

SHELF LIFE

MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM



LOANABLE RESOURCES

Kits are a hit!

At the end of each year, we have the opportunity to review the statistics for all of the great resources we loaned to member libraries. 2024 had a big boost in circulation of program resources and kits: 466 loans for the year! Science kits were especially popular this year, with 90 loans.

It is no surprise that the Big Play kits are the most popular, with a total of 96 loans. These Big Play kits are designed with baby to pre-K age groups in mind. Here is the list of Big Play kits, in order of highest usage:

Big Play Blocks -- Big Play Grocery
Big Play Indoor Playground -- Big Play Build
Big Play Tiny Tots -- Big Play Colors
Big Play Motor Skills-- Big Play Sensory
Big Play Unsandbox

If you haven't used all of these kits yet, or you want to try a new one, check it out!



INTRODUCING MYTURN

Replacing KitKeeper for loanable resources.

Earlier in the fall, Plymouth Rocket, the vendor who provided the KitKeeper software that we used for managing loans and reservations for all our fun stuff like Legos, Big Play and STEM kits, craft, outreach, storytime supplies, and more, had a major server migration failure. Those of you who regularly request these items from us noticed an unresponsive system. We were later informed that KitKeeper would no longer be supported and the company folded on 12/31/2024. This is the same company that supported the EventKeeper calendar, which some of our member libraries used. While libraries scrambled to find a replacement for the calendar used to display all of their events, we began the process to find a replacement to KitKeeper. We selected MyTurn as KitKeeper's replacement.

-continued on page 2-

IN THIS ISSUE:

Set SMART Goals - Page 2

Trustee Corner - Page 3

Advocacy Update - Page 3

Youth Services Highlights - Pages 4 & 5

AI Scams Warning- Page 6

-continued from page 1-

MyTurn has a much cleaner and more modern interface.

Some of the features of MyTurn include unique logins for every user, the ability to view all past, present, and future reservations, and the ability to cancel, edit, and renew items. These are definite improvements that will allow library staff to have more control over their kit reservations. There are currently 161 items available in My Turn with plans to add more in 2025. If you need assistance or have ideas for additional kits or resources, please send an email to mvls@mvls.info.

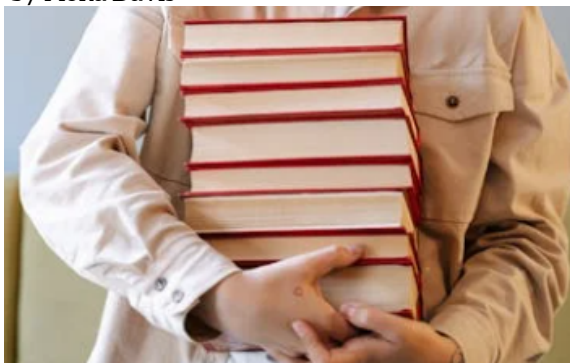
The process to check out Start With Science kits has not changed; they are still available in Polaris for libraries and patrons with access.

Staff Picks: *What are you reading?*

Kate: *The Black Angels: The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis*
by Maria Smilios

Mary: *The Last Thing He Told Me*
by Laura Dave

Sharon: *The Stolen Queen*
by Fiona Davis



SET SMART GOALS

Although they sounded good at the time, New Year's resolutions usually only last a few weeks.

If you want to try to get more serious about achieving your goals, try setting SMART goals

What is a SMART goal?

Specific - define what will be achieved.

Measurable - how will the goal be measured?

Achievable - how will the goal be achieved?

Relevant - how does the goal relate to the overall objective?

Time Bound - set a deadline to meet the goal.

Example:

- Set an objective to improve employee morale.
- Start with a specific goal of having bi-monthly employee gatherings.
- Poll the staff and gather ideas such as bring in a yoga instructor, host a staff trivia night, etc.
- Plan to schedule a specific number of gatherings.
- Set a deadline to schedule the gatherings and communicate these to the staff.
- After the first gathering, measure feedback from staff that attended and adjust accordingly.
- Determine if this gathering had a positive impact on the overall goal to improve employee morale.

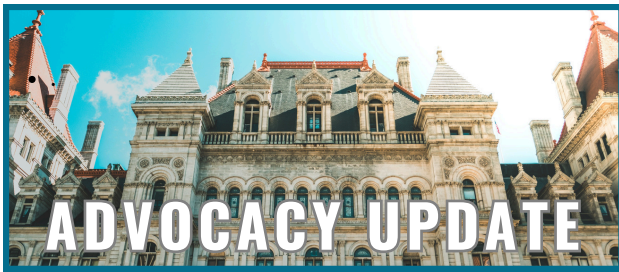
Great job! Now move on to your next goal!

PROMOTE NOVELNY

Click on the logo above to check it out or see the flyer on page 7 that highlights a few points of interest.

A valuable resource for your community.

Novel NY, also known as Gale Resources is a database all of our member libraries have access to for free. This was made available by state funding of \$3 million in 2025. NYLA is advocating for \$3.1 million in 2026 to ensure this resource is not lost.



ADVOCACY DAY AT THE CAPITOL - FEBRUARY 5

We let our voices be heard. Thank you for all your hard work and for being a library advocate!

New York Library Association (NYLA) Budget Requests

State Aid for Libraries (Operating Aid): \$176.8 million
This request represents the \$76 million statutory value for State Aid for Libraries in FY 1991 – 1992, the first year of modern operating aid, adjusted for 2024 using the Consumer Price Index.

NYS Library Construction Aid: \$175 million
This investment is needed to sustain and improve New York State libraries' physical infrastructures to provide a safe, accessible, and sustainable environment.

Library Materials Aid: \$11.33/pupil
NYLA is advocating for the first increase in Library Materials Aid since 2007. The cost of school library materials has increased substantially and since 2023 electronic and digital materials have been included in these costs without an increase in funding.

NOVELny: \$3.1 million
NYLA requests another year of dedicated funding from the state for NOVELny. This amount will allow this resource to continue for another year - FY 2026. NOVELny is a curated collection of databases made available to school, public, and academic libraries as a resource for access to reputable information.



NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Voice of the Library Community

TRUSTEE CORNER

Upcoming board training opportunity

MVLS will host board training and discussion sessions on some of the months between MVLS board meetings.

The first hybrid session will be on Thursday, February 20, 9:30-10:30 am. The [2025 Board Initiatives](#) webpage contains various sources for webinars that we will use as the basis for these training sessions. The training sessions are open to member libraries' trustees.

NYLA's 2025 Policy Initiatives:

Freedom to Read

§ Freedom to Read Act (School): [S.6350-B](#) / [A.6873-B](#)
Libraries across New York face rapidly expanding efforts to censor materials and programming. We require legislation that empowers library professionals to exercise their expertise to curate and develop collections and provide public access to materials, services, and programs.

Open Shelves

S.1100 (May) A.3119 (Kelles) - NYLA Memo of Support
Continued support by legislation that ensures library staff are allowed to curate and develop collections, services, and programming that reflect the interests of all people of the community that the library serves.

Protection in Public Libraries

§ Protection in Public Libraries: [S.7677-A](#) / [A.7843-B](#)

E-Books Licensing Reform

Legislation is required to allow library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks, providing requirements for contracts between libraries and publishers for access to electronic library material.

Media Literacy

§ [S.6868-A](#) / [A.10544](#)

NYLA supports efforts to advance Media Literacy education in New York State schools and to ensure Certified Library Media Specialists are using their training and experience to lead Media Literacy efforts in schools statewide.

IT'S GOING TO BE A COLOR-FILLED SUMMER!

It was a full house at Colonie Town Library on January 14th! For the first time in five years, youth services staff from MVLS and UHLS joined together to share, learn, and start preparing for Summer Reading programs. **This year's theme is Color Our World.**

Many, many thanks to all the MVLS libraries who participated!



An extra special thank you to the MVLS member staff who presented at the workshop:

- Diana Hurlburt from the Schenectady County Public Library related her experiences leading a popular Teen Writing Club, which produces its own magazine
- Amy Relyea, also from SCP (seen at right showing off her giant pencil-wielding skills), gave tips for doing process art projects with preschoolers.
- The Fort Plain Free Library team of Whitney Hubbard, Jacob Trahan, and Sam Zimmerman shared their successful Community Art Board Project.
- Sarah Carbone (AMS), Diana Hurlburt (SCP), and Stephanie Olson (SCP) all participated in our Picture Book Exhibition, sharing programs based on picture books covering everything from fairies, to painting, to tattoos.

COLLECTIONS CORNER

Useful selection tools for youth materials

On Monday, January 27th, the American Library Association announced it's winners for 2025. These awards honor books, videos, and other materials for children and teens, and are recognized world wide. To see this year's "best of the best" click below.



SUMMER READING THEME 2025

COLOR OUR WORLD

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2025

SAVE THE DATES!

Cabin Fever Club, Winter 2025 ([Click here for details](#)).

Children's SRP Virtual Planning Workshop, Tuesday, 2/25, 9:30am - 12:30pm

Teen SRP Virtual Planning Workshop, Tuesday, 3/11, 9:30am - 12:30pm

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY DAY

Take Your Child to the Library Day is an international initiative where thousands of libraries worldwide encourage families to visit their local library and explore everything it has to offer.

This day is celebrated annually on the first Saturday of February. Locally, our libraries were supported by MVLS with stickers, buttons, door hangers, and bookmarks to share with their community.



These libraries took part in this year's Take Your Child to the Library Day with some very creative plans!

The Community Library offered a fun Scavenger Hunt with a special bonus available on Saturday, 2/1. The Scavenger Hunt will continue through the month of February.

Sharon Springs Free Library also offered a cool bowling themed Scavenger Hunt to go along with the history of their building, which used to be a bowling alley. They offered a raffle to win 2 tickets to Clark Sports Center (donated by the center).

Fort Hunter Free Library invited children and their families to enjoy making crafts.

The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library plans to celebrate on Saturday, 2/8 with Drew's Magic and Balloon Animals.

Did your library participate in Take Your Child to the Library Day this year? Last year? Tell us how it went, and what we can do to better facilitate initiatives like this!

Kudos to Sonny from the Gloversville Public Library for sharing his talent with the Amsterdam Free Library. Our staff is one of our most valuable resources!



TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY DAY

Story Hour with Olaf
Saturday February 1
10:30 AM



Join our special guest, Sonny, for a snowtastic story hour filled with tales featuring Olaf from Frozen, followed by a fun craft activity!

Enter for a chance to be our Librarian for a Day!



AI SCAMS WARNING

From the Tech Tutor

It's important to stay up-to-date on the latest scams. Many times scammers prey on the most vulnerable and try to fool people with intimidation and urgency. Scammers use email, phone, and text messages to initiate a scam. These scams can involve clicking on a link, requests for personal information, or demands for money.

Here are some helpful tips to avoid falling victim to scams:

- Ignore calls from Unknown callers
- Delete or Block these numbers
- Listen to your gut, if it sounds like something far fetched, hang up, do not engage with the caller.

Now that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become more sophisticated, scammers are using these tools to do voice cloning and to make deepfake videos. Voice recordings can be pulled from videos on social media or a recorded phone conversation. Still images can also be used to create a life like replica of someone you know.

In this instance, Stacey received a video call from her friend, Sara, saying her Facebook account had been hacked and asked her to send her an access code. When Stacey sent the code, this initiated an elaborate scam to post multiple items for sale on Stacey's Facebook page. [Full story here.](#)

In another example, a scammer used a voice clone to call an unsuspecting individual, disguised as his adult son who said he was arrested. If you have heard of these types of scams from the past, they typically involve someone pretending to be a family member, there is an emotional tug, and a sense of urgency for money. This case was very believable at the time because the voice on the phone was his son. [Full story here.](#)

It is recommended to create a code word to use among your family and friends to verify identity. If you ask the person to state the code word and they cannot, hang up.

It is also recommended to lose the sense of urgency, slow down and check on the details provided, even if it may take a few hours.

START THE NEW YEAR WITH FREE GAS & COFFEE!

Stewart's Shops My Money Card

Show off how much you saved this year by using your library card .

1. Like & Follow our Facebook page
2. Comment on this post with a picture of your library receipt or a screenshot of your e-receipt
3. Receipts must be dated December 16- 31.
4. The patron with the highest total of money saved will win a \$50 Stewarts Gift Card & bragging rights!

This contest is open to all MVLS libraries, as we look forward to serving you as Central Branch in 2025!

AMSTERDAM FREE LIBRARY

Look at this example of creative engagement with our communities. See page 8 for the winner's reveal!

Additional Social Media Strategy Tips from Marketing Consultant - Bobbi Ryan

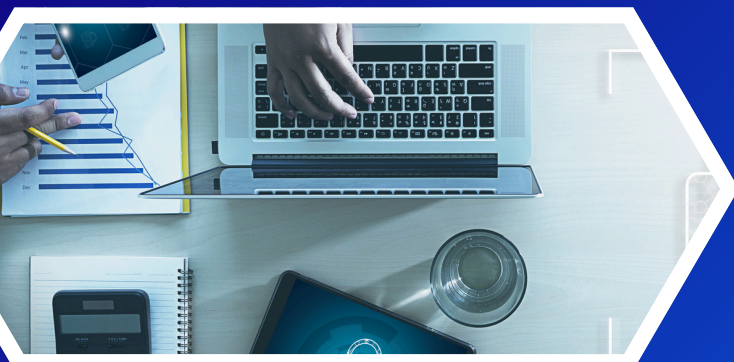
- Make sure to include the text in your post that is used on your image. For example - Using this example on the left, the content outlining all of the information about the contest in this image would also be seen as text in the post.
- Like and follow local groups and businesses, then share your posts with these groups.

Bobbi recommends posting consistently - generally 2 posts per week.

GALE RESOURCES BY NOVELNY



ONLINE ACCESS TO RESOURCES ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS



» BRITANNICA FOR RESEARCH

Research resources for all students - Britannica Academic, Britannica School, and Britannica Escolar (in Spanish).

» GALE PRESENTS: PETERSON'S TEST AND CAREER PREP

Free test prep and practice tests including AP, ACT, SAT, GRE, Civil Service, and much more. Review the Title List for a full list.

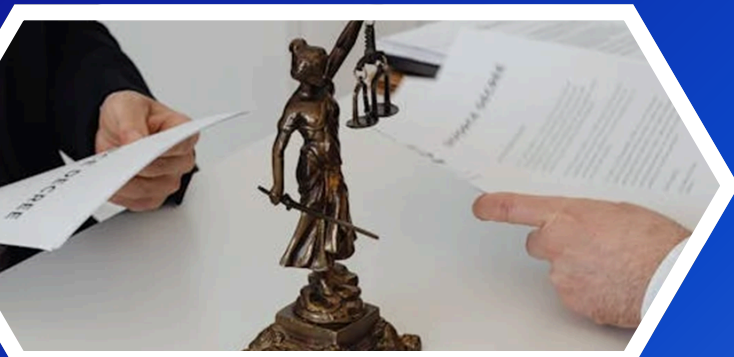
» GALE LEGAL FORMS

New York state legal forms library - Wills & estates, divorce, bankruptcy, power of attorney, and more. Also includes helpful topics, and sample letters.

» GALE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

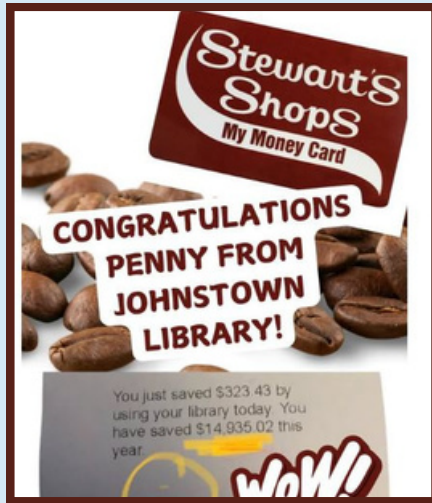
Browse hundreds of topics, with access to current magazine articles, news, and academic journals. Also see Gale Online - Health and medicine references.

And more in this curated collection of reliable resources.





CELEBRATIONS & SHOUT OUTS



Cheers to the Amsterdam Free Library for their creative use of social media to promote the value and savings libraries offer their communities. By using her library card(s), **Penny from Johnstown Library** saved \$14,035.20 in 2024 and won a \$50 Stewart's gift card!



Contact Beth Rienti at brienti@mvls.info to apply for a travel award to use for the 2025 Youth Services Section (YSS) Spring Conference hosted in Mount Kisco on April 4th. Up to \$300 per library will be awarded. Applications were emailed out and are due by Friday, 2/14. Contact Beth if you need another application form.

CONTACT US

Do you have questions we can answer? Helpful comments? Want to tell us about something going on at your library? Email us or call us at 518-355-2010.

- **Eric Trahan:** Executive Director, ext. 223, etrahan@mvls.info
- **Sharon O'Brien:** Assistant Director, Member Services Coordinator, ext. 226, sobrien@mvls.info
- **Kate Clingan:** Office Administrator, ext. 221, kclingan@mvls.info
- **Beth Rienti:** Public Services Consultant, ext. 225, brienti@mvls.info
- **Mary Carrier:** Technology & Growth Consultant, ext. 233, mcarrier@mvls.info
- **Wade Abbott:** Community Engagement & Communications Specialist, ext. 230, wabbott@mvls.info

Not sure who to contact?
Check out [MVLS Staff At a Glance](#)