Message from Board President
Crockett Bohannon

Message from Director/CEO
Mary Anne Hodel

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Dave’s Story

Learning Languages Virtually:
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I’ve long been a supporter and advocate for Orange County Library System. For many years, I served on the board of Friends of the Orange County Library System. In January 2020, it was my honor to join the library’s Board of Trustees.

When I was appointed, I had no idea that my first year would be one of the most challenging faced in recent years – by the library, by the community, by the entire world. COVID-19 brought much of our economy to a halt in March with stay-at-home orders that shuttered non-essential businesses all across the country. It did not, however, stop the library from serving residents of Orange County. Rather than allow the shut-down to shut us down, staff got creative about looking for new ways to connect with customers.

While working from home, they used smartphones and tablets to record storytimes in their living rooms that could be shared with families on the library’s YouTube and Facebook channels. They livestreamed craft programs and cooking demonstrations in their kitchens so people could participate in library programming from home. They increased the number of live online classes the library offered so people could continue to educate themselves remotely. Our social worker answered emails from customers at home. Our call center staff set up in home offices, so they could continue to answer customer calls remotely. Our Special Services Department saw a dramatic uptick in requests to have library materials home delivered, and staff from multiple other departments assisted them in meeting the demand.

Ever since our libraries reopened to the public in May, we have heard countless comments from customers about how we helped them make it through one of the most difficult times they’ve ever faced. I’m so proud of our staff for showing their resilience and finding ways to provide the best library service possible, under some truly unimaginable circumstances.

This has been an extraordinary year in so many ways. I like to think that one of the extraordinary things about it is the impact we made on people’s lives during this pandemic.

Crockett Bohannon
President
Board of Trustees
Orange County Library System
When this year first started, we were full of optimism for what was ahead. We were working on our Summer Reading Program, which seems to grow in leaps and bounds every year. We were ready to launch our next round of BizKids Club, a program funded in part through a generous grant from Orange County. We were finalizing details for the 2020 Orlando Book Fair, our region's biggest and best celebration of books and reading.

In March, though, all of our plans ground to a halt when it became clear that COVID-19 was not going to be just passing through. The county and state issued stay-at-home orders that shut down all non-essential services, and we closed the doors of all of our locations for six long weeks.

We never stopped working though.

In fact, our staff kicked into high gear after the pandemic struck, recreating nearly all of our in-person programs to be accessible to all through online platforms. We partnered with Orange County Public Schools to offer live virtual storytimes to students, and increased the number of live online software classes offered by our technology trainers. We turned up the volume in our Special Services Department, which runs our Books by MAYL program and saw a huge increase in demand for home-delivery of library materials. As of this writing, we are still offering a limited number of in-person services, but our virtual offerings are vast. The best part is that our community and customers have embraced them, showing up for cooking and qigong, singalongs and book clubs, all held online.

It was difficult, but we learned many lessons as a result – chief among them, that when things are difficult is when a library's work becomes most important. In the following pages, you’ll read more about how we shifted gears during the pandemic, and about some special library customers who relied on us to help them get through one of the most difficult times of their lives.

Mary Anne Hodel
Library Director/CEO
Orange County Library System
When Florida issued a stay-at-home order on April 3, 2020, shutting down all non-essential businesses in the state, it put small businesspeople like Orlando’s Dave Lehman into an incredibly difficult spot. Lehman is president of ConventionPlus, an Orlando-based small business that provides technology and support for the tourism and hospitality industry. His company makes custom keycards for hotels and offers tech support for conventions taking place in Orange County’s tourist corridor. When the stay-at-home order went into effect, the tourism and convention industry ground to a halt. So did his business. “I think a lot of us thought we’d be out of the woods by early summer,” he says. “That obviously has not happened. My business had essentially gone to zero.” Yet Lehman still had overhead to maintain. He knew he had to find a way to cut costs for ConventionPlus to survive the pandemic. He realized that one big expense he could eliminate was bookkeeping. He knew a number of other business owners who used QuickBooks to do their own accounting, and he started to look for low-cost classes so he could learn to use the software. As a longtime board member of Friends of the Orange County Library System, he knew the library offered free classes. He visited the library’s website, and he was pleased to see a live online course in QuickBooks was starting soon. He signed up, and after three sessions covering the basics, he says he had enough foundation and confidence to get started on his own. “Without those basics that I got from the library program, I would have been lost,” he says. He has since been able to eliminate the cost of hiring an outside source to handle his books, which has helped him keep his business afloat during an unprecedented time. He says he hopes that others who hear his story will think about how the library can help them when they need it most. “This is really going to save me quite a bit of money,” he says. “I’m really glad that my library was here for me during the pandemic.”
When Hetty Huang immigrated from China three years ago, she knew that she wanted to improve her English language skills so that she could speak, share and become more involved with the community.

“I decided to come to the library, but at the beginning I didn’t know the library has English classes,” she says. When OCLS suspended in-person classes in response to the pandemic, library staff quickly found ways to transition to online education in order to continue serving our customers despite many challenges. Hetty took advantage of these online classes to continue building her language skills while she studied Accounting with a minor in Finance at the University of Central Florida.

“It’s a little bit different, you know, because we couldn’t meet with each other face-to-face,” she explains, “but I think it’s very good, too. Because, first of all, it gave the opportunity for more students to come to learn … the opportunity to talk, to communicate.” Hetty found it interesting that with online classes, everyone tries to get involved. More students are eager to ask questions and share their experiences dealing with COVID-19. She found that the format helped the students connect in ways they may not have if they were taking classes in person, and her experience had a significant impact on her language skills.

During the last three months of online language classes at the library, her interview skills began to improve thanks to online video chats with instructors and other students.

“Last month I had three interviews from my school for internships. I received two offers!” she says with a wide smile. “I hope the community members who want to learn English, who want to learn Spanish or Excel, they can all come to the library, and you will feel at home.”

“ I love the sunshine. I love the people here and, more importantly, I love this library.”
When the pandemic started to become a serious concern for Floridians, Cassie Bailey was pregnant. Her 2-year-old son was in daycare, and she was a teacher. When everything shut down due to the state’s stay-at-home order, she says she and her family took it seriously.

“In March I was teaching face-to-face,” she says. “Then, of course, all of the schools shut down, and we quarantined very strictly. We don’t even go to the grocery store or anything. It had a huge impact on us.”

She was looking for safe ways for her son to stay socially connected with the world and continue to learn while he was unable to attend daycare. She learned that the library’s events had gone virtual, so she started signing him up for classes. He loved participating in online events, and he enjoyed seeing the faces of the library’s storytellers and instructors on his screen. After some classes, she says, the library would send emails to participants telling them about books their children might enjoy.

“And I thought, ‘Oh, right, I can have books delivered to my house!’” she recalls. “I requested a few of them to be delivered, and it was such a huge hit. My son was so excited.”

During the pandemic, she signed him up for his very own library card, so the library’s blue book-delivery packages (also known by many customers as “blue bags of happiness”) would arrive in his name. Every day, she says, he would go to the porch to see what had arrived.

Even though schools and daycares have reopened, she says her family continues to rely on the library’s home-delivery to stay safe, entertained and informed.

“Financially, it’s really such a nice perk, especially with me being pregnant and being a teacher, we didn’t feel comfortable with me going back to work face-to-face,” she says. “So we will continue to use the library and home delivery. It’s such a nice way to get books.”
In the earliest days of the pandemic, figuring out a way to stay connected with customers from our homes felt like an insurmountable challenge. But library staff are nothing if not creative and adaptable. Feeling a duty to produce valuable programs and content for customers, who were abruptly cut off from our in-person offerings, staff transformed rooms in their homes, figured out how to record professional quality videos on smartphones, and learned how to facilitate livestreams. All of these efforts resulted in dozens of high-quality videos for customers to enjoy – both live and on-demand.

From twice-a-week storytimes for parents and families, struggling to keep their kids occupied with safe, educational content while online, to weekly writing tip videos for the most ambitious amongst us, who took advantage of the unplanned time at home to work on the next great American novel, the library system saw unprecedented growth on its YouTube channel.

Prior to March 2020, the library’s YouTube channel had a respectable audience of 5,830 subscribers. After pivoting to producing this tremendous volume of video content, the library system ended the calendar year with a massive community of 10,521 subscribers. This 80 percent increase was the highlight of the library’s collective social media marketing efforts in 2020.

Customer Allison Feldman Steele said of the library’s storytimes: “Thanks so much for doing this! We are loving all the videos! Thanks to Mr. Myles, Ms. Antoinette and Ms. Kristen!”

Library staff are nothing if not creative and adaptable.
The staff of the Special Services Department, which operates the library’s Books by MAYL home-delivery service, welcomed 2020 refreshed, renewed and ready to get to work. Their goals for the new year were to work with greater focus to meet customer expectations, and to surpass the previous year’s checkout total of 492,974 by 5 percent or more. By the end of February, the Special Services Department had checked out and prepared nearly 78,000 items for home delivery.

When the pandemic hit and the library closed, Library Administration asked if Special Services wanted to continue working and checking out items for delivery. The team collectively agreed to continue, as they felt our customers were depending on this service, which could be accessed remotely. By the time Orange County issued a stay-at-home order for all residents on March 26, Special Services staff had checked out and prepared 45,836 items for delivery.

Special Services staff returned to work in mid-May, once the stay-at-home order was lifted, and resumed work promptly. The pandemic had provided opportunities for customers to accomplish their resolutions. Whether they had resolved to read more, binge watch television series, learn to cook, eat healthier, remodel a room, get better organized, or exercise more, the library had resources to support them. When home delivery resumed, customers expressed their appreciation for the library system, library employees, the Special Services Department, and our courier, Priority Express Parcel/PEP, by sharing their thoughts of gratitude. Some of those messages received by staff are highlighted on the next page.

Our Special Services team worked harder than ever during the pandemic, surpassing our home-delivery expectations

Our customers were depending on this service, which could be accessed remotely.
“To the Questline Team who take my reservations and make me feel valued … Your good work makes it possible for me to afford my reading habit and after 21 years, I feel you are family.”

“Thank you for all of your services you provide for everyone. I especially appreciate the Books by Mail, which I use quite frequently.”

“Appreciation for my beloved MAYL Department. For two decades, MAYL has left me SMILING with their wonderful service, attitudes, and cheer!”
“Thank you so much for the Biz Kids class. Micah really learned a lot and was always encouraged by you. We are grateful for the opportunity.”
– Jessica

“Thank you for the kindness, efficiency, and professionalism in the service yesterday when I called to make an appointment for English classes.”
– Denis

“My kids are really amazed. The host interacted with them in a such caring way. Thanks so much for this activity. So light in this hard time for everyone. Hope to see you soon! My kids are already asking for more.”
– Ana

“What a great book/author selection and discussion. It was like going back in time. You’ve got this Zoom class management perfected! Great info shared. OCLS is doing a first class job with online classes. Thanks for everything you do.”
– Carla

“Just wanted to tell the library staff that the online events have been wonderful! I would imagine being online is a new type of stress: First the tech, then the ‘acting’ without direct audience feedback. Please know your efforts are paying off and they are greatly appreciated.”
– Kelly

“Thank you, thank you for this afternoon’s ‘All Aboard To Explore.’ I had wondered how you would engage your audience for 45 minutes. Now I know, and I send my congratulations. My 5-and-a-half year old grand-daughter asked if there would be more.”
– Margaret

“My toddler misses the library story times. So glad our Orange County Library system has storytime on their Facebook page.”
– Cherrilyn

“Thank you for all of your services that you provide for everyone. I especially appreciate the Books by Mail, which I use quite frequently.”
– Joyce

“As someone who reads several hours every day, the free home delivery service is vital. I’m 81 and getting around is difficult for me. Keep up the great work.”
– Marinelle

“Thank you for having so many options – DVDs, books, Kindle – it saved us during this pandemic.”
– Jane

“My team and I truly enjoyed the opportunity to get to participate in a virtual field trip. Noraliz was enthusiastic, engaging and overall great! The lesson definitely hit on the standard and kept the students’ interest.”
– Mrs. Meteiver, Hillcrest Elementary

“I want you to know how much I appreciate your efforts to get through the pandemic safely. I’d be lost without [Books by] MAYL. Reading books, listening to audio and watching movies from The Vault have helped me keep my sanity. … I am grateful for the entire OCLS staff. Having an OCLS MAYL courier is like having my own tooth fairy!”
– Kathleen M

“Thank you so much for the time spending with our Head Start children. That was a wonderful story time; they had fun and they loved it.”
– Ms. Jean

“I took the Virtual Event ‘Create an LED Greeting Card’ with Yesenia. Most of the supplies were mailed so I was able to participate, best experience so far with the library.”
– Lisa
2019–2020 STATISTICS

CLASSES, EVENTS & ATTENDANCE

- Library Events: 9,760
- Attendance at Library Events: 317,383
- Technology Classes: 9,941
- Attendance at Technology Classes: 35,722
- Attendance at Community Events: 19,478

MELROSE CENTER

- New Library Card Registration: 34,667
- Melrose Members: 14,468
- New Melrose Members: 465
- Received Social Worker Assistance: 1,468

CIRCULATION

- Physical Items Circulated: 3,395,268
- OverDrive Downloads: 1,688,007
- Items Delivered (MAYL): 515,354
- Digital Items Downloaded: 2,557,377

Statistics are measured from the start of the fiscal year, October 1, 2019, through the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2020.
## SUMMER READING PROGRAM STATISTICS

### CLASSES & EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids’ Events</td>
<td>1,475</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Events</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Classes</td>
<td>572</td>
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### ATTENDANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids’ Events Attendance</td>
<td>68,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Events Attendance</td>
<td>14,848</td>
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</table>

- **83,788** Attended Summer Reading Program Events
- **2,355** Total Summer Reading Program Events
## Revenue & Expense Totals

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ad Valorem Taxes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Salaries &amp; Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$48,227,000</td>
<td>$24,909,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Federal, State and County Grants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>$1,059,000</td>
<td>$10,354,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<td>$734,000</td>
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<td><strong>Fines &amp; Lost Materials</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reserves</strong></td>
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<td>$487,000</td>
<td>$4,099,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transfers from County Property Appraiser and Tax Collector</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transfer to Capital Projects Fund</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$447,000</td>
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<td><strong>Charges for Services</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capital Outlay</strong></td>
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<td>$333,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Material Transfer to Capital Projects Fund</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$51,288,000</td>
<td>$51,288,000</td>
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</tbody>
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IN-KIND DONORS

4R Restaurant Group
Addition Financial Arena
American Ghost Adventures
American Girl Orlando
Andretti Indoor Karting & Games Orlando
Annie Russell Theatre
Aquatica Orlando
Art Services, Inc.
Art Systems of Florida
Bach Festival Society of Winter Park
Barnes & Noble
Baterbys Art & Framing
Benihana
Big Bob's Flooring Outlet
Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens
Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art
Chick-fil-A
Chuy’s
Coliseum of Comics
Community Health Centers
Congo River Golf
Cool Stuff, Inc.
Crayola Experience – Orlando
Dunkin' Donuts
Embassy Suites by Hilton Orlando International Drive Convention Center
Enzian Theater
Epic Comics
Ethos Vegan Kitchen
FoxTail Coffee Co.
Fun Spot America
Garden Theatre
Gods & Monsters
Golden Corral
Hard Rock Live Orlando
Harry P. Leu Gardens
Healthy West Orange
Heart of Florida United Way Campaign
ICON Park
Island H2O Live!
Jason's Deli
Jimmy John's
John E. Russo, D.M.D.
  Family & Cosmetic Dentistry
Kelly's Homemade Ice Cream
Kennedy Space Center
Kings Bowl America
Krispy Kreme
Landry's/Rainforest Cafe/T-Rex Cafe
Lazy Moon
LEGOLAND Florida Resort
Little Caesars Pizza
Lukas Nursery
Luna Mosaic Arts
Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament
Mennello Museum of American Art
Miller's Ale House
Nothing Bundt Cakes
Orange County Regional History Center
Orlando Magic
Orlando Museum of Art
Orlando Repertory Theatre
Orlando Science Center
Orlando Shakes
Orlando Solar Bears
Panera Bread
Papa John's
Park Ave CDs
PDQ
Pirate's Cove Adventure Golf
Planet Obstacle
Publix Super Markets
RDV Sportsplex Ice Den
SAK Comedy Lab
SeaWorld Orlando
Semoran Skateway
Sephora
Showcase of Citrus
Skeletons: Museum of Osteology
Sleuths Mystery Dinner Shows
Splitsville Orlando
Starbucks
Sweet by Holly
Texas Roadhouse
The Cheesecake Factory
The Escape Game Orlando
The Florida Aquarium
The Fresh Market
The Great Escape Room
The Wawa Foundation
Topgolf Orlando
UCF School of Performing Arts
Walmart Neighborhood Market
Walt Disney World Resort
WonderWorks Orlando
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