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Clay Patton

Library Director

Jesse Butz

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

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pcpls.org

BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

NOTICE: The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on March 20, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. for its regularly scheduled meeting at 103 Jefferson St., Valparaiso, IN, 46383.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

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:

1. Approval of the Minutes from February 21, 2024
2. Financial Report
 - a. Treasurer's Report
 - b. Approval of the Claims Register
3. Approval of Communications
 - a. Friend's Report
 - b. Director's Report
 - c. Patron Comments

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

1. Portage Accident Update
2. Paving and Concrete for South Haven and Hebron
3. Roofing Needs Portage and Kouts
4. Managed Services Provider
5. Internal Controls Update

Any other items

Adjournment

Signature Session

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

- April 17, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library
- May 15, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library
- June 19, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library

Porter County Public Library System

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for **Mar 20, 2024**

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:01 pm at 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN 46383. Kristy Merritt presided.

Members in attendance included Kristy Merritt, President; Roger Rhodes, Vice President; Paul Knauff, Secretary; Stu Summers, Treasurer; Kevin Pazour, Julie Giorgi (remote), and Olga Granat. No board members were absent. Also in attendance: Director Jesse Butz, Library Attorney Clay Patton, and Assistant Directors Inge Kokidko & Hayley Scott. Remote attendance was facilitated via Zoom.

Public Comment

No public comment was given.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from **Feb 21, 2024**

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 Paul Knauff.

Discussion: Communications reports were summarized.

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

Rhodes	Knauff	Summers	Pazour	Giorgi	Granat	Merritt
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Portage Accident Update

Efforts to secure the site were discussed, as well as the installation of a sidewalk shed, main door reopening schedule, quotes for repair or removal of the porte cochere, quotes for connecting lot sections, side street and pathway alterations, insurance claims, and ADA compliant door replacement quotes.

Paving and Concrete for South Haven and Hebron

Six companies were contacted for quotes with four responding. Concrete removal scope and the differences between quotes and project options were discussed.

Motion: Roger Rhodes moved to “award concrete work to American Concrete Raising and the asphalt to Boyd”. The motion was seconded by Kevin Pazour.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

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

Rhodes	Knauff	Summers	Pazour	Giorgi	Granat	Merritt
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Roofing Needs Portage and Kouts

Roofing repair specifications and options were summarized.

Managed Services Provider

Plans to switch to a new IT managed service provider were discussed.

Internal Controls Update

Updates to internal controls policy and procedures were summarized.

Motion: Stu Summers moved approval of the updated internal controls policy. The motion was seconded by Roger Rhodes.

Discussion: No discussion of internal controls followed.

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

Rhodes	Knauff	Summers	Pazour	Giorgi	Granat	Merritt
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Property Updates

Progress on the park projects were discussed, including ribbon-cutting dates and completion timelines. A preference was expressed to first use funds from the Library Improvement Reserve for the paving project. The possibility of a lawsuit to recover costs from the Portage awning accident was also discussed.

Adjournment

Motion: Olga Granat moved to adjourn. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

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

Rhodes	Knauff	Summers	Pazour	Giorgi	Granat	Merritt
Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 pm.

Paul Knauff, Secretary

February 2024

Overview

- February brought an easing of the transit troubles throughout Indiana. Many long in-transit items began to arrive and our patrons came flooding back in! The door count was up 15% and physical circulation was up 5%. While the situation hasn't been fully resolved, we believe the worst is behind us. We are committed to continuing to help improve the system at the state level.
- Electronic items continue to be strong, with an increase of 38%, a trend that has been going on for nearly five years. Audiobooks continue to be strong digitally, and with publishers slowly sunseting audiobooks on CD, we expect this trend to increase in the coming months.
- A huge thank you to our maintenance department and the entire Portage Branch staff. The teams worked together and have altered our service model and our facility following the unfortunate U-haul incident. While the entire situation is less than ideal, our team has made the best out of it and continues to serve our community to the best of their ability.

Important Upcoming Dates

- April
 - 3: Friends of the Library Meeting
 - 17: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
- May
 - 1: Friends of the Library Meeting
 - 15 Library Board of Trustees Meeting

Personnel

- Ending Employment
 - Cynthia Holt - LC1
 - Breea Colson - LC3
 - Olivia Kocon - LC1
- New Employment
 - Cari Postma - LC3
- The North County team leads worked on time logs to assist with team efficiency. The exercise helped them reflect on how they spend their time and allows us to ensure our job descriptions are accurate and that we are appropriately assigning our team throughout the day.
- The Branch Managers worked on Department Status update reports, which summarized current projects and goals. This has been an illuminating process and has facilitated strategic planning and decision-making with our core management team. They also analyzed door count data and circulation data to make recommendations about library hours or operation and staffing levels.

- Jesse has been holding meetings with the various management groups to review the new employee handbook and help answer any questions.

Finance Notes

- The budget benchmark for the end of February is that 16.7% of the budget should be expended. So far, 12.6% has been spent and we're on target to be within our estimated budget.
- The Library earned \$36,929.03 from Trust Indiana in February. Included in the total interest earned is the Mills Trust donation, which earned \$2,889.68
- The audit of 2022 will be wrapping up soon, with no known errors or comments for the library's portion of the county's financial statements.

Subscription/Contract Renewals

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

Buildings & Grounds

- The Portage branch had a U-haul truck drive through the covered overhang, resulting in significant damage to the structure and temporary closure of the space.
- Jesse met with Bill Gorski about altering the scope of potential renovations in Valparaiso.
- The Valpo hot water pump will be replaced. While not under warranty, our HVAC team worked to provide us the materials free of charge and we are only paying for labor.
- Kouts and Portage both had leaks in the recent storms. Our architect is working on design specs for the Portage branch, including an option of going away from our failing internal gutters and possibly going with an insulated shingle roof.
- Jason has been meeting with paving contractors following our recent RFQ for the South Haven and Hebron lots. He also met with a concrete contractor to go over options to eliminate the heaving of South Haven's lot.
- Jesse and Jason marked out locations for light bollards in South Haven. The garden is progressing quickly and is currently ahead of schedule.

- The Portage Garden is moving along as they take advantage of the blocked entrance and the warm weather. They have poured the new sidewalks and curbs and are ready for asphalt when the weather improves.
- Our new parent-child study stations have arrived. This was made possible by a generous donation from the Porter County Community Foundation and will provide young parents with a station to work or study while their child is safe and entertained beside them.
- Jason and Aiden have been revamping our large garage area, adding new storage options to more effectively use the space. Our hope is to move the maintenance office from the basement and all associated tools to the garage for ease of access and to open up some options for the basement.

Technology

- Angela has begun reaching out to Managed Service Providers in the area so we can find a more responsive partner to replace ProvenIT.
- Angela is working with ENA to finish setting up our VPN as well as some additional security features for our network.
- We are looking into what it would take to reconfigure our server infrastructure to reduce costs and have a more efficient solution.
- Nathan has been working on setting up two new devices that we hope to circulate for vision-impaired patrons. He has also started looking into partnering with community members to provide technology training for our patrons.
- Jesse attended a broadband challenge webinar to learn more about the challenge process in Indiana as part of the County's internet access initiative.
- Jesse met with Comcast leadership to discuss options for a technology grant that may help increase access to technology and technology skills.
- Our website design team met with our website committee to continue working on our new site. This group has various assignments to help keep the project on time.

Public Relations and Marketing

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during February was 74,004.
- Facebook:
 - Our Facebook reach was 11,430.
 - Our account has 6,606 followers.
- Twitter:
 - The System has 577 total followers. We made 4 tweets with 218 impressions this month.
- Instagram:
 - The System has 1,447 Instagram followers.
 - We shared 8 posts on Instagram with 1,092 impressions.
- YouTube:
 - The System has 144 total subscribers. Our videos had 99 views this month.
- Pinterest:

- The System has 83 followers. Our Pinterest account's reach was 23 people for the month.
- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 60,003 times this month.
- TikTok: Our TikTok now has 872 subscribers. We had 1139 total views this month.
- Virtual Customer Service: Interacted with 21 patrons.
- Google: 8 new five-star review
 - The staff that interacts with people are amazingly helpful in dealing with the huge variety of people and concerns that come to them. I really appreciate the help with computer programs and reasonably priced printing that is offered. Updating: You may have to search to find the quiet place you expect in a library.
 - I had a hold delivered here. Easy pick up.
 - Very polite and informative
 - Very helpful staff.
 - I was only in the parking lot but it was great! Had everything I needed. Ha.
 - Steve was so helpful!
- Jack attended the Hebron Chamber of Commerce's first business mixer this month. They got to talk to a representative from Work One and the president of the Hebron Town Council. They are looking forward to some upcoming partnerships with both.
- Jack worked to create a partnership between PCPLS and the Hebron Chamber of Commerce to put on a town-wide scavenger hunt, which will run the whole month of March. They visited businesses throughout the Town of Hebron, meeting with business owners not only to ask if they would like to be a part of the scavenger hunt but also to let them know about some of the amazing offerings the library has.
- The Northwest Indiana Literacy Council invited our very own Dawn Ailes to be a part of their annual virtual book tasting for local teachers again this year. We look forward to keeping this partnership going and hope to do more with them in the future.
- Willow Cataldo and Ashley Montelongo met with Olga Granat and Principle Rayson at Parkview for a walkthrough in preparation for the English Learner Family Night.
- Sarah Geer was reappointed to the Indiana Library Federation's Awards and Scholarships committee for 2024. As a Northwest Indiana representative, she will be serving on the reviews and marketing subcommittees.
- The system programming team met with programmers this month to discuss upcoming solar eclipse events and statistics reporting.
- The Community Engagement Team was invited to participate in the English Learner Family Night at Parkview. Willow gave a presentation to parents about everything the library has to offer, while a teacher translated it into Spanish. During the presentation. Kids enjoyed storytime and activities with library staff in another room. The library team also had a library card registration and info table set up for any families who had more questions. We are excited to continue this partnership.
- Jesse met with members of various groups throughout Northwest Indiana including leaders from areas such as redevelopment, employment, entrepreneurship, non-profit leadership, education, etc., as part of an advisory committee he has been appointed to with Purdue Extension.

- Jesse was invited to take part in the Porter County Community Foundation's community survey to help inform their strategic plan and direction over the next few years.
- Jesse attended the Portage Chamber's State of the City with the new Mayor.
- Jesse met with the Valpo Parks Department director and the Community Engagement Coordinator at the City of Valpo to discuss the possibility of creating a collaboration group designed to facilitate programming initiatives in our area. This group would help lessen duplication of efforts and ensure as few conflicts as possible.

Youth and Teen Services

- Dawn Ailes held a virtual book discussion in partnership with the NWI Literacy Council and Amanda Fack from the Crown Point Public Library. They showcased their book suggestions for 3 age groups to local educators. This was a fantastic offering and those who participated enjoyed the presentation.
- The five lucky Grand Prize Winners from the Winter Flurries Reading Challenge were randomly selected and received the bundle. A huge thanks to the Friends of the Library for supporting this engaging event.
- We have received a total of 7 Book Librarian requests. These have consisted primarily of informational sessions about the library and tours of one of our branches.
- Portage and Kouts Branches held a Books Balls and Blocks event in partnership with the Porter County Community Foundation with assistance from the system programming team.
- The system programming team is full steam ahead on StoryWalk prep. The books selected at Sunset Hill and the Valparaiso Rotary Garden are space-themed in celebration of the upcoming Solar Clips. The last panel highlights the upcoming Solar eclipse events.
- PCPLS partnered with Parkview Elementary for an English Learner Family Night! The community engagement team worked together with the guidance of Inge Granat and Principle Rayson. The event consisted of a presentation about the library resources, a card registration table with information handouts, a Big Blue Blocks Building, and a Storytime. It was a fantastic turnout with 64 in attendance.
- Sandra York and Amy Keleman presented a Storytime in the Park located at Woodland Park in Portage. This month's theme was all about birds! The children learned how mothers feed their babies and we read not one but TWO Lucy Cousins books (Hooray For Birds and Peck Peck Peck). Sandra showed everyone the birdwatching kit that is available for checkout through PCPLS.
- Sarah Geer and Willow created a plan to offer Sensory Friendly hours at the South Haven branch for Autism Awareness Month in April.
- Emily Earl led Plant Parties for teens and school-age children at the Valpo branch. Kids got to decorate miniature pots and plant their spider plants. The program also included educational elements regarding proper plant care. This program was a wonderful blend of art, science, and community! It was such a success that a local Girl Scout Troop Leader asked if we could host a Plant Party for their troop! They signed up for a Book-a-Librarian spot in March.

- Steven relocated and refreshed the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten display at the Valpo branch so that it is featured more prominently in the department. The previous display had been looking a bit tattered from years of use, so the refreshed version really brightens up the space!
- The furniture for the Valparaiso teen area arrived! It is colorful, fun, and can be easily rearranged into different configurations. We've been using that space to host our Young Adult book club.
- Porter Lakes Elementary Preschool requested a Book a Librarian visit. Dawn Ailes and Ashley Montelongo led the first visit with a Snow theme while Kate Lambert, Kayla Ludington, and Tiffani Arnold led the 2nd visit discussing Groundhog's Day and Creepy Carrots. The Teachers were grateful and will be inviting the library back for more visits!
- The Kouts branch had their first Books, Balls, and Blocks visit and it was a full house! Everyone had a good time and we are looking forward to the next one. A big thank you to First Things First of Porter County.
- The Portage branch also hosted its first Books, Balls, and Blocks event. It was very well received! Our next one will be at the South Haven branch.
- Kouts had two amazing visits from the Heartland 4 Kids Preschool. Everyone had a lot of fun and the kids got to learn a lot about the library.
- The Kouts branch was happy to restart their three youth book clubs this month, Emerging Readers for grades K-2nd, Read BeTWEEN the Lines for grades 3rd-5th, and A Likely Story for grades 6th-8th. This program is part of a partnership with the Kouts Lion's Club, which provided funding for every child participating to get their own copies of the books that they read.
- The Hebron library started a new program this month, TinkerTunes. The monthly program highlights the importance of music in early childhood development by allowing participants to try various instruments and help them learn simple rhythms and movements while enjoying all that music has to offer. There was a good turnout for the first one and staff hope to continue to have more interest over the coming months.
- The Valpo team reorganized the program organization process to make things more efficient. We are now using the Google Calendar to keep track of events happening at our branch, which is much easier to maintain than our previous organizational tool. Staff are also trying out a new and improved program planning checklist as well as a stats reporting process.
- The North County programming team met with Ashley Montelongo to get an overview of the new program planning checklist and the new stat reporting process. It was well received and should make the process of planning and reporting easier.

Adult Services

- The system programming team held a library visit to OE respite located at Camp Lakeside featuring the Big Blue Blocks. The clients worked together to build a free-standing structure.
- The Adult LEGO Challenge at the Valparaiso Branch was a hit this month! The adults creatively built their creations and they were placed on display in the lobby after the program.

- South Haven updated their shelf reading map and checklist and relabeled some shelving to mark the new shelf reading workflow.
- South County is working on a weeding and shifting project throughout both buildings, as well as extensive organizing and cleaning up of staff workspaces and storage areas.
- The AARP Tax appointments are going very well in Kouts, South Haven, and Valpo. Staff have been working closely with the AARP tax volunteers to help direct patrons and answer questions that they might have as they wait for their appointments.
- Tax season is in full swing at the Valparaiso branch, and it is very busy in the Adult Services department! There has been a rise in drop-in tech help, computer usage, and study rooms. The staff in Adult Services have been working diligently, and it shows. They've also had outstanding help with tasks from a wonderful volunteer, Tom!
- Dawn & John at the Valpo branch finished tackling the first phase of the CD relabeling project, so now all of the vocal sections are broken down into their new categories: Rock, Pop, & Hip Hop. The team has begun to push forward through the rest of the collection to update labels and cases. They hope to shift the entire collection by the end of March!
- The Valparaiso management team completed merchandising walkthroughs for the Adult Services and Circulation departments. Since then, Allison has done a terrific job updating the signage in Adult Services, and Kelleen has rearranged and optimized the staff spaces in Circulation.
- North County offered several painting programs this month, with an overwhelmingly positive response. Our takeaway is that patrons want more painting!

Collections

- In anticipation of outsourcing some of our finishing and cataloging tasks, we have not replaced the staff hours lost recently. To bridge the labor gap, two branch employees are assisting in the Collections department.
- Infoexpress continues to make progress on its backlog. Due to the large number of deliveries we have received recently, we had an abundance of shipping supplies and were able to arrange shipment of extra supplies to over 25 libraries that were in need.
- After the Evergreen ILS upgrade in January, Elizabeth Hager discovered that a change in how holds could be placed on DVDs was preventing some materials from being placed on hold by patrons. We were able to communicate this to the consortium and prompt cleanup on thousands of item records, improving circulation and service consistency.

Genealogy

- Milder weather this month has definitely brought in more patrons. The DAR ladies often have ten or more on Monday mornings. Several people have become regulars, with visits at least once a week.
- Some new books have arrived this month and their titles sent to the NWIGS newsletter for publication. We were able to add five more books from the Mayflower Families series. Several other books in the series are unavailable but are being rewritten. We will purchase them as soon as they become available.

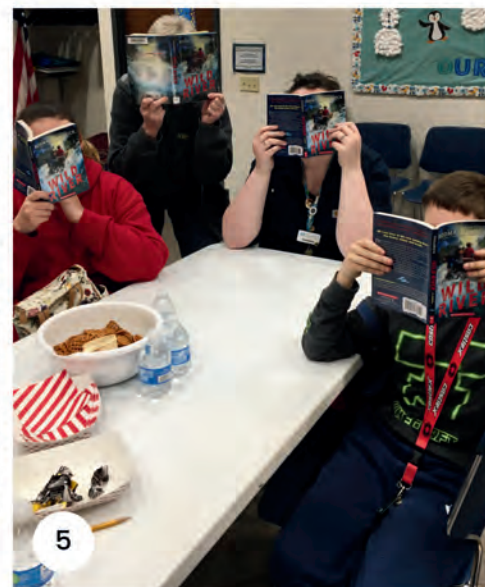
- Banta School is approaching its 100th anniversary. Since it has not been in the Valparaiso Community Schools system since the 1970s, photos of the building are not available. We keep searching for a color photo and maybe one will turn up in an unexpected place.
- Chris worked on a Chamber of Commerce article for Spring magazine. Kelleen was unavailable to compose, but she graciously offered to edit the article.
- RootsTech, the FamilySearch annual conference event, is the last week of the month. We will try to catch some of the presentations online to help us better serve our patrons.
- Kathy continues working on the Zabel family records and Chris M. is making progress on the fire department books.
- Chris H and Kathy visited the Christopher Center at Valparaiso University. They have an overhead scanner that they offered to let us use for the Board minutes book project. Unfortunately, the scan space was not large enough for this giant tome. Next up is a trip to Calumet Archives at IUN to see if their scanner will do the job.

Hebron



- 1 Patrons love the Paws to Read program and can't wait to read to Caleb each month.
- 2 Parents and kids alike had fun learning about ukele at the new TinkerTunes program with special guest, Plum Grove Music.
- 3 Family game night at the Hebron branch is a blast! We get to discover fun new games together.
- 4 It's time to learn and have some fun at Book Babies.
- 5 Egg-Racers were this month's Lego Club STEM challenge! Kids built vehicles to hold hard-boiled eggs and safely drive down a ramp.

Kouts



1

Happy Valentine's Day! At the Kouts branch we played games, ate some snacks and enjoyed a good story with our friends.

2

Books Balls Blocks continued with a stop in Kouts thanks to our great community partners: First Things First, Help Me Grow, and Kidworks LLC.

3

Lego club is the best! Spaceships and houses are fun to make, but sometimes our Lego creators have bigger plans.

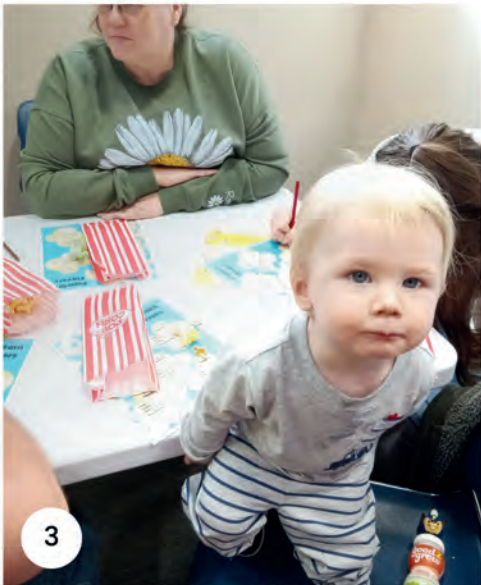
4

Our holiday bunco programs in Kouts have become very popular. Everyone loves to ring the bell. Bunco!

5

Busy reading at 'A Likely Story Book Club'. The wonderful books for this program are generously donated by Kouts Lions Club.

Portage + South Haven



1 Littles listen intently at South Haven's Storytime.

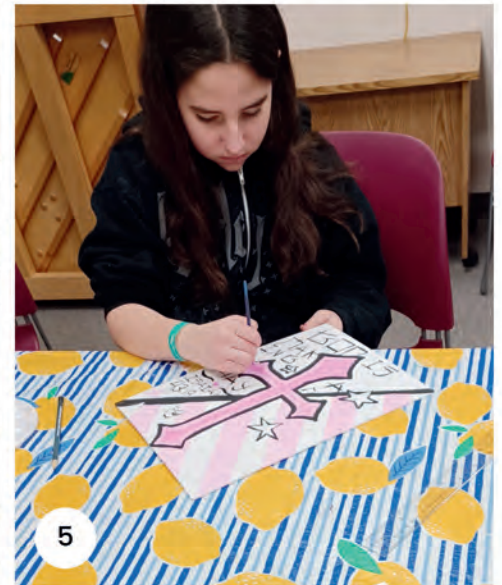
2 Having fun at Portage Storytime!

3 Enjoying popcorn themed activities at Portage's We Love Popcorn program.

4 Our painting programs are very popular and always fill up fast. Our Portage patrons painted delicious cupcakes this month.

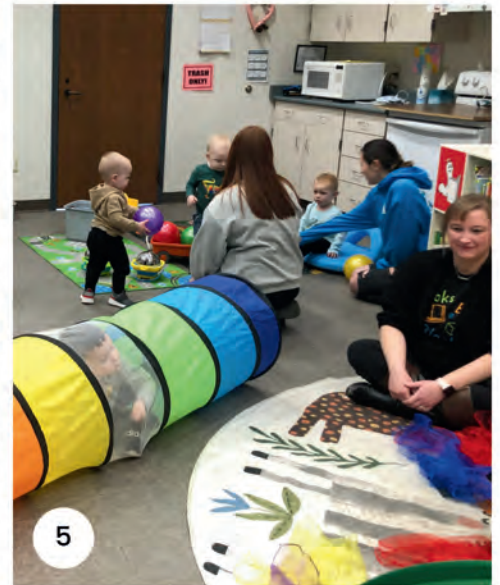
5 Talented patrons also enjoyed a painting class in South Haven!

Valparaiso



- 1 We have a new desk in Valpo Adult Services! It is intended for caregivers with little ones for entertainment while their caregiver works.
- 2 Fun was had by all at February's Kids Book Bingo program!
- 3 Check out the fun new furniture in the Valparaiso branch's teen area!
- 4 Check out the mountain of books these patrons won at our Teen Book Bingo event! Who has more?!
- 5 Patrons created their own unique designs at our Teen Painting night.

in Our Community



- 1 At this month's Opportunity Enterprises Respite visit, we had a blast building something using EVERY single big blue block!
- 2 The programming team has been streamlining library tours with an outline for BaL visits. The new system has helped staff prepare and be confident.
- 3 EVERY big blue block was used to create what was referred to as, "Tunnel City" at OE Respite!
- 4 Books Ball Blocks programming is in full swing many families have taken advantage of this rotating event with child development professionals.
- 5 Some patrons who enjoyed this event so much at Hebron, made sure to stop in when it came to Kouts.