

Southgate Veterans Memorial Library Director's Report

June 23rd, 2026

Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Programs launched on Monday, June 15th. As in previous years, we have programs for kids, teens, and adults, with events and prizes for each group. Several events do require registration, to help us make sure we don't get too large a crowd. The program runs through August 15th.

New Library Rooms

In May, City Council approved my recommendation to build two new rooms in the library, converting existing spaces. We discussed this late last year, they will be built around two alcoves along the back wall of the building. I am not certain when this work will begin, but we should be able to remain open. We'll put up warnings when we know more, let people know it may be a bit loud, and that parts of the collection might be inaccessible for a few days.

New Library Assistants Austin Moore & Naya Henderson

In May, I hired two new Library Assistants, Austin Moore and Naya Henderson. Some of you may recognize Austin, as he actually worked at the library previously, from 2017 to 2023. He left for family reasons, but was fortunately able to return when we had an opening. Naya is in school to obtain her Master's of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University, and is picking up the job well. They're both proving to be great additions to our staff.

Incidentally, with Naya, we now have 3 Library Assistants working towards an MLIS.

Alan Toubaux Retirement

Library Assistant Alan Toubaux has informed me he will be retiring on August 1st. Alan joined us in September 2020, replacing staff who did not return after we closed for COVID. He has worked in the library field for decades, at a medical library, and at the Southfield Public Library, before retiring and signing up with us. We'll be sad to see him go, but glad he will be able to fully enjoy being retired.

Midwest Tape Processing Contract

I have signed an agreement with Midwest Tape to provide processing for materials we purchase from them. We've purchased music CDs and some movies through Midwest Tape for years, and now they will prepare those materials for us, so they will arrive here pretty much entirely ready to add to the collection and shelve. This will save the staff time required to prepare the materials, which could add up when things don't quite fit in our cases, have to be split up, need all our new labels, etc. We do pay for every item to be processed, but I think it is well worth the cost.

Blackstone Unlimited

Initially, I had planned to cancel our subscription to Blackstone Unlimited, due to lack of use. When I informed our rep of this, they came back to us with an offer for a couple of years at a reduced rate. I looked at it again, and decided it would be worth giving the platform more time. It can take a few years for patrons to really gravitate towards an offering; Hoopla, for example, exploded in popularity a few years ago, and now is used hundreds of times more every month than it used to be.

As part of this decision, I did also drop access to kids and teen audiobooks on Blackstone Unlimited. Very few kids or teens use our physical audiobooks, I assume that few are interested in digital audiobooks as well, and this further reduces the price of keeping Blackstone Unlimited available.

Wednesday Night Movies cancelled

We have cancelled the planned Wednesday Night Movie events. We had intended to hold it once a month through the end of the year, but after months of low turnout, decided that it simply wasn't worth trying to keep going. We might revisit the idea later, think about ways we could make it more appealing, but for now we're seeing how teen movie nights are received, and keeping the monthly Saturday morning kids movies (though that is on hold until September).

Market in the Park 2026

We plan to have a table at a couple of Tuesday Market in the Park events this year. Our first planned visit is today, June 23rd, and the second will be in a couple of weeks, July 7th. We'll be sending a librarian and one or two assistants, to share information about the library, and offer the chance to sign up for library cards, or the summer reading program. We may try to go another later weekend, but with how busy summer is already, that might be more than we want to handle.