

ACDL

The Month In Review

LIBRARY EXPERIENCES / TESTIMONIALS / REPORTS – September 2025

“I love this library; It’s such a happy place!” ~ *Ashtabula patron using Front Desk copier*

Patron to Front Desk staff: “I’m not from Ashtabula, just passing through. I really appreciate how easy you guys make it to book the study rooms, it’s very nice!” ~ *Ashtabula patron*

“Thank you for showing me around, I can’t believe everything you guys do here! I’ll be back for Tech Tuesday!” ~ *Ashtabula patron to Dawn O.*

You do such a great job up here! You are always busy but manage to maintain an even keel. ~ *John (daily patron) to Conklin Staff*

“I have never been to this library before. I live in Washington D.C. and I’m just passing through. I can tell that you care about your patrons, and you are not just willing to go the extra mile, but that it makes you happy to do so. That makes you VERY good at your job.” ~ *Visiting patron to Dwight*

"I work 12-hour days and would have had to take time off work to get this document notarized, but thankfully I found the library, and it was open at night, and a notary was available so I could come. I very much appreciate this, and you are saving my life by being open late and offering notary at night, and for free! Once I retire, I'm coming back here because of you and because of how nice this library looks." ~ *Notary patron to Karen*

PUBLIC SERVICE

- **18,846 visitors** graced the doors of the Ashtabula, Geneva, and Bookmobile libraries during the month of September, with **8,365 items borrowed remotely** from our Digital Library.
- **436 students** visited the newly reopened Lakeside Jr. High Media Center which ACDL operates in conjunction with the Ashtabula Area City Schools.
- Ashtabula Library staff handed out 78 **COVID test kits**; the Geneva Library distributed 44. Additionally, 250 items were **faxed**, and 162 items were **notarized** between the two buildings.
- Bailey conducted informational sessions in the **Studio** with two (2) patrons who scheduled appointments and nine (9) walk in adult patrons, in addition to meeting and greeting 23 adults who came in for tours and planning sessions.

Ashtabula
440-997-9341
4335 Park Ave
Ashtabula, Ohio



Geneva
440-466-4521
860 Sherman St
Geneva, Ohio

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- The **community organizations** that used the Robert S. Morrison Foundation Room, Ashtabula Foundation Room and other spaces in the Ashtabula Library in September included: Alzheimer's Support Group, Ashcraft, Ashtabula County Genealogical Society, Ashtabula/Harbor High Alumni Association, Ashtabula Metropolitan Housing Authority, Ashtabula Writers, Bethlehem Experience, Building Resiliency Together, Buckeye Online Schools, Case Western Reserve, CJ Prentiss Education and Resource Center, Common Ground of NE Ohio, Woman's Fortnightly (Book) Club, Gateway Online Academy, GRIT Coalition, Human Trafficking Coalition, Jersey Mike's Hiring Event, Key Bank, Legal Aid, LGBTQ+ Coalition, NEO Fund, OHDELA Testing, SART Conference, Second Chance Citizens Circle (Catholic Charities), Senior Care Network, Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (WISE), and Zonta.
- **Community organizations** that used meeting spaces in the Geneva Library included Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Board of DD), Ashtabula County Health Department, Ashtabula County League of Women Voters, Aspire, Buckeye Online Schools, Community Counseling Center, Geneva Athletic Boosters, Geneva Camera Club, Geneva Country Quilters, Geneva Kiwanis Club, Geneva Middle School Parent Boosters, Geneva Rotary Club, Life Without Chains (NA Group), Platt R. Spencer Historical Society, and Spencerian Writers Group.
- The **Bookmobile** began visiting schools again! In addition to continuing regular community stops (Ashtabula City, Ashtabula Township, Dorset, Geneva City, Geneva Township, Harpersfield, Orwell and Pierpont), staff resumed regular stops at all Geneva elementary schools, St. John, Superior Elementary (Ashtabula), Happy Hearts, and the Amish *Eagle Country School*. All the students were so happy to see them!
- Outreach staff also made 10 **Express Deliveries** and 14 **House Call** visits (16 and 98 items delivered respectively). In their travels they left 393 items at **book drops** in Ashtabula City, Ashtabula Township, Geneva-on-the-Lake, and Pierpont.
- September was an excellent month for classroom visits to the **Media Center at Lakeside Junior High**. Of the 11 days that the Lakeside librarian was available, eight (8) were scheduled for classroom visits, resulting in 24 *Welcome to the Library* sessions during the month.
- The **Edith R. Morrison & Mary W. Morrison Genealogy and Archive** welcomed researchers from New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, South Carolina, and Michigan in September. Also, another 100GBs of information (including photos and several yearbooks) was sent to Columbus for upload to our **Ashtabula Memory** site.
- The Madison Historical Society kindly donated the **Bessie Ford Laird collection** that they had received for their collection.



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- Austin conducted quite a few interesting research requests this month. He is working with a patron who is piecing together the history of the **Ashtabula Ice Company**; helped a patron with the history of the **Nazarene Church** that was once on the corner of West 57th and Washington Streets; and assisted a patron who is updating a book that she wrote about the **Finns on the Titanic** (she will be adding Anna Turja). He also found that he and a set of out-of-state patrons were cousins!
- Carrie helped Pat DiAngelo of the **Ashtabula Police Department** with a couple of requests. The first presence of the State Highway Patrol in Ashtabula was in 1933 and was located in a personal residence on East Main Street in Geneva. Work is ongoing on which officers began their career with the Ashtabula Cadet program and continued with the department to retirement. (We believe officers DiAngelo and Varkette are the only two.)

PROGRAMMING

- Bailey hosted two (2) Adult programs in the **Studio**—both full houses! Patrons made tote bags with the sublimation printer and heat press, and candle holders with the Roland printer and Glowforge laser engraver. More classes have been added to the upcoming schedules, including ones especially for Seniors.
- **The Geneva Cookbook Club** relished The Fresh Eggs Daily Cookbook by Lisa Steele. We held our first meeting in the Demonstration Kitchen as we discussed the book. Ryan led the group in creation of a recipe from the book, Cheesy Baked Cream Eggs, and the group enjoyed them along with a still-warm quiche a group member baked.
- Ryan and Angela Thomas from the Board of DD hosted a **Cookie Connection** program in the **Demonstration Kitchen** for clients of the Grape Escape. Participants helped measure, mix, and decorate Mini M&M Chocolate Chip cookies. When baked, they served as tasters and then helped package them for donation to a local homeless shelter.
- Nine (9) participants joined Elizabeth for **Coffee and Conversation**. Topics discussed were the world's tallest sunflower (grown as a tribute to war-torn Ukraine); toothpaste made with hair that naturally repairs tooth enamel; large corporations taking over family farms; and the story of a man found living in a crawlspace of an Oregon housing complex.
- Keith led adult **DIY** programs in both Ashtabula and Geneva. Participants experimented with junk journaling, a project with less formal direction and more personal creativity than usual. Participants were provided with a wide variety of materials including textiles, stationery, recycled book covers, and leftover craft supplies to create their

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journals. Attendees used techniques like accordion-style bookbinding and sewing pages directly into book spines.

- Tina, Teresa, Sybil, and Ryan hosted a **Youth Services Open House** in Ashtabula so that members of the community and their families could meet the youth services team and check out the programs offered. Rocks were painted, STEAM games were played, and pizza and soda were served. Free books were available for kids, and many visitors registered for their first library card!
- Preschoolers and their families joined Teresa, Sybil, and Tiffany to engage in fun autumn activities at Ashtabula Youth's **Harvest Festival**. Participants made autumn leaf collages where they glued leaves to a tree template to create an autumn tree. They also enjoyed bobbing for apples with tongs. The Pumpkin ring toss with pumpkins and hula hoops was a lot of fun for the littles, and families especially loved the Children's Garden Storybook Walk (The Scarecrow's Hat by Ken Brown) and pumpkin painting.
- Since September was National Library Card Sign-Up month the major theme of **Ashtabula Storytimes** was *I Love My Library*. The kids really liked Dewey: There's a Cat in the Library! by Vicki Myron and Orson and the World's Loudest Library by Laura Gehl. Coloring pages were passed out and participants made bookmarks showing how much they love books and the library. Teresa also incorporated "books with a surprise," with Pop! Goes the Nursery Rhyme by Betsy Bird and Z is for Moose by Kelly Bingham being the favorites.
- Geneva Storytimes featured the themes of *pumpkins* (with Tina reading books about pumpkins and the color orange -- the favorite book being an interactive story titled Amara's Farm by JaNay Brown-Wood that had preschoolers looking for pumpkins and instead finding other fruit on every page!); *autumn leaves* changing color and falling (preschoolers especially loved Sneeze, Big Bear, Sneeze! by Maureen Wright and enjoyed all of Big Bear's tremendous sneezes and his belief that it was his sneezes making the leaves fall); and the *Science of Sound*. Out of the several books read by Miss Tina that week, by far the overwhelming favorite (because kids get to make all the sounds) was Rumble and Roar: Sound around the World by Sue Fliess. Co-workers said they could hear the kids howling like the wolves in the story!
- Ashtabula's **Rhythm Band for Preschoolers** was all about *shaking*. Shake the sillies out, shake your maracas, shake your body... all to a beat. Preschoolers enjoyed *Hap Palmer Rhythms on Parade* songs with rhythm sticks, maracas and bean bags.
- Parents and preschoolers were welcomed to a new program at each building this month: **Sensory Stay and Play**. Tina started with introductions on the importance of sensory play (playing with all your senses) and parents were given literature on the importance of



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sensory play. Tina pre-makes all the sensory items so the kids can dig right in and play. She also guides parents through the process of making/putting together sensory items. Each session is accompanied by dimmed lights and lullabies playing to help create a relaxed atmosphere. Sensory activities (and designs) included a sensory bin with shredded paper and pom-poms of different colors and sizes, and making cloud dough using cornstarch and scented hair conditioner (Tina used strawberry but encouraged parents to try different scents, too).

- **Little Scientists in Ashtabula** built homemade thermometers and tested them with hot and cold water; they did a pirate STEM lab where they played the 'value pirates' math game (they used a pirate coding scheme to find buried treasure and built a pirate ship that can float); and made pom-pom launchers using popsicle sticks and rubber bands.
- **Geneva's Little Scientists** created a maze and learned how to program coding mice to navigate the maze. They enjoyed a unit where they learned how to upcycle cardboard boxes into castles while using Maker-Cart supplies to help build and beautify. And they learned about aerodynamics with paper airplanes being flown out of the tree house "airport." A favorite was an activity where they worked on packaging small dinosaur eggs to ship via the "Outreach Express" to ACDL and back. *Shipping* seemed to resonate with the kids, and they learned the importance of properly packing items (they also got to unpack the eggs upon arrival to discover the little dinosaurs David hid inside them). They also had fun building their dream houses out of Keva blocks and Legos.
- **Homeschoolers at the Library (Geneva and Ashtabula)** made foam shape collagraphs where they learned printmaking by glueing foam and other materials to cardboard and stamping it on paper. Students participated in "Recycled City" by meeting the challenge to create buildings out of cardboard and other recycled materials. They really enjoyed the unit featuring a Matisse Art Workshop where they were "painting" with scissors. They also did a study of Matisse's goldfish. Students enjoyed the unit where they made Yayoi Kusama- inspired pumpkins. They had a blast making pom-pom launchers in a STEM building challenge; so many creative things were built, from slingshots to pom-pom bazookas!
- This month in **Lego Club** the students did a different Lego building challenge each week. In one challenge they were tasked with building mini habitats and buildings. In another, they were challenged with building a bridge using only one color. The competition grew fierce as they competed in building the tallest tower that didn't topple over! They also took home Lego coloring pages and create-your-own-Lego-mini-figure pages to do on their own.



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- Bailey and Keith hosted several **Studio Workshop for Teens** which were very well received and attended! 40 students did things like design and create Tie Dye Cinch sacks with the heat press and Cricut; jigsaw puzzles with the Glowforge; stickers with the Roland printer; pencil pouches with the heat press and sublimation printer; and used the button maker to craft “wearable statements.” These projects allowed teens to explore with both creative software, and the makerspace machines themselves.
- Geneva teens at **Afterschool Art Club** completed a Meet-the-Artist worksheet and a self-portrait. They really enjoyed using oil pastels when creating their own “Sunflowers” painting inspired by Vincent van Gogh. Students also participated in a two-part ceramics workshop where students made air-dry clay sculptures one week, then painted them the following week. They also loved making Matisse collages by painting paper with gouache, then glueing the cutouts to make a work of art.
- Creative teens flocked to **Teen Crafternoons**. Students enjoyed a variety of crafts each week, such as using Perler beads to make fun coasters, and making jewelry with various beads, trinkets and colored string.
- In **Games/Gizmos/Gadgets** teens had the option to use the 3D pens to create 3D art or create objects with Perler beads. They also had their pick of different board games to play together -- both old and new.
- David leads Geneva after-school students in a **Writer’s Block** program. This month participants started with short stories using some dinosaur prompts. They then delved into blackout poetry by blacking out words from a discarded book to create poems. They also learned about slam poetry, how to craft them and how to *slam* them.
- New this fall, **RPG (Role Playing Games)** is a program centered around character development and plotting. Participants started with the *Game of Hogwarts* and created scenarios to take all newcomers to magic school with adventures all along the express train route to Hogwarts. Toward the end of the month, participants started learning *ShadowDark* (Dungeons & Dragons) and are really enjoying exploring the different areas of this new world.
- In **Survival Skills**, teens went over fire safety for starting fires in the wilderness and then learned various types of fire builds to sustain a fire for heat and food. The teens spent time going over the basics for finding and collecting water in the wilderness and the dangers to look out for when consuming water. Participants created their own water filters using sand, pebbles, and activated charcoal with coffee filters, and they tried other materials for filtering water such as cheese cloth, observing the differences. The group also spent a unit learning the art of knot tying. They learned the importance of tying different knots and how they vary in function during use. Students practiced different



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types of knots and then made their own paracord bracelet/keychain! Lastly, the teens studied navigation which included learning to use a compass and the use of natural indicators such as the sun and stars. Led by Tiffany, this was a well-enjoyed new program this fall.

- **Signs, Signals, & Codes** participants study different forms of communication and guidance. This month Geneva teens learned about how people of older worlds used astrology and its signs to plan and move through their lives and then created their own birth charts to learn what their life charts predicted about them. They also learned about “intentions” and learned how to make their own sign or symbol with an intention; they learned to write the intention down in a complete present tense sentence and how to ‘decode’ their sentence to create an emblem which they then created with Perler beads. Students especially enjoyed exploring the world of spirit animals, where they came from, what they mean, and what they communicated to other tribes. Teens completed a quiz to find their spirit animal and then created that animal using pony beads. Teens really love this program!
- A returning teen favorite, **Stir It Up!**, is still well-attended and enjoyed—and they love using a “real kitchen!” Throughout the month teens learned to make mashed potatoes from scratch, including how to peel the potatoes and cook them on the stove. They then took turns mashing them using a handheld masher. Students learned how to make homemade cheese burritos from scratch -- learning how to make the dough, roll it out, then cook it. They learned how to bake cookies, which introduced them to the new ovens in the Demonstration Kitchen. They also learned about oven and kitchen fire safety while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies! And to provide a flavor option other than grapes, attendees made strawberry cheesecake chimichangas in the air fryer!
- **Become a Barista!** remains a steadfast favorite among the teens, as well. Each week teens learned how to make coffee and tea drinks that are served at popular coffeehouses everywhere. They love using the Demonstration Kitchen with ample counter space for this class. Teens learned how to brew a pot of coffee the correct way (not with a K-cup pod) and also the art of brewing different teas. Students spent a session learning to make a Mocha by mixing hot chocolate and coffee, and especially enjoyed creating a Chai Latte and learning the traditional, easy, and modern ways of making Chai. (They also baked cookies in the ovens and had them with their hot drinks during these sessions). Big fun was had, too, making Unicorn Lemonade using blue Butterly tea and lemonade and then adding glitter to make their drinks sparkly. They really enjoyed seeing how the lemonade activated the blue tea and made cool purple and blue swirls. Students also made an Arnold Palmer from scratch (iced tea + lemonade) and, lastly, made a Pineapple-



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Coconut Iced Tea requiring them to mash a pineapple and mix it with coconut milk. Many teens enjoyed making the recipes at home and shared photos with Sybil!

- **The Ashcraft Activity Adventure** program, hosted by Lyn, had 15 participants at the Ashtabula Library this month. The group watched the movie *Max* about a heroic military dog, enjoyed their lunches, looked for books and videogames, and some participants played videogames with Dwight. This crowd is always a fun and cheerful group who always expresses gratitude for the library programs we provide.
- **Ashtabula Passive Programs:**
 - Blind Date with a Book, The Classics: 14 checkouts
 - Staff Picks: 8 checkouts
 - Adult Coloring Club: 6 participants
- The positive response to our **Tech Connect** program is extraordinary. Dwight reports there are many comments implying that we should be charging an hourly fee, and when he explains that this is a free service, he is often greeted with shocked disbelief.
- **The Writers' Group** had a good discussion around the writing sample of a new member. A returning member introduced an outline for her novel. She is writing a romance set in Korea, with elements of espionage.
- Austin hosted the September **Genealogy Program**, *Mining for Genealogical Treasures*, where 44 patrons attended, eight (8) in-person and 36 online.
- Jim had 29 total attendees for his two Rae Ann **Reading Circles** and 14 total at Geneva Center for Nursing and Rehab visits. Both groups are reading *Skipping Christmas* by John Grisham. One Rae Ann regular recognized the plot of the book and asked if the movie *Christmas with the Kranks* had been based on it—and sure, enough, he was right! The Activities Director is going to show the film as a books-to-movies crossover when they are finished with the book!
- Carrie visited the ACCOA Center for Active Living to assist patrons with their genealogical research. There were seven (7) attendees.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & OUTREACH

- Outreach Services took part in the **Grape Jamboree** parades—the bookmobile's inaugural weekend as part of that festival. Geneva and Outreach Services staff also took shifts hosting an information booth at the Jamboree, greeting more than 400 people. Although there were many out-of-towners who stopped by, we also saw many familiar faces who were pleased we were a part of the community celebration.



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- Lyn Attended the Open House for the newly renovated **Legal Aid Society** building in Ashtabula. She discussed with Legal Aid staff the possibility of expanding the clinics hosted at the Ashtabula Library.
- Mike attended two **Ashtabula Lions** meetings and participated in the Lion's Club Pancake Breakfast and helped with their fundraiser parking cars for Grape Jamboree.
- Mike represented ACDL at the (quarterly) Ashtabula County **GRIT Collation** meeting.
- Carrie attended the **Ashtabula County America 250th** committee meeting.

MARKETING

- By far, the best performing post in September was the one thanking Albert (deceased) and Betty-Lou Cherry for their **\$10,000 donation** over the course of several years. The post reached 3821 accounts and received 172 interactions (likes, comments, and shares). Patrons were also excited about the **Harvest Festival** for kids and the **Studio Workshop** post.
- Adult book display themes in Geneva included *Autumnal Equinox*; *Check Meow-T* (books about cats); and *Celebrating Literacy* (book cap displays featured books with books on the cover, too).
- Book displays in Ashtabula included materials on the themes *Banned Books*; *Hispanic Heritage Month*; *Positive Thinking Day*; *All about Pies* (cont. from September), and *Pirates!* (cont. from September).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Elizabeth attended the NEO-RLS *Adult Services Virtual Networking* meeting and the NEO-RLS sponsored webinar *Adult Programming Equation*.
- Elizabeth and Dawn R. attended NEO-RLS sponsored webinar, *Escape Room at Your Library*.
- Sybil attended the webinar, *Using Collection Analysis at the Public Library*, on how to collect and use data from our current collection to assist in purchasing new materials.
- Tina attended the webinar, *The Best in Fall Nonfiction Part 2* by *School Library Journal* which focused on new release nonfiction titles for youth.
- David completed the *Gaming & E-sports in Libraries* webinar sponsored by NEO-RLS.
- Dawn O., Madelin, Christy and Will have completed the State Library of Ohio's *Librarian's Guide to Homelessness Training*.
- Becca Q. trained on the laminating machine.
- Carrie attended the *CONTENTdm User Group* hosted by the Ohio Digital Interest Group.



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VOLUNTEERS / LIBRARY FRIENDS

- **Edith R. Morrison & Mary W. Morrison Genealogy and Archive Room:**
 - Char covered the local history/genealogy room each Monday morning in September and helped cover extra days while Carrie was on vacation. She edited the digitized Ashtabula newspapers, completing 80 issues in September. She also added some recent donations to our photo collection totaling 108 images, and proofed the July obituaries.
 - Duane covered the local history/genealogy room each Saturday in September.