

Rye Public Library Covid 19 Response, Service and Revenue Status: May 2020

Dear Rye Community,

I hope many in the community have gotten a sense from our recent announcements and newsletters of the range of our response and depth of our current service offerings, but I wanted to reach out to those outside our mailing lists with news about the Rye Public Library. Remember, you can join our Booster mailing list and apply for a library card at the [RPL website](#).

From March 9, 2020 forward, everything we've done at RPL has been in response to the Covid-19 virus and in adjustment to the limitations presented by the requirements of operating while maintaining standards of public safety precaution. Since we closed to the public on the 16th of March, there has been a daily building check and minimal access by staff to keep up with administrative tasks and in-house functions like deliveries.

This update reflects our planning and decision making during the quick pivot to a remote-access reality, focusing first on our response, then on our services:

Response

With the potential threat of Covid-19 becoming more evident, we revised our existing flu policy to reflect this new situation and developed the RPL Acute Respiratory Disease Policy in the first week of March. It was accepted by the Board of Trustees on March 9, and shared with Town of Rye on March 11, 2020. At the same time we were making decisions about curtailing programming, and ultimately closing the library building to the public. Clear and reasoned public communication about this decision making was released to our e-mail lists immediately upon acceptance of the decisions by the Trustees. Communications were released on March 13 and March 16. These announcements were sent to roughly 3,000 recipients with 54 and 52% open rates respectively, meaning that approximately 1,500 or about 28% of the Rye population received and read our announcements.

Very quickly after closing the building, the entire library staff was confirmed to be able to meet and plan remotely. At first by phone conference and then via a Zoom pro account rapidly established for the purpose of meeting and offering programming the staff started the weekly meetings we have conducted throughout our closure. . Coaching for using the resource was conducted. By remote meeting with our phone service provider we arranged that incoming phone calls be forwarded to readable voicemail format in our general contact email address. Effective by the second day of our closure period, the Library's full open-hours [and more] are monitored by staff, who quickly respond by phone or e-mail to answer questions and support technology needs.

Our quarterly newsletter was released March 26, and reiterated our decisions, made updates, and announced a new weekly format for future newsletter outreach. Again, remarkable open rates

for Library outreach e-mail was seen. Our weekly Booster newsletters began on Friday April 3 and average a 46% open rate or roughly 1,000 opens per issue.

We also quickly developed a phone outreach plan. We distributed contact information for our entire database of 3,400 residents among RPL staff. Staff have been making calls to the entire list which include a wellness check- in along with announcement of health information sources and library services.

From the first week of Library closure we have participated in Rye Emergency Operations Center weekly meetings. The Rye Public Library was recognized as a strong resource both for offering a sense of “normalcy” in this difficult time, and for being in touch with a wide slice of the Rye population, receiving and relaying any expressions of need from the community. We quickly synchronized Covid-19 information sources with town authorities and distribute this information with our weekly newsletters and during the check-in phone calls described above.

As the town established the Rye Covid19 Support Team we were a key team member making announcement of the direct Support Team contact e-mail and phone number via our established newsletter and telephone outreach. RPL has also stayed in coordination with SeniorSERVE through staff liaison.

Finally, we have reached out to Rye’s school libraries and principals to offer any assistance our resources could offer them.

Services

Consistent with safety protocols around virus transport on surfaces such as books, we have concentrated our services to electronic materials circulation and tech support to use them. We also have a great selection of electronic databases we’ve been promoting and supporting. We’ve helped hundreds of people get connected to the many thousands of safe, remote-access materials RPL has to offer.

We’ve also quickly rearranged to offer [library card application](#) and [e-mail list registry](#) online. By the second day of the building closure we had begun providing live streaming programming which is also available [on-demand](#). Since those early days we have also been hard at work creating newsletter content and expanding our horizons with making video programming.

Now there is a wealth of programming available to view on-demand and more forthcoming, including a return to special events like lecture programming by local entrepreneurs and an upcoming musical event with a regional musician.

We are also getting a lot of wi-fi use through our free 24-7 internet network available from any of our parking lot spots.

We wrapped up last month by tracking statistics on the new measurements we are keeping. While some of those numbers won't be available until after the end of the month, streaming views at the time of this writing look like they will be close to 80 for April. Our newsletter opens will come in near 4,000, with almost twice as many links clicked as last month.

Phone calls in to the Library will be about double those of last month, and emails will also be close to double. Our Zoom engagements this month will be around 15 gatherings with roughly 120 individuals-- close to triple last month.

Finally, our Youtube channel tracks 358 views all made during April as we had no new to view in March—RPL staff created it all in April!

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with questions or for details. We really hope to be able to open in some fashion as soon as it can be carried out safely for all parties. Until then, Rye Public Library will do all we can to fulfill our mission to the Rye community. While we wish we could open our doors, and everyone on staff is anxious to serve you in person, it's obvious that our remote access efforts are being well received, and we are serving a need with an innovative and flexible response.