



Looking Back at 2024 and Looking Ahead to 2025

by Tammi Thiem

January is often the time to reflect on the past and set goals for the future. When I look back on 2024, I feel amazed that the year flew by so quickly. It was a rewarding year for me at the Three Rivers Library System, and here are some of the highlights:

- Virtual SKILLS via Zoom (Sharing Knowledge, Ideas, Learning, and Library Solutions)
 - I love listening to everything happening in libraries throughout the system, and I enjoy the camaraderie that this platform offers. It is the perfect place to share successes and challenges and to ask questions of one another.
 - 2025 will see the continuation of these, but I am still considering how to change things to make them more valuable for attendees.
- In-Person SKILLS (Sharing Knowledge, Ideas, Learning, and Library Solutions)
 - This is the same as above except in person! Due to low attendance when these were held monthly, these have been changed to quarterly meetings. Attendance has been better, and the conversations have been fabulous!
 - These will continue as quarterly meetings in 2025, rotated throughout the system.
- Kaleidoscope of Skills Workshops
 - These biannual workshops have been terrific! Encouraging everyone to share their wisdom and knowledge on a variety of topics is the perfect learning opportunity for everyone.
 - These will be held in May and November of 2025, and I will review the evaluations to determine the best topics to explore.
- Summer Reading Workshops
 - These are always fun, as children's programs are often the heart of the library.
 - Two of these are planned for February of 2025, so it will be exciting to hear what creative ideas librarians have lined up for the summer months ahead.
- TRAILS Scholarships
 - I have not verified this, but I think 2024 was the record high for awarding scholarships to librarians. The reason this is so exciting is that it means many librarians have been able to attend valuable professional development activities.
 - I look forward to 2025 exceeding 2024 with those scholarship opportunities.
- TRAILS Book Kits
 - 2024 had the highest record for lending books from the TRAILS office, and it was also the highest record for the number of book sets available for lending. One reason for the success is that librarians are encouraged to submit their suggestions for books so we can provide the desired titles. Another reason for success is the return postage option. Since libraries often struggle with limited budgets, having the return postage paid eliminates that potential barrier.
 - I look forward to 2025 being as successful as 2024 and maybe even exceeding the record.



At the TRails Office

Looking Back at 2024 and Looking Ahead to 2025 (Continued)

by Tammi Thiem

- Three Rivers Library Facebook Group
 - The Facebook group got lots of traffic during 2024! Everyone who is an active member likely knows that I schedule posts every day. What makes it more worthwhile, though, is that it has become an interactive exchange of ideas for librarians!
 - I am looking forward to 2025 being even more engaging than 2024!
- Breakout Box Challenges
 - I did not keep track of how many times I visited libraries with Breakout Box Challenges in 2024, but it was a lot! Some of these were for children's programs, and some were for library board continuing education. They were all fun for me, so thank you for inviting me to share the experiences!
 - I will continue to develop challenges here and there in 2025, especially a couple more options for library board training. I hope to visit lots of libraries with these adventures!

There are already some great things planned for 2025, and I am looking forward to another terrific year with the Three Rivers Library System. March of 2025 marks my five-year anniversary. I cannot express how much I have enjoyed my position with the Three Rivers Library System! Not every job allows the opportunity to befriend the most wonderful, passionate, creative people imaginable, and I get to learn new things every single day!

Find all of the words from the list below in the word search puzzle and carefully circle them or cross them off. Read the remaining letters from left to right, top to bottom. Send the answer to that question to Chelsea at trls.assistant@gmail.com by January 20th to be entered in a drawing for a prize.

S	N	O	W	P	L	O	W	T	H	E	S
N	N	B	L	I	Z	Z	A	R	D	N	N
O	G	O	Y	C	N	A	M	E	O	F	O
W	N	T	W	E	I	T	H	I	S	A	W
B	I	U	O	F	G	D	E	T	I	H	B
O	D	O	N	R	L	W	L	R	C	C	A
A	D	H	S	O	O	A	W	O	I	I	L
R	E	R	O	T	O	T	K	E	C	T	L
D	L	T	S	S	H	O	V	E	L	C	H
E	S	O	L	G	N	I	Z	E	E	R	F
O	R	N	G	G	N	I	I	K	S	A	W
F	R	I	G	I	D	Y	L	L	I	H	C
I	N	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	T	E	R

ARCTIC	SHOVEL
BLIZZARD	SKIING
CHILLY	SLEDDING
COLD	SNOWBALL
FREEZING	SNOWBOARD
FRIGID	SNOWFLAKE
FROST	SNOWMAN
ICE	SNOWPLOW
ICICLES	SNOWY
IGLOO	WINTER

Basic Skills

(* Required Class)

Communication *

Registration Dates: Any

Class Dates: Open

Customer Service *

Registration Dates: 22 December 2024 - 24 January 2025

Class Dates: 3 - 14 February 2025

Upcoming NCompass Live

Best New Teen Reads of 2024

Date: 8 January 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

2025 One Book One Nebraska: The Long March Home: A World War II Novel of the Pacific

Date: 22 January 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Pretty Sweet Tech

Date: 29 January 2025 from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Calendar of Events

Building Hope in Yourself and Others Workshop

La Vista Public Library

17 January 2025
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

SKILLS Meeting

Online

28 January 2025
10:00 am - 11:00 am

Summer Reading Workshop

Norfolk Public Library

24 February 2025
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

SKILLS Meeting

Online

26 February 2025
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Summer Reading Workshop

Blair Public Library & Technology Center

28 February 2025
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Big Talk From Small Libraries

Online

28 February 2025
8:45 am - 5:00 pm

NLC Book Club Spotlight

Book Club Spotlight:

[Know My Name](#)

by Chanel Miller

Mackenzie Marrow is the librarian in charge of book clubs at the Nebraska Library Commission and wants to share with everyone the hidden gems in the [NLC's Book Club Collection](#). Below is an excerpt, but to read the full details go to [Mackenzie's blog post](#).

In 2015, Chanel Miller woke up in a hospital bed. Standing over her was a Stanford Dean and a Police Officer- they told her she was found passed out with a man looming over her at a party the night before. Still confused and groggy, Chanel was probed, examined, photographed, and asked if she wanted to press charges without telling her what for. Trying to be helpful... Chanel agreed. What followed was over a year of protracted trial dates and a bloodthirsty media waiting to tear her apart. Her assailant found guilty on all three felony counts of sexual assault, only served three months in county jail. Any longer, and the judge worried that it could affect the "bright future" in store for the ambitious swimmer Brock Turner. Basing the sentencing on a theoretical future and disregarding the real harm he caused to another person with a future of her own.

The case of [The People V. Brock Allen Turner](#) sent shockwaves across the United States and college campuses. Pushback from the sentencing led to California enacting laws to expand protections for victims, the people prevailing where the system had not. Through Know My Name, we see the fallout Chanel experiences from agreeing to pursue the case. Feelings of total isolation, threats of violence, and the loss of dignity were thrust upon her by a system crafted against survivors. But her story is also about the love and hope she found in her family, this new community of survivors, and the people working for change.

Library News

Senator Conrad Earns Library Advocacy Award

via Nebraska Library Association

Today, the NLA Advocacy Committee delivered the prestigious Advocacy Award to Senator Danielle Conrad (LD 46) in recognition of her outstanding support and commitment to libraries across the state.

Senator Conrad has been a dedicated advocate for Nebraska's libraries, fighting legislation and initiatives that threaten the state's public library systems, erode intellectual freedom rights, and impact access to educational resources for all Nebraskans. Her efforts have a profound impact on both urban and rural communities, ensuring that libraries remain vital hubs for learning, innovation, and community engagement. Senator Conrad's support was critical when LB 441 was being debated on the floor, during the 2024 Legislative Session. Her comments were essential, and the bill did not pass cloture.

We are thrilled to honor Senator Conrad with this Advocacy Award. Those of us who work closely with Senator Conrad recognize that her steadfast commitment to improving library services and her understanding of the critical role libraries play in education, civic engagement, and workforce development make her a true champion for our cause. Her advocacy efforts ensure that libraries continue to thrive and serve as inclusive spaces for all.

Senator Conrad, who has long been a vocal supporter of public services and educational opportunities, has long fought for the civil rights of all Nebraskans through her work as an attorney and public policy advocate, as well as leading ACLU of Nebraska for eight years. During the 2024 legislative session, Senator Conrad led the charge to defeat LB 441, which would have criminalized librarianship and limited access to information to all Nebraskans.

This inaugural NLA Advocacy Award is being presented to Senator Conrad because her work has benefited ALL libraries in our state. Sections of the state library association offer awards to advocates in local communities or regions. But when someone works for us as hard as Senator Conrad, we want to recognize that work with a special award from all of us. Congratulations!



Pictured left to right: Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission; Jenny White, Schuyler Public Library; Senator Danielle Conrad; Deb Robertson, Kilgore Memorial Library; Michael Straatmann, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries; Brenda Ealey, Lincoln City Libraries

Nebraska Library Commissioners

by Tammi Thiem

There have been two new Commission Members from the Three Rivers region appointed by the Nebraska Governor. These members are Terri Cunningham-Swanson from Plattsmouth and Alan Wang from Omaha. They will serve their first term until June of 2027. They join Tiffany Carter from Omaha, Tom Rolfes from Lincoln, and Diane Downer from Gehring. There remains one vacant position, as there is no current representation from the Central Plains region.

The six Commissioners provide public representation by serving three-year terms, but no more than two consecutive terms. They meet every other month in these unpaid positions, but their expenses are reimbursed. You can learn more about the roles of the Commissioners on the Nebraska Library Commission website: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/commissioners/index.aspx>

Library News

Central Community College's Winter Display

by Shannon McDonald

Central Community College recently borrowed the [Cricut Joy](#) from TRaILS to cut out snowflakes and letters.



Tilden Public Library's Visit from Santa Claus

by Cindy Simeon

On Saturday December 7th from 4:00 - 6:00 pm, during the Tilden Main Street Christmas Stroll, over 200 kids, and those young-at-heart, shared their Christmas wishes with Santa at the Tilden Public Library Lied auditorium, after which they were given a gift by Santa's elf helper Elizabeth Kivett. While some of the kids brought letters for Santa's mailbag, many others took advantage of the letter writing table in the auditorium to write their letters to Santa before or after visiting him. Outside of the library entrance, popcorn makers Peggy and Tom Dittrich handed out freshly made popcorn to visitors enjoying a beautiful evening for the Christmas Stroll.



Scholarship Experiences

2024 ARSL Conference

by Mary Jo Mack

I would like to thank the Three Rivers Scholarship Committee for the scholarship granted me to attend the 2024 Association for Rural and Small Library Conference that was held in Springfield MA.

The ARSL Conference is my favorite library conference. This year's conference was another great one filled with interesting sessions, great networking opportunities and good vendor exhibits.

For me, the conference was off to a great start when I attended the opening breakfast. The keynote speaker was author Celeste Ng. She talked about her life and her process for writing books. She praised libraries and librarians and, of course, that was a big hit with the audience.

I attended sessions on how to weather the turbulence of a video auditor, outreach and reader's advisory. These were all good and I got lots of information that I can put into practice but my favorite session was a Sparks Talk. This was a panel of 4 librarians who talked on 4 different topics.

The first one talked about "Community Outreach Mindset." This speaker talked about how to develop a community outreach mindset and how to increase connections with your community. We were given an easy to follow how to and realistic things to try in this endeavor. The next speaker talked more about readers' advisory training and how to begin. She told us about LibraryReads and how this organization can help with training opportunities specifically for staff working with adult leisure readers. The third speaker talked about library safety and made suggestions for how to create a new "Safe Library Use Policy." The 4th librarian talked about opportunities to close digital divide through E-Rate. Most of this information I already knew but it's always good to hear what is all available to make sure that I am using E-Rate to the full advantage.

Earlier, I mentioned the opportunity to network with other librarians. A perfect example of this is when I went to the group lunch in the banquet hall. Tables there each had a sign in the middle of the tables with a topic such as pets, children programs or outreach. I chose a table with the topic of adult programming and I really got lucky with the table I picked. At this table there was an interim director from Boyne City Library and she was a wealth of information about adult programming. I didn't get my paper out soon enough to start taking notes but when I did I filled up a whole page of ideas. She talked for about 15 minutes and she had some really good ideas. Boyne City was lucky to have her for an interim and I was fortunate to hear her talk. I commented that she needed to be a presenter for the next conference. She stated that she had done so several years ago but I encouraged her to do so again.

I encourage everyone to apply for a grant through Three Rivers Library System. It is an easy form to fill out. I especially encourage you to use the money to attend an ARSL conference. The people are very friendly, the sessions are full of useful information and I always come back to work inspired and ready to implement things that I learned.

Scholarship Experiences

First Time for Everything

by Brandon Hemberger

Attending the Nebraska Library Association's Annual Conference can be intimidating enough as a first-time attendee. Especially since I also happen to be Battle Creek's new library director. A position I have never held in my relatively short career in the world of libraries. So naturally I want to experience as much as I could while I was there.

I started the conference by checking out some of the early exhibitors, before heading to Cody Talarico's "Harmonious Tales: Amplifying Literature with Musical Magic." I found the event very engaging, as we clapped along and sang to the stories. Though I'd be lying if I said I didn't mess up a few times. Being a short day, I ended the day off by attending the social hour.

I made the most of the next day, which was filled with things to see and do. Of course, being a new library director, I had to attend "What to do when you are suddenly in charge" spearheaded by four librarians, many of whom were new library directors themselves. They gave expert advice that gave me a new perspective about the job. It was a relief to hear they were experiencing many of the things I was having to deal with at the Battle Creek library.

My next event took place immediately after was called, "Hosting a ComicCon® at Your Library: Academic and Public Perspectives." Admittedly, many of the things discussed at the event would be impossible or very difficult to do in such a small library such as mine. I can't say I would create an entire event with panels, with guest speakers, or even vendors. I'm sure that's hard enough with a larger staff. However, I felt I gained many ideas from the event. Though I will never put together anything as grand as a convention for Battle Creek, I can at least take some of the ideas and create fun smaller events for the library.

After lunch I attended two STEM related programs, the first being "Teen Science Cafe." Out of everything I attended at this conference, this one grabbed my attention the most. I like the idea of having STEM experts and teen leadership opportunities for our youth. For me, STEM programming has been difficult for me, and previous programs were fairly new to the library. Amanda Sweet spearheaded the other panel called, "STEM Programs for Career Exploration" which acted as a sort of introduction to STEM. Amanda encouraged us to explore more locally into industries relating to STEM.

Truthfully, I should have taken a break during the day, as I certainly felt the effects of the conference. Yet I pressed on to the final event of the day, "Creating a Storywalk at your library." Storywalks are another subject I am less experienced in, and I was happy to learn that one speaker happened to be a librarian from my hometown of Hastings. This panel answered many of my lingering questions. Do you need to buy two books to pull this off? Yes, you got to go against your natural instincts and take that book apart! Do you end up getting books with more pages than panels available? Better find a way to shorten it! Does it take a long time to set up? Most definitely! Though the Battle Creek Library lacks these panels, I feel that I am more prepared for the eventuality for when I do get them.

To close of my thoughts, I'd like to talk about my main reason for going to the convention. As it was indeed my first time going to a conference of any kind, my goal was to make connections with some of the librarians there. And connect I did! I met several new librarians, ranging from assistant to director. Some of whom I have spoken previously. I am eager to strengthen the relationships with those whom I met and look forward to those whom I will meet in the future.



TEDDY BEAR WORKSHOP KITS

Hand Stuff a Furry Friend • Place a Wish Star Inside • Name It • Love It FUR-ever



Color Burst Teddy
(paintable bear)

Summer
Reading
Program Theme:
Color Our World

Order tie-dye bears through Three Rivers Library System for a discount *only* for librarians of the TRaiLS Region. The price of each bear is \$13 and will be distributed around the end of May. All orders must be in increments of ten. You will get ONE dye kit per TEN bears.

DEADLINE TO
ORDER:
10 January 2025

Sign up at:
<https://bit.ly/TRLSorders>

Three Rivers Library System Presents:

Building Hope in Yourself and Others Workshop

17 JANUARY
2025

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Trauma and Resilience
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Lunch
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Building Hope



“Everyone is born resilient. Even more so, anyone can learn to adapt better, bounce back stronger, and rebound healthier than ever. It’s not an easy thing to rebuild after trauma, and it’s a different journey for every individual. But with the right amount of support, time, and hope, survival is not only possible, it’s within sight.”

Learn more from Dr. Suzi Yokley-Busby!

\$5 per person

4 CE Available

Register Online:

<https://bit.ly/PositivityWorkshop>

at La Vista
Public Library

“This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.”

Three Rivers Library System Presents:

SUMMER READING WORKSHOP: COLOR OUR WORLD

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Welcome and Registration
9:30 AM - 10:20 AM	Sally Snyder
10:20 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:20 AM	Nebraska Game & Parks
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Nebraska Public Media
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	Break
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Nebraska Extension
2:50 PM - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	Sharing Ideas
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	Farewells and Doorprizes

24 FEBRUARY 2025

NORFOLK PUBLIC LIBRARY

\$5 per person
5 CE Available
Register online at:
<https://bit.ly/trlsSRP>

Three Rivers Library System Presents:

SUMMER READING WORKSHOP: COLOR OUR WORLD

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Welcome and Registration
9:30 AM - 10:20 AM	Sally Snyder
10:20 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:20 AM	Nebraska Public Media
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM - 1:50 PM	Nebraska Extension
1:50 PM - 2:00 PM	Break
2:00 PM - 2:50 PM	Nebraska Game & Parks
2:50 PM - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	Sharing Ideas
3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	Farewells and Doorprizes

28 FEBRUARY 2025

BLAIR PUBLIC LIBRARY

**\$5 per person
5 CE Available**

**Register online at:
<https://bit.ly/trlsSRP>**



Three Rivers Library System uses current technologies and professional relationships to help public, school, and special libraries meet the diverse needs of their patrons.

Three Rivers Library System Staff

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- Lisa Macke
- Jessica Chamberlain
- Kathy Stender
- Brad Hruska
- Shannon McDonald
- Julie Osnes
- Sami Stewart

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/782459329180478>

Counties Served:

- Antelope
- Boone
- Burt
- Cass
- Cedar
- Colfax
- Cuming
- Dakota
- Dixon
- Dodge
- Douglas
- Knox
- Madison
- Nance
- Pierce
- Platte
- Sarpy
- Stanton
- Thurston
- Washington
- Wayne

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