilla/Art Under the Umbrella**

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month the BVL Library hosted Arte Bajo la Sombrilla/Art Under the Umbrella sponsored by Tertulia Cuatro Gatos, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Spanish literature, art, music and culture. Organized by its founder Maria Emma Fernandez and Tertulias coordinator, Luisa Sanchez, the event received 250 attendees and provided an excellent opportunity to experience a variety of Hispanic cultures as seen through dance, musical performances, poetry readings, fashion, and art. Guests included Commissioner Viviana Janer, who opened the event with remarks about the BVL community, local artisans such as Alberto Quintero, who generously displayed his artwork throughout the event, as well as dance performances that highlighted the culture of Venezuela, Spain, and Panama. A big thank you goes to the Tertulia Cuarto Gatos for the hard work and dedication they have devoted to BVL Library during their two year partnership with Osceola Library System.

### **Adventures in BOOville (and other Halloween hauntings)**

It was a scary good time at the Library in October! Spooktacular events throughout the month brought out all the little guys and ghouls celebrating the changing of seasons (wishful thinking!). Actors Reaching Out helped 121 kids and grownups celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein at the Monster Mash Bash! Frankenstein Jr. program presented at St. Cloud, BVL and West Osceola Libraries. Actors Reaching Out also visited the Poinciana Library for more tricks and treats at Poinciana's annual Spooky Spectacular where 130 kids and grownups enjoyed a haunted escape room, games and activities. Many of our regular storytimes and programs were given spine-tingling themes in honor of the season. Library staff partnered with Kissimmee Main Street and the Early Learning Coalition to provide spooky stories and book giveaways to attendees of the Boo on Broadway – Adventures in BOOville annual event. 200 kids and grownups stopped for a thrilling tale and over 1200 books were distributed.

## **November**

### **New Opportunities**

November has bestowed upon us a bounty of positive recognition thanks to the persistence and creativity of our staff. The Library is again the recipient of the Prime Time Family Literacy grant from the Florida Humanities Council. The grant is a one-time award of \$2,000 to be spent on books and support for engaging inter-generational programming designed to encourage reading and discussion. The program should kick off in early Spring 2019 at the St. Cloud Library, facilitated by Crystal Hamrick and Lisa Jones.

Dagmar Lopez and Candice Casey will give a presentation at May's Florida Library Association conference on what they learned on their trip to Puerto Rico earlier this year. The trip was made possible by the American Dream Literacy Initiative following the major hurricane that dramatically impacted the socioeconomic future of Puerto Rico. Dagmar and Candice made the journey in an effort to learn more about the culture of library service and use on the island and determine how we can better serve an enduring Puerto Rican population in Central Florida.

### **Tinker Town Grand Opening**

Tinker Town is open for business! The Homework/Tutoring Room at Hart Memorial Library has been converted to a STEAM room for our littlest engineers under age 5. Staff used existing furniture to repurpose the space into a bright, inviting play/learn area with building toys like Duplo, wall activities, and cozy seating to encourage grownups to stay and engage with their children as they design, build, and play. Board books were also placed in this space to connect reading with imaginative play. The room has been a hit, especially on storytime days.

### **Tech Table Donation from Commissioner Grieb**

Commissioner Cheryl Grieb made a generous and surprise donation of two Tech Tables, child-friendly workstations that feature iPads loaded with the Osceola Reads free reading app, Footsteps2Brilliance. One table was placed at Hart Memorial Library and the other at the St. Cloud Library. The app is designed to teach the fundamentals of reading through interactive technology. The tables are great additions to our children's areas.

### **Fall Festivities**

It was 90 degrees outside but in our minds, the leaves were turning gold and red and there was a chill in the air as we celebrated fall holidays with food, crafts, stories, and BUBBLES! Chef Warren Caterson gave expert advice on how to not ruin Thanksgiving with dry turkey (among other things), kids and grownups gobbled up the fun at the Poinciana Library's and West Osceola Library's Turkeypalooza, and the St. Cloud Library frolicked into fall with their Fall Frolic and Crafters Fair featuring the Big Idea Bubble Show,

storytelling, music and games, plus unique crafts presented by local artisans. Over 160 enjoyed their warm fall celebrations with us.

## **Florida Author Fest**

In honor of National Novel Writing Month, the St. Cloud Library held its first Florida Author Fest, hosting over 30 local authors who set up tables to display their works. Authors conducted meet-and-greets with attendees who were able to purchase works and get them signed. As an added bonus, authors had the chance to mingle and network with other authors. A wide range of genres was represented such as Spiritual, Biography and Memoirs, Historical Fiction, Erotic Fiction, Paranormal Romance, Florida History, Reference, Children's Literature, Poetry, Teen, and authors who write en Español. The event was attended by 280 authors and literature aficionados. The focus of this event was the author meet and greet as a vehicle to establish interest and connections with authors. The St. Cloud Library is planning future author events, including breakout sessions, author panels, writing presentations/workshops, and much more.

## **New Website Launch**

The Library has launched a completely redesigned website that brings all the best of the library to your fingertips in a convenient and accessible format. Bright, colorful and thought-fully arranged, the new site is mobile-friendly, accessibility compliant and integrates the most important services and features that our patrons need, such as convenient access to the catalog, My Account, locations, eContent, events and news of the moment.

## **December**

December came in for a smooth landing, like a flying sleigh landing on snowy drift. As the twinkle lights came on around the community, a chill was in the air and everyone was prepping for a festive season, the Library rounded out a very successful 2018 with holiday events, grant awards, and some spiffy new wheels.

## **Everything is Awesome at the Jolly Holiday Parties!**

It's a tradition every year and the holiday celebrations were in full swing at the Jolly Holiday parties featured at the West Osceola, Buenaventura Lakes, St. Cloud, and Poinciana Libraries. Mrs. Claus stopped by to join the festivities and tell a story as revelers sipped cocoa, played games, crafted Christmas decorations, and some even jumped aboard the Polar (Parking Lot) Express! As an extra festive twist, each of the Jolly Holiday parties was themed to a decade or time period and the activities at each branch reflected popular traditions of that era. 169 attendees had a jolly good time. In a twist on the holiday party theme, the Hart Memorial Library celebrated the season with an Everything is Awesome: LEGO® Holiday Party. Building stations, LEGO-themed crafts, and creative games reinforced

the theme that families that create and play together, “stick together.” 79 kids and grownups “clicked” with this event.

### **LSTA Innovation Grant**

The Library was awarded the LSTA Innovation Grant by the State Library of Florida totaling nearly \$3000. Libraries across the state competed for grant funds for technology based projects. The funds will be used to purchase resources to improve our digital promotion efforts such as creating promotional film spots for social media and the website, documenting local history, delivering on demand storytime and instructional opportunities, and supporting live coverage of events. We will be purchasing a new digital camera, lighting kits, microphones, cell phone, and a cell phone stabilizer.

### **New Vans**

The Library has new vans! Our two 2003 workhorses saw their final days in December, retiring after 15 years of crisscrossing the County and sometimes the State to get materials and people safely where they needed to go. Those vans have witnessed lots of Library history and will be auctioned off by the County’s Fleet Management department, so who knows what their next adventure will be? Plans are in the works to have the new vans customized to be a source of rolling visual promotion for the Library as they travel across the County.

### **Storybook Trail**

The West Osceola Library created the wonderful Storybook Trail that takes kids and grownups on a journey outside the Library. Staff created a story based on Holidays Around the World and set up placards with a story placed outside the branch to be followed and read, creating an interactive literacy experience that takes advantage of West Osceola’s lovely lawn. The Storybook Trail stayed up through the month of December and at the conclusion of the program, a lucky patron won a four-pack of tickets to the Crayola Experience!

### **American Dream Grant Wraps Up**

The American Dream Grant program had its grand finale at the Everyday English Graduation Ceremony at the Hart Memorial Library. Students who attended more than 50 hours of the English conversational classes presented by ALCO teachers were awarded Kindle Fires preloaded with all of the popular Library apps. Some of those students actually concluded with up to 70 hours! Staff and ALCO teachers were on hand to celebrate their students with signed certificates, and the afternoon rounded out with a rousing game of Pictionary and snacks.

Part of the American Dream grant was the opportunity to develop promotional materials that would address the division within some of our communities regarding how much they know or understand what the Library can do for them and their families. Advertisements at two local bus shelters have been installed. These advertisements can be currently found on Michigan Avenue near Carol Street and on Bill Beck Blvd by Gateway High School. The ads will move to various locations around the County, gaining us exposure to residents and visitors who may not know about the Library or the basic services we offer.

Additionally, each branch received A-Frame signs to station outside (when the weather cooperates!), presenting a poster that enumerates our basic services. The Library will be investing in more promotional efforts that target underserved residents, using plain language that speaks to the core of our Library's offerings, with the emphasis on all of it being FREE!

# 2018 Gallery

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**ABOVE:**  
Everyday English  
Graduates at Hart  
Memorial Library -  
made possible by  
American Dream  
Literacy Grant.



**LEFT:**  
Orisirisi African  
Folklore performance  
for Black History Month  
at Hart Memorial  
Library.





**ABOVE - LEFT:**  
Bridal Expo at the St.  
Cloud Library.

**ABOVE - RIGHT:**  
Our Library Podcast,  
the Nonfiction Friends.

**LEFT:**  
Unsinkable Molly  
Brown, presented by  
Titanic The  
Experience, at the  
Poinciana Library. Part  
of our "Living Women's  
History" series.



**LEFT:**  
International  
Festival at Hart  
Memorial Library.

**BELOW:**  
One of the Lit Mag  
2018 winners  
reads her work  
aloud at the  
Reception at Hart  
Memorial Library.





**ABOVE:**  
Osceola Staff in Puerto Rico visiting our adopted library, made possible by the American Dream Literacy Grant.

**LEFT:**  
Teen authors of the *Coming to America* anthology.



**ABOVE:**  
Gatorland at the  
Buenaventura Lakes  
Library as part of our  
Summer Reading  
programs.



**LEFT:**  
Osceola Library receiving  
the ELC Award



**ABOVE:**  
Stories fit for a Queen  
storytime with Drag  
Queen Jem Stone at  
Hart Memorial Library.



**LEFT:**  
Commissioner Viviana  
Janer presents the new  
Makerbot Replicator+  
to the Buenaventura  
Lakes Library



**LEFT:**  
Commissioner Cheryl Grieb at Hart Memorial Library for her backpack giveaway.

**BELOW:**  
Sorcerers at Sunset after-hours event at the St. Cloud Library as part of a month of Harry Potter.





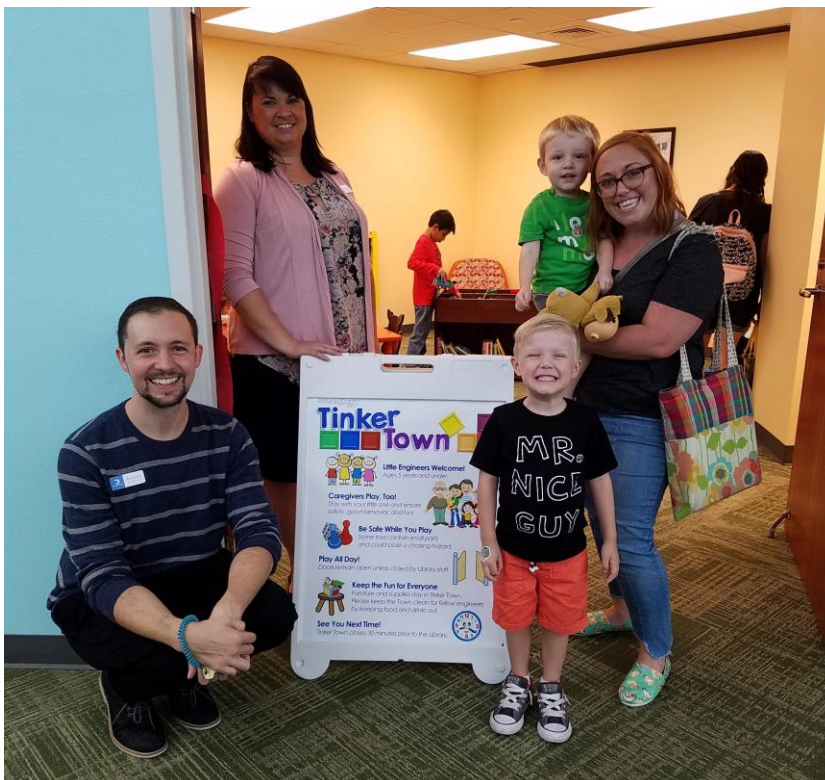
**LEFT:**  
Great Gatsby Poker  
Night at Hart  
Memorial Library.

**BELOW:**  
Caturday Cat Faire  
at Hart Memorial  
Library.





**LEFT:**  
Arte Bajo La Sombrilla event at the Buenaventura Lakes Library, celebrating artists from different countries including Spain and Venezuela.



**LEFT:**  
Grand Opening of Tinker Town at Hart Memorial Library.