

Genealogy/ESL Library Board Report
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The Genealogy Collection continues to grow. Our patrons are pleased and surprised with the scope of the collection. Newcomers to our collection only expect to see items from Texas. They are grateful that we cover 29 states – from Rhode Island to New Mexico, with the concentration on the migration routes to Texas (Pennsylvania south and west).

Through the efforts of our volunteers and staff, we are able to have the obituary indexes from the McKinney newspapers available through the Library's website. This has increased our visibility throughout the country. Because of this, in the past year, I've assisted 130 people with 530 searches through e-mail and phone contact. One of these contacts, who lives in Oregon, made the effort to visit the Library this past summer, just to meet with the staff that assisted her and to make a donation. Another patron had come into the library trying to find information on his great-grandfather. Through the material and databases we have, we were able to find him. This led to the great-great grandparents and great-great-great grandparents. The patron had been searching for quite a few years for this information and was very grateful that we were able to help him in his research.

We have now placed our collection of High School Yearbooks on CD through a program with an Oklahoma penitentiary. This service was done free of charge to the library. The oldest yearbooks in our collection are from Boyd High School – the 1914 Bison. Now, as our collection of yearbooks ages we will still have copies available for viewing.

Over the past year, the Genealogy Department has partnered with Guy Giersch for a program he conducted on researching the history of McKinney houses. We have had more people ask about this in the last year due to the tax abatements that are available for historic houses. Mr. Giersch has agreed to do this program again this May. We have also partnered with the North Collin County Genealogical Society. I conducted a program for Beginning Genealogy and Society members came the following week and assisted the attendees with their searches. We will be doing this again this year. This spring, a member of the LDS Church has agreed to present a program on Family Search. This is a well-known Genealogy website that will be upgrading its site in March. This program will be beneficial to our patrons who use the site as well as give me the tools I need to assist patrons with it.

We are in the process of obtaining new microfilm/microfiche machines. These machines will allow patrons to view images on our microfilm that are not viewable on our current machines due to the quality of the microfilm. They will also allow us to save images to flash drives, thus saving the library and patrons the cost of printing. All of staff will be trained on the use of these machines in order to assist our patrons.

Our English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are well attended. We have three sessions per year – 18 classes in the Fall, 18 classes in the Spring and 7-8 classes in the Summer. This past year, we had 74 students in the Spring session, 46 in the Summer session and 75 in the Fall session. Of those in the Fall session, 26 have pre-registered for the Spring session. Each session we have four levels of classes. These levels include students from all different backgrounds, although most are from Spanish speaking, Indian, and Asian countries. In the past, we have had students from Russia, Ethiopia, and Denmark.

We have a wonderful group of nine volunteers who will be working with our students this Spring. Some of them have a background in teaching or have been an ESL student themselves. Others have no experience, but are dedicated to assisting these students and helping them to succeed.

We do not charge for our classes which removes one of the hardships for people wanting to improve their English skills. Our classes are always well received and we always have a waiting list for spaces to open. We use the Dulaney Room for two classes and the Children's Storytime and Toddler Rooms for the others.

As a member of the Collin County Adult Literacy Council, the Library will be participating in their Family Reading Day in March. We will have five ESL families participate in this. They will receive 10 books and a bookcase for them for their children. We will nominate one of our ESL volunteers for Volunteer of the Year Award. The Council does this as a way to encourage parents to have their own library in their home. This is a concept that is foreign to many of them.

In the Fall, I talked to a group of our ESL students on the process to become citizens. Six students attended this program. I had material from a workshop I had attended that was given by the INS. Initially, I had asked if anyone was interested in the INS coming to the Library to speak about citizenship, and overwhelmingly the response was no. I believe they were hesitant to have the INS come out of fear of this organization. When I asked if I could give them the information, they were more receptive. I plan to do this program each year. Hopefully, the students who attended this year will advise their fellow students and friends to attend.