

Tuesday Topics January 4, 2022

Summary

The January 4 Tuesday Topics was our first meeting in 2022 and our first hybrid meeting. In-person attendees met at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. Others attended by Zoom. President Carole Jordan opened the meeting thanking Lissa Staley for her valuable assistance in managing the hybrid meeting. Carole announced Topeka's new mayor and City Council members were being sworn in today. She continued saying we need more voters! Following Carole's opening remarks, Judy Moler introduced our speaker Marie Pyko, CEO of the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library.

Marie began by saying the library, which opened in 1870 and was named Library of the Year in 2016, focuses on community collaboration. It is more than a library. It's a catalyst for what's possible. She identified the stages of partnerships and collaboration: coordination, cooperation, partnerships, collaboration (create something bigger than the individual collaborators). Partnerships/coordination/collaboration are key to the multiple ways the library provides services such as Kindergarten Readiness Impact with the United Way and the LWV collaboration. A few of the partners mentioned include the Kansas Discovery Center, Greater Topeka Partnership, and Momentum 2027. Among the many collaborations at the library are Deliberative Conversations facilitated by Lissa Staley, the LWV Legislative Forums and Redistricting Program, and Black History Month in February. There will be discussions by local Black entrepreneurs at events February 15 at 6 p.m. and February 26 at 10 a.m. at the library. The library partners with the YWCA to facilitate a Racial Justice Book Club.

Upcoming events and initiatives at the library include a new space focusing on "creating" and a partnership with KU for a visual art space that will provide classes, supplies, video recording space, and podcast space. The Adventuremobile (a kid-specific bookmobile) is supported by Security Benefit that provides increased library access to school children.

The focus is on access. For children, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides a book each month to children birth to 5 years old. If a child is registered at birth, when he/she reaches age 5, he/she will have 60 books. "Story Walk" is a partnership with Parks and Recreation that offers segmented reading experience that takes readers on a trail from one part of a book to the next with activities along the way.

The library provides additional access to all community members through its home delivery service TSCPL@Home. The National Book Foundation releases book awards and this spring two national award-winning authors, Lucas Bessire and Meghan Majumbar, who have written about the power of choice will be at the library.

The Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library has 28 business partners including a Digital Equity Partnership. We need to invest in broadband access as this is how people are communicating. The library has a Diversity partnership looking at everyone through an equity lens. Additional partnerships include recruiting with a focus on diversity and another for our Spanish speaking community. Community partnerships that are based on data with KSNT's market survey allow the library to customize services. The library advocates for weekend voting at the site. The decision is up to others. They have also talked about having a cooking partnership at the Community Center.

Following her presentation, Marie answered a question about digital library cards for students. The cards are connected to the student's school number and the student's school ID.

The Topeka & Shawnee Public Library is about TOGETHERNESS. Together we can turn what seems impossible into the POSSIBLE.