

**Below is a sample of reactions and interactions that KFL has had since becoming fine free.**

*"I am so glad the library has acted to remove fines. I just love this library."*

Patron's reply to our Fine Free announcement email.

*"Great decision. It makes sense."*

Patron's reply to our Fine Free announcement email.

*"Let us know how much it was that you collected from fines that would still be a help in your budget... I for one would be glad to cover as much as possible of the delta. Am delighted, as always, with how you handle things and thanks for telling us the "whys and wherefores"!! Great decision...thanks!"*

Patron's reply to our Fine Free announcement email.

*We've had a few patrons express concern or confusion about our move to being fine free. After explaining our reasons and reassuring them that the books are still being returned, their concerns and confusion have diminished or vanished.*

Jenny, KFL Library Assistant

*A patron returned a book a few days late and chose to donate \$5.00.*

Jenny, KFL Library Assistant

*Another patron called to renew her books because she was too sick to come in. I renewed them and was happily able to tell her that we are fine free so that she didn't have to worry if she couldn't get them here right away.*

Jenny, KFL Library Assistant

*My friend, a parent of two young children, wanted to come in but was dreading it because she thought she had fines. I explained that KFL is now "fine free forever" and she was so relieved. I explained some of the reasoning behind our decision to her and a few other parents nearby, they all agreed it made so much sense and were impressed that KFL and other libraries have made this change.*

Sarah, KFL Administrative Assistant

*I had the opportunity to cover the desk, which I rarely do, and had a patron return an item that she knew was late and wanted to know how much it cost in late fines. I explained to her that we are fine free to which she responded that she knew but she still wanted to pay.*

*She did so in excess of what would have been owed.*

Michelle, KFL Director

*A sudden illness crept up on me that had me bedridden in just hours. I spent two days at home.*

*When I got back to work and checked my account I found that I had 7 items that were late (3 Children's DVDs, 3 Children's Books, and 1 Adult Book). Had I been accruing late fees this would have cost me \$7.20. Not to mention those Rock N' Learn DVDs were a great distraction for the kids while I was hanging out on the futon. This was the first time the impact really hit me personally since I do check my account daily but rarely do I see more than one item overdue at a time.*

*It was a reminder of how quickly things can slip out of control.*

Michelle, KFL Director

Overall, the amount of overdue or billed books we have has stayed the same, if not lessened from what it had been before. Some of this may be due to the fact that our circulation numbers are still a little lower than what they had been pre-COVID, but generally I have not seen an increase in the number of overdue or billed notices we send out daily. I keep track of how many books have gone to billed status (meaning 21 days overdue), and while on a day-to-day basis they may increase, once those patrons get the bill in their email, for the most part the books come right back. When items that patrons requested from other libraries hit that billed status, the lending libraries' librarians contact me to let me know; I have not seen an uptick in those billed items either. If anything, there are even fewer of those than before, even though we are still requesting a high volume of items through ILL. Patrons are amazed at the fact that we're no longer collecting fines, and they love hearing the rationale behind it even if at first, they're confused as to why we're doing it. I had one patron come in to return a book two or three days late, which would have been a \$.45 fine before; even after we told her she didn't owe anything, she put a \$5 bill in the donation box. We still have people calling to renew their items, even when those items are only a day or two overdue. Following national trends, we have seen an increase in long-overdue books coming back to the library. In just June, we had materials returned that had been originally due in February 2019 and August 2020. We've also gotten books back that were so overdue they were no longer in the catalog or hadn't gotten new barcodes when we joined the Minerva consortium in June 2014.

As a whole, our circulation numbers have steadily increased since May. Most of this is probably due to the fact that we reopened first with limited in-person browsing, and then to our regular pre-COVID hours, but feedback suggests that going fine-free and the announcements surrounding it have had a positive impact as well. In May 2021, our patrons checked out 3532 items; this skyrocketed to 6577 items in June, and 7956 in July. We have also had an unprecedented number of patrons come in to renew their library cards who haven't been to the library in many years. Many of these patrons haven't used the library since 2015 or 2016.

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Brittany Kashar

Circulation Services Manager, KFL

August 25, 2021