

# Director's Report

April 2026

Arlington Heights Memorial Library

GOAL

Strengthen the library's service outside its walls

## Library Continues to Build Upon Partnerships



**School District 214:** District 214's Bake-off sponsored by State Representative Mary Beth Canty was held at the Makerplace last month. Students from Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove and Rolling Meadows High Schools each presented two original recipes showcasing their creativity and skill. The event drew an impressive cross-section of community stakeholders including high school and library staff, library board members, state representatives and senators and Village board members.



**Village of Arlington Heights (VAH):** Last month's Memory Café presented in partnership with Senior & Accessible Services Supervisor Jessica and VAH social worker Hannah featured musical instrument bingo, hands-on crafting of tambourines and maracas and a joyful jam session with homemade instruments. Beyond the music, the event fostered meaningful connections. Participants shared stories, exchanged contact information and expressed interest in additional library and village resources.

Programs & Exhibits welcomed back Village Manager Randy Recklaus for a now annual Village Update. A robust crowd of 98 turned out, very interested to learn more about the latest Chicago Bears status. Randy first presented general content from village governance structure and finances to successes and recognitions, and then the status of the former Arlington International Racecourse site.

**Scout Groups:** Chef Brian welcomed six Cub Scouts into the Makerplace Kitchen for a hands-on knife skills and safety class. The program was made possible in part by the Twinny children's chef knife, a tool designed specifically for young hands.

**Cook County & RAILS:** The library hosted a Listening and Learning Circle led by the Cook County Digital Equity initiative and RAILS, bringing together suburban Cook County libraries to help shape a future countywide Digital Navigator Network. Deputy Director Dana, Digital Services Supervisor Gregory and Technology Instruction Coordinator David participated, contributing to a Human-Centered Design process focused on expanding and providing access to devices, reliable internet and essential digital skills for customers across the county as community technology needs continue to grow across the county.





## Library Continues to Offer Virtual & Hybrid Opportunities

**Potty Training Workshop:** Thirty-seven attendees joined local childhood expert Teri Kmak over Zoom for a virtual caregiver workshop. Parents learned tips and tricks to support the potty-training process.

**Illinois Libraries Present:** Last month's Illinois Libraries Present event welcomed bestselling author Percival Everett to Zoom, in conversation with Chicago journalist and library champion Brandis Friedman. The event drew 930 viewers across the state, 44 from Arlington Heights.

**Senior Phone Series Milestone:** Last month, Senior & Accessible Services (SAS) celebrated the 300th meeting of its phone-based program series. To mark the occasion, SAS Advisor Kathryn delivered a "party in a bag" to each participant, including a spring-themed mug, tea, seed packets and a small planting pot with a specially designed commemorative garden stake. For the celebration, the group listened to a lively selection titled, "If Plants Could Talk," exploring the idea that plants may be more aware and communicative than we think.



## Staff Highlights from Outside the Library Walls



### Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo (C2E2):

Makerspace Specialist Lisa took the stage at C2E2's Crown Championships of Cosplay, competing with her 18th-century French court character from Mel Brooks' *History of the World Part 1*. The costume, much of which was designed, digitized and stitched using the Makerplace's embroidery machine and Adobe Illustrator, represented 130 hours of construction over 44 days, including over 600,000 embroidery stitches and more than 20 hours spent hand-ventilating a moustache and beard from scratch. The skills she challenged herself will feed directly back into her work and teaching at the Makerplace.

**Illinois Libraries Present:** Programs & Exhibits Manager Jennifer continues to chair the statewide Illinois Libraries Present. The current season is the first presented with the Illinois Library Association. In March, Jennifer led the committee to finalize the Season 6 lineup under budget and ahead of schedule. The lineup will be announced when annual membership opens next month.

**Computers in Libraries Conference:** Digital Services Librarian Bill attended the 2026 Computers in Libraries conference and presented on smart telescopes in libraries as part of the Leveraging Simple Tools for Complex Problems & Engagement program.



Grow the use of our services and resources

## Library Engages the Community Through Programs & Experiences

**Resource Hour:** Last month's Resource Hour included a visit from the ICash team, part of the Illinois Treasurers office. The ICash team reported that during their resource hour they found more than \$200,000 in unclaimed property for customers.

**Tweens Make Moving Sculptures:** Twelve tweens crafted their own automata using cardboard and other materials to create a custom piece of art that moves with the turn of a crank. One parent picking up their child commented on how inventive the project was and looked forward to using the prepared handouts to craft with their child at home.



**Teens Make Chocolate Lava Cakes:** Teen Librarian Alejandria and Teen Services Advisor Chrissy instructed 16 teens in the Makerplace Kitchen on how to make chocolate lava cakes. Learning along with library staff, each teen enjoyed a lava cake with vanilla ice cream and fresh fruit as well as taking home three more lava cakes.



**New Presentation Skills Program:** Programs & Exhibits Assistant Jay delivered a new program created in collaboration with presenters Nancy Burgess (a marketing professional) and Jacquie Schattner (a long-time library genealogy volunteer). The lively session with 30 people in attendance focused on fundamentals of successful presentations, such as preparation, knowing your audience, addressing and managing fear, producing "Wow!" visuals and more.



## New Engagement Station at the Senior Center

The Senior & Accessible Services team introduced a new interactive space in the Reading Room at the Senior Center, designed to support brain health and wellness. The space features rotating activities like coloring, drawing, games and responding to questions on a community board, encouraging creativity and connection. One regular participant asked to have their completed coloring project displayed, highlighting the sense of pride and engagement the space inspires. Many thanks to Jim and Leonel in Facilities, who built and installed the interactive wall display.





Enhance the library's role in the everyday lives of the Arlington Heights community

## Library Launches Community Pantry



Community Engagement Supervisor Catalina, Youth Services Supervisor Rebecca and Programs & Exhibits Specialist Neal launched the pantry in pilot mode after consulting with neighboring libraries and community partners to respond to rising food costs and rising food insecurity being observed in the community. Library staff contributed the first round of food donations, and library visitors have been actively using and replenishing the pantry in its first two weeks. Discreetly located on the first floor near the Dunton entrance, the pantry reinforces the library's role as a responsive community anchor and marks a crucial step in expanding the library's impact beyond traditional library services.

## Library Continues to Engage Emerging Adults

Last month marked the first meeting of the 20s & 30s Book Club, the newest addition to the 20s & 30s suite of events. Programs & Exhibits Coordinator Nikki and Info Services Advisor Danielle facilitated a discussion of "The Book of Lost Hours" by Hayley Gelfuso with eight attendees. 20s & 30s discussions will continue quarterly, offering bookish connection just for young adults. Emerging adults also enjoyed a session of puppy yoga at local Reset Vibes Yoga Studio with 18 lucky people in attendance.

## Updates on the Library's Collection

Reel Talk, the last curated display on the first floor, hit a total of 1,625 checkouts over a three-month period. Celebrity Book Clubs, the newest curated display, generated 132 checkouts within the first week, showing it's a popular display. The library now has a 4K Blu-ray collection. 4K Blu-rays are interfiled with DVDs and Blu-rays, and they come in black cases that specifically state they are 4K. These discs can only be played on 4K Blu-ray players. Currently we are only adding 4K material to the adult audiovisual area.





## Makerplace Fosters Community Connection & Inspires Creativity Through Experiences

**Makerplace Helps Customer Create St. Joseph's Day Garden Flag:** When a customer went looking for St. Joseph's Day holiday decor and couldn't find anything that would arrive in time, she decided to make her own. Makerspace Specialist Kate worked with her to design and create a custom garden flag in honor of the holiday. As a thank you, the customer returned with zepole, the traditional St. Joseph's Day pastry that also happened to be featured on her finished flag.

**Custom 3D Printed Awards for Staff Recognition Program:** To support the library's Staff Engagement Committee, the Dunton Street Social Club, Makerspace Branch Manager Chris designed and 3D printed five custom awards for Staff Day. The awards, modeled after the Oscars statuette, were created to recognize colleagues nominated through the library's employee recognition program, Shout Out.

**Arlington Heights Chopped Returns for a Third Edition:** Chef Brian hosted the third edition of Arlington Heights Chopped, the library's take on the popular cooking competition show. Sixteen participants formed four teams of four and collaborated to create dishes using mystery ingredients revealed only at the start of the program. The winning team put together a standout plate featuring panko-crusted eggplant croutons, orzo salad and a nicely prepared chicken. Winners took home a one-of-a-kind trophy: gold-colored tongs engraved with "Chopped Winner," custom made on the Epilog laser cutter at the Makerplace.

**Crispy Chicken Sandwich Class with James Keane of the Curious Crow:** Chef Brian welcomed James Keane of the Curious Crow food truck, a familiar presence at the Arlington Heights Farmers Market, to the Makerplace Kitchen for his first guest class. Keane taught attendees how to make his signature crispy chicken sandwich, a staple of his menu. It was a strong debut, and he is already planning to return.



# What Customers Are Saying



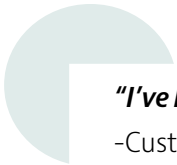
***"Early Learning Librarian Allison overheard a caregiver reading a story in Russian to her baby. Upon finishing, the caregiver said, "Best. Book. Ever." Allison asked her about it and learned it was a book of fairy tales that she remembered owning when she was a girl."***

-Kids' World World Languages collection feedback



***"A preschooler from Our Lady of the Wayside introduced Youth Outreach Specialist to her mother who shared that her daughter always tells her about library visits from Miss Kim. She also shared that her daughter has been hooked on presenting storytimes to her, her husband and a menagerie of stuffed animals!"***

-Youth Services Staff Member



***"I've had the best, most creative day!"***

-Customer who took a Canva class in the morning at the library and a Cricut class in the afternoon at the Makerplace



***"The Tech Learning Center was amazing and very helpful making faxes and scans. We are so lucky with our library."***

-Tech Learning Center Customer



***"A customer shared that she 'felt like Alice in Wonderland' walking through the library."***

-Digital Services Staff Member

# Arlington Heights Memorial Library

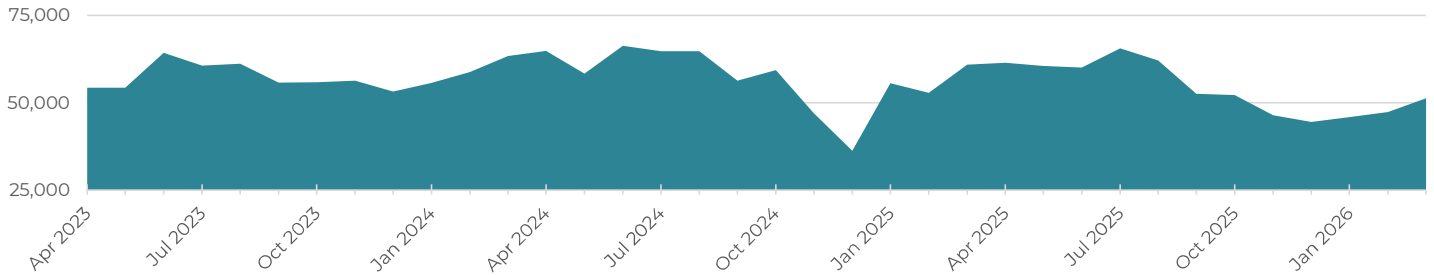
March 2026 Dashboard

## Library Visits

79.7% of library customers in March visited the Main Library. Year to date, library visits are down -14.7%.

	March			2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Main Library	40,884	79.7%	<div style="width: 79.7%;"></div>	114,599	137,780	-16.8%
Drive-Up	4,318	8.4%	<div style="width: 8.4%;"></div>	12,440	14,924	-16.6%
Makerplace	1,795	3.5%	<div style="width: 3.5%;"></div>	4,366	3,731	17.0%
Senior Center	1,663	3.2%	<div style="width: 3.2%;"></div>	4,880	4,860	0.4%
Outreach	1,336	2.6%	<div style="width: 2.6%;"></div>	4,983	4,171	19.5%
Bookmobile	1,281	2.5%	<div style="width: 2.5%;"></div>	3,157	3,834	-17.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,277</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>144,425</b>	<b>169,300</b>	<b>-14.7%</b>

Total Visits



Room Use	March	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change	Trend
Hendrickson Room	10	29	35	-17.1%	
Conference Rooms	1,284	3,693	4,020	-8.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>3,722</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>-8.2%</b>	

April 2025-March 2026

Library Cards <sup>1</sup>	March	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change	Trend
Resident	269	857	1,019	-15.9%	
Reciprocal	113	345	344	0.3%	
Purchased	4	13	4	225.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>-11.1%</b>	

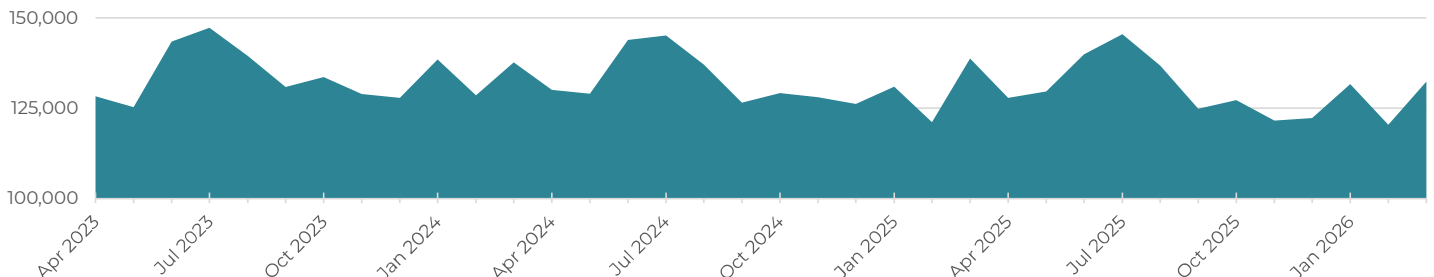
April 2025-March 2026

## Circulation

132,415 items were checked out in March. Year to date, total checkouts are down -1.6% compared to 2025.

	March			2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Print	70,607	53.3%	<div style="width: 53.3%;"></div>	204,557	214,668	-4.7%
Downloadable	30,701	23.2%	<div style="width: 23.2%;"></div>	89,575	75,221	19.1%
Audiovisual	21,563	16.3%	<div style="width: 16.3%;"></div>	62,527	71,221	-12.2%
Other	9,544	7.2%	<div style="width: 7.2%;"></div>	27,859	29,789	-6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,415</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>384,518</b>	<b>390,899</b>	<b>-1.63%</b>

Total Checkouts



<sup>1</sup> New cards only. Does not include renewals.

# Arlington Heights Memorial Library

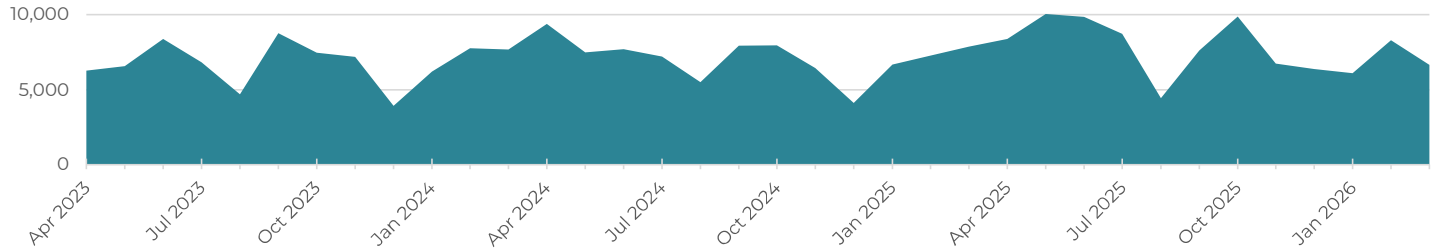
March 2026 Dashboard

## Programs

3,620 customers attended Children programs in March, which represents 54.4% of all program attendees. Year to date, program attendance is down -3.4% across all audiences and program sessions are down -2.5%.

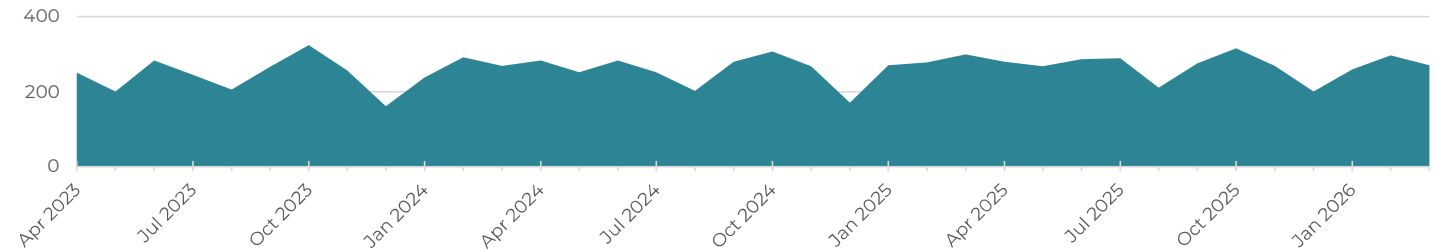
Attendance	March		2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Children	3,620	54.4%	12,788	12,530	2.1%
Adult	2,231	33.5%	6,808	8,002	-14.9%
Teen	805	12.1%	1,452	1,258	15.4%
	<b>6,656</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,048</b>	<b>21,790</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>

Attendance



Sessions	March		2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Adult	170	62.7%	518	544	-4.8%
Children	85	31.4%	273	260	5.0%
Teen	16	5.9%	36	44	-18.2%
	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>

Sessions



## Supplementary Programs and Activities<sup>2</sup>

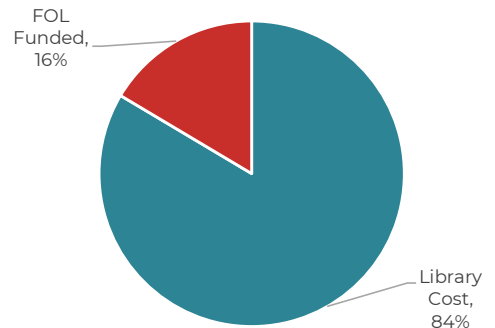
	March	Trend	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Attendance	1,933		6,076	4,859	25.0%
Sessions	19		66	63	4.8%

April 2025-March 2026

<sup>2</sup> Supplementary programs and activities are planned events where customers participate on their own, instead of at a designated time with a group. Registration is not required.

## Program Spending

	March	2026 YTD	Budget	% Spent
Presenters	\$12,891	\$48,338	\$186,177	26.0%
Supplies <sup>3</sup>	\$5,651	\$18,076	\$110,349	16.4%
	<b>\$18,542</b>	<b>\$66,414</b>	<b>\$296,526</b>	<b>22.4%</b>
Library Cost	\$17,651	\$55,486	\$243,026	22.8%
FOL Funded	\$892	\$10,929	\$53,500	20.4%
	<b>\$18,542</b>	<b>\$66,414</b>	<b>\$296,526</b>	<b>22.4%</b>

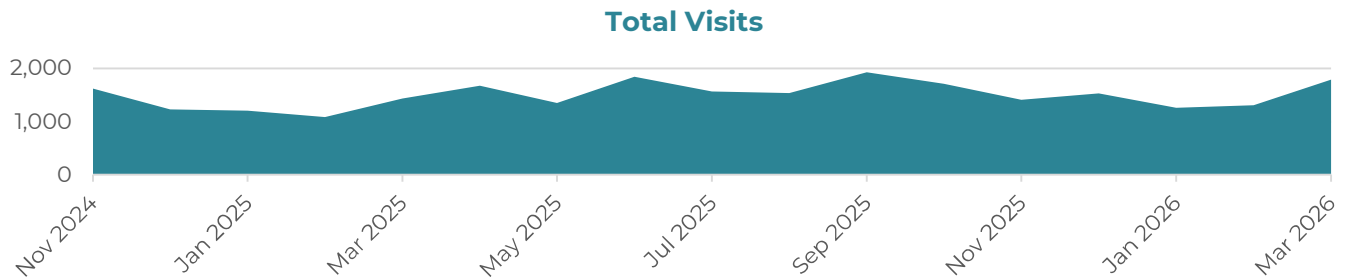


<sup>3</sup> Includes supplies for supplementary programs and activities

# Arlington Heights Memorial Library Makerplace

March 2026 Dashboard

	March	% New Users	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
<b>Makerplace Visits</b>	1,795	3.4%	4,366	3,731	17.0%



Equipment Usage <sup>5</sup>	March	% New Users	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Fabrication	138	44.8%	367	406	-9.6%
Small Tools	72	23.4%	195	165	18.2%
Sewing	51	16.6%	186	176	5.7%
Technology	28	9.1%	70	51	37.3%
Art	19	6.2%	38	29	31.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

Program Attendance <sup>6</sup>	March	% New Users	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
Culinary	107	51.2%	384	323	18.9%
Maker	91	43.5%	284	345	-17.7%
Tour	4	1.9%	4	15	-73.3%
Other	7	3.3%	23	73	-68.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>-8.1%</b>

	March	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
<b>3D Print Jobs</b>	282	817	456	79%

	March	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change
<b>eLearning<sup>7</sup></b>	147	967	688	41%

<sup>4</sup> Measured by number of waivers signed for maker/fabrication, kitchen, or both

<sup>5</sup> **Fabrication**: all fabrication room equipment except 3D printers; **Small Tools**: soldering irons, hand tools; **Technology**: design computers

<sup>6</sup> **Culinary**: kitchen programming; **Maker**: hands on making programs (3D printing, laser cutting, sewing); **Tour**: attendance of facility tours prescheduled or drop-in

<sup>7</sup> Niche Academy views of Makerplace resources