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Library Innovation

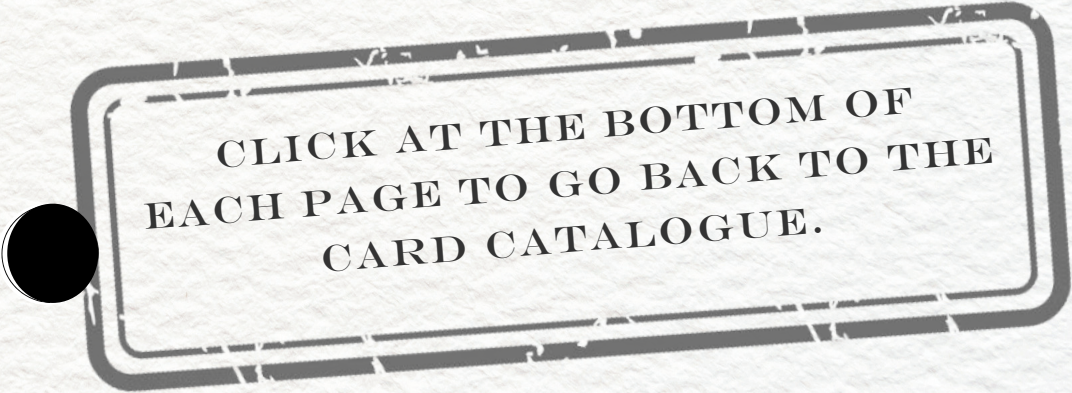
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ABC

The ABC's of Library Innovations

Public Libraries are inherently places of innovation, meant to provide opportunities for civic and personal improvement. In honor of the opening of the *Spark! Places of Innovation* Exhibit, we are highlighting some of the ways that our local library came up with innovative solutions, over the years, to solve problems and benefit our community, in the hopes that this will strike a spark for you to innovate in your community and your own lives.

Just [pick a letter](#) and click on a drawer in the card catalogue below to learn more.



CLICK AT THE BOTTOM OF
EACH PAGE TO GO BACK TO THE
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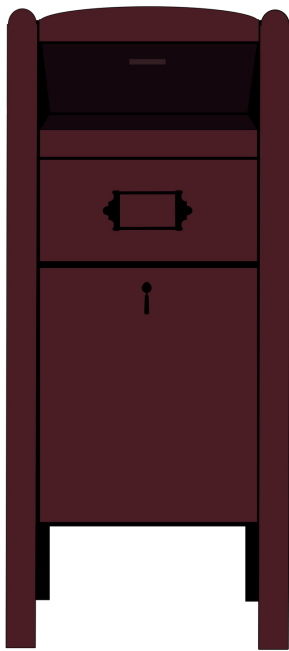


Though libraries are often seen as places of learning, they can also be places to discover beauty. Libraries often partner with other local organizations to come up with innovative ways to support the community.

In 1959 the library had an agreement with a local organization, the Lakeland Painters, to display artists' works in the library each month. These works were then sold at the end of the month and new works were displayed for a "change of scenery," according to a Grand Haven Tribune article from that year.

The tradition was carried on at the new library building in 1969, as seen in the picture above. Art could be rented for a month at a time to decorate anything from civic buildings like the community center to individual's homes.

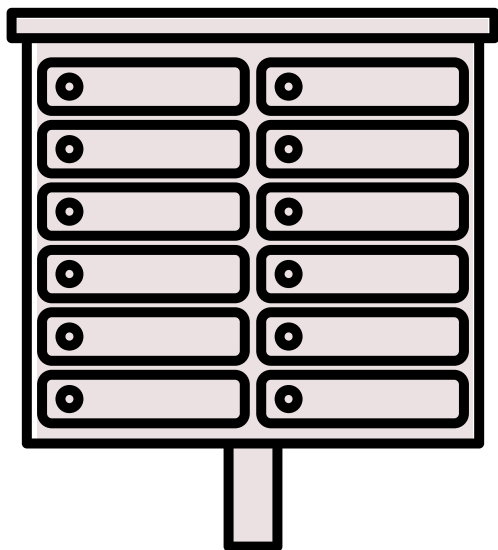
Today we allow artists to display their works on the lower level of the library.



Have you ever taken a moment to appreciate the book drop? Though the library here in Grand Haven might not have invented the concept, it made a big difference to patrons when the Carnegie Library installed a curbside book drop in front of the building in 1958. Up to that point, patrons had to bring their books back during the library's regular hours, occasionally making it hard to avoid a late fee. Thanks to the addition of the brown, metal box that looked a little bit like a mailbox, patrons could return their books when it was convenient for them.

Today we've even taken this concept one step further with our convenient curbside pickup and after-hours lockers, and the addition of a drop box in Robinson Township, continuing to meet our patrons' needs and make it easy and fun to use library services.

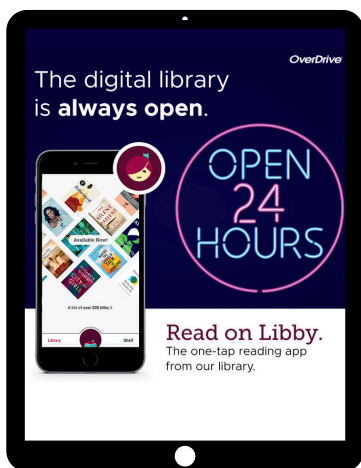
Book Drop



The Covid-19 lockdown made it hard for patrons to access library services in 2020, so many libraries across the country found creative and innovative ways to eliminate some of the barriers created by the pandemic. Loutit District Library was no exception, offering curbside pickup for materials during the libraries normal operating hours and after hours holds lockers for those that could not make it during the day.

Fortunately, the library continues to offer these services, making it easy for patrons to pick up and return library materials, regardless of their busy schedules or comfort in public spaces.

Curbside & Holds Lockers



The Loutit District Library tries to make books available in as many formats as possible for any reading preference, and in order to make library services more accessible. The library offers access to several digital resources that can help you find your next read, and some even include movies to borrow:

Hoopla offers instant access to a wide variety of ebooks, audiobooks, movies, and TV series, as well as BingePasses that offer unlimited access to specific services for a week.

Libby allows for an experience closer to that of the physical library collections, offering a wide selection of ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines that patrons can browse and put on hold if they are not immediately available.

Kanopy offers access to a wide varieties of movies and TV series that patrons can borrow and watch instantly, using a ticketing system.

Digital Resources



Recently, you may have noticed some innovative changes in the library's Public Computing area. The Loutit District Library introduced a new software called Envisionware, to manage users' Public Computing experience. Here are some of the improvements we made:

- The new software we use allows us to print guest passes, which are available anytime at the Reference and Information Desk, making it easy to take a pass and sign in if you don't have your library card with you.
- Each Public Computer now has its own barcode scanner, to make it easier and faster to sign in with your library card or a guest pass.
- You no longer have to wait in line for staff to print off your documents. You can print them yourself from the Print Release Station and pick them up at the printer nearby, making printing your documents easier and increasing privacy.

Envisionware



Libraries offer a wide range of programs and activities, but sometimes more help is needed to keep up with all these great opportunities for the public. For this reason, libraries typically have a Friends of the Library group. This is a dedicated group of volunteers, who help facilitate programming and activities, as well as helping raise funds for projects at the library.

The Friends of the Loutit District Library was approved by the Library Functions and Facilities Committee in 1960, and registration was opened to the public in 1961. According to an article from the Grand Haven Tribune, there was an overwhelming response, and the group was formed in June of that year.

Today, the Friends of the Loutit District Library runs the Cheapstacks Bookstore on the lower level of the library, while continuing to assist with programming and fundraising.

Friends of the Library



In 2022 the Loutit District Library chose to break from the typical format for the Summer Reading Program by creating The Grand Adventure.

In many ways the Grand Adventure is very similar to other libraries' summer reading programs, but we made a few adjustments, expanding its scope, to provide fun and educational experiences for all:

- You don't have to be a patron of the Loutit District Library or even have a library card (though having one could help you achieve your goals faster).
- Adults are encouraged to participate, not just kids!
- The Grand Adventure includes opportunities to complete activities and attend events, for those who may not be avid readers but still want to participate.
- Reading minutes can be earned using any digital or physical resources, not just those provided by the library.

Grand Adventure



Mobile Hotspots are an easy way to get a secure and reliable internet connection just about anywhere. Hotspots work a little like a cell phone, connecting to cell towers to provide a Wi-Fi signal. You can then connect to the network created, without having to wait to find an open public network.

Though Mobile Hotspots are more common in libraries since the Covid-19 lockdown, it was less common for libraries to offer this service before the pandemic.

In 2019, Loutit District Library staff realized that there was a need in the community for reliable, secure internet, so the library applied for a grant to make hotspots available to members of the public who would not have access to them otherwise.

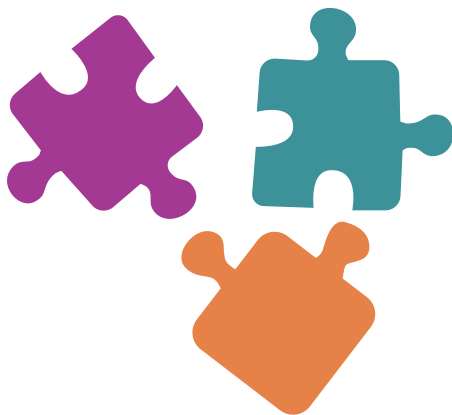
Now the library also offers Chromebooks for checkout, a week at a time, to help patrons who might not have access to a personal computer.



Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Censorship is not new; records of censorship date back to 212 BC, but censorship attempts have increased dramatically in recent years.

Each year, staff finds new and innovative ways to help our community understand their right to intellectual freedom and celebrate the freedom to read, by creating an educational exhibit about intellectual freedom and the history of censorship. This exhibit features books from the library's collection that were challenged or banned, throughout the United States, in the last 100 years.

Intellectual Freedom



Assembling a jigsaw puzzle can be a great way to pass the time and relax, while you watch an image slowly come together before your eyes.

But what can you do with a puzzle once you've completed it? You could frame it for posterity, or you could bring it to the library to exchange it for another one from the jigsaw puzzle exchange shelf on the lower level of the library, so you can enjoy the process all over again.

Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange



During the Covid-19 lockdown, a lot of things were up in the air, and some library materials got lost in the chaos. Whether books were misplaced during a hurried move or simply left behind when travel plans changed suddenly, many patrons were left with fines that prevented them from borrowing further materials.

Loutit District Library staff came up with an innovative way to replace some of these lost books, while allowing patrons to take an active role at the library and spread a little kindness in the process. Patrons could peruse a list of books that needed to be replaced and choose one to purchase for the collection. Once purchased, the fine for that title would come off of the account of the patron who was billed, allowing them to borrow materials again.

Today, the Kindness Month program still allows patrons to spread kindness by removing fines from accounts, while also helping replace worn or damaged materials.

Kindness Month



Staff in the Local History and Genealogy department are constantly working to improve patron experience and access to the archives, and finding innovative ways to do so.

With one of the largest local history and genealogy collections in the area, we are always trying to think of ways to improve how we preserve and use the resources we've collected. Some of the ways we do this are:

- Creating indexes to make it easier to quickly find information on various topics.
- Digitizing our collections, to make materials more accessible.
- Scanning and reprinting worn materials to preserve original documents and make digital copies that can be searched.



A great way to learn is to make something. This is part of the reason that craft programs are some of the most popular events at the Loutit District Library.

During Covid-19 lockdown Loutit District Library staff had to come up with innovative ways to continue offering craft programming. One of these creative ideas was the Take-and-Make Bag.

Take-and-Make Bags provided all the materials and instructions necessary to complete a specific project, all contained within a paper bag that patrons could pick up from the library with their other materials. That way, patrons could pick up a bag and complete their projects at home.

Though we no longer offer Take-and-Make bags, we do still have in-person craft programs. Please see the library's events calendar for upcoming classes.

Make Something



Did you know that you can look at digital copies of the Grand Haven Tribune going back as far as 1891?

Through a partnership with the Grand Haven Tribune, the Loutit District Library gained access to the microfilmed archive of old issues of the local newspaper, and library staff and volunteers digitized and indexed old issues.

Today you can access the searchable digital copies of the Grand Haven Tribune 1891-present on any of the public computers, or stop into the Local History and Genealogy Room if you need a little extra help searching. Staff are always willing to help you start your research.

Newspaper Access



It's never fun to not be able to check out a book because there's a fine on your account, so in 2019, Loutit District Library joined a growing number of libraries across the country that are eliminating overdue fines to make it easier for patrons to enjoy the materials they borrow.

The primary reason for eliminating late fees is that these charges present barriers to library service for those with limited income, disabilities, and transportation issues. Eliminating this barrier provides equitable access to library materials for all of our residents.

We ask that you be courteous and return materials by the due date so that others may enjoy them. Also, if you borrow materials from other libraries, you may be assessed overdue fines for late returns by the lending library. You will need to contact the lending library for more information on any fines they may assess.

Overdue Fines?



Libraries aren't necessarily as quiet as they used to be. They also serve as social gathering spaces and places to meet to get projects done.

Sometimes, patrons need more privacy though, so the Loutit District Library incorporated dedicated study rooms into the plans for the renovations to the library building in 2009. These rooms allow patrons a quiet, private place for everything from studying to conducting virtual interviews or phone calls, while allowing access to the library's reliable wifi network.

The Loutit District Library offers access to study rooms on a first come first serve basis, for two hours at a time. That way, each patron that checks out a key to one of the rooms knows how much time they will have free of interruptions.

A Place to Study



One of Loutit District Library's most recent additions is the Silent Book Club. People's lives are busier than ever, and sometimes we don't have time to read for a book club outside of the time we've set aside to meet. We might not even want to read the same thing everyone else is reading. How do you solve this dilemma? You ask for a silent book club.

Silent Book Club allows participants to come and read whatever they want for a while during a scheduled time, then have discussion at the end (if they wish!). This format allows busy people to read during the time they've already allotted for book club, while also allowing participants to sit back, relax, and not have to worry about the formality that can come with a traditional book club.

Please see a staff member if you would like more information about Silent Book Club, or you can register online through the Loutit District Library Events Calendar.



Research is easier than ever, with digital resources becoming more and more widely available, but it can still be hard to find free, reliable resources for scholarly research. Fortunately, libraries have come up with innovative ways to help people access great free resources, and all you need is your library card.

Michigan eLibrary is no longer just for interlibrary loans from across the state; you can also access a variety of databases to help with your research, including whole books and scholarly journals in MeL's eResources.

Another type of research that people come to the library for is genealogical research. Many libraries purchase subscriptions to various family tree databases, including Ancestry and Fold3. Loutit District Library has a variety of database subscriptions and dedicated staff to help patrons start their family history research.

Research



Do you recognize the display case and card catalogue that we are using for this exhibit about library innovations?

Loutit District Library staff offers a wide variety of services, including a well-maintained seed library, which is usually available in this display case and card catalogue. To use the seed library, patrons are asked to take seeds, grow a plant, and then harvest the seeds from it to add back into the seed library, creating a chain of growth and learning year to year.

Come back in the Spring to see what seeds we have available to start your garden!

Seed Library



Need help figuring something out on your computer, phone, or tablet? We might be able to help.

Previously, the library offered technology classes that taught the basics of how to use a computer. Unfortunately, it became apparent fairly quickly that not everyone comes into a technology class with the same level of experience, and those with less experience often get left behind.

For this reason, the Loutit District Library started offering one-on-one technology help sessions, to address specific issues that patrons were having with their devices. These sessions are usually available for an hour at a time and can be scheduled ahead of time, so staff can prepare to help the patron.

If you would like to schedule a One-on-One Technology Help session please see a staff member at the Reference and Information Desk.

Technology Help Sessions



Loutit District Library staff are always looking for new and innovative ways to make your experience at the library more user-friendly and help you get things done.

One of the more recent additions to the library's services was the introduction of a Document Scanning Station. Staff noticed that patrons need to scan many different types of documents for a wide variety of reasons, so we opted to make several scanners available. Additionally, more options are available with this new system, including scanning to email or to a flash drive, and patrons can now fax their own documents instead of having to wait for staff to do it for them.

Staff are always willing to help if you need assistance with scanning or faxing. If you need help, just let a staff member at the Reference and Information Desk know.

User-Friendly



Visually reading, and listening to the audio version of a book at the same time, can help young readers learn how to read the text on the page, as well as learn how the words sound, increasing comprehension skills. VOX Books are an innovative and accessible way to incorporate audiobooks into books. These books have a small audio player attached inside their covers, to allow readers to listen while reading, and include a headphone jack for private listening and speaker for listening aloud.

For adults, there are digital and physical audiobooks, but there are also Talking Books available for those with visual or print disabilities. These books include their own player, as well as instructions in braille, to make them easy to use. Loutit District Library has applications available to access the Braille Audio Reading Download Library for patrons. Please ask staff for an application if you or someone you know could benefit from access to Talking Books.

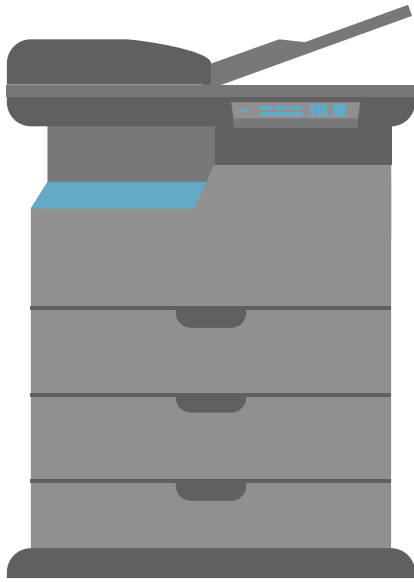
VOX Books



Library staff are always trying to think of innovative ways to engage patrons. One of the ways staff does this is through walking tours. Unlike more traditional programming, these tours provide an opportunity to learn about various locations in the Grand Haven area, while traveling to those locations, encouraging a greater understanding of the subject and sense of authenticity.

This format provided a great foundation for programming during the Covid-19 pandemic. Tours outside provided a safer way for patrons to learn. During lockdown, the Local History and Genealogy Department even developed a self-guided walking tour of Lake Forest Cemetery, to keep patrons and staff safe, while still allowing for a great learning experience. The Self-Guided Wicked Lake Forest Cemetery Tour consists of signs throughout the cemetery that include QR codes for patrons to scan to view short videos detailing stories of various crimes and criminals from Grand Haven's past. Staff continue to update the tour and provide new entries each year.

Walking Tours



When the library switched over to the new Envisionware software for the Public Computers, staff realized that sometimes patrons might need to print documents but don't have the money with them to pay for their copies. For this reason, the Library Board decided to remove the barrier by offering 20 pages of printing per day, at no cost. After the first 20 pages patrons can pay a suggested donation of .15 cents a page.

Another innovation made to help eliminate barriers for patrons was the implementation of the new PrinterOn App and Mobile Printing page on the library's website. These features allow patrons to send documents from their phones and laptops, and even from home. Then they can simply release their prints when they come into the library.

Xerox (sort of)

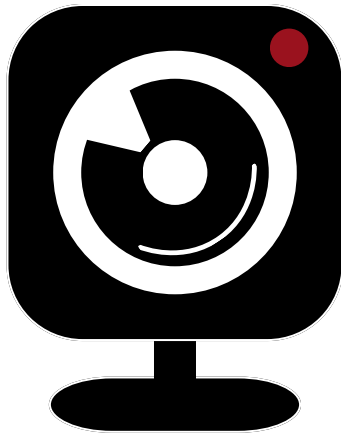


During Covid-19 lockdown, the Youth Department at the Loutit District Library had to come up with innovative ways to provide opportunities for parents and children to get out and enjoy library programming. Two of the best ways they accomplished this was through the Play Cafe and StoryWalk® programs.

Play Cafe was a program which allowed parents to reserve time for children's play groups to gather in the Youth Program Room, providing a safe environment for socialization. Staff provided refreshments for parents and allowed time in between sessions to clean toys.

The StoryWalk® program encourages patrons to read a story while enjoying time outdoors. Participants can follow the trail to each sign, containing a page of a story, while taking a walk in one of the Grand Haven area's many parks. This was a great way to engage the public during lockdown. We continue to offer this program regularly, as a great way to learn and experience nature.

Youth Programming



During the Covid-19 lockdown, many organizations turned to virtual meeting programs to provide innovative programming for the public, and Loutit District Library was no exception. Virtual presentations were offered, and people could join in remotely. Authors were invited to give virtual presentations about their books, artists gave live drawing instruction sessions, and the Local History and Genealogy Department even developed a virtual GenChat program that patrons could attend each month.

In addition to Zoom based programs, Loutit District Library also created Facebook Live events and pre-recorded programs that got posted on the library's YouTube page. The Local History and Genealogy Department recorded talks about objects and documents from our collection and various historic events in the area, and the Youth Department offered a virtual storytime, filming videos each month and posting them.

Zoom Programs