WATCHING AND WAITING

Heartfelt thanks to the Ypsilanti Area Community Fund and the many generous individuals who contributed over $28,000 toward the installation of air purification equipment at YDL-Whittaker and YDL-Michigan. The needlepoint bi-polar ionization systems (NPBI) remove bacteria, allergens, and virus particles from the air. This will provide greater peace of mind and speed our libraries’ reopening.

As of this writing, public gatherings remain greatly restricted by state regulations. We are closely monitoring the impact of the new COVID variants and vaccination rates in the Ypsilanti area. As conditions improve, we’ll move to the next phase of our reopening plan, including computer use by appointment and limited browsing. We’ll also maintain the curbside and virtual services you’ve come to rely upon.

Reopening news will appear on ypsilibrary.org and social media. Staff are busy making the libraries sparkle and getting ready for your safe return. We can’t wait to see you again!

Lisa Hoenig, Director

CELEBRATE A SUPERIOR MILESTONE

Since Superior Township joined the library district in 2006, YDL has dreamed of building a full-service Superior library branch. We limped through the Great Recession, and we’ve held on through the pandemic, but our vision never wavered. This spring we will finally break ground on a new Superior library, and you are invited to join in the celebration!

The rain-or-shine community event will feature hard hats, masks, balloons, entertainment, and some fun! Former State Representative David Rutledge, a neighborhood resident and friend of the project, will be on hand to speak, along with Library Director Lisa Hoenig and Superior Township Supervisor Ken Schwartz. If you’re unable to join us in person, watch the groundbreaking livestream, courtesy of Bank of Ann Arbor at ypsilibrary.org/superior团长.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for Wednesday, April 7th, at 3:30 p.m.

The new library site is located on the east side of Harris Road between Geddes and MacArthur, with parking available on the northeast corner of MacArthur and Harris.

The Superior Library groundbreaking ceremony takes place during National Library Week, April 4–10, which has the very fitting 2021 theme “Welcome to Your Library!” The new 7,800 square-foot library is expected to open in the summer of 2022. It will feature a Community Meeting Room that can seat 50, dedicated youth and teen areas, 20 public computers, two group study rooms, an accessible learning garden, and more. The building is being designed by Daniels & Zermack Architects, with O’Neal Construction the construction manager. To learn more about the project, visit ypsilibrary.org/newlibrary.

The original budget for the new library was $2.5 million, but with skyrocketing construction costs, the budget has more than doubled. To ensure the new library is everything the community wants and needs, YDL launched a capital campaign with a goal of $2 million. $200,000, or 10% of this goal, was earmarked for the YDL Endowment at the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, to ensure the new facility would be supported far into the future.

As if in answer to this wish, YDL just received a tremendous gift, the new James W. and Marla J. Gousseff Fund for the Ypsilanti District Library, Part of a larger $1.8M gift to the Ypsilanti Area Community Fund, the endowment is intended to enrich the community the Gousseffs loved. Through their generosity and dedication, they left an incredible lasting legacy for Ypsilanti. We are honored and grateful they selected YDL as a beneficiary.
**As YDL buildings are closed due during COVID-19, all events are virtual. Find details to access them at ypsilibrary.org/events.**

### MAR--MAY EVENTS

**MONDAYS**

#### Mar 1–Apr 5

**TWEEN BOOK CLUB**
(Grades 6–8)
6:30 PM
Join us for a virtual meeting to discuss great books.

1. Mar 1: The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis
2. Apr 5: Hatred by Gary Paulsen
3. May 3: Wonder by R. J. Palacio

REGISTRATION REQUIRED.
Email michelle1@yplaslibrary.org.

#### Mar 2–May 25

**VIRTUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN AUTHORS BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**

1. Mar 30: Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett
2. Apr 27: Truths We Hold by Kamala Harris
3. May 25: Memorial Drive: A Daughter’s Memoir by Natasha Trethewey

#### Apr 1

**FEED BACKROOMS TO ZOOMERS: ZOOM PRACTICE FOR SENIORS**

2:00 PM
Learn the basics of navigating the Zoom meeting interface. While working with other seniors, you can see questions or feedback floating in your mind,高手, learn to chat, and more. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.

#### Apr 19

**GOOGLE DOCS FOR BEGINNERS**

2:00 PM
Learn to format, select, copy, and paste text and methods for sharing your document and collaborating with others. A Google account is required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.

#### Apr 26

**ONE-ON-ONE TECH HELP FOR SENIORS**

9:30 AM
Call 734-482-4110 x1384 or email brightmitchell@ysilibrary.org to schedule a one-hour phone or virtual session.

### TUESDAYS

#### Mar 2–May 25

**E-COMMERCE**

6:30 PM
Explore more advanced features of Google Sheets including: using formulas, conditional formatting and functions, formatting, sorting, filtering and linking data, and defining a pivot area. A Google account and prior Google Sheets experience required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.

#### Mar 29

**GOOGLE SHEETS TIPS & TRICKS**

2:00 PM
Explore more advanced features of Google Sheets including: using formulas, conditional formatting and functions, formatting, sorting, filtering and linking data, and defining a pivot area. A Google account and prior Google Sheets experience required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.

#### Apr 5

**SETTING UP AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR BOOKKEEPING SYSTEM (SESSION 1 OF 2)**

2:00 PM
Learn about basic financial reports and concepts that small business owners need to know. Get prepared so you can talk to an accountant about how to set up your bookkeeping, financial statements, and other metrics so they will help you make informed and run your business. Our Bookkeeping workshop will go through the process of setting up a software on a year-to-date basis. Presented by the Ann Arbor area SCORE office. Registration required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 x2411.

### WEDNESDAYS

#### Mar 3, Apr 7 & May 5

**NEW EPISODE OF YPSI STORIES**

9:30 AM
Our podcast is back! We have new episodes jam-packed full of new perspectives and voices that by sharing more perspectives and voices from our past, we as a community can have a better understanding of our collective past, present, and future! Look for a new podcast, every Wednesday at 10 AM. We’ll also cover how to set up financial reports including payment apps, accounting software, discus the cost of eCommerce to a business, present in the process of setting up an online bookkeeping software (SESSION 2 OF 2).

#### Apr 8

**SETTING UP AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR BOOKKEEPING SYSTEM (SESSION 2 OF 2)**

2:00 PM
Learn about basic financial reports and concepts that small business owners need to know. Get prepared so you can talk to an accountant about how to set up your bookkeeping, financial statements, and other metrics so they will help you make informed and run your business. Our Bookkeeping workshop will go through the process of setting up a software on a year-to-date basis. Presented by the Ann Arbor area SCORE office. Registration required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 x2411.

### THURSDAYS

#### Mar 4–May 27

**COOKING FOR ONE**

2:00 PM
Whether you’re a college student, senior, or single living on your own, cooking for one can be fun! Over the course of a six week series, learn four ways to take cooking for one simple and enjoyable, make healthy choices on a budget, learn food safety basics, participate in self active physical activities to at home, and walk away with new recipes. Offered by Michigan State University Extension. Please register online by the March 24 session meeting. A total of five classes to receive a cookbook and calendar.

#### Apr 28 & May 5

**VIRTUAL MYSTERY LOVER’S BOOK GROUP**

6:30 PM
We’ll also cover how to set up financial reports including payment apps, accounting software, discus the cost of eCommerce to a business, present in the process of setting up an online bookkeeping software (SESSION 2 OF 2).

### SATURDAYS

#### Mar 6

**MAGPIE MURDERS**

11:00 AM
by Louise Erdrich

#### Mar 13

**WILLS, TRUSTS, AND ESTATE PLANNING**

9:00 AM
Learn what estate plan will work best for you. Attorney Virginia Cardwell endorses available tools: trust, probate, wills, and other methods and plans to property to pass outside of probate. Registration required.

#### Apr 28 & May 5

**HAILING/JUNK REMOVAL BUSINESS**

2:00 PM
Learn about basic financial reports and concepts that small business owners need to know. Get prepared so you can talk to an accountant about how to set up your bookkeeping, financial statements, and other metrics so they will help you make informed and run your business. Our Bookkeeping workshop will go through the process of setting up a software on a year-to-date basis. Presented by the Ann Arbor area SCORE office. Registration required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 x2411.

### APRIL EVENTS

#### Apr 1

**READ, WRITE, AND ROLL**

2:00 PM
Learn to write, edit, and spell, format, create and share your document and collaborating with others on your spreadsheet. A Google account is required. Registration online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.
JEWELRY - BRACELET: STRING A BEADED FOR MORE INFO ABOUT STORYTIMES TO REGISTER

Bank. Visit Buying a home is a big deal. How do you know if

BUY A HOME GET TO A BETTER PLACE! WHAT

6:30–8:00 PM

Apr 1:

Mar 4:

10:30 AM

krowe@ypsilibrary.org. For more information about storytimes to register, please visit ypsilibrary.org/events.

Storytime Live

ONLINE SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

1:00 PM

Contribute to the library by sharing ideas and resources. For more information, email or call Monique: meigen@ypsilibrary.org, 734-482-4110 ext. 1385.

STORY TIME LIVE

4:30 PM

Hear stories, sing along to your favorite storytime songs, try some yoga poses from home, and most importantly, enjoy each other's company! Visit ypsilibrary.org/storytimes for more info about storytimes and other activities for little ones.

THIRD THURSDAY CRAFT CLUB

7:00 PM

Join us as we use a simple set of patterns to create a beautiful tangle of designs. No prior experience is necessary. Pick up supplies in advance, then meet virtually. Registration Required. Participants will receive the workshop Zoom link after they register. For ages 55+ and up, or any adult wanting to explore this relaxing skill.

HEALTHY LIVING THROUGH NUTRITION

7:00 PM

Join Family Medicine Dr. Jamie Qualls for an informative virtual session about the power of lifestyle medicine for the prevention and reversal of chronic diseases. Dr. Jamie will focus on the basics of nutrition and treatment.

TEEN GAME NIGHT

Calling all teens to join YDL TAP in our monthly gaming night! You’ll need two devices: one to play the online game and one to join our Zoom hangout! There will be a $2 gift card raffle each month for those who join and play. So come play, hang with friends, and possibly win some cash!

FINDING MEMORIES: TIPS AND TRICKS FOR NEWS WRITING AND BLOGS

Join Detroit Free Press journalist Cheryl Saff for an informative session on news and blog writing. Learn the basics of reporting and starting a blog about something you care about.

LITTLE ONE'S TEA TIME

Get open-ended activities you can do at home that allow your little one to learn new concepts and develop their creative side through exploration and play. Parents watch a quick video or gather ideas from our website, with or without little ones, then gather the supplies and let your little one explore and create. Reserve supply kits at ypsilibrary.org/littenteatime-kits, or call 734-482-4110 x109 for more information.

SUNDAYS

SUNDAY AFTERNOON ADULT CLUB FOR CLUBS

Michigan Ave Cushion Holes Feel like you could use a break? Stop by for a virtual lighthearted afternoon to listen, collaborate, and learn to play guitars together. Acoustic, electric, and all other types of guitars are welcome. Email Scott Marlowe, sca@psu.edu, or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411 for more information.

GOOGLE DOCS FOR BEGINNERS

Mar 13 | 2:00 PM

May 15 | 10:30 AM

Learn the basics of using Google Docs, select, copy and edit text and methods for sharing your document and collaborating with others. A Google account is required. Register online or call 734-482-4110 ext. 2411. Space is limited.

VIRTUAL GARDEN CLUB

10:00 AM

Start your vegetable, flower, or container garden. Learn the basic needs of growing plants, garden planning and preparation, seed/plant selection, planting and maintenance, pest control. Carrier Carol Brödbeck presents a new topic every month.

Mar 13 | Vegetable Gardening 101

Apr 17 | Flower Gardening 101

May 29 | Container Gardening 101

LIVE FROM THE LIBRARY

Live from the library Saturdays on Ypsilibrary.org Into the Night: Storytime, stories, share your favorite songs, and play activities that you can do with your little one at home.

Mar 20, Apr 3 & May 14

LITTE ONE'S TEA TIME

GET OPEN-ENDED ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME THAT ALLOW YOUR LITTLE ONE TO LEARN NEW CONCEPTS AND DEVELOP THEIR CREATIVE SIDE THROUGH EXPLORATION AND PLAY. PARENTS WATCH A QUICK VIDEO OR GATHER IDEAS FROM OUR WEBSITE, WITH OR WITHOUT LITTLE ONES, THEN GATHER THE SUPPLIES AND LET YOUR LITTLE ONE EXPLORE AND CREATE. RESERVE SUPPLY KITS AT YPSILIBRARY.ORG/LITETENTEATIME-KITS, OR CALL 734-482-4110 X109 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO RECEIVE THE ZOOM LINK. REGISTER ONLINE OR CALL 734-482-4110 EXT. 2411. SPACE IS LIMITED.
As YDL buildings are closed during COVID-19, all events are virtual. Find details to access them at ypsilibrary.org/events.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

During your spring cleaning, did you find a bunch of old electronics you don’t use? You can recycle those during YDL’s Electronics Recycling event! Bring computers, printers, LCD monitors, phones, cables, DVD players, and other unused electronics to the Whittaker Road parking lot in Superior Township. To schedule your drop-off, visit superiortownship.org.

Pop-up events

We can’t wait to see you again! Keep an eye on our events calendar and social media for announcements about outdoor programs such as storytimes, gardening projects, pop-up book browsing, and other family fun, as weather and COVID permit.
NEW-LOOK OSCARS, SAME YDL OSCAR CONTEST

The Oscar Awards this year will look different, but our Oscar Awards Contest won’t!

We’ll have ballots available for you to fill out by March 17 (nominations are announced on March 15), and you have until April 25 (the day of the ceremony) to turn them in.

The ceremony, originally scheduled for February 28, will require social distancing and likely use a mixture of live and virtual appearances, according to many sources. COVID also changed the way we experienced this season’s Oscar-nominated films. Since movie theaters around the country have been closed, releases of highly-anticipated films have been delayed. Some, like Wonder Woman 1984, opened directly on streaming services.

To address this, the Academy extended the deadline for qualifying films from December 31 to February 28 and paused the requirement that movies have a theatrical release to qualify. Because of these moves, Anthony Breznican says in a November Vanity Fair article that there’s concern this will be “the ‘Asterisk Oscars,’ with too few contenders, or an unfair advantage for streaming services like Netflix and Amazon, which don’t rely on theatrical debuts to reach a core audience.”

It could even mean a difference in how the Academy votes, Cassandra Butcher, an Academy member, awards strategist, and the chief marketing officer for Bron Studios said in the Vanity Fair article. “We’re not gathering together. We’re not breaking bread together. We’re not drinking together,” Butcher said. “Now we’re in our homes voting the way we want to really vote. The Academy could be everywhere this year, all over the place.”

This means Oscar winners will be harder than ever to predict. It will be exciting, whether you’re a true aficionado who can pick the winners without even seeing the nominees, or a casual movie fan that wants to take your best guess. Either way, if you enter our contest, you could win a prize!

The individual who picks the winner in the most award categories will be our champion (including a tiebreaker question, if necessary). This year’s winner will receive a watch-at-home movie prize pack, including a movie of our choice and movie theater style snacks for two.

Don’t want to watch this year’s winners in the theaters, or pay to stream? As soon as any nominated titles are available on DVD, we will add them to our collection. Since many of the nominees are expected to be from streaming services this year, we may not be able to get all nominated titles on DVD. Keep checking our catalogs for availability.

TO GET YOUR BALLOT
Request and return a paper copy at a curbside pickup or fill out an online form at ypsilibrary.org/movies. We’ll announce the winner Monday, April 26th, the day after the ceremony.

FEED YOUR OSCAR APPETITE WITH HOOPLA

To really get into the Oscars spirit this year, explore hoopla!

Visit ypsilibrary.org/download to login to your account. From there, head to the videos collection, and browse by the Oscar Winners & Nominees category. You’ll find past winners and nominees like Across the Universe, Black Hawk Down, I Am Not Your Negro, RBG, Room, Loving Vincent, and much more! Movies, books, and music on hoopla are available for you to access immediately, with no waitlist.

You’ll find all your favorite categories. Prefer movies that are based on a true story? Try Eight Men Out and many more! There’s also a “Directed by Women” category where you’ll find movies like Blackfish and Monster.

There’s even a Bonus Borrows section, with specially curated lists of titles one month a quarter that are available for free to libraries, and don’t count against your monthly borrowing limit. Check in May for the next batch of Bonus Borrows in movies, music, ebooks, and audio books.

March–May 2021
LEARNING AND RESILIENCY

Ypsilanti Community Schools has felt the brunt of a very challenging year. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted YCS students and families, with help from local organizations several programs have helped to ease the burden for those affected directly.

At the end of 2020 and the start of 2021, YCS launched the YCS Resiliency Center and the first of ten YCS Learning Labs across the Ypsilanti area. These new programs offer a combination of assistance that includes internet access, meals, social and emotional support through certified social workers, and a safe space to receive one-on-one tutoring.

YCS Resiliency Center

Located at the Old Willow Run campus, the YCS Resiliency program offers students a location to shop in the "gently" used clothes closet for coats or personal products, print off school assignments, and use computers with Internet access. Over the holiday season, the center helped over 50 families with gifts, gift cards for food and gas, plus cleaning supplies.

Center coordinator Marquan Jackson worked with community partners to create a space that is available for all but "creates an opportunity for families … to have access to resources they otherwise might not have."

For more information on donating to the center or resources, please visit www.ycschools.us or email mjackson9@ycschools.us.

YCS Learning Lab

The YCS Learning Labs were created in partnership with Collaboration for Change, a group of organizations (Washtenaw ISD, United Way of Washtenaw County, Washtenaw County, Eastern Michigan University, and Washtenaw Community College) that assists YCS in literacy, mentorship, and encouraging students at EMU to begin their teaching careers at YCS.

Superintendent Alena Zachery-Ross says the Collaboration for Change committee, along with community support, has provided resources and helped the YCS team open the Learning Labs. "This resource is needed, and our students and families will benefit greatly and receive the help they need during this time," said Zachery-Ross.

The first Learning Lab, which opened January 11, was at Parkridge Community Center on the south side of Ypsilanti. Within days of opening, it had upwards of 20 K–5 students using the labs for in-person and virtual tutoring and access to the Internet. Students who participate in the full-day program receive breakfast and lunch plus social interaction, with social distancing precautions. Parents interested in enrolling their student should email learninglabs@ycschools.us.

TAKE A "LITTLE" LIBRARY TRIP

If you've been using the Little Free Libraries in your neighborhood more often, you aren't alone.

During the pandemic more people have been exchanging books at their regular little free libraries, according to Little Free Library statistics. Some have even been used as mini food pantries where people share non-perishable food items.

You may even have branched out from your own neighborhood to explore others. YDL has library boxes of our own at or near each of our locations. The little library box at Whittaker Road was recently rebuilt and freshly painted, so it's better than ever!

If you haven't seen them already, you can find the one at Whittaker Road just outside the circle drive in front of the building, near the bus stop. At Michigan Avenue, the box is in front of the building, near the fountain. Near our Superior location, you'll find it on the northeast side of Oakbrook Park on Berkshire Drive.

Little Free Libraries are simple: browse and take a book of interest to you. Leave a book that you think others will find interesting in its place. In the current COVID pandemic, the Little Free Library organization offers these tips for staying safe:

1. Wash or sanitize your hands before opening your Little Free Library.
2. Owners can clean the entire library with disinfectant wipes. Pay special attention to high-touch areas like the handle and bookshelves.
3. To be extra-cautious, clean the books with a microfiber cloth or disinfectant wipes.
4. Wash or sanitize your hands again.

There are over 100,000 Little Free Libraries in all 50 U.S. states and more than 100 countries. According to their data, millions of books are exchanged annually. Visit littlefreelibrary.org to find registered boxes closest to you.

Near our Superior location: On the northeast side of Oakbrook Park on Berkshire Drive.

Whittaker Road library box: Just outside the circle drive in front of the building, near the bus stop.

Ypsilanti Community Library Materials

Michigan Avenue library box: In front of the building, near the fountain.

Visit www.ycschools.us or email mjackson9@ycschools.us for more information on donating to the center or resources.
LCS TACKLING RACE AND CULTURAL LITERACY

Like many organizations and individuals around the country, Lincoln Consolidated Schools is tackling issues of race and equity. To that end, LCS is working to make systemic organizational changes.

The entire district is using a series with Dr. Yolanda Sealy-Ruiz, “Developing Racial and Cultural Literacy,” to enhance understanding of culturally-responsive instruction and use it as a foundation for teaching and learning. The hope is that it will help spotlight the differences among students to encourage new thinking about how to meet a variety of educational needs.

In partnership with the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District, Central Office leaders and building administrators are engaging in a book study, Courageous Conversations About Race, for strategies and protocols on how to have open conversations about race within the schools.

Several teachers are participating in training opportunities, including book studies about race, social justice, responsive teaching, and socially-just assessments and grading. LCS also developed a district Equity for Justice committee, led by teachers, whose mission is to assess and address the district’s progress and areas for growth related to education justice. The district is also making it a priority to attract and retain more teachers of color.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” LCS is prioritizing this work to ensure all students succeed.

NEW LOOK SCHOOL RESOURCE FAIR

The pandemic has impacted the 2020–21 school year in a variety of ways. YDL wants to make sure we’re helping minimize the confusion of parents and kids starting school in Fall 2021!

For the past two years, YDL offered a space for parents to meet representatives from a variety of preschools and kindergartens. In this setting, parents could easily gather information to make a decision about which program was the best fit for their little one.

Though we can’t host the event in person this year, we’re offering parents the chance to browse local school options virtually on our website. Visit ypsilibrary.org/school-readiness for information and links to schools, along with activities you can do to make sure your child has the skills to start school successfully.

Supply kits to help kids learn to cut with scissors, write their name, practice early math skills, and more will be available beginning April 2. If your preschool would like to be included on our school readiness resource page, contact jodi@ypsilibrary.org.

IS EVERYONE TALKing?

YDL was thrilled to receive an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant to expand TALK: Text and Learn for Kindergarten, our early literacy text messaging service. The Washtenaw County-only service will soon be one caregivers and libraries across Michigan can use to improve school readiness in their communities!

As part of the grant, the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services helped us develop an improved texting platform. Caregivers can now sign up for TALK by texting the word TALK to a new short code: 75547. We’ve also translated our texts into Spanish. New users are prompted to choose their preferred language before entering their zip code, allowing them to get local library event notifications, and their child’s birthday, ensuring the activities we suggest align to their developmental level. To reflect these exciting changes, the website and all TALK promotional materials have been revamped.

Visit texttolearn.com to find songs, fingerplays, sample text messages, and booklists for little ones 5 and under. We’ll be in contact with schools and organizations serving little ones in Washtenaw County to distribute flyers with the new short code when they are ready. Thanks to all of our partners for helping make the service successful and ready to share statewide!
GARDEN GROWING

After a long winter of Zoom meetings and virtual classrooms, getting out into the fresh air will be a welcome relief. New programs and updates to YDL garden spaces can help satisfy your budding need for the outdoors.

To expand learning opportunities, a rain garden is coming to YDL-Whittaker! It’s being created in partnership with the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office through a Community Partners for Clean Streams program.

Rain gardens are an important way to keep our waters clean and protect our water infrastructure. The solid surfaces in our cities can’t absorb the water from rainstorms, and the high amount of stormwater runoff from rooftops, parking lots, and roads increases flooding and carries pollutants into local streams and lakes. That’s a big deal since there are six watersheds in Washtenaw County that empty into the Great Lakes, where 21% of our world’s freshwater is contained.

Rain gardens capture rainwater and reduce runoff and flooding, as well as filter pollutants. Even better, rain gardens are usually planted with native plants, creating an excellent habitat for birds and butterflies. Be on the lookout for the new rain garden this spring!

If you’re thinking of building your own rain garden this year, get your questions answered during our program on April 8 with local rain garden guru Susan Bryan. From Washtenaw County Water Resources, Susan has taught the Master Rain Gardener class for 10 years and will cover the basics, and connect you to helpful resources to get your spring garden project off the ground. See page 3 for more information.

We’re also “planting” a new garden sign honoring recently retired Youth Librarian Molly Beedon! Molly started the YDL-Whittaker garden several years ago and expanded it with grant funding. We will build on her work and continue to use Molly’s Library Garden to offer in-person programs for kids when it’s safe, along with online activities you can try at home.

Starting in May, kids will learn different ways to plant vegetable and flower seeds and simple gardening techniques to help develop fine motor skills and cultivate a life-long passion for growing. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the rain garden or vegetable garden, contact spallas@ypsilibrary.org.

Gardens have long been associated with creativity and learning. The early “scholar gardens” in China offered a place to retreat and reflect. Universities boast large botanical gardens where researchers can find inspiration. Library gardens are no exception.

The first garden reading room was a green space on a rooftop of the New York Public Library, planted in 1905. Other libraries followed with their own inspirational green spaces. Children and adults of all ages love to spend time among plants, which research shows has many benefits.

The hands-on experience of the garden is enjoyable for children, and anyone can do it. We’ll also have programs for adults. See page 5 for our garden club information, and watch for more opportunities to learn outdoors at YDL this summer, including chances to share the harvest at YDL-Superior and Michigan.

MORE FOR YOUR FOOD STARTUP

In 2019, Growing Hope opened their Incubator Kitchen to give food startups a space to take their business to the next level. In 2021, this service is so popular, they’ve added even more to meet the needs of the community.

Using grants from the Ralph Wilson Foundation, PNC Bank, and individual donors, Growing Hope is adding more equipment and storage space to help entrepreneurs more effectively use the facility.

“We’ve been wanting to undertake this remodel since we first opened the kitchen back in January, 2019,” says Cynthia VanRenterghem, Executive Director at Growing Hope. “We began to hit full capacity in regards to cold storage after only a few months of operating. We are just excited to not have to turn anyone away; we want to support any food entrepreneur who has the desire to pursue their own food business.”

Startup food businesses can rent the Incubator Kitchen for access to commercial-grade equipment as well as cold and dry storage. With the remodel, there is also access to a new walk-in cooler and freezer, plus over 800 additional square feet of food prep space that can also be used for culinary classes and workshops.

Pre-COVID, the kitchen was hosting seven makers who were using it anywhere from a couple hours a week to 25 hours a week. Currently, the kitchen supports three makers, all of whom use it between 15 and 25 hours a week depending on their sales.

“We are making the space work better for our makers,” Elisa Marroquin, MarketPlace Manager, said. “By opening it up they will be able to spread out and have room to prep and process their food products more efficiently.”

Located in downtown Ypsilanti at the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace, the Growing Hope Incubator Kitchen is open 24/7 to rent, with hourly rates and other options available. Growing Hope also facilitates connections to new retail markets and helps kitchen renters understand food safety regulations and navigate Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Washtenaw County Health Department licensing and permitting.

To tour this new space, contact Elisa Marroquin, MarketPlace Manager, at Elisa@growinghope.net or visit growinghope.net/community-spaces/growing-hope-incubator-kitchen.

If you are interested in supporting local food makers who are renting the Growing Hope Incubator Kitchen, you can find a number of them offering their products for sale at the Ypsilanti Area Online Market (growinghope.net/ypsi-area-online-market), including Bird Dog Bakery, 24th Cheesecakerie, and HumusFalafel Mediterranean.
DESpite PANDEMIC, NEW FOOD BUSINESSES THRIVE AT YPSI TOWNSHIP COMMERCIAL KITCHEN

Adapted from an article published December 16 as part of Concentrate Media’s On the Ground Ypsilanti segment. The original article can be viewed at concentratemedia.com.

BY SARAH RIGG - Dan Evanski’s family sausage recipe is so tasty that his neighbors treated its currency when he was growing up.

“My dad used to barter with it, because everyone enjoyed it,” he said. “My brother and I hated shoveling our big driveway, and the neighbor wanted the kielbasa and would plow the driveway in exchange for it.”

That Polish family recipe was the inspiration for Sk’s Sausage, one of five businesses that have recently launched at Rosie’s Community Kitchen and are thriving despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Rosie’s, located at 235 Spencer Lane in Ypsilanti Township, is an incubator kitchen, which allows small food businesses to use a shared commercial kitchen to safely prepare food.

The other four businesses that started up at Rosie’s during the pandemic were Feelings Baking Co., started Aug. 1; Mondays StreetFood, a food truck business started in September; The White Pine Kitchen, which started in early November; and Buczek Pierogi, which started up in mid-November.

The five businesses that have started at Rosie’s since March embrace models that don’t rely on in-person dining or indoor events.

Chris Delusky, owner of Mondays StreetFood, wanted to teach his two children how to support themselves. So he started Mondays StreetFood, a food truck business selling street tacos in East Lansing. And then the pandemic hit.

“We still put the truck up there, and it’s going okay, but East Lansing doesn’t have the kind of population it does during a normal school year,” Delusky says.

Despite living in West Bloomfield and vending in East Lansing, he ended up at Rosie’s because the commercial kitchen he’d considered in East Lansing was almost fully booked and couldn’t accommodate a food truck.

Rosie’s Community Kitchen happens to be located inside the former Willow Run Middle School. The former school’s bus lot is available for long-term parking of food trucks or other mobile food units.

Delusky thinks the timing for launching a food truck business is pretty good, since so many people are looking for alternatives to indoor dining, and that their popularity will last past the pandemic.

“I still think people will enjoy having a truck in their neighborhood once a week, because it’s an event,” he says. “They’re having fun and telling their neighbors that they’re having a blast.”

The owners of The White Pine Kitchen have found another niche during the pandemic: providing a dining experience similar to an upscale restaurant in the customer’s own home on Sundays and Tuesdays.

Owners Bryan Santos and Forrest Maddox were friends in New York City who took turns hosting dinner parties at their apartments, all the while dreaming about starting their own brick-and-mortar restaurant.

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The business model they worked out is somewhere between meal delivery services like HelloFresh and Blue Apron, which provide raw ingredients that customers prepare at home, and traditional restaurant delivery services.

For instance, the “Dinner in Bologna” menu featured handmade pasta and bolognese sauce. The consumer simply had to boil the pasta and combine it with the sauce. The White Pine Kitchen’s menu changes with each delivery, highlighting the cuisines of a different city or region each time.

“We’ve created an experience that is as good or better than eating it at a restaurant. We provide high-end, quality food, and music playlists, and information about the cuisine and culture to build up the ambience when you’re eating,” Santos says.

Santos and Maddox are capitalizing on a growing trend of “ghost kitchens,” food businesses that don’t have a retail space and exist only online.

Maddox says he thinks their dinners are meeting a need people didn’t even realize they had around wanting to “feel transported to somewhere else.”

“Some folks told us they dressed up for a fancy date night at home, and they felt like it was something special,” Maddox says. “This is a fairly new business model, and we weren’t entirely sure what the reception would be, but it’s been overwhelmingly positive.”

GIVE YOUR PURCHASING MORE POWER

If you’re like a lot of people, you’ve done most of your shopping online lately. Did you know all of those Amazon purchases and Kroger pick-up orders can actually support YDL?

Kroger Plus

If you have a Kroger Plus Shopper’s Card, Kroger donates a portion of your purchases to the area organization of your choice. It’s easy:

1. Create an account at Kroger.com using your Shopper’s Card number.
2. Navigate to your “My Account” page and click to the Community Rewards area.
3. Follow the steps to select Ypsilanti District Library as your organization of choice.
Then, anytime you use your Shopper’s Card to make an eligible purchase, YDL receives a donation at no extra cost. If you don’t have a Kroger Plus card, you can request one at the customer service desk. It’s an easy, free to you way to support YDL!

Amazon Smile

Shop at smile.amazon.com (same selection and prices as Amazon.com) and Amazon will donate a percentage of eligible purchases. Once you’ve created your Amazon Smile account, just designate YDL as your organization of choice when prompted. Most purchases qualify for a donation, but ones that are ineligible are noted.

Since YDL is an official 501©(3) organization more of these opportunities may become available. Visit ypsilibrary.org/donate to check on other opportunities to have your regular purchases help YDL.
COVID-19 Vaccine

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COVID-19 vaccine will be critical in slowing the spread and helping communities recover from the pandemic. However, stopping this pandemic will take ALL our tools: handwashing, masks, social distancing, and vaccines.

In mid-December, Washtenaw County received its first COVID-19 vaccines. The first people to have access to the vaccine included health care workers providing direct care, people who will be vaccinating others, and residents in long-term care settings. The next phases involve some frontline essential workers and community members over 65 years old.

For everyone else, the Washtenaw County Health Department encourages patience. It will take weeks or months to move through the prioritization phases, depending on vaccine supplies. The WCHD is vaccinating as quickly and efficiently as possible and appreciates the community’s understanding.

“It’s a tremendous relief to add vaccination to the resources we have to prevent COVID-19 from causing additional harm, but this process will take time,” said Jimena Loveluck, MSW, health officer with Washtenaw County Health Department. “We need everyone’s patience, and we need to keep doing everything possible to prevent the spread of illness – including wearing face masks, social distancing, and isolating or quarantining when needed.”

For the latest information about COVID-19 vaccination, see www.washtenaw.org/covid19vaccine.

Washtenaw County COVID-19 Data

Throughout the winter, COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths increased and reached higher levels than during the spring pandemic shut down. Though many of us are very excited about COVID-19 vaccines, everyone should continue to:

• Wear face coverings when out in public or around anyone outside of your household.
• Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone outside of your household.
• Wash your hands often and well.
• Stay away from others if you have any symptoms, and
• Follow isolation procedures if you test positive or have COVID-19 symptoms. Follow quarantine procedures if you’re a close contact of someone with COVID-19. Learn more about isolation and quarantine at https://bit.ly/39FNuS9

Washtenaw County Health Department reminds everyone to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19. These prevention strategies are most effective when combined! They help us slow the spread of illness and prevent as many cases of COVID-19 as possible—especially as we spend more time indoors.

It’s not too late to get your flu shot!

During flu season and COVID-19, it is more important than ever to get your flu shot! Learn more and see how to get your shot: www.washtenaw.org/flushots.

APPLY FOR SUMMERWORKS

Time is running out to apply for the SummerWorks program! Applications are due by March 17 for the program, which offers professional development, mentorship, and paid work experience for Washtenaw County young adults, 16 to 24 years old.

The program, now in its sixth year, was designed to provide young adults with tools, work experience, and exposure to different career paths. Young adults can sign up by March 17 at SummerWorks.info/employers.

SummerWorks is a partnership between Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, Michigan Works! Southeast, and the University of Michigan. Last year, the partners were able to pivot to continue the program during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, SummerWorks underwent significant changes which resulted in exciting new programming, including mentorships and career talks from local guest speakers.

This year, program partners are hoping to reach even more young adults. Everyone accepted into the program will receive virtual professional development, be connected to a mentor, and have the opportunity to learn from guest speakers about different career paths. SummerWorks will also pair a select group of these young adults with local businesses and organizations for safe, in-person, or virtual paid job experiences.

Local businesses and nonprofits can participate by hosting a summer intern, participating in the mentorship program, serving as a guest speaker, and more. To learn more about how to get involved, visit SummerWorks.info/employers.
EXPANDING DIGITAL ACCESS

With remote learning and working, having broadband Internet coverage is more important than ever. Thanks to The Library Network and Huron-Clinton Metroparks, we have added 10 new mobile hotspots you can borrow to help meet this growing need.

In 2020, we added 11 hotspots with CARES Act funds. We now have 21 mobile hotspots in circulation, but we also know the need is greater than that.

When the Ypsilanti Community Schools were assessing needs ahead of their remote learning plan, they found hundreds of families who lacked reliable Internet in their homes. Additionally, according to a 2020 report from the Washtenaw Broadband Task Force, more than 30% of responding households in Washtenaw County reported having no Internet access.

We encourage you to follow (and share information) about organizations working to address this resource gap. The Michigan Moonshot Project, for example, has worked to add dozens of public hotspot access points outside of buildings that you can use from your vehicle or on foot. For a list of active hotspots, visit michiganmoonshot.org/communitywifi.

Engage @ EMU is also working on a Digital Connecting Corps project. In partnership with the University of Michigan’s Ginsberg Center (with funding support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation) the project will focus on meeting the digital needs of older adults. Using comprehensive surveys, the project will identify access and technology needs and form plans to help meet them within the senior community. You can follow that progress at emich.edu/engage.

RECREATION HIGHLIGHTS

Major Improvements at Frog Island Park!

The City of Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission partnered this summer to bring much-needed improvements to the trails in Frog Island Park.

The existing asphalt trails were removed and replaced with a new, wider concrete trail that connects to the Forest Street sidewalk at the north end and the Cross Street sidewalk at its south end. The trail also wraps around the amphitheater to provide an accessible space at the top for viewers with disabilities.

New lighting was also installed alongside the pathway and in the north parking lot.

This project was funded by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, as part of a larger project to improve the Countywide Border to Border Trail within Ypsilanti. A significant portion of the B2B Trail along Grove Road, from the Water Street/Rivers’ Edge Trail to I-94, was reconstructed, widened, and made more accessible, and plans to improve the I-94 crossing at Grove are in the works for the summer of 2021.

For some extra fun at Frog Island, see page 4 for information about our socially-distanced outdoor frog walk!

CommUNITY Skatepark

In February, the Ypsilanti Township CommUNITY Skatepark received the mParks Facility Design Award from the Michigan Recreation and Park Association. It was one of four projects honored in this category at the 2021 mParks Conference.

This state-of-the-art skatepark, located at 2000 E. Clark Road in Ypsilanti, is free to use and provides a place for skaters of all ages to be active outdoors in a safe environment. The terrain provides opportunities for all skaters—new and experienced—to learn and test their skills and abilities.

“It offers a much needed recreational opportunity for those that live in eastern Washtenaw County and the surrounding area,” said Angela Verges, the Ypsilanti Township Recreation Services Manager. “We are very proud of this project and the effect it has had on the community already.”

Others earning the distinction in the Facility Design category were:
- Marketplace on the Green (Meridian Township Parks and Recreation)
- Accessible Multi-Purpose Dock (Ingham County Parks)
- Sterling Heights Community Center (City of Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation).

Serafinski Scholarship

Have you wanted to participate in Ypsilanti Township Recreation programs, but didn’t have it in your budget? Try applying for the new Serafinski Scholarship.

Started in honor of former longtime director Art Serafinski, this scholarship provides youth with recreation opportunities with the Ypsilanti Township Recreation department each season. The scholarship is for youth 3–17 years old and can be used for most of the Township’s in-house programs. Families can apply to utilize the scholarship by completing the Scholarship Application at ytown.org or call 734-544-3800.

The scholarship was started with the help of a golf tournament in August 2020, which was hosted by the Township to start the Serafinski Scholarship Fund. The 2nd Annual Serafinski Golf Outing Fundraiser will be held August 21st at Green Oaks Golf Course.
**Virtual Workshops**

- **Tips and Tricks for News Writing and Blogs** – Join Detroit Free Press journalist Chanel Stitt for an informative session on news and blog post writing. Learn the basics of reporting and starting a blog about something you care about. This workshop will cover steps for finding what you’re most interested in writing about to generate regular content for yourself or the public. Friday, March 19, 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

- **Writing Picture Books** – Have you ever thought about writing a children’s book? Explore the basics of writing for children with three wonderful authors of picture books and middle grade fiction. Jump start your own work with writing exercises and a short critique session. Presenters include Lisa Rose lisorosewrites.com, Jennifer Torres jennitores.com, and Debbie Taylor sweetmusicinharlem.eweby.com. Saturday, April 10, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

- **Using Memoir to Make Sense of the Pandemic** – As we begin to see some light at the end of the tunnel, let’s take a moment to reflect on 2020. What happened to you during this unusual year? What moments (the good, the bad, and the ugly) do you want to remember for yourself and for others? What new understandings did you gain? Get an introduction to idea generation and launch your memoir writing focused on 2020. Thursday, March 11, 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

- **Getting that Song Out of Your Head and Onto Paper** – Join local singer-songwriter Pat Grimes for a fun-filled afternoon of songwriting. Learn how to take those words and ideas rolling around in your head and use them to create your own song. For teens and adults. Saturday, April 17, 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

**Virtual Writing Support**

- YpsiWrites offers virtual writing support for writing that matters to you. You can receive feedback on writing that you submit electronically or through a real-time Zoom or Google Meet tutoring session.
- You can submit a piece of writing or request a tutoring session at ypsiwrites.com.

**Writing Prompts & Activities:**

- **Nature Writing** – Many of us—especially as Spring is arriving—find joy and inspiration in nature. In that spirit, we continue offering these writing prompts, designed by YpsiWrites volunteer Lisa Eddy, to help you slow down and appreciate the natural world. There are some for those who are able to get outside and observe, and some for those who remain indoors and appreciate nature through the window. You can find these prompts at ypsiwrites.com.
- **Let’s Write! Tips for Tackling All Kinds of Writing** – These genre-specific writing boxes contain prompts, tips, and examples to help you write resumes, cover letters, songs, memoirs, grants, and more. Find them at ypsiwrites.com.
- **Resumes for Teens** – Monitor ypsiwrites.com and ypsilibrary.org for these toolkits coming soon! These materials will provide guidance for secondary students interested in improving an existing resume or developing a new one.
- **Youth Writing Prompts** – YpsiWrites writing activities and games will accompany YDL Youth Supply Kits this spring. Be on the lookout for online and hard copy resources for young writers with each kit!

And keep an eye out for two new initiatives planned for this spring or summer—Public Art/Public Writing and Mystery Writing!