

Engagement with libraries skyrockets despite pandemic

Take-home kits, virtual trivia popular among residents

By Derek Johnson
Special to Conley Media



Image courtesy of the Jack Russell Memorial Library

The finished version of a craft offered by the Jack Russell Memorial Library in Hartford.

In addition, traditional library services are still being used despite the pandemic. Many librarians said that they frequently see people browsing their libraries in-person, and that teens are still making use of libraries as a place to study for exams.

E-book checkouts, too, have started to become more popular. At the New Berlin Public Library specifically, e-book usage has reportedly increased 20% in 2020 compared to 2019, and all across Washington and Waukesha counties, librarians said that they're seeing an increase in demand for these virtual books.

As a result of all these things, librarians said that their libraries are going to continue pursuing these assorted programs even if the pandemic ends, and that they're also actively looking for ways to expand the programs to better help their communities.

"We like to feel useful," said Hannah Kane, the youth services director at the West Bend Community Memorial Library. "And we want to help."

"We haven't had anything that hasn't been attended," said Terry Buchmann, a library assistant at the Mukwonago Community Library.



Image courtesy of the West Bend Community Memorial Library

An example of a STEAM kit offered by the West Bend Community Memorial Library. The kits focus on science, technology, engineering, art and/or math (STEAM).

Upcoming events from local libraries

Waukesha Public Library

- Feb. 1 — Adult Color Yourself Calm kits available
- Feb. 10 — Simple Science kits available
- Kits can be picked up between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at 321 Wisconsin Ave. in Waukesha.

Mukwonago Community Library

- Feb. 4 at 10 a.m. — Virtual Lap-sit Storytime

West Bend Community Memorial Library

- Feb. 9 at 4 p.m. — Virtual Girls Who Code Class
- Signup information for these classes can be found at <http://mukwonago.evanced.info/signup/calendar>.

Jack Russell Memorial Library

- Feb. 1 at 6 p.m. — Crafts for Grownups On The Go kits available
- Feb. 3 between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. — STEAM Club kits available
- Kits can be picked up at 100 Park Ave. in Hartford.

West Bend Community Memorial Library

- Feb. 2 — Virtual Storytime on YouTube
- Feb. 6 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. — Elementary-Age Craft kits available
- Kits can be picked up at 630 Poplar St. in West Bend, and Virtual Storytime videos can be viewed at <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCH0h7odU88MxuLAd53EGG0dKp6C9uJK>.