

Summary



Important Milestones Achieved / Expansion of Barrier-Free Services Continues at Neuss City Library (Claudia Büchel)
(pp. 114 – 115)

Social participation is a core element of the library concept at the Neuss City Library. Therefore, expanding barrier-free services has been given high priority. In previous years, the city library has already provided special services which facilitate the involvement of people with impairments. These include books in simple German, wordless books, audio books, large-print books and access to »Onleihe«, the platform for digital media.

In the past two years further important milestones have been achieved in order to lower barriers even more. This includes making entrances barrier-free, equipping the library's meeting room with an audio induction loop system, placing mobile induction hearing devices at information stations, making magnifying lamps available, as well as providing a reading device with a high rate of magnification, offering library cards with extra-large print, and placing identifiable markings on glass walls, steps and pillars in the public areas. The periodicals collection has been expanded to include subscriptions to publications devoted to the concerns of people with impairments. The collection of audiobooks in the standardised DAISY format has been expanded; in addition, two DAISY players have been acquired and made available for loan. A series of monthly events with the title »Reading with Dog« has been established where a specially trained therapy dog helps children with reading difficulties overcome their inhibitions about reading aloud. Remodelling public toilets to make them barrier-free and relaunching the library website were major projects in 2020. For 2021 a revamping of the public elevator is on target.

A Pioneer's Birthday / The City Library of Spandau Turns 100 – Landmark Innovations Set the Trend for all of Germany (Katrin Seewald, Ina Wolter)
(pp. 132 – 135)

In hindsight the date of the opening day of the first public library in Spandau could not have been a better choice: 24 October 1920. Just 75 years later Germany's president, Richard von Weizsäcker, declared October 24th »Library Day« – another sign that Spandau was ahead of its time. And this feature has been a red thread running through its history.

Spandau is a city district on the fringe of western Berlin with a lot of green areas and water. A notable array of innovations, not only for Berlin but for all of Germany, came out of Spandau: »home lending«, a service to deliver materials to the homes of elderly or homebound readers; the first library in Berlin to offer lending on Saturdays; the implementation of a modern photographic lending system in Germany; the first sorting machine for computer punch cards. In 1965, after lending over 700,000 books, Spandau was ranked first-place among all West German libraries. The main branch quickly grew to hold over 100,000 volumes, and in 1974 a newly added wing also included the highly modern collection of vinyl records for lending. In those days an intensive effort was being made in general to expand the collection of new media: music and spoken-word cassettes, CDs, software on diskettes, and then video cassettes, which quickly became a great success.

And another curious fact: upon the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989, new users from the surrounding areas began to come in and some even returned books which had been borrowed before the wall was built in 1961 and stored away for all those years.

Support in Coping with the Digital Revolution / Senior Citizens as Recipients of Library Pedagogy (Robert Langer, Marina Strohm)
(pp. 136 – 139)

One realization that has arisen during the pandemic which has affected all our lives is a concern for the older generation of parents and grandparents. Many of the efforts we take to maintain social distancing and break the chain of infection serve to protect the especially vulnerable and endangered members of our society, the elderly. This article by Robert Langer and Marina Strohm deals with how we can consider and support this user group from a library perspective.

When we hear the term library education, we think first of all of children and young people. How can we help them become enthusiastic readers, how can we promote reading and media competency, how can we provide room for creativity? We regard them as our most important target group, as they undoubtedly are, since they are the future of our society. But especially in rural areas, and not only in the eastern regions of Germany, senior citizens represent the largest and fastest growing segment of the population. In 2018, according to the Saxony's Statistical Office, the elderly represented 45% and the younger generation only 27% of the state's population. While the latter group is predicted to rise by 3 percent in the next decade, the proportion of elderly will rise by 10%. Hence it is time to give more attention to the user group of 60+ and include them in our conceptual planning.

A major problem in this matter is that the target group of senior citizens is a highly heterogeneous one. Among other things the diversity of the aging process and the differences in physical and mental abilities present considerable challenges for working with this group of users.

Translated by Martha Baker