

the storyline

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark skin and dreadlocks. She is wearing large black headphones and has her eyes closed, appearing to be listening intently. Her right hand is resting on the side of her head, touching the headphones. She is wearing a black t-shirt with a white graphic. On her left wrist, she has two wristbands, one light blue and one orange. In the foreground, a professional microphone with a grey foam windscreen is mounted on a boom arm. The background is a solid, vibrant blue.

Find your voice

**Making noise
in the Creative
Studio**

pages 6-7

**Celebrating
hip hop**

page 8

**Plus summer
reading
for all ages**

THE STORYLINE
Summer 2023

FIND YOUR VOICE

The Storyline shares information, services, and opportunities that fulfill Oak Park's aspirations, and supports the library's vision to empower every voice in our community. Please get in touch with comments or questions anytime via oppl.org/contact.

We love to see how you use your public library!

If you have an idea or story to share with us for a future issue, please contact us at communications@oppl.org. You can also share stories, photos, and more at oppl.org/share.

Looking for events? Pick up monthly print calendars for kids & families, adults & teens, and older adults at all library locations. Find all details at oppl.org/calendar.

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Find board meeting information and meet the trustees at oppl.org/board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In November 2022, we welcomed Joslyn Bowling Dixon as our new Executive Director. More: oppl.org/staff



Featured in this issue

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ON THE COVER

Nick Posey, age 15, tests a microphone in the new Audio Booth on the Main Library's third floor. Part of the Creative Studio, the 8-by-12-foot Audio Booth is acoustically treated to provide a quiet space for audio recording and editing. Learn more about the Creative Studio on pages 6-7.

"The library is a great place to hang out, and they have all kinds of books. The staff is really supportive and the WiFi is reliable. Honestly, I couldn't pick a better spot to chill out, read, and work."

—Patron response from 2022 cardholder survey



I'm listening

One of the best parts of my job, as your library director since last November, has been meeting and talking with so many of you. It's been such a pleasure to return to this library, where I worked early in my career. Everyone has made me feel at home with the unique Oak Park community vibe and culture I remembered so well, including all the voices advocating for the good of the community.

We started a series of listening sessions in April, and these continue through June. I've been enjoying chatting with you about library spaces and services, and hearing what you'd like to see in the future. We'll have some data to report later this summer, but I want you to know that I'm always going to be interested in hearing what you have to say. Please reach out to me anytime.

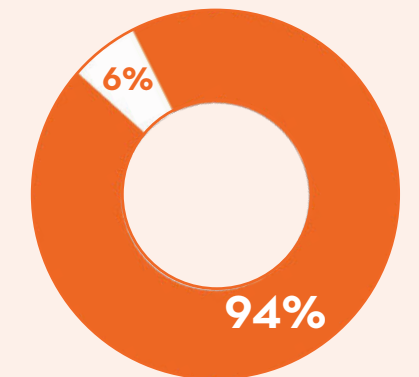
Finally, I'm thrilled that our library is one of 30 organizations participating in a nationwide initiative to celebrate 50 years of hip hop. You can find out more about this amazing grant-funded program on page 8, and join me at some of the programs our library is hosting this summer.

—Joslyn Bowling Dixon
jdixon@oppl.org | 708.697.6911

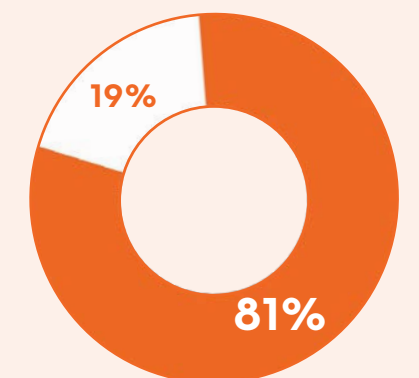
In the 2022 National Community Survey, **9 out of 10 Oak Parkers surveyed said the quality of library services was excellent (64%) or good (30%), and 4 out of 5 said that the value of library services for taxes paid was excellent (49%) or good (32%).**

More: oppl.org/about/evaluating-our-impact

QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES



VALUE OF LIBRARY SERVICES FOR TAXES PAID



● Excellent or good
○ Fair or poor



The exhibit shown here—*Gender Is a Galaxy, Gender Is a Weapon*, in honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance—was curated by a community member in November 2022. More about the Idea Box: oppl.org/idea-box

‘We challenge censorship in all forms’

All across the United States, there is an unprecedented campaign to censor books in school and public libraries. In March, the American Library Association (ALA) reported that 2022 saw the highest number of attempted book bans in 20 years, nearly double the number in 2021. According to the ALA, these attempts overwhelmingly target historically excluded themes and creators, including LGBTQ+ communities and people of color.

“Oak Park Public Library strives to be a library for everyone, every day,” says our Executive Director Joslyn Bowling Dixon. “We know that access to information and reading materials is crucial to democracy and civic engagement. Given our responsibility to provide information and enlightenment to all people we serve, we challenge censorship in all forms.”

It’s why our library actively provides access to materials in multiple formats—digital, audio, and print—“which embrace inclusivity and provide a window into lived experiences from all walks of life,” she adds.

SOLIDARITY & SUPPORT FROM OUR LIBRARY BOARD

Last fall, our library board passed a resolution to support library staff, collections, and programming. It was a show of solidarity with public libraries nationwide, as well as a clear vote of confidence in our professional library staff and the decisions they make in selecting collection materials as well as programs.

Our library staff select collections in response to our community’s needs and aspirations. While the library does not promote all of the ideas found in its collections or the discussions those ideas may inspire, we provide the spaces and opportunities for those ideas and discussions. We do not exclude materials for partisan reasons, or because of the origin, background, or views of their creators.

“Oak Park is a village of readers,” says Manager of Collections Services Barbara Fitzgerald. “Our material curation supports the diverse interests of the community, and we will continue to create collections that support our being a library for everyone.” Read more at oppl.org/freedom-to-read.



Library board members with Joslyn Bowling Dixon (front row, center) in April. More: oppl.org/board

‘Our community guides everything we do’

We’re all about making it easier to find and use library resources, whether it’s reading newspapers on your phone (free), checking out books via the Book Bike in the park (free), or getting a library card made on the spot at daycares and senior centers (always free)! Here are three ways we expand access beyond our three buildings.



BRINGING THE LIBRARY TO YOU

Find our Community Engagement Team out and about this summer, bringing resources to community festivals, daycares, senior centers, neighborhood parks, the farmers market, and more—often with a fully stocked Book Bike (see oppl.org/bike).

All year, this team delivers community-driven programs and exhibits at library locations, outreach visits throughout the community, and home and resource delivery.

“We build authentic, collaborative relationships with and among community members and partners, and we prioritize equity, inclusion, and access to diverse library services and resources across the community,” says Director of Equity & Anti-Racism Stephen Jackson.



‘THE BOOKS JUST COME TO THE LOCKER!’

Patron Jessica Sime wrote to us in April to let us know that she loves the outdoor lockers at the Main Library for 24/7 holds pickup and returns.

“It may seem strange, but my family’s participation with the library has doubled or tripled since the lockers came out,” she wrote. “I place a hold on whatever book I want, and wait for the text. I can pick up books before the library opens, or run up and get my book without having to park.”

“The SWAN app plus the lockers have really made a difference,” she added. “My kids have gone through entire book series in order without having to skip around. The books just come to the locker! We love them.”

How to use the lockers: oppl.org/lockers



GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Every week, our staff deliver books, music, and movies to residents who are 60 and older, have limited mobility, or have kids under age 5. Last year, we made more than 3,000 home deliveries, an increase from previous years.

And our staff often go the extra mile. Community Engagement Librarian Ian Gosse recalls one Friday last October, after all the deliveries were done: “One of our regular patrons called, panicked because they had just signed up for the Oak Park Township Senior Services book group and didn’t have a copy of the book. Luckily, we had one on the shelf, so I walked it over to the patron on my way home from work so they would have the weekend to read it and prepare.”

More about delivery service: oppl.org/home-delivery



What's inside

See all details: oppl.org/creative-studio

- **MakerBot Sketch 3D printers.** Submit up to two free requests per month. Allow one week for printing. We offer links to free software and training, plus Learning Labs by appointment for additional guidance.
- **Poster printer.** For posters, banners, and other oversized print jobs. Submit up to one free request per month.
- **Audio Booth.** An acoustically treated 8-by-12-foot room designed for recording a podcast or music. Includes two SM7B vocal microphones, a MIDI controller, and an analog drum machine. Software includes Pro Tools, Ableton Live, Reaper, and Audacity. Must first sign up for Learning Lab training before using the booth independently, then submit reservations subject to staff approval.
- **Media Preservation Station.** DIY equipment and software to preserve VHS video tapes, cassette tapes, and film negatives. Training not required, but Learning Labs available by appointment.
- **3D pen.** Using the same filament material we use in our 3D printers, you can create intricate, organic, three-dimensional structures using this hand-held device. Available via Open Studio drop-in hours and Learning Labs.
- **Media Editing Station.** Mac mini installed with software for editing images, videos, and more.
- **Cutting plotters.** DIY equipment and software to design and cut by machine a variety of thin materials such as sticky vinyl, heat transfer vinyl, cardstock, and more. Available via Open Studio drop-in hours and Learning Labs.
- **Laser cutter.** Coming soon: Design a flat object, such as a keychain or layered artwork, using computer software. Then ask a staff member to help you use the laser cutter to etch and cut it from library-provided Proofgrade material.

Let's make some noise!

After more than a year of listening to our community, refurbishing our spaces, and investing in technology that Oak Parkers asked for, the Creative Studio is now open for all kinds of digital learning possibilities on the Main Library's third floor!

"I've never been this excited to make noise in the library before," said Supervising Librarian of Creative Technology John Gargiulo right before we cut the ribbon and gave tours of the space during an April 27 event with the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THIS MAKERSPACE?

Some ideas: Start a podcast. 3D-print your own designs. Make mixed-media art. Design a T-shirt logo for your business or your family reunion. Digitize old VHS tapes to share with family and friends. Record a song, or a whole album.

Nick Posey (featured on cover) was among the teens who came to test out equipment in the new Audio Booth that day. He wants to get back into making music and rapping, he said. Some of his favorite artists are Polo G, G Herbo, and Lil Durk, and he says listening to them has made him think, "I hope that would be me one day."

Thanks to the advocacy of State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, the library received a \$25,000 Illinois State Library grant to build out the Creative Studio, which includes 3D printers, a poster printer, a Media Preservation Station, the Audio Booth, and more. Special thanks to the Friends of the Oak Park Public Library for their support in purchasing a laser cutter (see page 7 for details).

"We are thrilled to be able to realize the promises made in our strategic plan to focus on preparing people in our community for continuously changing technology," said the library's Executive Director Joslyn Bowling Dixon.

"It's all accessible for you here," she said. "That's what we do. We are a library for everyone!"



GET INSIDE & GET LEARNING!

- **Open Studio**, first and third Wednesdays, 1–5 pm. Patrons ages 14+ can work on self-directed projects. Children ages 13 and under require an adult (18+) caregiver.
- **Learning Labs** (one-on-one 30-minute sessions). Sign up: oppl.org/lab
- **Classes & workshops.** See a list and register: oppl.org/creative-studio

50 YEARS OF HIP HOP



We're thrilled to be one of more than 30 organizations around the country—including libraries, museums, colleges, universities, and archives—partnering for Collections of Culture: 50 Years of Hip Hop Inside Libraries, Museums and Archives.

Led by the Queens (NY) Public Library and funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the celebration offers in-person and virtual programming from participating institutions through August.

Here in Oak Park, we've got in-person dance classes for kids, spoken word and songwriting workshops for tweens and teens, film screenings, art and fashion workshops, a trivia night, and more! See all offerings and join the epic party: oppl.org/hip-hop-50

LADIES, ALL THE LADIES

Synovia Knox, who joined the library in March as a Programming Specialist in Middle & High School Services, could talk about hip hop all day.

This spring, she created a "Hip Hop Through the Ages" display on the Main Library's second floor, showing influential artists from the 1980s to today. Here's some of what she has to say about just a few of the women in early hip hop.

1980s

On **Salt-N-Pepa** and **MC Lyte**: "They were the blueprint for women in rap. They were honestly some of the first MCs in the scene, so pivotal."

On **Roxanne Shanté**: "She was 14 when she broke through ... in a genre that was just starting and heavily dominated by older men."

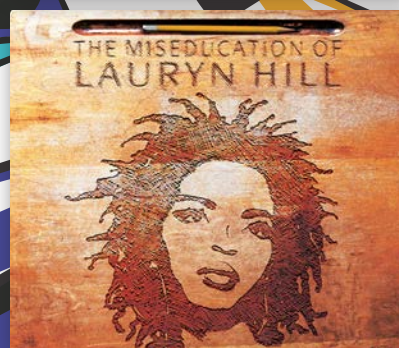
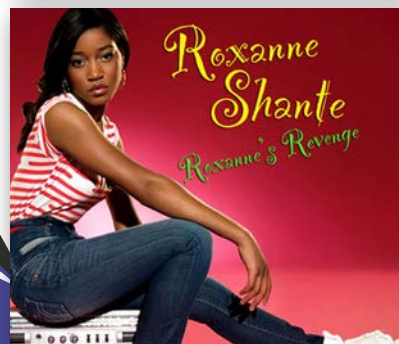
1990s

On **Lauryn Hill**: "I think her place in rap as one of the most influential female rappers, even to this day, is something I will never be able to overlook."

WE SUGGEST

See a curated 50 Years of Hip Hop list of music, books, and movies: oppl.org/catalog

▶ Scan the QR code to listen to Synovia's Spotify playlist.



Synovia Knox (right), Programming Specialist in Middle & High School Services, discusses hip hop through the decades with Nora Sanchez (left), Latine Language & Culture Librarian, in the Main Library High School Space on the second floor.

For middle & high schoolers

Join us for these and more programs in the Middle & High School spaces on the Main Library's second floor.

RAPPIN' UP THE SUMMER

An arts-based outreach program with spoken word, songwriting, and beatmaking workshops, plus a performance.

EXPRESSION SECTION

An arts-based outreach program with monthly creative sessions, including painting and DIY fashion.

See all dates and times: oppl.org/hip-hop-50

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Join the Teen Summer Challenge

June 1–July 28

It's the summer of self-exploration and self-expression through literature, poetry, music, fashion, and other creative art forms such as art, graffiti, and dance! Record your involvement in the online platform Beanstack, earning badges and raffle entries as you go. Complete all three badges for a chance to win to an all-expenses-paid trip to Great America in August (restrictions apply). No library card necessary. For all students in middle and high school. Get all the details and sign up at oppl.org/summer.



New! Adult summer reading

Ages 18+ | June 1–August 15

Who says summer reading is just for kids? Join a community of readers in our fun new summer program for adults. Track your reading, complete activities, and earn badges for chances to win gift cards!

Using the online platform Beanstack, you'll track your progress and earn digital badges. For every badge, your name will be added to a drawing. Five lucky winners will receive a \$100 Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce gift card for local businesses.

No library card necessary. Get all the details and sign up at oppl.org/summer.

WHAT TO READ NEXT? Browse our librarians' latest suggestions, and sign up for emails, at oppl.org/we-suggest.

BONUS CHANCE TO WIN A GIFT CARD

1. Scan the QR code.
2. Sign into Beanstack.
3. Enroll in the Adult Summer Reading Challenge.
4. Under Activity Badges, scroll down to find the "Secret Storyline Badge."
5. Tell us: "What's the best thing you've read, watched, and/or listened to recently?"



MEET ROSE, HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES LIBRARIAN

As our Health and Senior Services Librarian, Rose Barnes helps you find the health and wellness resources you need. She collaborates closely with librarians who curate the health and wellness collection, plans programming, and cultivates community partnerships based on healthy living.

Rose regularly writes about library resources and programs too, especially for older adults. Sign up for the Older Adults email at oppl.org/subscribe to get Rose's posts in your inbox. You can also sign up for more emails that match your interests, like Tech Tips, Equity & Anti-Racism, and more.



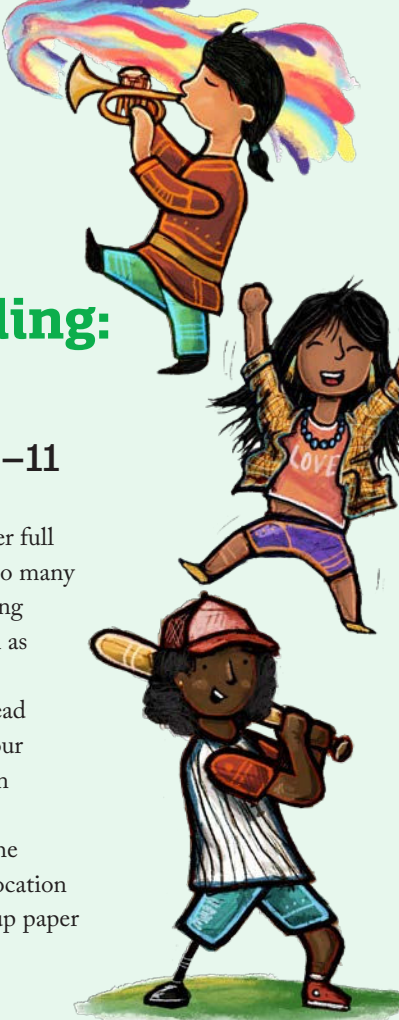
Kids summer reading: Find Your Voice

June 1–August 15 | Ages 2–11

Calling all kids ages 2–11 for a fun summer full of reading, joy, and creativity! There are so many fun ways to learn, and our summer reading program will get you doing fun activities as well as reading. No library card necessary.

Earn beads and stickers all summer as you read together or independently, make art, broaden your learning with storytimes in languages other than English, and so much more.

You can sign up and track your progress in the online platform Beanstack, or visit any library location (including the Book Bike) to sign up and pick up paper tracking sheets. Get started: oppl.org/summer



Instructions: Get creative and earn a bonus summer reading bead! Detach this coloring page, fill in your answer, and bring it to any library location. Multiple kids participating in summer reading? Make extra copies by tracing the line art onto any blank piece of paper, color it in, and write your answer. Or use any piece of paper to draw how you will find and use your voice this summer. We're excited to see your creativity!





Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 134
Oak Park, IL
Postal Carrier Pre-Sort

All library buildings will be closed
Monday, June 19, Tuesday, July 4,
and Monday, September 4.

JUNE/JULY 2023

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8						

SEPTEMBER 2023

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER



MAIN LIBRARY
834 Lake St.
708.383.8200
Monday-Thursday: 9 am-9 pm
Friday: 9 am-6 pm
Saturday: 9 am-5 pm
Sunday: 12-5 pm

DOLE BRANCH
255 Augusta St. | 708.386.9032
Monday: Closed
Tuesday-Thursday: 10 am-9 pm
Friday: 10 am-6 pm
Saturday: 10 am-5 pm
Sunday: 12-5 pm

MAZE BRANCH
845 Gunderson Ave.
708.386.4751
Monday-Thursday: 10 am-9 pm
Friday: Closed
Saturday: 10 am-5 pm
Sunday: 12-5 pm

oppl.org/visit

Friends Book Fair

Main Library | July 14-16

SHOP

Browse thousands of gently used books, CDs, and DVDs!

DONATE

Donate items in good condition at the Main Library starting June 1 (no textbooks, encyclopedias, magazines, or VHS tapes).

VOLUNTEER

Help us sort and organize books, set up the sale, and unload and repack boxes of books.



OPPL.ORG/FAIR

