**January 2026**

**The MPL Mission**

Spark curiosity. Make connections. Thrive together.

Missoula Public Library achieves its mission by fostering community engagement, providing core services, and promoting sustainability and wellness.

**Circulation and Cataloging**

**Community Engagement**

* The Circulation department managed a significant increase in the volume of materials circulation in January. On average, an additional 100 or more holds were received and processed per day throughout the month. Circulation staff handled the increased volume efficiently, staying on top of large deliveries and a backlog of shared materials for processing.
* Elizabeth Jonkel, Jon Tweeten, and Will Klaczynski attended the quarterly Partner Sharing Group meeting on January 6. Discussion focused primarily on the transition from collapsible crates to enclosed bins for materials transport by Western Peaks Logistics. The intention is to improve safety, efficiency and cost investments for the partnership. The MSC has agreed to subsidize the MPL equipment needed to reconfigure the Circulation work area and assist with the transition. Circulation staff are adapting well to the expected impacts of this project.

**Core Services**

* Caroline Campbell facilitated discussions and training with Ingram to prepare selectors with cart construction for collection development using the iPage acquisition dashboard. EDI integration for pre-processing is anticipated to begin in February 2026.
* Elizabeth presented the Board’s approved 2026 Policy manual changes and updates to staff at the monthly staff meeting.
* Elizabeth attended County training on the next phase of Workday services: timesheet submission and leave management. Human Resources met with MPL management on necessary library configuration for the platform.

**Sustainability & Wellness**

* Emily Walter accepted a 16-hour/week Library Assistant 2 position with the Circulation Department. Her assistance with early morning operations will be greatly appreciated.

**Community Engagement**

**Community Engagement**

* Bookmobile made 29 stops around the county to serve priority communities
* Served 203 patrons, checked out 271 items, and answered 277 questions
* January month of the new stop schedule at Watershed; we will now have library presence there twice a month. Once as a regular bookmobile stop and again at ComMUNIty Court. Engaging with this community regularly outside the downtown branch has been really valuable, and we've gotten good feedback.
* Heard some nice feedback from a patron at our Bonner stop (which is often pretty slow): "I just wanted to say thanks. My wife and I have been going to the library ever since we talked to you." A good reminder that a successful bookmobile stop isn't always measured by how many patrons we have consistently showing up to the stop.
* Held a well-being concert with the Missoula Crescendo Club on Level 1 intended to create connections between community members and spark curiosity around what well-being and mental health looks like. A string quartet led the audience through a restful and calm experience with art supplies given out so participants could express their feelings around well-being. 50 people attended.
* Collaborative outreach and refreshed visuals have expanded the library’s visibility and strengthened connections with families and community partners. Updated images and adjusted time promotions for Tiny Tales and Story Time led to a substantial increase in participation, demonstrating the impact of thoughtful communication that responds directly to the needs of parents and caregivers.
* The Olympics Watch Party was promoted on several local radio stations at no cost to the library, increasing awareness and reinforcing the library’s role as a central community gathering space.
* Public Relations has also begun early planning and asset development for Project Community Connect 2026, including image creation and press materials, ensuring strategic lead time for strong community awareness and partnership engagement.
* The library gained 126 new Instagram followers, signaling a continued shift in audience engagement from Facebook to Instagram and highlighting the importance of focusing on platform-specific outreach.

**Core Services**

* Added a few dozen new books to the bookmobile collection, pulled from a few good sets of donations
* Staff from several different departments (circulation, safety, social work) joined for bookmobile stops aligned with their interests
* Targeted promotion continues to drive strong in-person participation and support community partnerships. Advertising for the January Blood Drive filled all available appointments and generated interest from community organizations interested in organizing group donations at the library. This response demonstrates the library’s role as a trusted and accessible space for essential services.

**Sustainability & Wellness**

* Early communications planning for Project Community Connect 2026 prioritizes community well-being by ensuring clear, consistent information reaches those who need it most.
* Lead Safety Specialist worked with Missoula County Risk and Benefits office on securing Shelter in Place kits
* Lead Safety Specialist revise the Code Adam procedure to better secure the entrances/exits as well as meeting with MPD for their feedback and what to expect from their response.
* Lead Safety Specialist has been in contact with the county for advice on finding resources for staff to more easily recognize individuals who have been trespassed that is in alignment with Library policy
* Lead Safety Specialist has began working on developing trainings for staff to understand and feel comfortable in handling emergency situations like active shooter trainings, fire drills & code adam drills.

**Reference**

**Community Engagement**

**Core Services**

**Sustainability and Wellness**

**Youth Services**

**Community Engagement**

* Introduced a community member-led weekly program called Peaceful Bracelet Making Club. Started by 2 girls (with the help of their mom), they bring beading supplies every Wednesday to the Imaginarium for anyone who may want to come in and do a calm craft. Attendance so far has been great, with regulars coming in and bringing their own beading supplies
* Biweekly Story Time for Diverse Abilities has seen enhanced participation and excitement with the introduction of games and activities. Going forward, this program will be called Stories and Games for Diverse abilities, with the same goal of continuing connection and fun for folks who attend
* By patron requests, we implemented a Saturday afternoon Tiny Tales for families who cannot attend TT during the week. Attendance has been steady and mainly made up of kids and families who have never attended TT before, which means we are hitting our goal of reaching new families
* Also new on Saturdays is a new start time for Story Time (11:30 instead of 10:30) to allow for greater engagement with a slightly older crowd of kids. Results have been mixed, but in general attendance seems to be slightly increasing, with some older kids who are better able to engage with stories and do crafts
* For the Jeanette Rankin Peace Center Reflect Restore Renew event on January 10th, YS partnered with JRPC volunteers to bring some kids and family programming to the 2nd floor. This included a Spanish/English story time, family yoga, peace crane making, and watercolors
* The Infant Play Group continues to be popular, with weekly attendance between 60 and 80 kids and caregivers

**Core Services**

* Weeding of E, J, and JMID collection started based on patron use. Some discards are being considered for donation to St. Pat’s hospital for inpatient use

**Sustainability & Wellness**

* Select discarded books are being used for summer Altered Books programs to be turned into works of art
* Additional padding at the base of the DNA slide has proven to be very effective and allows for an easier landing

**Branches**

**Community Engagement**

* **Big Sky**
  + Regular patrons coming in for Thursday Tech Time, a few new patrons 3D printing, still no interest in Writers’ Group for some time. Submitted spring programming schedule to Mary, considering dropping Big Sky Writers’ Group for something else but no definite plans yet.
* **Frenchtown**
  + Book Club met in January to discuss The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Klune. Ten attended. This lovely group of ladies are mostly older then I am and tend not to like fantasy. This is a fantasy and they so enjoyed the book they asked to read the sequel.
  + The movie for January did not happen due to illness in the staff.
  + Some nights in the library are very quiet. Others nights are busier with younger siblings of students who are playing in athletic events. They get bored and come up to play games, do homework, and just visit with their friends.
* **Lolo**
  + The return to regular hours has made a positive impact on patrons. They are delighted. The Yarns program is meeting once again in our space and they are grateful to have a place to meet.
* **Potomac**
  + Book club is starting to gain even more momentum, with a new member added this month!
* **Seeley Lake** 
  + Posting library updates in local paper
  + Helping local artist group with postings/printing
* **Swan Valley**
  + Plans are being discussed for a pottery painting class in Feb or March.
  + Donated books have been coming in from people doing winter cleaning.

**Core Services**

* **Big Sky**
  + Continued learning Ingram Ipage, including attending a webinar explaining the interface. Placed a few more orders.
* **Frenchtown**
  + Continue to cover books for MPL.
* **Lolo**
  + Planned a few program ideas and will be implementing them in February – Book Discussion Club, Lego Club, Yarns, Tech Help
  + Weeding and making room for newer items and playing around with different display ideas for books that are not circulating much.
* **Potomac**
  + Continuing to replace books that are lost or damaged
  + Going through the J collection to update spine labels with series/series # as needed
  + Had 2 boxes of gently used books donated to the library – I am working through them and adding some to the collection, saving others for summer reading prizes, and using the rest to stock the Little Free Library in front of the school
* **Seeley Lake**
  + Active adult book club with dynamic participants
  + The after school book club in currently paused (hoping to resume this spring)
  + Community puzzle available for anyone to work on (this has been very popular this winter – already on our fifth puzzle)
  + Finished weeding Juvenile section: fiction (J & JMID), biographies, comics, cds, dvds
* **Swan Valley**
  + Our Book Chat book for January was The Secret Life of Sunflowers by Marta Molnar. We enjoyed learning more about the life of Divinci and his painting style
  + 7 notaries were performed in January.

**Sustainability and Wellness**

* **Big Sky**
  + Carolyn Kamrud is back working Mondays. Shifted my own schedule to work Mondays as well, so that I can more easily cover Mondays if Carolyn is unavailable again in the future, cover sick days, etc. Elizabeth Lofts is our Lolo branch librarian now, so she likely won’t be able to cover as often.
* **Lolo**
  + Joshua D was onsite and got the public laptops, and my work laptop updated. He also ordered a new scanner and a receipt printer for the branch.
  + I am finding it much less harried now that all the work is not having to be done in one night
  + It was decided that I will deliver crates back and forth between Main and the Branch as I am scheduled to work at Main on the same days as at the Branch. Towne Mailer was notified.
* **Seeley Lake**
  + Maintaining clean air protocols during winter (continuing partnership with Amy of Climate Smart Missoula)
  + Completed Reflex-Protect Training 1/22/26
* **Swan Valley**
  + The ramp was installed for our new door.