

Library Launches Redesigned Website

Online visitors to www.mpppl.org discovered a new and exciting interactive experience when the Mount Prospect Public Library rolled out a totally redesigned website. The new site features significant updates to content and improved navigation tools allowing quicker and easier access to the Library's resources.

"Our goal was to create a virtual experience that replicates the experience patrons have when they visit the Library," says Cathy Deane, Deputy Director for Public Service and a member of the Website Design Committee. "We wanted users to be able to navigate the site easier, find information faster, and expand upon the idea of our Library as a 24/7 experience."

The many exciting enhancements are revealed the instant users begin to explore the new site. Across the top of every page is the navigation menu, a display of the Library's resources divided into nine sections: Books, Movies, & Music; Research; Kids; Teens;

Community; Calendar; Services; South Branch; and On Demand. A navigation tool known as "hovering" allows a user to simply glide their mouse over the menu. By hovering over each section, additional information and subsections instantly appear in an easy-to-read, drop-down format.

"The new menu system is much more immediate and user friendly," explains Tim Loga, Head of Computer Services and a member of the Website Design Committee. "Rather than having to click multiple times, you can simply hover over the menu and all of the choices appear. We've flattened out the site and broadened it so that it is much easier to find information with fewer clicks."

Another time-saving tool on the redesigned website is the option for a user to establish a MyMPPL account. This new, customized account provides patrons access to Library web resources with only one sign in. Another important feature is that it allows

users to post comments on blogs. The MyMPPL account creates a personalized dashboard for patrons, allowing them to track their library usage 24/7 as well.

"The advantage of creating a MyMPPL account is that it allows users to move around the website accessing all of MPPL's resources and databases without having to stop and reenter information," explains Chris Amling, the Library's webmaster and designer of the new site. "Users can also manage what they have checked out or renew materials all through their MyMPPL account. This is a built-in option for a one-stop shop."

Once patrons have signed up for a MyMPPL account, they can further enhance this one-stop shop experience by establishing a Family Account. The Family Account builds upon the convenience of entering information a single time and allows

see "Website" on page 2

EXPRESS CHECKOUT Patron's Choice

Visitors to Mount Prospect Public Library are discovering a new, time-saving option for checking out library materials. Express Checkout was launched in early May, and patron feedback indicates that the do-it-yourself technology is easy and convenient to use.

"This was my first time using the system," said Mount Prospect resident Sweetie Patel during a recent visit to the Library. "It was really fast; it took maybe thirty seconds to check out all my books," she said as she pointed to a stack of nearly a dozen items. "I will definitely use it again."

There are three Express Checkout computer stations in the Library. One station is located in Youth near the Duck Bench—just follow the orange footprints! The other two stations are located in the Registration Desk Lobby. For the next several months, Library staff will assist patrons at the three stations, answering questions about the new technology and helping them get started in using the system. There are also posters and flyers available with a step-by-step guide.

"We're discovering that patrons are eager to try it out and seem comfortable choosing Express Checkout because they are familiar with other self-checkout systems such as at the grocery store," says Kathy Murray, Head of Circulation Services.

By following the prompts, this technology allows patrons to check out many of the Library's collections, including books, DVDs, and most CDs. Mount Prospect resident Laura Kremer and her five-year-old daughter, Kate, discovered the new checkout

system during an afternoon visit to the Library. Armed with a stack of children's books and videos, they opted for the Express Checkout station in Youth. They began by scanning their Library card.

"The onscreen prompts really are easy to follow and make it simple to use," said Kramer, who frequently spends time at the Library with her two young children. "I love that it does a whole stack at once."

After the items were scanned, her daughter Kate assisted with printing a receipt and unlocking the video cases before dropping each item into a canvas tote bag. Within minutes, they finished and Kramer added jokingly, "In the words of my kids, 'that was easy peasy.'"

Express Checkout also enables visitors to access information about their library accounts and conveniently pay fees and fines using credit or debit cards. Larger items, such as art prints and any library material with a locking system, still need to be checked out at the main Circulation Desk, which Murray emphasizes remains fully staffed and ready to provide service.

"Express Checkout is the perfect alternative for patrons who come in to grab one book or to pick up a movie," Murray says. "They may not have time to wait in line at the Circulation Desk. Now with Express Checkout they have another option they can easily take advantage of that gets them moving on their way."



Kate Kremer and her mom, Laura, find out how easy it is to use the Express Checkout.



SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION
Save for Future Reference

A Guide to the NEW www.mpppl.org

HOME PAGE

Navigation Menu

Hover your mouse pointer to see what each section offers.

Slideshow

Use the numbers along the bottom or the arrows that appear on the sides to go to next slide.

Features

Music, movies, and book recommendations for all ages.

Events

Detailed listings of upcoming events at the Library.

Profile

To change or add information on your account, switch to this screen. You may also add up to four library card numbers to create a family account.

Blog Summary

From here you can make comments on the most recent blog posts. Once you log in to MyMPPL, you can post comments on any blog on the website.



MyMPPL Access

These buttons let you access one of our newest features: MyMPPL, an interactive look at your library account. (See picture below.)

Catalog

To go to our catalog, click here.

Home

From anywhere on the site, this button brings you back to the home page.

News & Events

News about the Library and upcoming events appear in this spot.

Staff Blogs

Continually updated to feature the four most current postings.

MYMPPL PAGE

Help Dropdown

For more information on using the features of MyMPPL, click here to drop down the "Help" menu.

My Account Summary

Shows an overview of your library card activity including items checked out, due dates, and the option to renew. You may also check if you have any holds or fines on your account. If you have added family members' cards, their information will be displayed as well.

Web Resource Access

Another use of MyMPPL: once you log in, you have access to all the online resources and databases to which the Library subscribes, without having to log in to each individual site.

Website

continued from page 1

a user to add up to three additional library cards. Information on up to four accounts is then linked and displayed, making it easy to keep track of multiple users.

"It used to be that if you wanted to see if your kid's books or video games were overdue, you had to log out of your account and log into each of theirs separately, which means you had to have all their barcodes and PINs handy," Amling explains. "With the Family Account you only have to enter that information once, and it will appear on your dashboard allowing you to see and renew for all of them from one screen."

Other dynamic changes to the site are in the areas of fresh content and enhanced interactive capabilities.

The most immediate information on Library News and Events is prominently displayed on the home page, along with Staff Blogs which continually update by featuring the four most current postings.

"The new site allows staff to interact and provide immediate information to the public—from book reviews, to special events here at the Library, to reviews of programs," Deane says.

Another example of the site's enhanced interactivity is found on the home page in a new, visual gallery of "featured" materials: Featured Books, Featured DVDs, Featured Music, Featured Audiobooks, Featured for Kids, and Featured for Teens. These dynamic virtual displays allow users to see MPPL's vast and ever-changing collection and instantaneously tap into the latest recommendations by staff.

"The content on the new site is dynamic and constantly updating and changing," Loga says. "The idea is to have our information professionals, whether reference librarians or readers' advisors, select materials to highlight on the main page and to offer it in an immediate and visual way. Every time you visit, the information will be different."

Additionally, the website boasts a decidedly updated look. The colors and design of each section were carefully chosen to reflect the subject matter. The Youth Section incorporates a whimsical, fun and interactive visit to a pond, complete with the familiar Monty the Duck, while the new Community section features a stylized photo of the railroad tracks that run through Mount Prospect.

"People always tell us how much they love visiting the Library," Amling says. "Our goal was to provide them with that same positive experience online."

Friends Welcomes New Board Member



The Friends of the Mount Prospect Public Library is pleased to announce that Melanie Miller Krupp has recently joined its board. A resident of Mount Prospect for 24 years, Krupp brings a wealth of volunteer experience and a deep personal commitment to community service to the Friends organization.

“I’ve always believed in community service,” Krupp says. “For years I’ve been involved in the Friends book sales, and I understand the importance of the Library. It’s a place where people can learn, create, and experience programs they might not be able to otherwise.”

Krupp acknowledges that she and her family have benefited from the Library. When her son Joshua was younger they attended the children’s programs. She is an avid reader and values the endless array of programs and services that the Friends of the Library sponsor, such as the annual Summer Reading Program, the Teddy Bear Walk, and much of the public art on display in the Library.

“The Library is just such a great place to be,” Krupp says. “I am thrilled to have been invited to join the Friends board.”

Other organizations benefiting from Krupp’s energy and enthusiasm include the Mount Prospect Cable Television Department, where she has volunteered for more than 25 years assisting with the Village’s public broadcasts. For close to 30 years, she has also volunteered with the Northwest Special Recreation Association, a Rolling Meadows-based organization that provides a full range of recreation services to children and adults with special needs throughout the Northwest suburbs.

“I love volunteer work/community service,” Krupp says. “It makes me happy.”

The Friends are happy, too; welcome aboard!

Playing Keeps Learning Fresh and Fun

Busy at play equals hard at work. That’s the philosophy behind a dramatic play area in Youth Services designed to promote early literacy.

First introduced in December of 2010, the play zone has become a destination of choice for young, pint-sized visitors to the Library. Located at the far end of Youth Services, the area is defined by its whimsical storybook house, play kitchen, toys, colorful props, and books that serve as a magnet for the zero-to-five set who explore an ever-changing theme and range of activities designed with one goal in mind—building a foundation for learning to read.

“The purpose of the area is to introduce young children to the six pre-literacy skills all through playing,” said Mary Smith, Head of Youth Services. “The activities are self-guided so the children can play freely and use their imaginations.”

The Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association, recently endorsed five *practices* to support early literacy: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. Play is a way children can learn all six early literacy *skills*: print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, and print motivation.

The Library’s creative learning area delivers on each of these pre-literacy skills by cleverly incorporating them into the practice of the day—“let’s play!”



Toys and props are labeled, which supports vocabulary, print awareness, and letter knowledge. Props encourage storytelling and narrative. Books are placed low to the ground, making them easy to grab



Madison enjoys the storybook house.



Connor plays in the kitchen.

and hold.

A new theme is introduced to the play area every two months. The activities, props, books, and games are changed, which keeps the learning fresh and fun. In May and June, the theme was *How Does Your Garden Grow?* It was with this theme that twin brothers Matthew and Alex Hassett discovered the play area. Having recently moved to Mount Prospect, the three-year-olds were visiting the Library for the very first time with their grandparents.

Alex zipped around the space, pushing a toy lawnmower and wearing a pair of gardening gloves, saying, “Look at me, look at me I’m cutting the grass.” Meanwhile his brother Matthew sat on their grandpa’s lap listening to the the book *Two by Two by Two* by Jonathan Allen.

“Matthew loves the books,” said the boys’ grandmother Nancy Flowers. “Alex likes to do his own thing.”

The boys continued to explore.

“I’m going to water my flowers,” Alex announced as

he picked up a watering can and pretended to water some colorful cloth flowers he had earlier placed on the windowsill of the storybook house.

“This area is wonderful,” said Flowers. “It allows them to be creative and use their imaginations. It’s so good for them.”

Not only is it good for them now but also in the future when all this creative play translates into success as readers.

“It is so important to build a foundation for reading before children even go to school,” Smith says. “Learning through play is so natural for children. It is easy and fun.”

THE FIVE EARLY LITERACY PRACTICES

TALKING

with children helps develop all six early literacy skills: print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, and print motivation.

SINGING

and rhyming are especially effective at developing letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary.

READING

also helps children learn all six early literacy skills.

WRITING

helps children learn about print, letters, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and narrative skills.

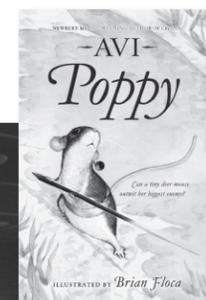
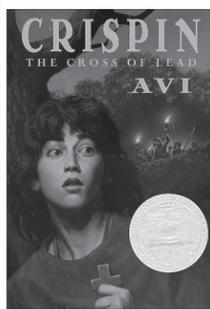
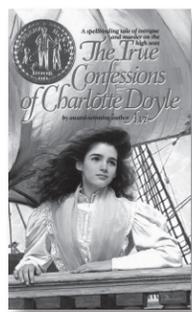
PLAYING

is a way children learn all six pre-literacy skills.

Information provided by *Every Child Ready to Read*®, a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association.

Award-winning Author Connects With Young Readers Via Skype

Earlier this year a group of young readers, participating in the Library's popular Chat & Chew book discussion, was treated to more than the usual fare of good food and a great book. The afternoon's book was *Poppy* by award-winning author Avi. In a first-of-its-kind event for the Library, and using the Internet telephone service known as Skype, the group of 4th through 6th graders communicated by voice and video with the author who was 1,000 miles away in Denver, Colorado.



"It was so amazing for the kids to see Avi sitting in the office at the desk where he works," said Brad Jones, Youth Technology Librarian. "He was projected up on a big screen, and they were so enthralled with being able to see him right there in the same room and then to get to talk directly with him about the book they had read. It was so cool."

"Avi was so personable," Jones continued. "The kids could ask him anything."

And ask they did. For 45 minutes, the fifteen eager students took turns sitting in front of a laptop computer outfitted with a camera and microphone and fired off question after question to the prolific children's author. Avi has written more than 70 books for children and young adults including *Nothing But the Truth*, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*,

and *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, recipient of the 2003 Newbery Medal.

The inquiring readers wanted to know where Avi comes up with so many ideas for so many books and who are some of his favorite characters? Most importantly, they were curious to know if Avi was his real name. Avi informed them that his real name is Edward Irving Wortis. Avi is his pen name and a nickname he has had ever since he was a young boy. His sister had difficulty saying his full name. She shortened it to "Avi" and the name stuck.

"The kids were so into him as an author," says Erin Emerick, Youth Programming Coordinator. "They really could ask him anything, and most of the questions were about his writing. He was so funny

and personable that you felt like you were there in the same room with him, sitting down and chatting."

The afternoon was deemed a success right down to the price tag—\$100 to the author for his time and participation.

"The technology allowed us to have a really amazing author visit at an affordable price," Emerick said. "We could never afford to have an author of Avi's caliber visit the Library in person. It would cost thousands of dollars. So to have this as an option is really wonderful."

"I heard one participant say 'I've seen a lot of authors but I have never Skyped with one before,'" Emerick added. "We will definitely do it again."

Sharing on the Virtual Fridge

The act of posting important messages, favorite photographs, and prized school assignments on to the kitchen refrigerator has been a much-loved practice for generations. Now, thanks to technology, clever graphics, and the creativity of area youth, this concept receives a decidedly updated twist on the Library's website.

Known as the Virtual Fridge, and located on the landing page of the Kids' Catalog, the site features a prominent graphic of a refrigerator. Monty the Duck, the whimsical mascot of Youth Services, enjoys a refreshing drink while peering gleefully at the front of the fridge. There he sees a rotating display of colorful photographs or scanned images of original artwork created by local children.

"The Library experience has shifted from a one-dimensional experience to a two-way interactive one," explains Brad Jones, Youth Technology Librarian. "Kids are having more input into what is happening as they are learning, and the Virtual Fridge is one example of that."

The Virtual Fridge was first introduced by Youth in January of 2011. The idea was to create a place for youngsters to showcase original works of art in the digital world. Eventually the site was also used to post pictures of some of the fabulous LEGO creations being built at the Library's ever-popular LEGOMania programs. Young artists can simply bring their creations to Youth where drawings are scanned, formatted, and posted by Library staff on the Virtual Fridge. The images rotate and remain posted for two to three months. The drawings or photographs are displayed one at a time and change each time the page is refreshed.



"It's been a lot of fun," Jones says. "The kids are really excited to see their artwork so prominently displayed on the website. I've even heard parents say, 'Now we can call Grandpa and tell him to go to the website to see your picture.'"

