

# The Item

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## Huntsville Public Library announces new Director, Spring programs

- Kristie Stevens | For The Item



Lisa Lance is the new Director at the Huntsville Public Library, with plans to bring a whole new realm of educational experiences and hands on learning opportunities to the community.

Lisa Lance arrived in Huntsville just a few weeks ago to take her place as the new Director of the Huntsville Public Library (HPL). She holds three degrees in Library Science that cover public library technology and service, including a Master's in Library and Information Science. "The HPL team has been incredibly welcoming since I arrived. From the circulation desk where we build relationships to our new hires and IT Specialists, this staff does a great job. Linda Huff is a whiz with the kids, and Mary Kokot is my go-to person for learning about this library and its patrons. I came from a much smaller library and it's wonderful to lead this many people who are excited about assisting our patrons," said Lance.

Lance began as a public library volunteer in Bay County, Fla., and was promoted to Assistant Branch Manager in Franklin County, down the coast near St. George Island. Most recently, she served as a librarian for four and a half years at the Sam T. Wilson Public Library in Arlington, Tenn. As an employee of Library Systems & Services (LSS), which now operates the HPL, she personifies the organizational belief that strong libraries build strong communities.

LSS has been in business for more than 40 years, now operating 80 libraries throughout the U.S. Originally founded in 1981 to provide automated library services and support, they were contracted by the Department of Energy and the Library of Congress. They later became the first private company to

operate a public library system in California. "Every community that LSS serves is different. They use a specific model that is similar to a property management service. It's all about collaboration and public access. I want to spark enthusiasm and camaraderie in the community. We want people of all ages and economic backgrounds to come experience the quality of the free services that we offer," said Lance. She and her team have plans to provide more opportunities for hands on learning and new educational experiences. By the end of February, the teen section will include a new gaming area. They are hoping to attract local youth volunteers to be part of their Teen Advisory Board, which will help shape future programs in robotics and engineering. A new maker space with a 3-D printer is in the works, as well as forming building clubs to foster Magna Tiles and Lego League Teams along with other STEM programs for all ages.

Upcoming events hosted by the Walker County Master Gardeners (WCMG) and supported by the Texas A&M Forestry Service include free classes to inform the public on how to select and care for trees and roses, from 10:30 a.m. to noon Monday, Feb. 12. Rhonda Hanks will speak on which native trees are recommended for our climate and how to care for them. With specific instructions for fruit trees, attendees can learn how to keep them alive and thriving through the seasons.

The silent auction that supports the Walker County Genealogical Society begins at noon Monday, Feb. 12, at HPL with genealogical materials and books of all genres up for bidding through 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17. Contact Adult Services Coordinator Mary Kokot at 936-291-5471 for more information. Their annual Genealogy Open House and Lock-In will take place from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17. Beginners and longtime researchers are all invited to stay on and continue their research until 6 p.m. Society members will be available to assist in all areas of research. Registration is required. Contact Kokot at 936-291-5471 for more information.

Hanks and Gail Warren of the WCMG will discuss how to grow and care for roses from 10:30 a.m. to noon Monday, Feb 19. The class will cover soil amendment and watering, bed prep and mulching, how to properly prune your roses, and how to manage fungal diseases and pesticides. The class will include instructional handouts, sachets, and recipes for herbal and medicinal applications. Outreach and Programs Director Amanda Sturdivant hosted her first painting class at the end of January, which will continue as a monthly offering that alternates family friendly and seasonal themes throughout the year. Registration is required and all ages are invited for the two hour class.

Children's Music and Music is back in full swing, partnered with the SHSU Music Therapy Program. Classes begin on Feb. 27 and will be held on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. through the end of April. HPL will host a monthly open mic night for ages 16 and up beginning at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28. The public is invited to share their love of words and music by reading prose, poetry and song lyrics, either original or those by a favored author. For Spring Break, March 11-15, HPL is hosting school aged children Monday through Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m. for tropical themed activities and a Luau from 1 to 3 p.m. Friday with Kona Ice, a bounce house, face painting, games and live entertainment.

Yajaira Marin, HPL's new intern from SHSU's Law, Engagement and Politics, is preparing to lead their annual Citizenship Prep Course, which leads attendees through the citizenship process and prepares them for a naturalization interview and exam. The free five-week class meets once per week and is set to begin in early April, and advance registration is required.

HPL will join CASA of Walker County at their All About Kids Expo on Saturday, April 20, at Huntsville Church of Christ on Highway 30. Admission is free, and other local churches will be providing free parking and shuttle service to the event. Contact CASA for more info at <https://allevents.in/huntsville/casas-all-about-kids-expo>. The adventure begins at HPL for their 2024 Summer Reading Program. Early registration will be held in late May. Programs will begin on June 1, with a kickoff party and run through the end of July. To learn more about free programs at HPL,

visit [www.huntsvilletx.gov](http://www.huntsvilletx.gov). For more information on Library Systems & Services, go to [www.lsslibraries.com](http://www.lsslibraries.com).