



GALESBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

YEAR IN REVIEW

2021

40 East Simmons Street
Galesburg, Illinois

309.343.6118
galesburglibrary.org



MISSION

To serve the community as a general center of information, and to provide opportunity and encouragement for people to use its services and materials to meet their educational, personal, professional, recreational, and cultural needs.



VISION

By providing equitable services to all library users, the Galesburg Public Library will enhance the educational, personal, professional, recreational, and cultural opportunities for all Galesburg residents, increasing job preparedness, lessening the burden of poverty, cultivating empathy and understanding, and improving the quality of life for the Galesburg community.



EQUITY OPPORTUNITY COMMUNITY INDEPENDENCE



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Progress. It is difficult to recognize in the moment whether one is moving in the right direction or even moving at all. The distance traveled isn't apparent until the end of the journey. Only now, after 2021 has ended, can we see how great our strides were. Our new building is on the way. Our website has been redesigned. Our resources are accessible to more people, thanks to the elimination of late fees and a path for individuals experiencing homelessness to qualify for library cards. And we've learned a lot about how to better serve our community.

Most importantly, we're still here, thanks to you. Our volunteers, donors, cheerleaders, partners, Friends, Foundation, and Trustees provide the support and direction we need to move forward, even when those movements look different from what we had planned.

-Noelle Thompson, Director

FROM THE BOARD

The Cambridge dictionary chose "perseverance" as its word of the year for 2021. Perseverance was certainly characteristic of the director and staff of the Galesburg Public Library during the last year. For a time the building may not have been open, but the library was never altogether closed. Even when the physical library was unavailable our curbside pickup continued to operate, moving inside to convenient shelving just inside the back doors when we reopened.

More recently, with the help of Travis Downs, our new technology and employment specialist, our computer resources have become a lifeline for people applying for jobs and doing their first Zoom interviews. The Board of Trustees of the Galesburg Public Library is proud of the staff and the skill with which they have maintained library services in the current building while planning for the construction of the new building.

-Laurie Muelder, President, Board of Trustees

TAKING SERVICES OUTSIDE, OFFSITE, & ONLINE



In 2021, we combined the creativity of our staff, the flexibility of our users, and the collaboration of our partners to create unique services and experiences. We moved programs to the Storybook Garden, delivered books to residents unable to visit us, transformed book clubs into Digital Discourse, and kept you reading with our online challenges and at the Standish Park StoryWalk.

"How you
have managed
to work
around the
pandemic,
keep us safe,
and still get us
what we need
is fantastic."

GPL patron



Curbside pickup provided access to books and other resources like our printing and faxing services. Our holds pickup has now moved back into the building but still offers quick, easy, and contactless access to all of our circulating materials.

Curbside pickup also allowed us to offer take-and-make crafts, self-care kits, book giveaways, and program supplies.



"I just wanted to thank you for continuing to provide books to patrons during the pandemic. Your service to the community is much appreciated."

GPL patron

Throughout the spring, the library offered in-person services via appointment. Patrons scheduled visits to use computers, view our microfilm, copy documents, or seek assistance from a librarian.

Requests for information and research assistance may still be made to our children's, teen, and adult services librarians and our archivist by phone, email, or Facebook Messenger, or in person.



BY THE NUMBERS

From March 17, 2020 through today, library staff have repeatedly and continuously provided alternative services to meet the informational needs of users.

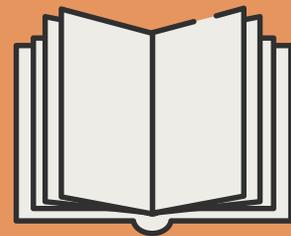
These 2021 statistics are just one small snapshot of the library's impact on the community.

922



new card
holders

137,509



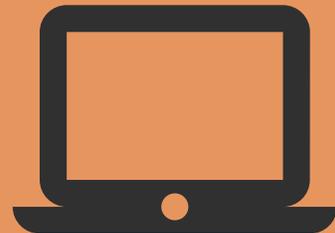
items
borrowed

27,432



questions
answered

3,778



hours of public
internet use

11,651



program
attendees

19,272



Wi-Fi
sessions

A COMMUNITY THAT SERVES



Above: Lions and Tigers of Bethel Cub Scout Troop 317 donate items for the blessing box.

Below: Teen Advisory Board members join the Downtown Community Cleanup Day.



Part of the library's mission is to serve the community, and in 2021 we saw countless instances of our community members serving each other. From cleaning up downtown to packing the blessing box to knitting winter gear, our library users improved our city and helped our neighbors.

Volunteers supported library services by working for 806 hours in 2021! Many of those hours were spent on the Friends of the Library book sale.

Winter gear made or donated by library users is available to anyone in need.



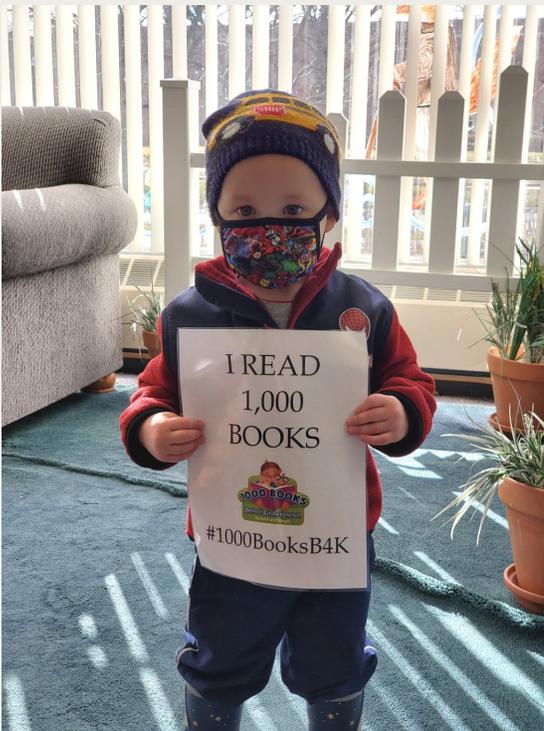
REASONS TO CELEBRATE



Despite the challenges of the pandemic, GPL found many reasons to celebrate. We were able to resume some favorite programs, like gingerbread house building (left), and we returned to normal hours and full services. Special events like the Big Read, Summer Reading, and Ghosts of Galesburg were executed with both in-person and virtual components.

GPL celebrated enhanced access to services in 2021 when the library board voted to eliminate late fees and to provide an avenue for individuals experiencing homelessness to qualify for library cards.

Fine free!



Left: Nathan celebrates completing 1,000 books before kindergarten.



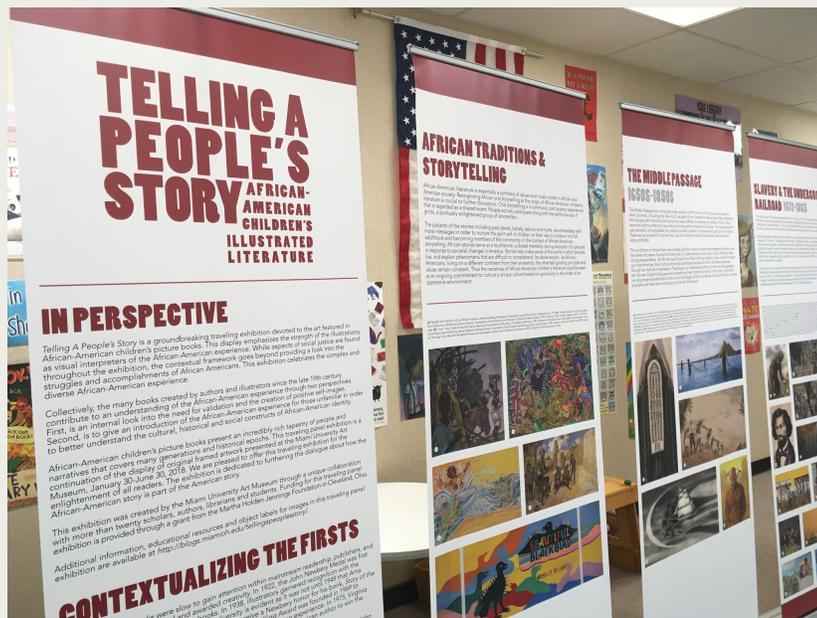
Right: Josie wins a prize basket during the Summer Reading finale.

REASONS TO CELEBRATE

Our programs and services were enhanced in 2021 thanks to several special gifts and grants. For the fourteenth year, GPL received the the Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The 2021 Big Read book was *In the Time of the Butterflies* (right) by Julia Alvarez.

In July, *The Galesburg Register-Mail* donated years' worth of photos, documents, and artifacts to the library's Archives & Special Collections.

Thanks to the Communities for Immunity Grant and partnership with Knox County Health Department, Cottage Hospital, OSF Medical Center, and CommunityGlo, the library offered a vaccine clinic while providing a free meal and information about the COVID-19 vaccines.



left: The children's room hosts the travelling panel exhibit, "Telling a People's Story: African-American Children's Illustrated Literature"

"Thank you for the spectacular services you always provide, especially now. Everyone has been fantastically amazing!"

GPL patron

BUILDING A LIBRARY CONNECTING A COMMUNITY

In March 2021, GPL was awarded a grant from the Illinois State Library totaling \$15.3 million for the construction of a new building.

The Galesburg Public Library Foundation kicked off the capital campaign in May, and by the end of the year, raised over \$2.5 million of their \$3.75 million goal.

In December, the Galesburg Community Foundation announced a match grant to build a community room. For every \$2 given, GCF will give \$1, up to \$350,000.

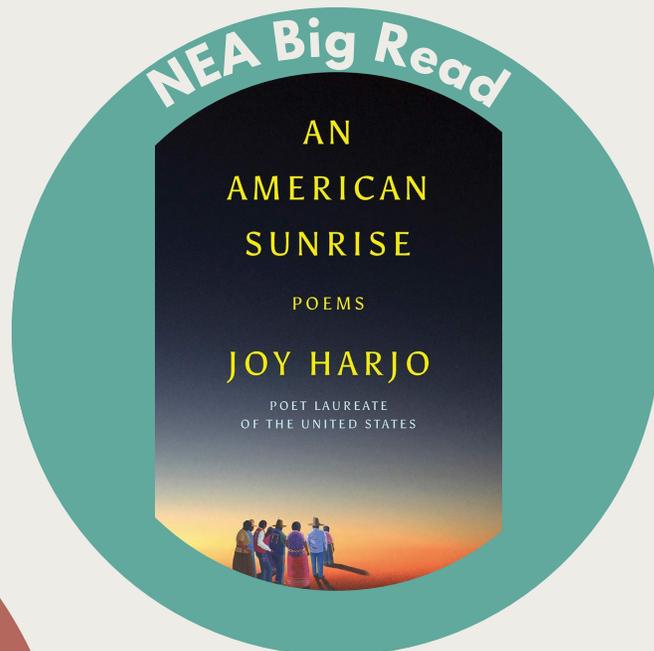


Above: Warren and Vada discover the future site of GPL.

Below: The two-story building will be located at 264 W. Main St.



What to expect in 2022



Construction begins!



Opportunities to give

