

Plenty of Activity Behind the Scenes During Carlinville Library Closure

by Tom Emery
May 20 2020 1:44 PM



CARLINVILLE - Like many other places, the Carlinville Public Library has been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. But there is plenty of activity behind the scenes.

“The building may be closed, but library services continue,” said Library Director Janet Howard. “Really, there’s been a lot going on, and a ton of work is being done.”

Many services are still available through the library, including access to over 37,000 eBooks and over 28,000 eAudiobooks through the CloudLibrary. Access to the CloudLibrary is available through a free app or the library’s homepage at www.carlinvillelibrary.org.

Patrons may also access Tumblebooks through the library’s homepage. These include selections in fiction, nonfiction, and picture books, from child to adult levels.

There are plenty of opportunities for young readers, such as ABCmouse, a children’s learning website, which is available on the library’s homepage.

Children’s StoryTime, one of the most popular programs at the library, has been converted to a virtual format and is presented once a week by Children’s Co-Librarian Nadia Kahl. The StoryTime sessions are available on both the library’s Facebook Page and YouTube account.

Kahl is also planning the Summer Reading Program, which is themed “Dig Deeper: Read, Investigate, Discover.” The program is offered for children of birth age through third grade, and is entirely online. Story times and activities will be presented through the Zoom app, and will be available through YouTube videos on the Carlinville Public Library channel.

During the program, children of birth through five years, the Little Dinos, will listen to stories every Tuesday at 10 a.m. on dinosaurs, counting, the alphabet, phonics, colors, and many more topics. First- through third-graders, the Investigators, will view stories each Thursday at 1 p.m. on pioneer life through renowned American writer Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Registrations must be received by May 29 to participate in the live Zoom sessions. Anyone interested may e-mail nadia@carlinvillelibrary.org or direct message the library on Facebook, and include the child’s name, age, grade of school finished, group, parent /guardian’s name, contact phone number, and e-mail.

Some services at the library are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including WiFi, which is available in the library parking lot. Patrons may also order hard copy materials online day or night, which include books, audiobooks, DVDs, and magazines from the Carlinville library's collection.

Those items will then be available for curbside pickup when the library re-opens. Interlibrary loan service is not expected to be available for several months, even after the expiration of the stay-at-home executive orders.

Temporary library cards are also available for anyone five years of age or older who lives within the Carlinville Community School District. These temporary cards allow access to eBooks and eAudiobooks, and expire on June 30. However, the card may be converted to permanent status with access to the library's entire collection. For directions, patrons may visit the library's homepage and click on the "Your Account" tab.

The library is not always empty during the closure. Howard works six to seven hours per day with a myriad of tasks, as there is plenty of work to do, and much planning to be done before the reopening.

"Sometimes I answer twenty phone calls a day," she said. "People have all sorts of questions on when and how we're going to reopen. They also ask about children's services, and have questions on our materials. We get a lot of phone calls and e-mails on a variety of topics."

Staff members are available during limited hours to help patrons by phone (854-3505) or e-mail (Mail@carlinvillelibrary.org). Among many other activities, staffers are maintaining the library's website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts, ordering and processing new titles for circulation when the library re-opens, taking inventory of the collection, emptying the Book Return, and re-shelving returned items.

In addition, staff members have engaged in professional development, with online classes and webinars on subjects relating to library and patron services. Others have learned new skills to better serve patrons, now and in the future.

Most importantly, library staffers have deep-cleaned the facility, and checked in and quarantined returned items. Though seventy-two hours is recommended for quarantine of returned library items, Howard has taken an extra measure of safety, requiring five days of quarantine for all returned materials. No overdue fines have been charged during the time the library is closed.

Patrons are encouraged to visit the library's website for information on library services, as well as dates and plans for the re-opening of the facility.