

Assistant Director's Report – Sept. 2026

Professional Development & Training

- **UPRLC Conference:** Participated in sessions including: *Conversations That Move Work Forward*, *Building Better Library Teams Together*, *Michigan Library Leaders: Case Studies in Conversations Worth Having*, *Libraries for Life*, and many more. Several sessions offered practical ideas for strengthening staff relationships and communication. I learned how to apply the WIDGET framework (wonder, invention, discernment, galvanizing, enablement, and tenacity) as a tool for moving projects and conversations forward. We also explored using generative questions to foster more productive team discussions and encourage engagement. The *Libraries for Life* session explored opportunities for libraries to partner with Donate Life through activities such as making blankets for donor families, offering take-home kits, and sharing information about organ donation. The conference also provided plentiful opportunities to network with other library professionals and vendors to learn about things that could benefit our library.
- **Psychology of Poverty Training:** Attended training focused on understanding the psychology of poverty and how we can use this knowledge to better serve our patrons.
- **CLIO Interlibrary Loan Training:** Participated in training on the updated CLIO system used to process out-of-state interlibrary loan requests.
- **Open Books, Open Minds Virtual Conference:** Attended this virtual conference, which featured several interesting discussions about artificial intelligence and top picks for young readers.

Michigan Humanities Collaboration

- **Great Michigan Read:** Attended the regional meeting in Mount Pleasant as the representative of Northeast Michigan. Alongside leaders from five other regions, we discussed around a dozen qualifying selections to decide on the next Great Michigan Read. Our regional group's top choice was selected as the finalist: *The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by John U. Bacon. For the first time, a youth selection was also chosen: *The Circles All Around Us* by Brad Montague. This addition creates another opportunity to engage younger readers and families in the Great Michigan Read experience.
- **Great Michigan Gathering:** Worked on planning the Great Michigan Gathering Watch Party featuring Priya Parker on October 8.

Library Operations & Administration

- Coordinating staff scheduling.
- Preparing reports and compiling library statistics.
- Sending thank-you correspondence to donors.
- Completing deposits and other financial responsibilities.
- Ordering new materials for the collection.
- Working alongside staff at the service desk and assisting patrons.

I continue to value the opportunity to work alongside staff, learn more about the library's operations, and identify ways to support the team and strengthen our services to the community.

Sincerely,

Lauren Mantlo