

the storyline

**The library is
my place to...**

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myself**
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THE STORYLINE

Spring 2020

TURNING OUTWARD

In our library magazine, we're reflecting on our community's aspirations in action.

- **Have a story to share?**
Visit oppl.org/share or email us at communications@oppl.org.
- **Looking for events?**
Pick up monthly print calendars—for families, adults, and teens—at the library and at 50 more Oak Park locations, or visit oppl.org/calendar.

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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COVER

Last summer, teen library volunteers and local artist Tia Etu created this mosaic peace sign sculpture. It now stands outside Dole Center, 255 Augusta St., home to Dole Branch Library. Learn more about art in the library on page 11.



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EMPOWERING EVERY VOICE

The Oak Park Public Library publishes *The Storyline* in support of its vision to empower every voice in our community and its mission to share the information, services, and opportunities that fulfill Oak Park's aspirations. Contact Writer and Editor Kristen Romanowski, Graphic Designer Rebecca Lang, and Director of Communications Jodi Kolo at communications@oppl.org.



“It’s a treasure trove of resources and information.” –Response to Community Needs Assessment Survey question, “What is your favorite thing about the Oak Park Public Library?”

A place for everyone

Last fall, we conducted a Community Needs Assessment Survey to learn more about what keeps people from using library resources and to help shape how library spaces could and should be used in the future. We were pleased to learn that almost all (96.3 percent) of the 1,000 Oak Park residents who responded said the Oak Park Public Library is valuable to their community.

More than eight out of 10 (86.9 percent) respondents indicated someone in their household has an Oak Park Public Library card. And library services ranked as most valuable by respondents for both their own household and the community as a whole were (1) promoting children’s literacy, (2) encouraging preschool and school-children to play, read, and learn, and (3) supporting the educational success of children and teens.

When we asked “What is your least favorite thing about the Oak Park Public Library?” almost 25 percent of respondents said they do not have a least favorite thing. Of those who do, the top response was the presence of people perceived to be homeless (11.1 percent). Read the full report at oppl.org/news.

Serving the most vulnerable people in our community is a community challenge. Libraries are spaces where everyone in the community is welcome, and libraries exist to help people connect with the information, resources, and services they need.

This is the work our Social Services and Public Safety team does every day. The team ensures safety in the library and connects people with the information, resources, and services they need, including referrals for housing, employment, health care, immigration, domestic violence, and more.

We also work together with community partners such as the Oak Park Township, the Community Mental Health Board, Rush University Medical Center, and many others, in many different ways, to serve everyone. Read more about this work on pages 18–19 and at oppl.org/social-services.

David J. Seleb, Executive Director



'It's like healthy peer pressure'

Last fall, Adam Natali set a goal for himself: to make writing a priority in his life, and stop putting it on the back burner. "I'd been in a slump," he says. "I journal every day but couldn't get a story going."

Natali, who writes mostly short stories in horror, sci fi, and fantasy genres, says he tends to procrastinate if left to his own devices. That's why he likes attending writing groups at the library,

like Writers' Word Feast.

This group for writers of all types and genres meets two Sundays a month. It gives writers opportunities for feedback and time to write.

"Instead of waiting for the perfect idea to show up, which never really happens, you're in a room full of people writing," Natali says. "And you think, maybe I should just start writing too."

Last November, the Writers'

Word Feast group met every Sunday to participate in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), an annual event in which writers aim to produce a novel, or 50,000 words, by the month's end.

Even though Natali doesn't aspire to write a novel, he used NaNoWriMo to set a manageable goal of writing 500 words a day. He hit that goal last November and produced rough drafts for several decent short stories. The one he likes most is about a retail store that sells dreams. It's a fantasy inspired by his years working in an expensive home electronics store full of stuff he couldn't afford.

Attending the writing groups is "like healthy peer pressure," he says. "Seeing other people hard at work on their own stories helps me set aside the hundred different ways I'd like to procrastinate, and just get something down on the page."



Adam Natali (right) finds community among fellow writers in library programs like Writers' Word Feast.

WRITERS' WORD FEAST

First Sundays, 1:30–4:30 pm, Main Library
Third Sundays, 1:30–4:30 pm, Maze Branch
More: oppl.org/calendar



'A very kind audience'

The **No Shush Salon** is a monthly open mic for all creative types who want to share their works-in-progress or newly finished endeavors.

It's a place for people from different creative backgrounds to communicate with one another, says Neighborhood Services Supervisor Jeanine Vaughn. And while it's not limited to writers, Vaughn says she loves seeing participants from Writers' Word Feast (see page 4) come and read in front of an audience for the first time.

"It's a very kind audience, and a very comfortable place," she says. "It gives them a space to actually explore presenting their work."



No Shush Salon draws both amateur and professional creators, including Chicago author John McNally (left).



THE NO SHUSH SALON

Thursdays, 6:30–9 pm, Maze Branch
March 26, April 30, May 28

👍 You might also like

ADULT IMPROV WORKSHOP

Tuesdays, 7–8:30 pm,
Maze Branch
March 3, April 7, May 5

KIDS' IMPROV

Mondays, 6:30–7:30 pm,
Maze Branch
March 23, April 20, May 18
Grades 1–5

LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Mondays & Wednesdays,
5:45–7:45 pm, Main Library
Grades 6–12

SOCIAL CHANGE THEATRE PROJECT

Most Tuesdays, 3:30–5 pm,
Main Library
Ages 13–18

See all dates: oppl.org/calendar



Empowering local creators

Oak Park Creates, our unique local creators program, is growing! Now with digital items, the collection offers even more options for locals to share their work and discover what their neighbors are creating.

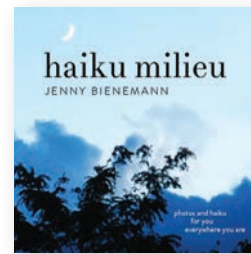
“Because of how much creativity there is in Oak Park, we have an extremely diverse collection,” says Manager of Access Services Kathleen Spale.

Oak Park Creates offers hardcover and paperback books, music and audiobooks on CD, vinyl records, and films on DVD. The collection ranges from children’s picture books to in-depth history texts for adults, books in languages other than English, and even chapbooks by local teens. And it includes a growing number of digital items: ebooks and digital audiobooks, movies, and music.

Anyone with direct ties to Oak Park can submit materials for possible inclusion. Items in the collection can be checked out by anyone with a library card in the SWAN library network.

“Our vision is empowering every voice in our community,” Spale says. “And that’s what Oak Park Creates does. It empowers local creators and gives everyone the opportunity to check out what Oak Parkers are creating and publishing.”

Learn how to submit your own creative work, find author events, and browse the physical and digital collection at oppl.org/creates.



Haiku Milieu
CD, book, and audiobook (2018)
by Jenny Bienemann



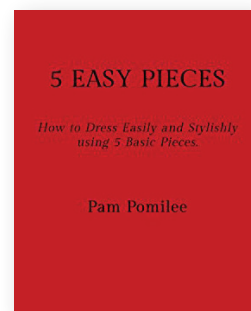
Private Lines
Novel (2014)
by Emma Gates



Contemporary Islamic Finance: Innovations, Applications, and Best Practices
Nonfiction book (2013)
by Karen Hunt-Ahmed



Thunder & Lightning: A Story for a Stormy Night
Children’s book (2013)
by Tim Sheridan



5 Easy Pieces: How to Dress Easily and Stylishly Using 5 Basic Pieces
Ebook (2019)
by Pam Pomilee

Oak Park Creates author Pam Pomilee (left) published her book with help from library staff, including John Gargiulo (right).



'Once I got that idea, it all started flowing'

For longtime fashion designer and new author Pam Pomilee, the idea for her first book was planted by friends and family.

"My son said, 'Ma, you know a lot about fashion, you should write a book,'" says Pomilee, who has been designing both custom and ready-to-wear clothing since 1989.

At the same time, friends were asking her for help with what to wear for special occasions, saying, "Pam, style me up!" I said, 'I can't be at all your houses, but if I had a manual, I could walk you through the steps.' Once I got that idea, it all started flowing."

Then, last year, she heard about a new library resource for authors

called Pressbooks. The software helps authors create their books in all the formats needed for print and digital publication. "I said, 'Yes! Oh, I can do this,'" Pomilee says. "My problem was I needed help with the technology."

Pomilee had fashion expertise, but not much experience with computers. After writing out a draft of her book by hand, she spent the next six months working on computers at Maze Branch and the Main Library, creating her book with Pressbooks.

When she ran into problems, library staff helped her with the technical aspects so she could keep writing and editing.

"You were pretty dedicated,"

says John Gargiulo, one library employee who helped Pomilee with the process and provided digital learning support through multiple revisions.

The final result is titled *5 Easy Pieces: How to Dress Easily and Stylishly Using 5 Basic Pieces*. It's now available through the library's Oak Park Creates digital collection.

In four pages of acknowledgments, Pomilee thanks everyone who inspired, motivated, and helped her.

"Even though it may be a difficult journey, it was worth it," she says. "Here I am in Oak Park, where a lot of great thinkers and writers are, and here I am now among them."

More: oppl.org/creates



Pomilee poses with one of her designs.



Our American Girl custom kits teach about empathy, inclusivity, science, history, and more, and can be checked out with their own books and accessories. More: oppl.org/kids

Representation, education: 'We can find lots of ways to play'

Since 2014, we've curated a popular collection of American Girl Dolls that cardholders can check out. In addition to classic historical dolls like Kit and Josefina, which come with their own stories and books, our children's librarians have started creating and customizing dolls just for our community, with specific hobbies, identities, and stories relevant to Oak Park and Chicago.

One doll plays volleyball and wears a hijab that Elementary School Services Librarian Genevieve Grove sewed herself. Another is bald; her tag reads, in part: "My lack of hair doesn't affect my imagination at all; we can find lots of ways to play!"

"We believe strongly in kids seeing themselves represented in the community," says Early Literacy Librarian Shelley Harris. "For example, a number of kids who live in Oak Park use communication devices to speak, so we created a doll that also uses augmentative communication. Her hobby is coding, and she also uses the toy tablet she comes with to communicate."

The dolls come with their own accessories, clothing, and related books. One new local history doll, Dinah, is based on the 12-year-old main character in Harriette Gillem Robinet's *Missing from Haymarket Square*.

Robinet is an author of historical children's books and lives in Oak Park. Her book is set in 1886 Chicago, centering on labor conditions and the Haymarket Riot. "This is the first time we've created our own doll for a local book, and we have plans for more local dolls, historical and current," Harris says.

One of the newest additions is a doll who enjoys gardening and is an ambulatory wheelchair user. That means she uses a wheelchair but also is able to walk or use other mobility aids at certain times.

"Not very many able-bodied people are aware of this, which leads to a great deal of emotional stress for ambulatory wheelchair users, who deal with hateful messages about 'faking it' on a regular basis," Harris says. "Hopefully our dolls can both be representation for kids who use mobility aids, and be educational for other kids and their caregivers."



Oak Park Code Fest at the Main Library in January



Code Fest

During Oak Park Code Fest in January, our librarians teamed up with Oak Park Elementary School District 97 teacher librarians to explore apps, robots, and websites with students and families.

All year, we're learning and on the lookout for educational, easy-to-use third-party websites, apps, and gadgets. Check out our recommended digital learning resources:

oppl.org/kids-digital



More ways to play & learn

Find coding gadgets like Bee-Bot (pictured at left) included in some of our Discovery Kits. Available for checkout, these kits offer hands-on activities also in art and music, language arts, life science, math, and engineering. For more learning through play, access discounts and offers on area cultural destinations, such as Legoland Discovery Center, through Museum Adventure Passes and Explore More Illinois. More: oppl.org/kids

“Kids learn best by playing and exploring. ... Introduce them to the world, talk to them, and you’re doing it right.”

—Early Bird Readers text message tip, Jan. 20. More about our digital early learning program for caregivers and teachers of kids ages 0–5: oppl.org/early



Daniel (left), Isaac (top right), and Sage (bottom right) became friends through afternoons spent at the library.

Respect—and ‘a lot of goofiness’

After school, Daniel, Isaac, and Sage come to the Main Library to get work done and hang out with friends.

In fact, it was through afternoons spent at the library that they all became friends last spring. Daniel and Isaac were both students at Brooks Middle School, but in different grades, so they didn’t have much opportunity to get to know each other at school. And Isaac’s younger brother, Sage, was still in elementary school.

Daniel, who’s now in seventh grade, says their friendship started “by being at the computers and hearing each other’s goofiness.” Sage, who’s now in sixth grade, agrees: “A lot of

goofiness.”

Middle School Librarian Beronica Puhr, who sees the three friends regularly attending library programs for kids in grades 6–12, says that in addition to any goofiness, they’re nice people. “And respectful toward staff members,” she adds.

TRY-IT THURSDAYS

Thursdays, 4–5 pm, Main Library Storytime Room. Students in grades 4–8 can try or create something new each week, and hang out at the library. Please join us for any and all events in this series. See all topics and dates: oppl.org/teens



“I want to make sure I treat middle schoolers and young adults with the utmost respect. Anything you say or do can have such an impact.” –Middle School Librarian Beronica Puhr

See new and creative programming for kids in grades 6–12: oppl.org/teens



‘If you can think it, you can probably do it’

Last summer, a team of teenage library volunteers collaborated with local artist Tia Etu to create the mosaic peace sign sculpture that now stands outside Dole Branch Library (see cover).

For two weeks, the teens painted, hammered, and glued hundreds of mosaic fragments they’d collected—CD shards, doll parts, glass beads, shattered ceramic plates, marbles, and more.

One high school junior, Sai (pictured at left, top photo), said that working with Etu gave her insight into the process of a professional artist. And it left her feeling empowered. “If you can think it, you can probably do it,” she said.

‘EFFORT AND PATIENCE, AND TEAMWORK’

Etu (bottom photo, right), a working artist with a studio on Harrison Street in the Oak Park Arts District, has created murals along the

Green Line in Oak Park and in the Arts District, as well as outdoor sculptures around town.

She also has work in the library’s permanent art collection—you can see her oil painting *Passing* on display on the third floor of the Main Library, in Study Room C. And in summer 2018, she mentored a team of teen volunteers who created a mural in the Main Library’s Teen Study Room on the second floor.

Etu said the mosaic project required a lot of problem solving, teamwork, and listening skills. “It’s really about effort and patience,” she said. “And teamwork.”

The team learned a lot as they worked through some creative differences, Etu added. “And that was good, because they figured it all out. And in the end they had a project, and they all left with smiles.”

More: oppl.org/art



Learn something new

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We are so grateful for our dedicated Home Delivery service volunteers (left to right) Diane Genge, Donna Bobco, Tom Holmes, and William Crozier.

retired English professor John Shipley is still pursuing his intellectual interests, with the help of two library services.

Through interlibrary loan, he can request items that aren't in our library's catalog, but that are owned by other public or academic libraries across the United States. And through home delivery, he receives those requested books and articles without ever having to make a trip to the library.

Library Specialist Debbie Rafine, who tracks down the sometimes obscure and rare items, says that when Shipley calls to make requests, he often makes the point that while his body might not be as cooperative as it used to be, his mind is still as curious and engaged as ever.

On one Friday morning in December, Shipley had just received a new stack of materials dropped off by home delivery

volunteers. He was working on a new research project, having recently finished writing a scholarly article on Jonathan Swift's satirical essay *A Modest Proposal*. Handwritten, with footnotes, Shipley's article filled 40 pages of a yellow legal pad. He expected his current project to fill more than 50 pages.

"Are they ever going to be quote-unquote 'published'?" he asked. "Heaven only knows. I'm doing it primarily for my own purposes. I keep myself alive by doing this. It's simply to keep my brain active, and I find it entertaining to do this sort of thing."

When asked what he would do without interlibrary loan and home delivery service, Shipley said: "I simply don't know. I'm so appreciative of this service, that the thought of having to do without it is something I can't comprehend. This service is invaluable to me."

is available to all Oak Park cardholders unable to come into a library location. To request this service:

- Call us at 708.452.3469.
- Email us at homedelivery@oppl.org.
- Please share your name, address, and telephone number.

More: oppl.org/home-delivery

Cardholders can make interlibrary loan requests for items not in the SWAN catalog. Learn more:

oppl.org/request



Librarians Ed O'Brien (left) and Alexandra Skinner (right) use their expertise to help patrons conduct local history and genealogy research.

'It's bringing history to life'

Michelle Dybal, who has lived in southwest Oak Park since 1992, had always wanted to research the history of her house, built in 1913. But for one reason or another, she kept putting it off.

Then, while working on an article about the history of Berwyn's Friendly Tap—Dybal is a freelance arts reporter for *Wednesday Journal*—she came across the library resource NewspaperArchive.

This online archive gives library cardholders access to historical issues of newspapers both local and worldwide, including hundreds of Illinois newspapers with searchable articles, advertisements, editorials, classified ads, and obituaries.

Dybal used it to look up the addresses where the Friendly Tap and Coffee Lounge are located, at 6731-6733 Roosevelt Rd. By piecing together details from items going back to the 1930s—apartment rental notices, wedding announcements,

telephone directories, and so on—she was able to flesh out her story, published in May 2018. Later that year, she also used the archive to research the history of Oak Park's Economy Shop, for an article about its 100th anniversary.

"It made me think, well, if I could type in this address, then what if I typed in my address?" she says.

EVERY HOUSE HAS A HISTORY

As Manager of Adult Services Alexandra Skinner puts it: "You may not live in a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house, but you can still find out some interesting things and some history by searching your street address."

From the August 10, 1918 issue of the Oak Park *Oak Leaves*, Dybal learned that a young man who had lived at her family's address had been sent to an army training camp in Houston during World War I. "From there, we didn't know

what happened to him," she says. "And I was just like, I hope he lived. Because you think, so many young people died in World War I."

'YOU HAVE TO BE A DETECTIVE'

With most genealogical and local history research, says Local History Librarian Ed O'Brien, "You have to be a detective."

Especially if you're just starting out, NewspaperArchive is a great resource if you're looking for a name or an address, he says. And not just in Oak Park, but across the United States and other countries.

"It is detective work," Skinner agrees. "If you have that list of names from grandma that you've been meaning to do something with, and you've already googled them, and you're wondering what's the next step, go to NewspaperArchive."

'JOURNALISM WAS A LITTLE MORE FOLSKY BACK THEN'

When combing through old newspaper archives, O'Brien says he gets a kick out of little things like grocery circulars, ads for coal and dry goods stores, and descriptions of social events like bridal luncheons.

"What's fun is journalism was a little more folksy back then," he says. "A large part of the paper is occupied with people's comings and goings."

For Dybal, who was trying to track down what had happened to the young soldier who had lived in her house, it was one of those seemingly mundane details that led to a breakthrough.

"They used to print things in newspapers that we don't do anymore," she says. "Now, we'd never say 'Someone came and visited their mother' in the newspaper, but they did."

From a 1928 *Oak Leaves* item announcing that the man was visiting his mother in Oak Park, she found out that he had, in fact, lived through the war.

"It's interesting to think about all the different families who lived here and the different things they've done here," Dybal says. "It's bringing history to life."



Find NewspaperArchive and more genealogy and local history resources: oppl.org/history

OAK LEAVES

Mostly for Women

Engagements—Weddings—Club News

Economy Shop Ready for Deluge of 'April Showers'

By ROBERTA

HOPING THAT "April Showers" will pour down tomorrow and keep right on coming all through the month are members of Economy Shop, that unique organization which benefits six local charities with proceeds from monthly sales.

But it isn't rain that the shop personnel, headed by Mrs. Harry L. Judd, is talking about. These "showers" have absolutely nothing to do with the wet stuff that usually comes down abundantly during April; rather, "April Showers" at Economy Shop has come to mean a "rain" of clothing, houseware, furnishings and hundreds of miscellaneous items brought in by members of the bene-

Saturday, August 10, 1918 OAK LEAVES 21

Army and Navy Roster

of Oak Park and River Forest Men Who Serve in the Armed Forces in the War with Germany

April, 1917, to August 1, 1918

school, will matriculate versity next fall. ows' only daughter, nd the couple's two ons, Steve and Larry, making the trip by rented car will then family on a tour of n state.

Mrs. Horace Smith, of Oak Park-River den club, opens her a meeting of the :30 a.m. At 11 a.m.

Com C

Cold Weather Ahead!

BE PREPARED FOR THE STORMY MONTH OF MARCH

Reprint from *Oak Leaves*, April 11, 1930

Through The Most Terrific Storm in History

August 10, 1918

"Photo taken 3/27/30 day after a two days blizzard.

Coal delivery promised Thursday March 27th, and it was, in a bob sled.

That's what I call service.

C. F. Kopf
415 N. Harvey Ave."

‘Writing helps me process things’

After tragic losses in her life, Neighborhood Services Supervisor Jeanine Vaughn says she’s learned that repressing her grief doesn’t work.

Two decades ago, her older sister, Joy, nearly drowned while whitewater rafting in Costa Rica. Joy received a traumatic brain injury that left her disabled and no longer able to care for herself.

“When her accident happened, I shut down,” says Vaughn, who was in college at the time. She tried therapy but didn’t stick with it. “I wasn’t talking to anyone about it. I lost friends. I didn’t want to burden anyone.”

Twenty-three years later, Vaughn was working on a master’s degree in library science and was in a good place. She felt as though she had her life together. Then in November 2018, she got the news that Joy had been killed in a horrific accident, when a truck crashed into the bedroom where she was sleeping, at the home of another sister who had been caring for her.

After Joy died, the first couple of months were a blur. “I was flailing,” Vaughn says. “I knew I needed something.”

Through the library’s employee assistance program, Vaughn was able to find a therapist and stick with it. She also started going to a local grief support group. “I realized I shouldn’t repress it,” she says. “I’m going to deal with it, confront it, and work with the grief rather than fight it.”

‘YOU CAN STILL RELATE’

As a writer, she got the idea to start the Grief Journaling Workshop Series at the library. With Health and Wellness Librarian Juanita Harrell and Death Café facilitator Katie Tyrrell Weimann (see page 17), Vaughn leads the workshops and writes alongside participants.

The workshop series kicked off in December, and it continues twice a month at the Main Library and Maze Branch. Those who attend might be grieving the death



of a parent, their partner, a cousin who felt like a brother, a cat, the end of a relationship. Or they may be experiencing an ambiguous loss, one without closure, such as infertility or a family member going through cognitive decline.

Vaughn, who is working on a memoir, says journaling is something anyone can do. “Although it can lead to better writing, you don’t have to be a writer to journal,” she says. “One of the things I’ve found is I’m writing a lot of things nobody is ever going to see. It’s a lot of conversations with myself, just working through a bunch of things.”

Workshop participants spend time writing, with the help of prompts like “The hardest time of day is...” or “A memory that always makes me smile...”

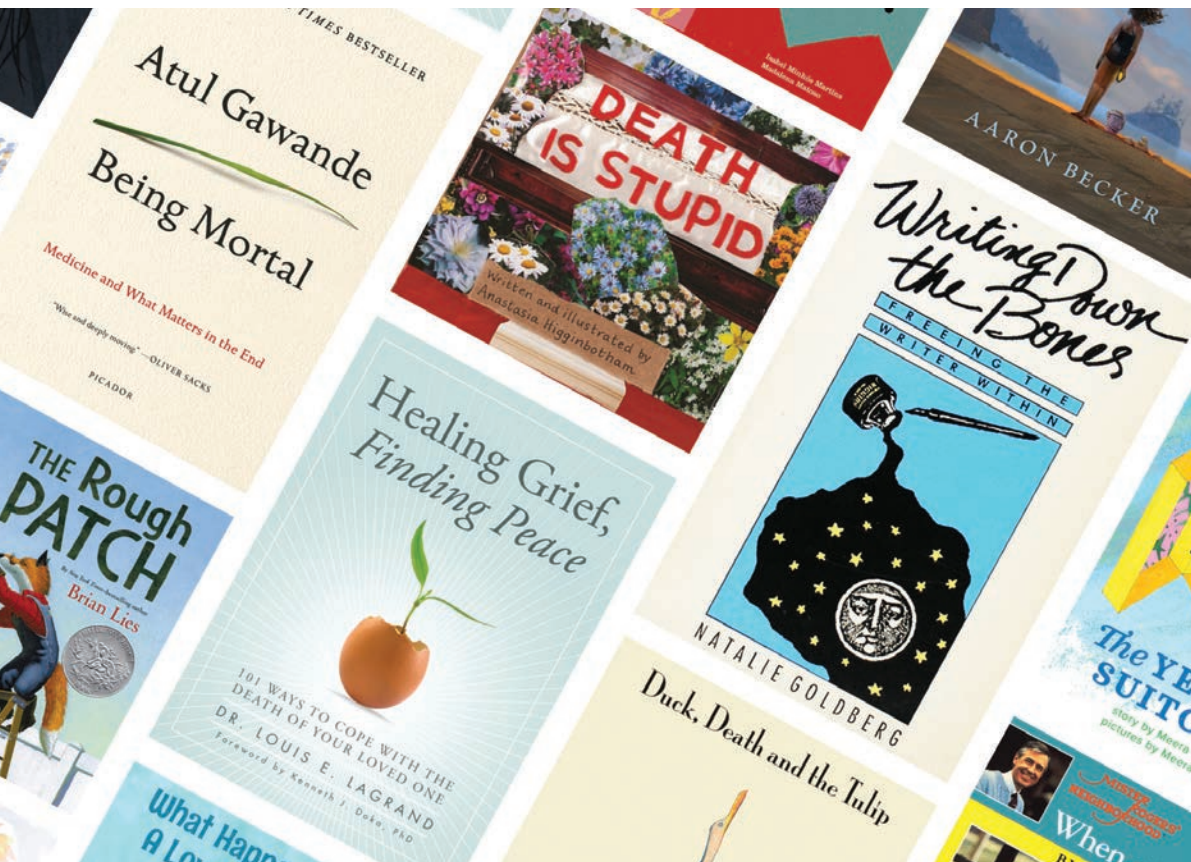
They share their stories aloud if they wish, and they listen to those of others. One of the beautiful things, Vaughn says, is that “even if you’re not experiencing the same thing, you can still relate.”

GRIEF JOURNALING WORKSHOP SERIES

First Thursdays, 6–8 pm, Maze Branch

Fourth Sundays, 2–4 pm, Main Library

More: oppl.org/calendar



TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT DEATH

Our librarians regularly update our reading lists for kids by age, grade, and topic. Find an updated list of recommended books to share with children about death, dying, and grief management: oppl.org/reading-lists

Being mortal: ‘A conversation about living’

For many people, death is something they don’t want to think about, let alone talk about.

Then there are those who gather at the Main Library, for an hour and a half every other month, specifically to discuss death.

The series is called Death Cafe, and it’s been drawing adults of all ages, often strangers to one another, who want to talk about death with no agenda, objectives, or themes. The purpose is to bring awareness to death, to help participants make the most of their lives.

“Often, people do not talk about death until faced with the tragedy,” says palliative care social work student and group facilitator Katie Tyrrell Weimann. “At the Oak Park Death Cafe, we bring attention to the impermanent nature of life and remember the sacredness of each breath.”

Since 2011, Death Cafes have spread around the world. They were started in London by a man named Jon Underwood, who died in 2017. Wherever they are

held, they are always offered on a not-for-profit basis, in an accessible, respectful, and confidential space, and with no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product, or course of action.

Death Cafe is a discussion group, rather than a grief support or counseling session. And the library is a critical space for such conversations, Weimann says.

“These are intentionally free spaces because access matters,” Weimann says. “Some people come to listen and others share personal stories. It can be a call to action or a discussion about the mystery of life. The conversation about death and dying is a conversation about living.”

Learn more: deathcafe.com

DEATH CAFE

Saturday, April 11, Sunday, June 14, 2–3:30 pm, Main Library. More: oppl.org/calendar



THRIVE TALKS

Enrich your life with this speaker series presented by Thrive Counseling Center, a comprehensive mental health center in Oak Park. More: thrivecc.org

What About Us? Family, Friends & Loved Ones of People With Addictions

Thursday, March 5,
7-9 pm, Main Library
Veterans Room

Anxiety in Children & Teens: Recognition, Prevention & Treatment

Thursday, May 7,
7-9 pm Main Library
Veterans Room



GET INVOLVED

Teens ages 12-17 can get involved in a research project at the library. We're partnering with Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine Center for Behavioral Intervention Technologies on a project to design smartphone apps that help teens better understand and manage their emotions. Participants will be compensated. Learn more: oppl.org/teens



Reaching people where they are

Thanks to a unique partnership with Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, people without adequate health care coverage have been receiving confidential mental health assessments from a licensed clinical psychologist at the Main Library since last fall.

Since October, the clinic, which is open every Wednesday from 9 am to 1 pm at the library, has averaged three appointments per month. The pilot program for children, adolescents, and adults continues through June.

"Rush University Medical Center is recognizing that our library is where people are coming every day," says the library's Director of Social Services and Public Safety Robert Simmons. "There is an extreme need for psychiatric support in our community, and together with the hospital we are trying to reach people where they already are."

One in five adults experiences mental illness, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the average delay between the onset of symptoms and getting treatment is 11 years. Taking the first steps can be confusing and difficult,

especially for those without adequate health coverage and other obstacles.

By reaching out to library patrons and other organizations that work with vulnerable populations, Simmons schedules the confidential appointments. And through strategic partnerships with seven area mental health organizations, patrons receive ongoing mental health support afterward.

"We have people at the library every day in front of us who need these services," Simmons says. "With this partnership, we can begin to help them here at the library, where they already feel safe and welcome."

More: oppl.org/social-services

➔ **In need of a free mental health assessment?** Contact Director of Social Services & Public Safety Robert Simmons at 708.697.6910 or RobertS@oppl.org.

➔ **The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** often hosts programs at the Main Library. To learn more and find resources, call 708.524.2582 and visit namimetsub.org.



Adult Programming Specialist Debby Preiser facilitates conversation at the Oak Park Township Memory Cafe.

OAK PARK TOWNSHIP MEMORY CAFES

Third Tuesdays,
2-4 pm, Oak Park Township Senior Services Center,
130 S. Oak Park Ave.
For individuals living with memory loss and their caregivers to connect, share a meal, and enjoy recreation and education.
Call 708.383.8060 or email memorycafe@oakparktownship.org to register.



Fostering quality of life

We know aging in place is a community aspiration. That's why, last October, the library joined the Village of Oak Park, the Oak Park Township, and the Park District of Oak Park in the effort to become a dementia-friendly community.

Nearly 800 Oak Park residents 65 and older may now be living with dementia, according to the Village of Oak Park. Dementia is a general term for memory loss and other cognitive declines that interfere with daily life.

A dementia-friendly community is one in which every sector—from local governments to restaurants, grocery stores, and libraries—works together to create a culture that “is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers and provides supportive options that foster quality of life,” according to the nonprofit Dementia Friendly America. River Forest is one of the eight Illinois communities that have already received the dementia-friendly designation from

Dementia Friendly America.

The ultimate goal is keeping people with dementia engaged in the community and living independently for as long as possible. As part of the collaborative effort, training and awareness days are being held for businesses, first responders, and the wider community. And to ensure the changes being made are both meaningful and led by those who need them the most, interviews are being held with those personally affected by dementia in Oak Park.

“The champions of this effort are excited to be working together to aid the community by partnering with organizations from various sectors of Oak Park to make meaningful change in the community,” says Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director for the Village of Oak Park, adding that Oak Park could achieve the official designation by this spring.

Learn more and find resources: www.oak-park.us/dementiafriendly

CHECK OUT A MEMORY KIT

For people with memory loss, a Memory Kit can provide mental and emotional stimulation. The kits, based on themes including gardening, *I Love Lucy*, and travel, can inspire conversation and build stronger connections. Memory Kits are available in the Main Library and can be checked out for up to three weeks. Learn more: oppl.org/memory-kits

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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: 1-6 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: 1-6 pm

MAZE BRANCH
845 Gunderson Ave. | 708.386.4751
Monday-Thursday: 10 am-9 pm
Friday: Closed
Saturday: 10 am-5 pm
Sunday: 1-6 pm



**SPRING/SUMMER 2020 CLOSINGS
OPPL.ORG/VISIT**

Memorial Day:
Monday, May 25, 2020
All buildings closed

Staff Engagement Day:
Friday, June 12, 2020
Main Library and Dole Branch closed
until 2 pm; Maze Branch closed

Independence Day:
Saturday, July 4, 2020
All buildings closed

Labor Day:
Monday, Sept. 7, 2020
All buildings closed

Looking for events
at the library? Find all at
oppl.org/calendar.



My place for **civic learning**
oppl.org/civic



RESPOND TO THE CENSUS

The 2020 Census starts in mid-March. For the first time, you can respond online, as well as by phone or paper questionnaire.



VOTE IN MARCH

The Presidential Primary Election is Tuesday, March 17. Early voting starts Monday, March 2.



FILE TAX RETURNS BY APRIL 15

At the library, you can print popular state and federal tax forms at no charge, use library computers to file taxes online, and find resources and referrals.



**ACCESS ONE CALENDAR
FOR ALL OF OAK PARK**

Sign up for Burbio.com, a free website and mobile app that pulls events from local organizations into one online calendar.

