

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GERMANTOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARY DIRECTOR PRESENTS 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Germantown, WI – Almost a year after the building was first closed to COVID-19, Germantown Community Library Director Trisha Smith reflects on library services over the past year. The 2020 Annual Report was presented at the Village of Germantown Board meeting on Monday, March 1, 2021.

The year 2020 ended up being a very different year than planned. The year started out strong and continued to see increases in circulation of material, services and programs that were offered to the community. The library checked out over 49,000 digital items during the year – a 29% increase. While the library continues to see growth in digital resources, physical material still remains a vital service to the public.

After COVID-19 hit in mid-March, the physical library building stayed closed for several months and had to figure out how to serve the community during a pandemic. Throughout the year the Germantown Community Library staff worked to pivot programming, provide increased digital resources and provide information, services and materials to the community through a different approach.

“The library found new ways for residents to learn at home and stay connected to the library and to each other,” says Trisha Smith, Library Director. “Online programs that started last spring such as virtual storytime, online book discussion groups and an online Memory Café program are continuing into 2021. We have had so many patrons telling us that they use these programs to keep in touch with friends and family that they were not able to see in person.”

The library was one of the first at the end of April to provide patrons with Curbside Pickup of material – a service that was continued throughout the year and remains in effect today.

“When we opened in the spring, we quickly saw the need for more options to allow shorter visits to the library,” Smith says. “In 2020, we had over 5,500 Curbside Pickup appointments. After the physical building opened, we found that patrons really liked and appreciated the convenience of being able to request their items online and pick them up from the library with limited contact. The library also added services such as Library Express Bags and themed book and movie bundles for quick and easy browsing.”

The library also added limited contact programming options such as outdoor storywalks at local parks, an online Summer Reading Challenge and Grab & Go Kits.

“We have had nothing but positive responses from these programs,” says Smith. “We handed out over 23,000 Grab & Go kits for kids, teens and adults last year. While COVID-19 restrictions remain in place, instead of attending a family program, kids can pick up a STEAM Kit to complete at home. Over the past year, we have worked to expand our Grab & Go options to include options such as Preschool, Recipes, Movie Night and Craft Kits. While we are very much looking forward to being able to offer in-person programming again, we found that patrons really like the flexibility of these Grab & Go options that do not require participation at a specific date or time. Once we are able to offer more in-person programs, we will be working to balance traditional programs while continuing to offer these Grab & Go activities that are working well for the community.”

The 2020 Annual Report can be found on the Germantown Community Library website at <https://www.germantownlibrarywi.org/annual-report>

Do you have a comment or story to share about the library? Contact Trisha Smith at smithp@germantownlibrarywi.org

PATRON COMMENTS:

"Thank you for coordinating all of the programs, constantly flexing for COVID and providing such an amazing value to our community. The library activities and books are the highlight of our week!"

“I wanted to thank you for offering both the adult and children’s to-go kits! These have been invaluable to our family during these crazy times. I sometimes Zoom with my neighbor as we do Art projects and my daughter gets so excited with each new kids art and recipe kits.”

“Thank you for coordinating all of the programs, constantly flexing for COVID and providing such an amazing value to our community. The library activities and books are the highlight of our week!"

PHOTOS (attached):

2020 (1): DJ Smith (age 3) and Zachary Backes (age 3) watch Storytime Live at home.

2020 (2): Michelle Klowak enjoys an outdoor storywalk with her grandkids, Isabelle Smith (age 5) and DJ Smith (age 3) at Schoen Laufen Park in Germantown.

2020 (3): Participants attend an online Memory Café through the Library Memory Project for those with dementia and their caregivers.

2020 (4): Germantown Library announces new Curbside Pickup services in April 2020.