

**President**

*Olga Granat*

**Vice President**

*Kristy Merritt*

**Secretary**

*Roger Rhodes*

**Treasurer**

*Stu Summers*

**Members**

*Paul Knauff*

*Kevin Pazour*

*Stacey Whitten*

**Legal Counsel**

*Clay Patton*

**Library Director**

*Jesse Butz*

Porter County Public Library  
System  
103 Jefferson St.  
Valparaiso, IN

(219) 462-0524

pcpls.org

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, May 17, 2023**

**NOTICE:** The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on May 17, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. for an Executive Session at the Valparaiso Public Library, 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN, 46368 to discuss the job performance of an individual employee IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(9). The regularly scheduled meeting is to follow no earlier than 4:05 p.m.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:** (Olga)

The Public comment session is provided as an opportunity for patrons to address the Board of Trustees on matters related to agenda items.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** (Olga)

1. Approval of the Minutes from April 19, 2023 (Roger)
2. Financial Report
  - a. Treasurer's Report (Stu)
  - b. Approval of the Claims Register (Hayley)
3. Approval of Communications (Jesse)
  - a. Friend's Report
  - b. Director's Report
  - c. Patron Comments

**ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:**

1. Renovation Update (Jesse)
2. Library Gardens Update (Jesse)
3. Crown Point Reciprocal Agreement
4. Horizon Bank Signatory (Hayley)

Any other items  
Adjournment (Olga)  
Signature Session

**Future Meetings: (Dates subject to change) 4:00 P.M.**

- June 21, 2023 - Valparaiso Public Library
- July 19, 2023 - Valparaiso Public Library
- August 16, 2023 - Valparaiso Public Library

# Porter County Public Library System

## Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for May 17, 2023

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:15 pm at 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN 46383. Olga Granat presided.

Members in attendance included Olga Granat, President; Kristy Merritt, Vice President; Roger Rhodes, Secretary; Stu Summers, Treasurer; Paul Knauff, Kevin Pazour, and Stacey Whitten. No board members were absent. Also in attendance: Director Jesse Butz, Library Attorney Clay Patton, and Associate Directors Inge Kokidko & Hayley Scott.

### Public Comment

No public comment was given. It was noted that, during an executive session that met prior to the current meeting, employee performance was discussed, but no action was taken.

### Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Apr 19, 2023

Financial Report

    Treasurer's Report

    Approval of the Claims Register

Approval of Communications

    Friends of the Library Report

    Director's Report

    Patron Comments

**Motion:** Kevin Pazour moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Kristy Merritt.

**Discussion:** Communications reports were summarized.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with the following roll call vote:

Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Knauff	Pazour	Whitten	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Renovation Update

Updates were given on the Hebron and Kouts HVAC projects, the issues with the windows and facade in Valparaiso, the tuckpointing projects in Hebron, Kouts, and Valpo, and the roof and automatic door replacement in Portage.

## Library Gardens Update

Updates were given on the South Haven library, including progress on the land survey, patio repair, exterior lighting, and undergrowth cleanout. Bids and fundraising plans for Portage were summarized. The establishment of donation funds for all gardens was discussed.

## Crown Point Reciprocal Agreement

The status and use of current reciprocal borrowing agreements were summarized. It was recommended that PCPLS update its reciprocal agreement with Crown Point Library.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved to establish a reciprocal agreement between Porter County and Crown Point libraries. The motion was seconded by Roger Rhodes.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with the following roll call vote:

Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Knauff	Pazour	Whitten	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Horizon Bank Signatory

Updates on the status of signatories, CDs, and deposits from Evergreen libraries were given.

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:41 pm.

Roger Rhodes, Secretary

# **April 2023**

## **Overview**

- April is generally a slower month for circulation as the nice weather prompts families to head back out and explore the world after a long winter. Our Rotary garden has been a popular destination this spring as families and school classrooms have come by for a tour or to enjoy our storywalk.
- While physical circulation cooled in April, electronic usage continued to be strong with an increase of 35%!
- Our popular Book-a-Librarian has been more popular than we could have ever imagined. Teachers and schools are booking time at our branches or in school almost daily. A HUGE shoutout to our youth services and systems programming teams for handling this essential service!

## **Important Upcoming Dates**

- May
  - 3rd: Friends of the Library Board Meeting
  - 17th: Library Board of Trustees Meeting-Valparaiso
- June
  - 1st: Summer Reading Begins!
  - 7th: Friends of the Library Board Meeting
  - 21st: Library Board of Trustees Meeting- Valparaiso

## **Personnel**

- Ending Employment
  - Marilyn Cummins, TS/Library Clerk, 11/06/19 - 04/22/23
  - Sydney Briel, Library Clerk, 12/28/22 - 04/22/23
  - Megan Heavner, Library Clerk, 04/13/23 - 04/18/23
- New Employment
  - Madeline Prussman, Library Clerk
  - Megan Heavner, Library Clerk
- Staff Development
  - The north county management team trained on how to handle difficult conversations and situations with patrons. While challenging, every conversation is an opportunity for a positive interaction!
- Amy conducted phone interviews for part-time LC3 positions in South County and Valpo.

## **Finance Notes**

- The budget benchmark for the end of April is that 33% of the budget should be spent. So far, 29% has been spent and we're on target to be within our estimated budget.

- The Library earned \$25,297.32 from Trust Indiana in April.
  - Included in the total interest earned is the Valpo Garden Donations, which earned \$752.69 in April.
- In April, the library received \$3,000 from the Valparaiso Tri Kappa Chapter to provide updated tablets for our youth services department.
- April saw the final installation of our new phone systems! With NITCO absorbing our fax lines, the library is anticipating an annual savings of around \$4,500!

### **Subscription/Contract Renewals**

- Subscriptions
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - None
  - Cancellations
    - None
- Contracts
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - None
  - Cancellations
    - None

### **Buildings, Grounds, and Technology**

- The Kouts branch had a new 5-ton ac system installed for their meeting room. This is step one of the larger project that will begin in the fall.
- Hebron is preparing to start their HVAC project at the end of May. Staff are coming up with different plans to still have programs, even though Youth Services will need to be closed. We will be reaching out to the Hebron Parks Department.
- RLM Landscaping did spring clean up in Portage, Valpo, Kouts, and South Haven, laying down a fresh layer of mulch and making the grounds look fantastic.
- IT continues to configure the settings for our new patron computers. This is a very involved project so we are taking our time to make sure we do it right!
- We scheduled the meeting room AV equipment upgrade for June 5th and have started getting quotes to update the other meeting room AV equipment as well.
- We have updated our auto attendant voice message to help patrons adapt to the phone changes.
- We've had some issues with our TBS coin towers and credit card readers this month that took some time to resolve. Nathan created some documentation on how to clean our coin towers to help alleviate some of the issues with coin jams that cause the bulk of the errors we tend to have.

- Jesse, Stu, and Roger met with a fencing contractor to go over options for the South Haven Library Garden.
- Jesse met with the City of Portage to finalize the bid package for the Portage Library Garden.
- We had leaks at both Hebron and Valpo that have been linked to rotting or faulty windows. Jason is working with vendors on quotes for replacement or repair.
- The Rotary garden is in the process of being opened for the season with a fresh layer of mulch, decorations down, and the fog walk being turned on. People are already stopping by and are excited for this summer!
- Jesse met with the new Porter County Parks Department Director regarding surface options for the South Haven Library Garden. He had a wealth of information to assist in the selection of our wooded trail.
- Jason and Jesse met with landscapers regarding options for the South Haven Library Garden and space.
- Stephen, Jesse, Jason, and Monique moved shelving units in the youth department in Valpo to accommodate the DVD move to the second floor.
- Jesse met with Lance from Porter County's Emergency response team. They will be supplying the Library with two portable AC units, one from the County and one from the hospital to help keep Hebron cool while the new AC unit is installed. What amazing partners we have with Porter County Government!

### **Public Relations and Marketing**

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during April was 73,989.
- Facebook:
  - Our Facebook reach was 20,663.
  - Our account has 6,087 followers.
- Twitter:
  - The System has 565 total followers. We made 4 tweets with 604 impressions this month.
- Instagram:
  - The System has 1,318 Instagram followers.
  - We shared 19 posts on Instagram with 2,651 impressions.
- YouTube:
  - The System has 134 total subscribers. Our videos had 85 views this month.
- Pinterest:
  - The System has 83 followers. Our Pinterest account's reach was 61 people for the month.
- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 45,730 times this month.
- TikTok: Our TikTok channel now has 722 subscribers. We posted 4 new videos and had 4,195 total views this month.
- Virtual Customer Service: Interacted with 38 patrons.
  - Google - 3 new five-star reviews
    - "My favorite little library in Porter County. Very helpful staff, large selection of books, and very clean and friendly environment."

- “Great that this facility has this program...very professional team! Many thanks...”
- Our community engagement team’s partnership with the Porter County Government’s Health and Fitness Taskforce allowed us to highlight a number of PCPLS “healthy living” resources during the Wellness Committee’s presentation at April’s Porter County Commissioner meeting.
- Willow and Ashley met with the Porter County Community Parks Department on April 4th to define our partnership and brainstorm how we can grow together including brainstorming gardening events, storywalks, adult painting classes, and Camp FUNset 2023.
- The Marketing team, with the Hebron YS staff, had a fantastic time at the Hebron MS Science Night. Between the giant slingshot, the fun games, and the engaging staff, they were able to reach a lot of families who did not know all that the library could offer them. We look forward to attending again next year.
- Jesse had an excellent meeting with the Portage School District regarding the next steps in collaboration with PCPLS. This meeting led to speaking opportunities with their education foundation and more!
- Our Marketing Team began marketing audits at the branches. This process helps train the trainers on cohesive branding, our marketing style guide, and how these visual elements dovetail with library resource promotion and accessibility.
- Ashley Montelongo , PCPLS’ System Programming Coordinator, participated as a panelist at the Indiana Library Federation North Regional Conference on Friday, April 14th. She represented PCPLS (and our innovative programming adaptations and community partnerships) in a session titled, “Programming in a Post-Covid World.”
- Nina and Sarah Portage’s Chamber Night. The event’s theme was Minute to Win It. The library booth hosted Skee Ball and handed out fun prizes.
- We talked about the library and all of our upcoming summer fun with 1406 people at outreach events, including Portage Chamber Night, Hebron Middle School Science Night, Porter County Recycling’s Earth Day Celebration, Valpo Parks’ Active Kids Day, and the Portage YMCA’s Healthy Kids Day.
- Jesse met with the Northwest Indiana Food Council team on partnerships including the stocking of our new seed libraries!
- Jesse and Willow attended the First Things First Early Learning Collaborative meeting at the Porter County Community Foundation. This essential program helps our newest patrons and young families as they navigate early childhood.
- Jesse attended an Indiana State Library webinar regarding censorship and new legislation.

### **Youth and Teen Services**

- The Hebron branch has been having some amazing turnouts for its storytimes. We already have two days that we offer storytime, to accommodate patrons and to spread out the attendance. We have now added a Saturday storytime that happens every other week, to bring in patrons that can not make it in during the week and to give families more options for storytime days.

- Teen programs at the Hebron branch have been really building momentum in the past several months. We had several teens attend our How Money Works teen program and our teen paint-pouring workshop was a hit.
- The Hebron branch hosted its first T-Rex Tea Time. There was a story, some dancing, and, of course, tea and cupcakes. Everyone had a lot of fun, especially our special guest Ms. T-Rex.
- Attendance to the Mother Goose on the Loose program at the Kouts branch has been gaining a lot of momentum this past month. We have parents/guardians from Chesterton to Laporte bringing their children in for this amazing early literacy program. If the trend continues we will need to add a second day or another time to be able to accommodate the numbers we are seeing.
- For part of April and May, the Kouts branch will once again be partnering with the Kouts Elementary School to host the KES art show. This month's art is clay hanging sculptures of the elementary schoolers' pets. The art show itself will be held on the 16th of May, but already we have been getting many families coming in to admire these adorable works of art.
- The Valpo branch has moved the children's DVD collection upstairs to the Youth Services department. This was the last major step in the Youth Services collection shifting project. The team is now working on the final touches, such as labeling the shelves. It is looking great up there!
- Valpo team member, Kristin, has been working with our system programmers to develop Sensory Storytime, an inclusive program with activities that support children with sensory processing challenges. We offered this for the first time in April and received positive feedback from the attendees, who said they would come back next month.
- The Valparaiso branch was a host location for Spring Into the Arts again this year. The Youth Services Department is showcasing artwork from kindergarteners, and the branch was abuzz with people on opening day, April 22nd. The artwork adds such joyful and fun energy to the department!
- Portage hosted the Portage Township Schools Elementary art show. The Youth Services Department had many visitors throughout the month and a packed house during the open house on April 6.
- Portage hosted a successful Homeschool Hour where students engaged in poetry-based activities. We look forward to hosting more homeschool groups.
- South Haven hosted a Toddler Formal, the event was fun and popular among our youngest patrons.
- Amanda Koeppen and many creative team members started prepping decorations to promote Summer Reading in Portage and South Haven
- System Programming Coordinated an Every Child Ready to Read Training held at the Wheatfield Branch of the Jasper County Public Library System. We had 3 programmers, and 2 system programmers attend.
- Our Book a Librarian feature available through our website has been gaining a lot of momentum. We have had a range of offerings based on requests made by teachers in the community. System Programming has been able to coordinate, delegate, and fulfill



all requests that have been submitted. Some of our offerings were Hi-low Book tastings, Library Tours, and Lego clubs.

- Our Storytime in the Park partnership with the Portage Parks Department is gaining a steady increase in attendance.
- System Programming received donations for our Summer Reading Grand, Weekly, and Finisher prizes from McDonalds, Culvers, Family Express, Dairy Queen, Pizza Hut, Roots, Imagine Theater, and the Field Museum in Chicago.

### **Adult Services**

- Both South County branches had their adult painting programs this month. Sarah MacMillan keeps finding fun and simple pictures for patrons to paint. This month it was a colorful tree in full Spring bloom. Everyone who comes to the program has a lot of fun and can not wait for the next one.
- The Valpo branch received a Legal Help Kiosk from the Indiana Bar Foundation. It is up and running in the Adult Services department, and will surely prove to be an invaluable resource for patrons seeking legal information and resources.
- Valpo team member, Allison, has started working on coordinating Summer Reading displays. One of the biggest projects, the Lord of the Rings stairwell display, is nearly finished. Our team members have been working diligently and we will see more finished displays by the end of May. Many team members that don't normally volunteer to do displays have stepped up and have been really enjoying the process. Staff have approached Allison and said that display work has added a much-needed pep to the work day!
- The Valparaiso branch is grateful for all of the help it receives from its network of volunteers. Kelleen, the branch's volunteer coordinator, onboarded 5 new volunteers in the month of April. Volunteers help with all sorts of tasks throughout the branch, such as shelving, shelf reading, Genealogy data entry, cleaning, craft preparation, and outdoor cleanup (picking up litter). We saw a total of 87.75 volunteer hours in the month of April!
- Portage staff began a shifting project in AV to obtain more room for DVDs
- We are seeing more tech one on one requests in Portage and South Haven lately, and inquiries into that service. This essential service provides that individual connection that our patrons have come to know and love.
- The system programming team visited OE for our monthly visit. This month was Bingo Night and both participants and OE staff won books that were donated to the library.
- Our much-requested Seed Library officially launched in a soft opening. The community enjoys being able to grab seeds on the go!

### **Technical Services**

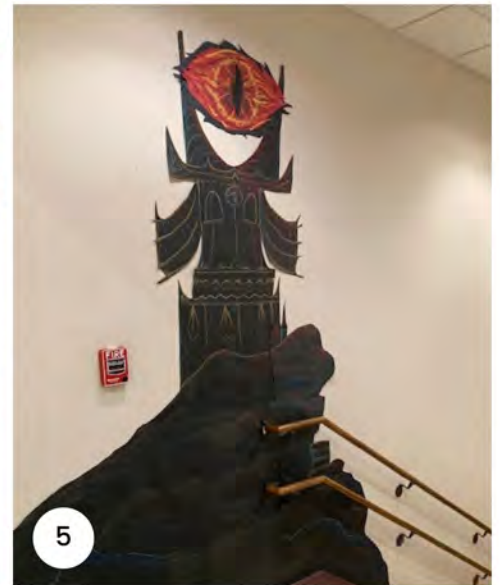
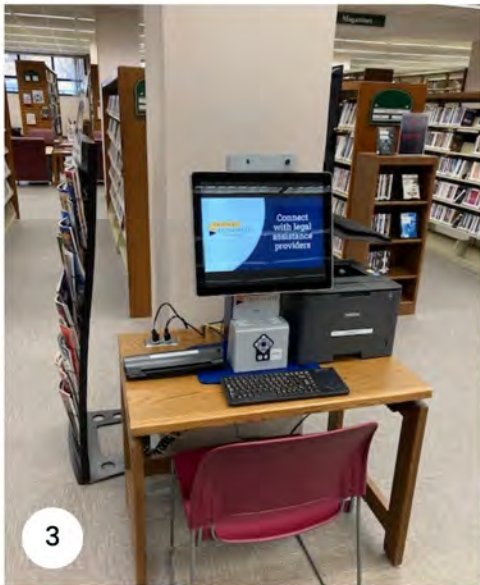
- Tech Services have been auditing and performing maintenance on our Penworthy kits. These popular children's activity kits cover a variety of topics such as nutrition, engineering, and measuring and complement a variety of curricula, whether for public, private, or homeschooling.

- Inge, Elizabeth, and Jackie attended a tour of Baker and Taylor's Momence warehouse. The tour provided a great behind-the-scenes glimpse at B&T's operations. This gave us a great introduction to some of the additional services that we are not currently taking advantage of that may allow us to automate some of the more routine TS workflows.
- Tech managers are spearheading a system-wide effort to better understand our staffing needs by auditing our workflows. We plan to use this information to develop some performance benchmarks as well as optimize staff allocation.
- PCPLS partnered with local Cub Scouts to help build our braille collection. The scouts raised \$425 which the library matched. These funds were to be specifically for braille-enabled picture and board books purchased from the National Braille Press. These unique volumes feature the illustrated version of the books with clear braille overlays creating a way for both sighted and visually impaired individuals to enjoy books together.
- After a much-needed weed of dated materials in Valpo's children's nonfiction last year, Elizabeth coordinated a large order of children's nonfiction to replenish our collection.

### Genealogy

- Our team researched and delivered information to Alexandria Monroe Library about Zada Carr Williams using our Centennial booklet.
- The team has been hard at work merging donated materials into our vertical files. This work includes making photocopies of original newspaper articles from other, non-archived publications.
- Chris started gathering information for the next Valparaiso Magazine about local restaurants that are no longer here. She will partner with Kellen to write the article that so many enjoy reading!
- Chris and the team researched the first computer at the courthouse through newspaper accounts. The IT team at Porter County Government had reached out for assistance and were very grateful for the information received.
- The team was able to help Kevin at POCO Muse with a request.
- Kathy continues working on Miller family databases as well as obit books for Chesterton and LaPorte.
- Chris M. Continues working on the very interesting fire department books.

# Valparaiso



- 1 Spring Into the Arts has brought a colorful and fun energy to our Youth Services department!
- 2 We got the childrens' DVDs moved upstairs to the Youth Services department at the Valpo branch!
- 3 The Valpo branch received a Legal Help kiosk from Indiana Legal Help, which will prove to be an invaluable resource for our patrons.
- 4 Our team member Nikki F created this whimsical and inviting display near the Youth Services entrance.
- 5 Here is the other part of the stairwell display- the Eye of Sauron from *Lord of the Rings*!

# Hebron



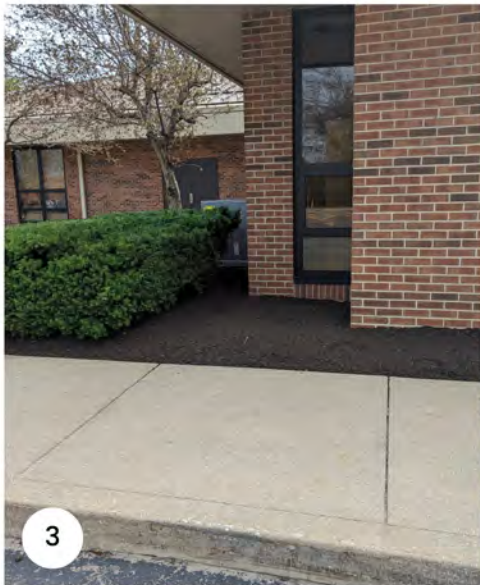
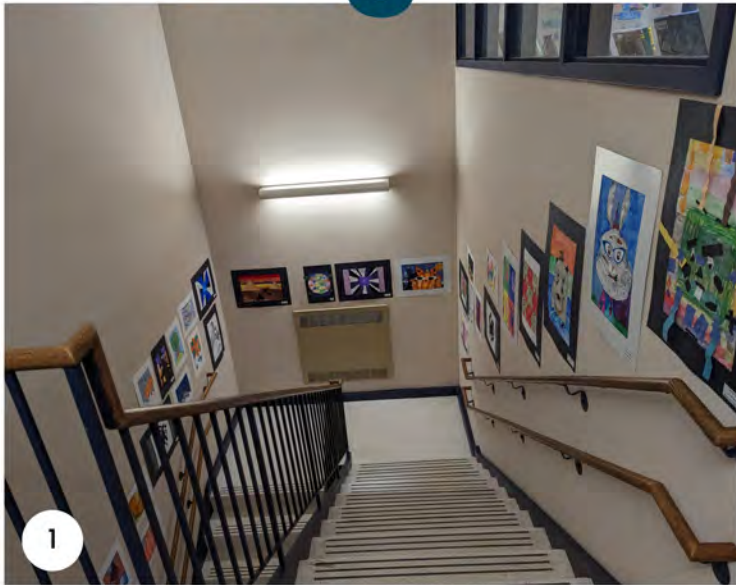
- 1 Our T-Rex Tea Party was so much fun! Our special guest "Ms. T-Rex" was there to hear the story, play games & dance along with the kids.
- 2 Team Hebron Middle School Science Night Outreach reached a lot of Hebron families ...and we even got to hang out with the Mandalorian!
- 3 Our Paws to Read program with Caleb "the big teddy bear" comfort dog, was really nice. He enjoyed the kids and the stories!
- 4 For one of our storytimes, we learned all about being good veterinarians and had a hands-on vet clinic for our stuffed animals!
- 5 This amazing big brother loves to use Hebron's puppet show to put on plays for his sibling.

# Kouts



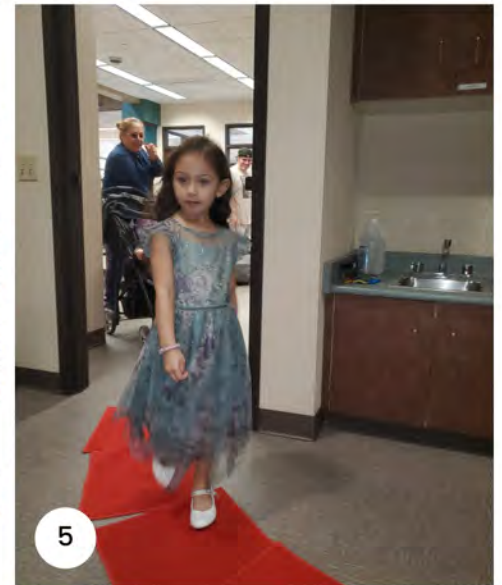
- 1 Mother Goose on the Loose is such a popular program. We have parents, grandparents, and guardians coming with their children.
- 2 Sarah M. of South County helps patrons to find their inner artist. It's nice to have a splash of color after so many rainy days.
- 3 Working hard on making their very own bunny for Easter.
- 4 Everyone likes their spoon bunny that they got to make at the storytime in Kouts.
- 5 Reading together at the Kouts Emerging Reader Book Club.

# Portage



- 1 Portage hosted Portage Township School's Elementary Art Show.
- 2 Portage showcased many talented young artists at the Portage Elementary Art Show.
- 3 A fresh layer of mulch made the landscaping in Portage look really nice.
- 4 Amanda interacting with babies at Portages Babies and Bunnies Storytime.
- 5 Homeschool kids enjoyed an hour of poetry appreciation during Portage's Homeschool Hour.

# South Haven



1 Sandra giving instructions for a few Easter experiments for South Haven's Stem Saturday.

2 Patrons had an eggcellent time with our experiments in South Haven for Stem Saturday.

3 Our youngest patrons dressed in their princess best for Toddler Formal!

4 Kids enjoyed an afternoon of building Lego creations in South Haven.

5 Looking good on the red carpet at South Haven's Toddler Formal!