

# KCL MONTHLY



## Kuskokwim Consortium Library Newsletter

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## KCL: A 2023 Review

It was quite a year for the Kuskokwim Consortium Library. This was our first complete year in operation without Covid restrictions since March of 2020, and we kicked into high gear organizing programs and events to give the community opportunities to come together and learn, celebrate, and be together.

Our goal for the past eight years has been to build a sleight of programs that meet the diverse needs of all demographics in the community. With that in mind, we have fine-tuned our service priorities based on community needs. We have developed programming and resources that celebrate Yup'ik culture and history. Digital access and assistance is essential, as well as providing healthy activities for children and adults and spaces for the community to gather. We have worked to develop resources to battle low literacy and digital literacy rates, and have been a supportive partner in community efforts to improve the safety net for people experiencing unemployment, homelessness, and food insecurity. Through these efforts, we provided 149 programs and community outreach events with over 4300 people in attendance over the course of the year.

Like in previous years, we provide frequent programs for kids and families. These include bi-monthly Toddler Times, STEM programs, and arts and craft programs with our favorite visiting artist Jimmy Riordan. We had a robust schedule in our annual Summer Reading program. Summer Reading programs have two purposes. They incentivize children to read over the summer, which is important because struggling readers lose literacy skills gained during the school year if they don't continue to read while on break. This summer, 78 kids logged pages as they tracked their reading. They got entered into the summer reading raffle, many won cool prizes, and all participants went home with books. This summer, we challenged our readers to compete in a race to 25,000 pages. The first age group to reach that goal won an ice cream party and movie screening of their choice. "Where the Crawdads Sing" was the selected movie. The adults took great pleasure in beating the children and teens.

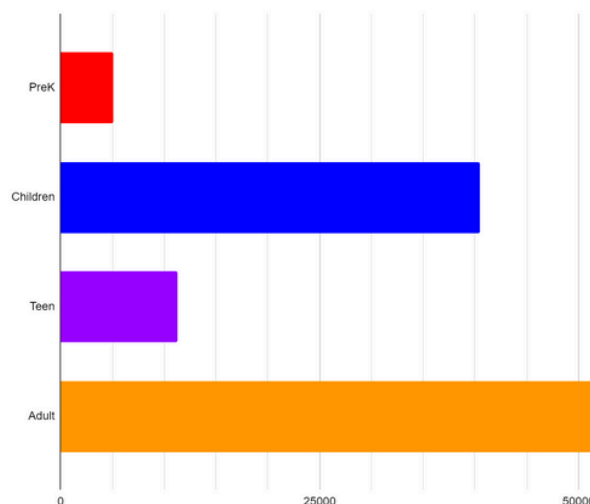
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## Race to 25K



### Final Results:

1st Adults- 59,726 pages  
2nd Kids- 40,467 pages  
3rd Teens- 11,296 pages  
4th PreK- 5,047 pages

The second component to Summer Reading was a full sleight of programs. We had something for all ages, and many of them were outside. We kicked off summer reading with an ethnobotany walk called "Finding Fiddleheads". We led multiple kayaking programs, Edible Science Experiments for kids, and Dutch Oven Gourmet camp cooking. We are finding that adults are just as interested (or more interested!) in craft programs than children, so we included some adults only crafting opportunities like in Upcycled Candle Making.



The highlight of the summer (and year and career!) was when myself, Youth Services Librarian Mikayla Miller, and community partner Michelle Dewitt got to attend a ceremony at the White House to receive the prestigious National Medal for Museum and Library Service from First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. This is the most prestigious award that a library can receive, and we were blown away that our little, rural library was recognized in this way alongside only three other libraries.



We continued to provide humanities, holiday and cultural programs throughout the year. The library organized the community Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration with 8 hours of cultural activities. We provided Halloween fun with Trunk or Treat and holiday festivities at WinterFest. We kicked off the fall with programs every Saturday, including board games, Chess Club, storytime, and crafternoon.





Teaching artist Jimmy Riordan visited throughout the year and led workshops on animation, leather tooling, and block printing. He also brought in equipment to do a pop-up digitization station, and community members brought in VHS, cassette tapes, and vinyl to get digitized. This was very fun, and some of the content that was digitized included elder storytelling, old family videos, and a recording of a deceased parent singing for her children. We look forward to doing this again in the new year.

The library has been a partner of the Bethel Housing and Homelessness Coalition (BHHC) since its inception in 2017. Through this partnership, we continued to organize two Project Homeless Connect events in 2023, including one on the day of the Point In Time count, a day when communities nationwide get a snapshot of homelessness in the United States. This partnership with the BHHC has been fruitful in many ways. When the coalition first formed, one of the gaps in Bethel's ability to move forward with housing projects that address homelessness was that there wasn't baseline survey data on what homelessness looks like in the community. Since 2017, BHHC has been using the library's Project Homeless Connect events as the venue to collect the needed data. When the pandemic hit and Covid relief funds became available, the partners on the coalition, notably Bethel Community Services Foundation, Tundra Women's Coalition and Bethel Winter House, saw the opportunity and secured funding to build Bethel's first Permanent Supportive Housing facility. The facility is under construction now, and will open in March of 2024. This facility will provide apartments for 24 people experiencing chronic homelessness. This is what happens when the community works together to address a problem.

We enjoyed partnering with the Southwest Alaska Arts Group and KYUK to do a second storytelling event modeled after the popular Arctic Entries events on the road system. This year's event was called Terrifying Tales on the Tundra, and was held the weekend before Halloween. Seven community members told supernatural, terrifying and spooky stories. Don Rearden joined us from Anchorage and co-hosted with local darling Beverly Hoffman. Local band Velma Lyle performed. The recording is available on the library's YouTube channel to those who missed the show.



*Photo Credit: MaryCait Dolan*

The library continues to host the Dolly Parton Imagination Library through our Friends of the Library Fund with Bethel Community Services Foundation. This popular program sends a free book to enrolled kids under 5 each month, and is a great way to promote early literacy to children. At the end of 2023, we are happy to say that 250 children are actively receiving books through the program, and 104 have graduated! If you would like to donate to the programs that the library supports, you can do so at <https://www.bcsfoundation.org/friends-of-the-kuc-library-fund/>.

We continued to focus on digital access by providing one-on-one assistance with computers, technology, and forms. This is a very important service that the library provides, and our Jesuit Volunteer has continued to provide this service as part of their position description. We also participated in the Digital Equity Coalition as they drafted the Digital Equity plan for the state of Alaska. Hopefully we will see some tangible outcomes and resources from the funding that the state will disperse for projects outlined in the plan.



It has been a great year at the library. Thank you to the many supporters, library patrons, and community partners who make all of our programs and services possible. We love being a part of this community, and are looking forward to more amazing things in 2024. Happy Holidays!

-Theresa Quiner  
Library Director

## What's Happening at KCL?

KCL is going to take a break from our bigger programs for the month of January to get prepared for our spring program line up.

Library is CLOSED January 15 for Alaska Civil Rights/MLK Jr. Day.

Game Activities is January 20 at 2 p.m.

January 6 is our crafternoon for adults at 12 p.m.

January 27 is Chess Club at 12 p.m.

Toddler Time will be on Monday January 8 at 11 a.m.

Project Homeless Connect is January 30 at the Evangelical Church from 12-2 p.m.

Saturday Story time is January 13 at 11 a.m.

### **KUSKOKWIM CONSORTIUM LIBRARY STAFF**

**THERESA QUINER, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**



@BethelAKLibrary

**MIKAYLA MILLER, YOUTH SERVICES  
COORDINATOR**



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**IAN POOLE, ADULT SERVICES  
COORDINATOR & JESUIT VOLUNTEER**



@kcl\_braryAK



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@KuskokwimConsortiumLibrary

### **MONDAY**

11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

### **TUESDAY**

11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

### **WEDNESDAY**

11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

### **THURSDAY**

11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

### **FRIDAY**

11 A.M. - 6 P.M.

### **SATURDAY**

11 A.M. - 4 P.M.

### **SUNDAY**

CLOSED

# JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Library Closed</u>						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Library Closed	Toddler Time 11 a.m. @ Cultural Center					Saturday Storytime at 11 a.m.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Library Closed	Library Closed					Game Activities at 2 p.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Library Closed						Chess Club at 12 p.m.
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
						Adult Crafts at 12 p.m.