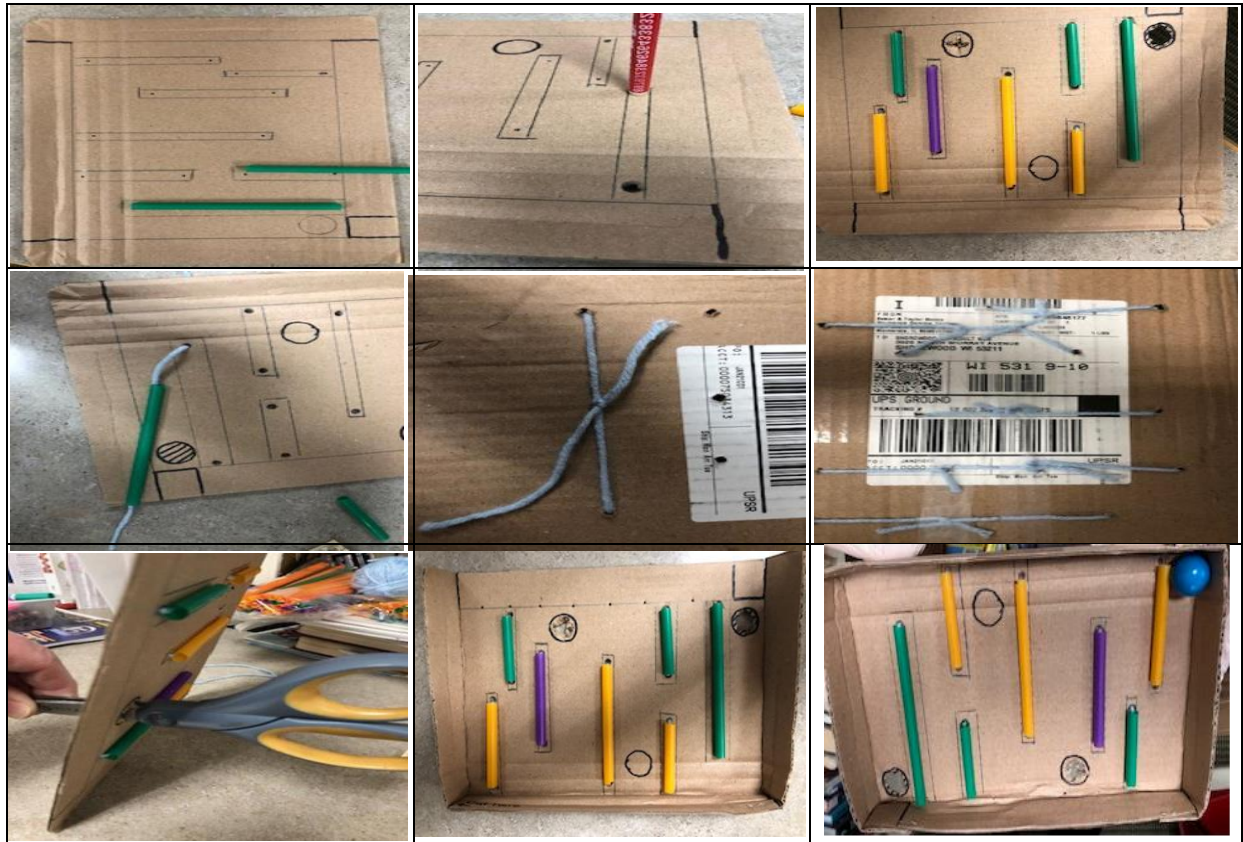This is Ms. Susan from the Shorewood Public Library. It can be difficult to be creative and find some fun during these long, winter days. I have an amazing game to make and play that will keep you thinking, balancing, and a little puzzled. It will have elements of a design process, executing or making the design, and finally, testing the design. The fun will be getting the ball to the end, following the path, and not jumping out of the box. Are you up to the challenge?

1-On a rectangular piece of cardboard (maybe a cereal box) or thick paper, draw a border around the outside edge about an inch wide. Draw lanes, the width of a straw, from the two long sides of the board. Leave enough space for a marble or small ball to move through. It is fine to have just a few lanes if it is your first try with a maze. Use the end of a sharp pencil to make holes at each end of a lane. When you have all the lanes ready, cut pieces of yarn or string twice as long as each lane. Cut a straw the same length as each of the lanes. Thread the yarn through one of the holes in the first lane, then through the straw. Now thread the yarn through the opposite hole, through to the back of the board. Turn the board over and tie the two ends together to keep the straw tight on the board. Do the same for each of the lanes. You can tape over the knots on the back to make it more secure.

2-Draw a circle on one end, just inside the border. If you really want a challenge, draw a few more holes along the path near the sides. Use the tip of the pencil, to put holes around the circles you have drawn. Gently, punch or cut out the circles. Smooth the edges of the hole by twisting the whole end of the scissors around inside of it. To finish the board, cut small slits in each corner on the long side into the border. Fold each side up and staple it together to form a box. Drop in a marble, small ball or even a gumball to follow the path from one end to the other, until it falls through the hole. Carefully!

Have an A-maze-zing week!

Ms. Susan