

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY INTRODUCES POST OFFICE READING LIST



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Posted on [August 28, 2020](#)



The Brooklyn Public Library hopes to be a resource on the embattled United States Post Office.

REUTERS/Carlos Barria

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A new reading list from the Brooklyn Public Library aims to educate locals about the embattled United States Postal Service amid efforts by [the Trump administration](#) to sideline the agency.

The [book list](#), which includes 44 titles for children and adults, gives readers a look into the significance behind the current mail crisis, said a library spokeswoman.

“BPL’s librarians have created comprehensive book lists to explain the history and importance of the Post Office, and emphasize why funding the service is critical,” said Katie Groenke. “These lists serve as a critical tool for the community to learn about the history of the Post Office, and hopefully spurs Brooklynites to protect this institution.”

The Postal Service has been thrust into the national spotlight after postmaster general Louis DeJoy — a recent appointee of President Donald Trump — implemented [several new measures](#) in July that cut costs and urged workers to leave mail behind to avoid delays.

Many Democrats viewed the directives as efforts to undermine the upcoming presidential election, whose results will rely heavily on millions of mail-in ballots due to the coronavirus pandemic. In an Aug. 13 interview with Fox Business Network, Trump [admitted](#) that the funding cuts to USPS will prevent the Postal Service from processing all the ballots.

“If we don’t make a deal, that means they don’t get the money,” Trump said. “That means they can’t have universal mail-in voting; they just can’t have it.”

In addition to funding cuts, the Postal Service has decommissioned hundreds of mail sorting machines nationwide — [four](#) of which serve in Brooklyn. Officials [say](#) the machines’ removal is part of a long-term plan to reduce equipment because a decline in the use of mailed letters, but workers charge that fewer sorting machines will cause delays.

To teach locals more about the Postal Service, one librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library decided to compile a reading list that highlights the oft-overlooked agency and its importance.

“I had been aware of what was happening, and then with this problem ongoing, it seemed like an important time to point out these books,” said Emma Carbone, who works at the library’s central branch by Prospect Park.

The diverse book list — which includes nonfiction history books, novels that feature letter-writing, and picture books about the mail — aims to educate a wide range of readers, Carbone said.

“I tried to cover a full range of things so that there’s something for everyone,” she said. “We even have a couple of murder mysteries featuring mail workers.”

One of Carbone’s favorite books from the collection is “Because Amelia Smiled,” a picture book by David Ezra Stein about a girl whose smile inspires her neighbor to send cookies to her grandson in Mexico, spurring a domino effect of good deeds around the world.

The list also includes favorites from other library workers, who sent their book recommendations to Carbone, she said.

“I started the list and then I was able to ask my colleagues for suggestions,” she said. “Some colleagues recommended picture books that I didn’t know we had in our own collection or featured the post office.”

The book list also provides a way to learn about the current political climate that’s less overwhelming than reading the news, Carbone said.

“I think right now it’s important to stay informed, but because the news is coming out at everyone so quickly, it’s hard to stay plugged in,” she said. “It’s a way to stay informed without having to constantly be glued to social media or the news cycle.”