

8 July 2020

To the Blake Memorial Library Association and All of our Patrons:

It seems important at this time of uncertainty to make contact with each other and to offer some information about the state of the library. I hope this finds you all well.

The library, in the last months, has been confronted with many challenges. The renovation required a great deal of attention from the board and the arrival of COVID-19 has thrown us all into turmoil. Things have not gone as planned but we've managed through them despite delays and restrictions. Transitioning from a library where patrons browse and choose their books to curbside service has required guidance and help from the State. Although we have been fortunate to see low numbers of the virus in Orange County that could change at any time, as we have seen throughout much of the United States; we want to make sure to be using the best science-based practices. As board members, we are adjusting to having zoom board meetings and establishing new procedures for all patrons and staff to be safe and still use the library. While we're excited to have everyone in to see our new library, most importantly we want to keep patrons, staff, and volunteers safe. For now, that means remaining in curbside service and doing our best to expand those offerings; thank you for utilizing this service and for your respectful understanding. We're all in this together.

Christiane Carroll resigned as Library Director in late June. We appreciate all that she brought to the library, especially the work she did in organizing, preparing, and managing the library before, during, and after this major renovation; she did a tremendous job and we are incredibly grateful for her hard work. Fortunately, our Board of Trustees President, Miranda Miller stepped in to become first our volunteer emergency director and now our operating interim Director. She is providing a seamless transition. Sadly, in order to do this Miranda has had to resign from her position as Board President. This is a big loss to the Board; however, she is providing a most needed service and we are grateful. Shirley Montagne has been elected to fulfill the role as Trustee President in the interim, and the board has been able to recruit more members. We plan to start the process of interviewing for a permanent Library Director as soon as the new Board is fully established.

We continue having conversations about how we can hold a Library Association meeting. Since the attendance is usually 30 or more association members, and the meeting has served as both a social gathering and a means to conduct library business, the Board of Trustees has not come up with a solution for how to hold the meeting and be safe. In the past the Board has presented a slate of new members to the Association for approval and election. Given the nature of the current situation this is not possible. We are fortunate that 2 more community members have volunteered to serve on the Board, bringing us to 7 members. Therefore, we will onboard these new

trustees to fill the vacant positions and present them to you when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, the public as well as Blake Memorial Library Association Members are always welcome at Board Meetings. These are listed on the BML website, as well as posted at the library and on town hall bulletin boards, and are held via Zoom. Meeting agendas and minutes are also posted online. We welcome you to review them and engage us with comments and questions. As well, if you'd like to attend a meeting but need support in doing so, please reach out to us for support.

We hope this letter finds all of you well and dealing with our new strange reality safely. We all look forward to in-person meetings with the Library Association, sharing food and conversation as we have in the past, as well as reopening story time, opening up to regular patron use, and all the many programs we are hoping to host at our new beautiful library. In the meantime, our staff are doing their best to be innovative and creative and provide the best services they can during curbside restrictions. Be sure to check out our website and Facebook page for information on the All Ages Summer Reading Program, the virtual summer discussion series, and upcoming virtual and outdoor events, including weekly movie nights on the lawn and a story walk in the town forest. While we know these aren't quite the same, we hope they will help you stay connected to the library until we can go back to business as usual. We all look forward to that time.

Sincerely,

The Blake Memorial Library Board of Trustees