

QUARTERLY STAFF REPORT – APRIL 2020 – COVID RESPONSE EDITION

Gustavus Public Library

LIBRARY COVID-19 RESPONSE- UPDATED 4/1/2020

CURRENTLY, THE GUSTAVUS PUBLIC LIBRARY REMAINS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, BUT WILL CONTINUE OFFERING TAKE-OUT SERVICES (20 BOOKS/10 DVDS PER PATRON) M-F 1:30-4:30PM.
CALL (697-2350) OR EMAIL (JEN.GARDNER@GUSTAVUS.LIB.AK.US).

In light of the news that there are active COVID-19 cases in Southeast Alaska as well as community concern, we have adjusted our operations as follows:

Take-out services will be offered outside only. Call or email your request list, we will contact you when the order is ready, and you can either set up a pick-up time or call us from the parking lot. We will bring items out to the bench under the covered side entrance. We are hoping this reduces the amount of people needing to touch surfaces such as door handles, or come into a confined space.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN ITEMS IF YOU ARE SICK, HAVE A SICK FAMILY MEMBER, OR ARE IN QUARANTINE/SELF-ISOLATION DUE TO RECENT TRAVEL. WE WILL NOT BE WORRYING ABOUT LATE ITEMS RIGHT NOW, THOUGH YOU MAY CALL OR EMAIL IF YOU WISH TO RENEW YOUR MATERIALS.

If you are healthy, feel free to return your materials. While staff is on site (M-F 1:30-4:30), there will be a hands-free drop off bin available in front of the usual book drop. At the end of each day, materials will be removed from the bin with gloves and isolated for 4 days before being checked in and re-shelved. This is to help prevent the spread of illness via surfaces.

We encourage you to stock up now. As the COVID-19 situation progresses, we may have to alter our plan. Remember that others will be “shopping in bulk” and that we are isolating returns for 4 days, so the item you want may not immediately be available. We can still place holds on items upon request.

Please use caution when handling library materials, using the book drop, etc. We are doing everything we can to reduce the risk of spreading illness, including sanitizing surfaces, washing hands frequently, transporting returns with gloved hands, and isolating returns for 4 days. We ask you to use care as well, and practice good hygiene such as hand washing before and after handling library materials at home.

ILL Services are very limited until further notice, as the Anchorage Public Library is closed, though the ILL coordinator is able to help us access some materials. We will do our best to order or borrow materials requested through phone/email.

WiFi will remain on. We cannot offer other services at this time. **Wash Your Hands! :)**

How the Library is operating internally:

During this “hunker down” period, we are going to remain flexible as a team, alternating staff being physically present at the library and maintaining as much service as we can safely provide during this library closure. Until the situation changes, we have decided to provide limited services to the public

Monday through Friday despite the building being closed. These services include “take-out” services (patrons can call or email with specific requests or get a hand-picked assortment just for them), an increase in check-out limits, and WiFi available 24/7 in the parking lot. As several people have had trouble accessing the online catalog at home, we have increased our social media presence by posting pictures of new and recently returned materials so patrons can more easily see what is available. We continue to work with the Interlibrary Loan Coordinator in Anchorage to supply patrons with items we do not physically have at our library, take requests for our upcoming book orders, and support patrons via phone and email in accessing e-books and audiobooks.

We have also changed our protocols to try to reduce the risk of spreading the virus through surfaces. We offer a “hands-free” bin during our service hours, eliminating the handling of the book drop door. Daily, those materials are boxed up (while wearing gloves) and put in “quarantine” for four days, at which point materials which will not be damaged are wiped down with disinfecting wipes. We are using the Zep spray the Chief Travis gave us to wipe down any handles and surfaces that we touch, and sanitize the book drop handle daily for anyone who needs to use this outside of our service hours. As supply of cleaning products remains an issue, we are working with Travis to come up with a plan to ensure we can continue being able to clean and sanitize thoroughly throughout this closure.

1. General Library Statistics January – March 2020:

	Jan	Feb	Mar*	
Library Visitors:	1324	1183	448	
Books Checked out:	638	614	958	
DVDs Checked out:	437	521	606	
Events/Meetings/Classes Hosted at the Library:	79	92	27	

*The library officially closed to the public on 3/17/2020, at which time all events, meetings, and classes were cancelled. The week prior to the closure, we were actively encouraging groups to suspend their meetings as part of our “illness planning” and suspended all library-directed programs at this point as well.

During the library closure (3/17-4/7) we have provided “take-out” services only, as well as support via phone and email. During the closure, we have checked out 1,189 items to date, increased our social media presence and provided 3 virtual programs.

Winter 2020 Activities/Programs:

Yoga Classes	Public Assistance	Boys/Girls on the Run
Class Visits	Book Club	Battle of the Books
Library Band	Movie Showings	Holiday Programs
Test Proctoring	Figure Drawing Group	Winter Reading Events
Board Meetings	Visiting Author	Story Time/Virtual Story
Public Meetings	Art Workshops	Time
Homeschool/Study Sessions	Afterschool Programs	
Story Time	Robotics Team Meetings	

Some of our highlights for this quarter:

Before the library was closed to the public, we were on a role with programming! We had 92 events/meetings/classes take place at the library during the month of February alone, ranging from drawing class to homeschool lessons. For the first time, we saw regular visits from the high school classes, and received positive feedback about these programs from both teachers and students. We supported a book group for students in Ms. Jessie's 3rd-5th grade class. We saw an increased interest in film showings and discussions. This makes it all the more difficult to be closed right now, but we have also seen immense gratitude from the community for continuing to do what we can to offer limited services, and an outpouring of support when we were in need of supplies like toilet paper and hand sanitizer. We look forward to being able to fully reopen and offer more, but for now we are so glad to see the community continuing to utilize the library as a resource, just in a different way.

Upcoming Programming: Our upcoming programming will be dependent on the COVID-19 situation. During the closure, we have been able to provide a limited amount of virtual programming, but our primary focus has been and will remain to provide basic library services (check-outs, check-ins, and patron support) while ensuring the space and materials remain sanitary to reduce risk of spreading the virus. So far, these basic services has utilized the majority of staff time. When we reopen, we plan resume programs as soon as we are able to safely do so. Should the library remain closed for some time, we will work together to determine what types of programs we might be able to offer virtually or in other creative ways to continue striving towards are mission and meeting the needs of the public. Summer Reading is sure to look different this year, as we generally rely on a partnership with the Interpretive Division at Glacier Bay National Park to execute this program, as well as support from local businesses. As we wait and see what things look like closer to summer, we will also begin thinking about contingency plans for Summer Reading so that no matter what, we will be able to offer some kind of programming for readers in our community.

At the suggestion of the City Administrator and with approval from the Mayor, Jen will be taking the lead on developing a Financial Assistance Center at the library. Through this, Jen will learn the ins and outs of COVID-19 related assistance that is available through the Federal Government, and assist members of the public in accessing this assistance. Until the library reopens, this assistance will take place via phone or email only. Once the library is able to reopen, we will offer in-person assistance to anyone who needs it.

2. Status of Active or Upcoming Grants:

We are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through our Public Library Assistance grant which began at \$7000 to spend on materials (books/dvds) for the library. The application for FY21 has been submitted and we will hear from the State Library soon.

3. Status of Active or Upcoming Contracts:

The roof contract is always on our mind. Tom has been working hard keeping this going and is reporting frequently - thanks so much, Tom! Currently, we are waiting until Spring to reissue the RFP with hopes of receiving multiple responses within the scope of work proposed.

Brenna of BAM! Cleaning Services is working out wonderfully. After completing her 14 day quarantine, Brenna will return to the library to support deep cleaning efforts and help keep the space sanitized. There will be plenty for her to do, and we will take this opportunity to move shelves and furniture and ensure the library is thoroughly cleaned by the time the public is able to access it again.

4. Existing projects:

- We understand the Council's decision to hold off on funding for the bike shed until there is a better understanding of the City's financial status for the coming year. We hope this project will not be forgotten once we are through this.
- Ben is going to begin work on finishing the bathroom floor, which has been exposed concrete since July. We are looking into linoleum tiles at the moment and will order an ADA accessible.

5. Past, Current & Upcoming Trainings:

- Jen's Summer Reading training in Anchorage was cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Bre's training was cancelled.
- Jen will be seeking out online trainings to help with the development of the Financial Assistance Center at the library.

6. Budget:

Bre is attending budget meetings to keep up to date with what the Council is debating regarding our budget requests.

Thank you all for being such a great Council - we all appreciate your work!