

Report to the Community

2021/2022



South Shore
Public Libraries
TURNING PAGES SINCE 1972

Mission Vision Values

MISSION

South Shore Public Libraries celebrates reading, discovering, learning, and sharing.

VISION

South Shore Public Libraries is a vital centre of the community, sharing a robust collection and innovative technology, that inspires life long learning and literacy in a positive welcoming environment.

EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

South Shore Public Libraries Board believes that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our community's identity. Libraries have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that recognizes diversity and fosters social inclusion. Libraries strive to deliver inclusive service. South Shore Public Libraries Board recognizes and energetically affirms the dignity of all people we serve.

South Shore Public Libraries is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and inclusive community in which all people, including borrowers, employees, and volunteers, feel welcomed and can thrive. We are committed to providing equitable access to all facets of the library experience and providing the resources that further these objectives.

Creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive community is an ongoing and evolving process. The Board, employees and volunteers challenge ourselves to do this work on a personal and institutional level, with empathy and mutual respect.

Board Chair Message

It's once again my pleasure and honour to bring greetings and remarks on behalf of the South Shore Public Libraries Board of Directors.

I want to begin by acknowledging that our public libraries are located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded home of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all Treaty People and as we strive toward the goals of Truth and Reconciliation this year, next year, and for generations to come, it is important that we always remember this.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of our four branches, our mobile branch, and our headquarters office. The past year has presented us with a number of challenges, internally and externally, and I applaud each of you for your continued dedication to the provision of library services and to our communities. You are South Shore Public Libraries.

More than ever, public libraries are providing a vital service to each and every one of our residents. No longer are we simply repositories of information and stories. The public library of the 21st Century is a community cultural resource; a safe and brave space for individuals from all backgrounds; a place to meet, and gather, and grow; and, for many, a place to access modern technology, such as the internet, on a daily basis. As we grapple with the new realities of inflation and the rising costs of living, the past year has served to underscore that the services we provide are becoming critical and fundamentally necessary for more and more of our residents.

Beyond our direct service to the public, over the past year SSPL has also had the opportunity to continue the work of improving our organization from within. The Board has approved an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan that was developed in consultation with members of the BIPOC community here on the South Shore. We have increased the diversity of our Board, as we work to ensure the perspectives of all members of our communities here in Lunenburg and Queens are represented and have voice in our decision-making processes. Going forward, we also have committed to working with our staff to regularly review and revise our internal policies, such as the Respectful Workplace Policy, to ensure that staff can work safely and confidently.

No organization that serves the public should ever be static or satisfied. Indeed, as poet Alice Oswald said, we have to keep our senses awake to all the complacency that kicks in. We should always strive to find ways to improve upon ourselves and pathways to better serve our communities. Embracing that kind of mantra is part of what makes our library service so strong and our organization so very vital. I look forward to seeing where it leads us in the years to follow.



Acting CEO Message

This has been another year of uncertainty and fear, as Covid-19 continues to play havoc with our lives and world events of turmoil and tragedy unfold.

In times like this it may seem like the public library is a small thing... but in fact it is quite the opposite. Supplying up-to-date information, providing access to lines of communication with loved ones across the globe, and serving as distribution points for masks and test kits in support of public health – plus offering some respite from the stress and exhaustion we're all suffering from through books, movies, and safely-led activities - nowhere else can this be done, for everyone, at the same time and place. In and of themselves they may seem to be small acts, but the cumulative effect is tremendous, and adds up to become a great feat of providing comfort, relief, and hope to our families, friends, neighbours, coworkers - our communities.

I would like to thank the members of our Board, staff, and volunteers for their courage and dedication to library service. It is a privilege to work with such fantastic people who believe in the strength of our community and the role the public library plays in the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of everyone here on the South Shore.

It can be challenging to maintain a sense of hope and optimism as the waves of uncertainty surge all around us, but the Library is there for you, and always will be. With your help, we will all weather the storm together, safe and sound.



SSPL is celebrating fifty years of public library service this fall, and looking forward to the next fifty years. We've grown immensely since 1972, and these last couple of years are a testament to our resilience, both as a library and as a community. Take a walk down memory lane with us as we look back on where we've been and what we've done. Then take out your crystal ball and share your vision of what the future will bring. This is your library – let's see what wonders we can build together!

Jeff Mercer

Introducing the New Bookmobile



Our new, more accessible bookmobile officially hit the road in August continuing almost 50 years of rural library service in our region.

The custom-made, Canadian built bookmobile replaced the older model retrofitted school bus that served the area for more than 10 years, crisscrossing our two counties and accumulating close to 300,000 kilometres. Like its older predecessor, the new bookmobile is the only one of two in operation across Nova Scotia and the only one that is custom-made.

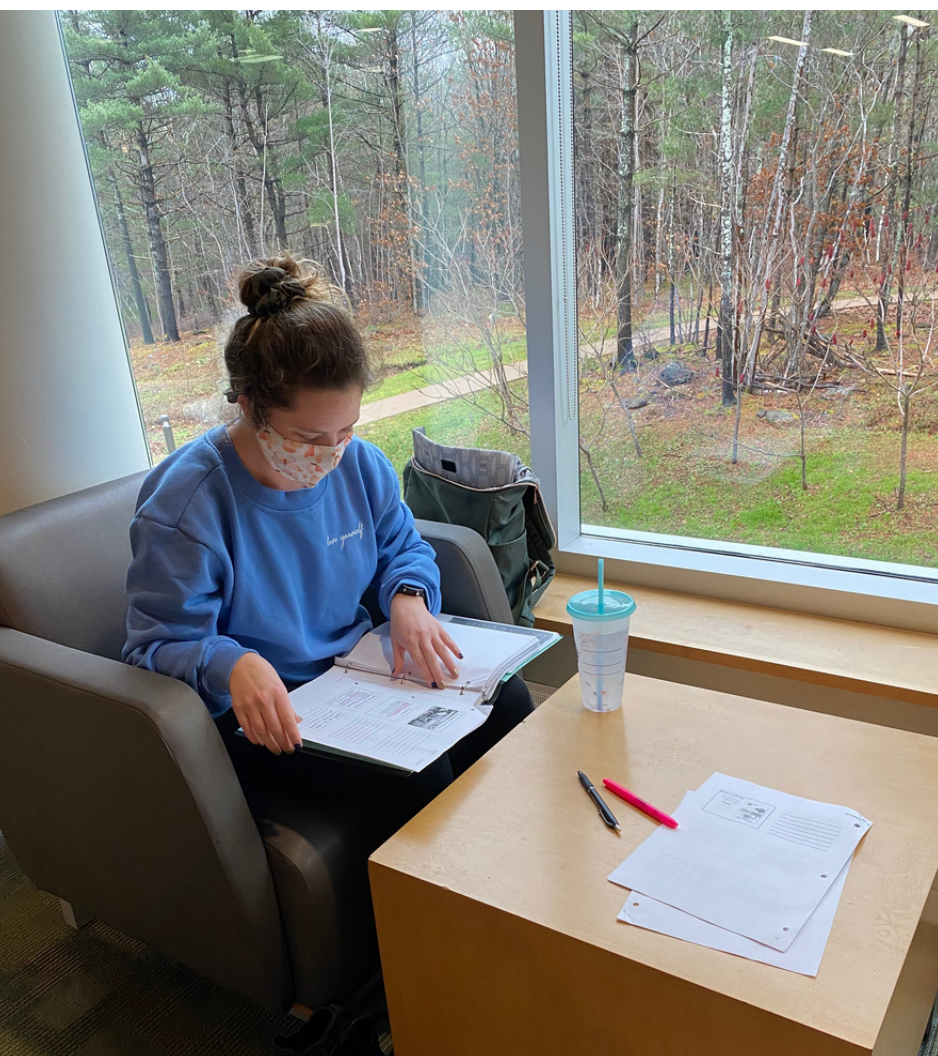


During the last year two years our priority has been providing safe service during the pandemic. This has meant getting books and other library materials to our bookmobile patrons at times on a modified schedule and allowing fewer people on board. We were thrilled to be back on track with full service and being able to welcome users on board.

Instead of a modified bus, the new bookmobile is put together from the chassis up, specifically designed for serving library borrowers. It was built by ITB, based in Coaldale, Alberta.



Anybody stepping aboard the new Bookmobile will notice not only the bright and inviting interior, lit by LED lights and natural light, but also rows of shiny new books, DVDs, magazines, audiobooks and more for all ages. The new Bookmobile is helping us to better fulfill our mission at South Shore Public Libraries to celebrate reading, discovering, learning and sharing.





Location Updates

Bridgewater, Lunenburg Bookmobile



Margaret Hennigar Public Library, Bridgewater
Katherine Sharp, Branch Coordinator

2021 has been the year of adjustment. We are all trying to adjust to the new normal. Public Health restrictions meant that we had to change how we did programming. We were able to provide take home science and art kits and offer in person programming for smaller amounts of people. We were, however, able to offer a summer camp by taking advantage of our great outdoor space and offer a full roster of regular fall and winter programs.

A highlight for the branch this year was March Break; we had over 400 people attend our programs during the week. We had smaller attendance limits but offered more sessions. All of the kids were used to protocols and everyone was so respectful to each other.

This year marked four years of the Monarch Program at MHPL, we raised and released over 50 Monarch butterflies in 2021. This year also marks the 8th year of community art displays thanks to the local talented artists that have been willing to share their works in the library space.

A special thank you to our hard-working volunteers, who were so eager to get back to work as soon as were able to welcome them back.

Bookmobile **Crystal Madill, Branch Coordinator**

Like the rest of the library system we were curbside pickup only in April and May returning to in person regular service in mid May. The new Bookmobile arrived on July 19, the new collection was loaded it and its maiden voyage was July 28th. The grand opening August 5th in Mahone was very well attended even though it poured rain.

The Summer Reading program had a new twist with story times in New Ross, Barss Corner and New Germany. Thank you to our loyal borrowers who were super supporters of the Gift-A-Book campaign again this year. Through all of the service disruptions this year borrowers did not waiver.



Lunenburg Library, Lunenburg
Holly Sweet, Branch Coordinator

Although programs were postponed at the beginning of the year due to the pandemic, some of our regular programming such as Crafty Hands, Intuitive Drumming and Dungeons & Dragons started in June. Summer was busy for kids with summer camps, birding, pen pals, zine workshop and button making. Adults kept busy with poetry workshops and painting,

In person programming continued in the fall with guided meditation, composting and recycling presentations, Crafty Hands, drumming and watercolours and Spot of Poetry. Thank you to the many special guests who shared their skills and passions throughout the fall. The libraries also became a spot to pick up rapid test kits. A spike in covid cases kept programming down in the new year but Crafty Hands, Needle-felting and drumming groups continued to meet.

March Break was busy with button-making, birding, rainbow collage poetry, monster-making, zine-making and a breakout box! Spring saw the return of pre-primaries to Story Time, Art Space for teens, Moving Stories, needle-felting, origami Magic and D&D.

We're committed to serving our community to the best of our ability. We look forward to another year of serving you!

Location Updates

Liverpool, Greenfield



Thomas H. Raddall Library, Liverpool **David Trueman, Branch Coordinator**

Over the past year, the branch has had a great range of programs to entertain and educate kids; story times, science experiments, and arts and crafts activities let kids explore the world around them, play, and express themselves.

Our Summer programming this year included arts, crafts and science programs and camps that featured indoor and outdoor games. The annual TD Summer Reading Club encouraged kids to read throughout the summer. A highlight this year was an interactive art installation, "The Giant Book", by local artist Tanya Barnett, which engaged minds, both young and old!

March Break saw a great attendance at kids activities, which included an escape room, button making, clay modelling, rock painting, slime and live music from Danny and Steve of East Coast Kitchen Party.

The branch has continued to provide a diverse range of programs for adults, which has included our regular favourites French Conversation, Rug Hooking, Fibrecraft, Chair Yoga, Sewing Help, Bread Club, Tech Help for Seniors and the Raddall Reading Club. We also offered monthly information sessions from our community partners; Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Queens County Transit, Second Story Women's Centre, and NS Sexual Health.

We had a wonderful range of presentations at the branch throughout the year and we'd like to thank our program presenters who give so much of their time: Barry Walker, Karen Millar, Angela Taylor, Oren Hercz, Mary White, Rachel Jessup, Gillian Wu, Sheena Masson, Janice Rand, Bev Crouse, Jenn Meister, Vernon Oickle, Cathy Stitt, and Agnes Moase.

I look forward to a new year of fun and informative programs, community events and planning for a new library!



Alean Freeman Library, Greenfield **Charity Fraser, Branch Coordinator**

We saw many new faces at the library this year while giving out rapid test kits. While most folks just came in for the test kits several signed up for cards and have become regular patrons.

In the summer we ran Summer Reading Club programming and Pride button making. In October we hosted local author Vernon Oickle who shared ghost stories to get us ready for Halloween.

Virtual programming has continued this year, partnering with the Municipality of Chester to host a virtual Social Justice Book Club. Anime Club continues twice a month with a regular attendees. Charity was also invited to help run an in-person Anime Club at Bayview school, which was extremely well attended.

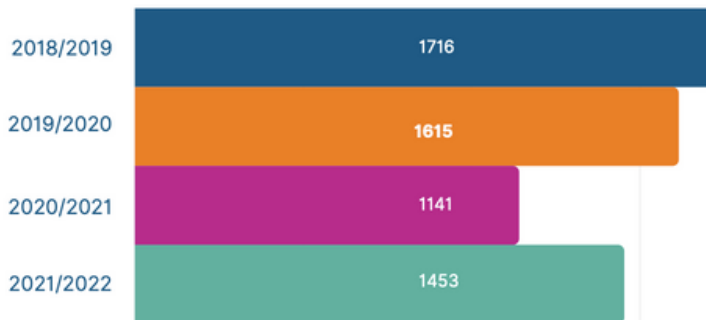
Four new volunteers started at the branch this winter. Over the past couple of years we have lost several volunteers due to health concerns or moving away, so it has been great to have our numbers up again. We have such a great group of volunteers here, their work is invaluable!



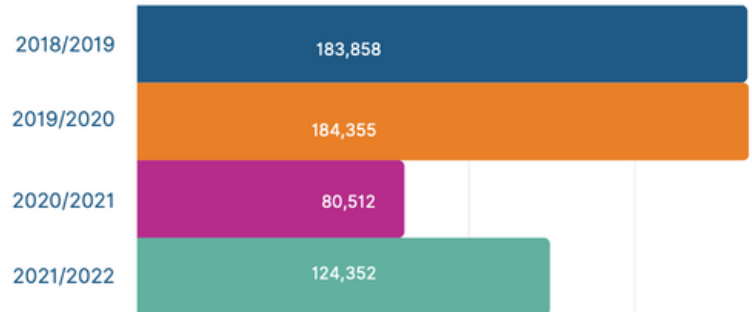
Year To Year Comparison



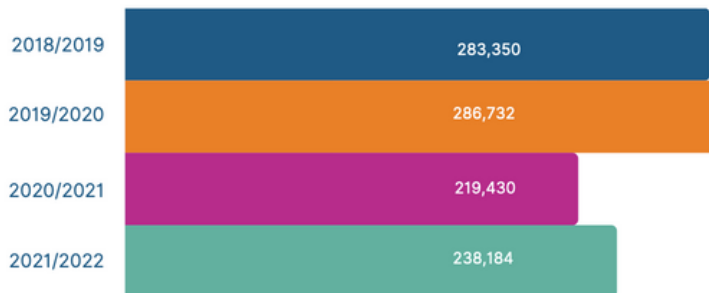
New Members



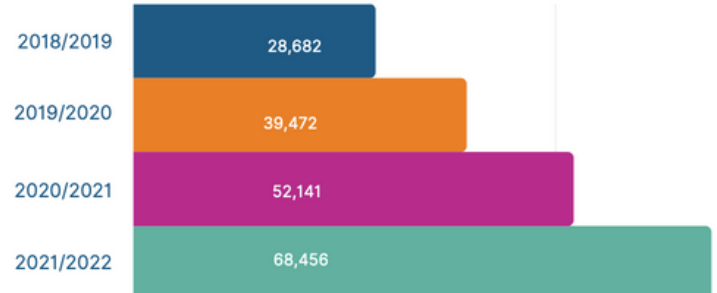
Visits to the Library



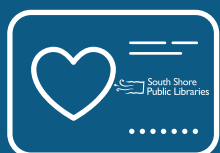
Items Checked Out



Hours of Free WiFi Provided



By The Numbers



1,453

new library cards



124,253

in person visits



238,184

items checked out



35,960

digital items borrowed



68,456

hours of free WiFi



93,578

website visits



16,066

questions answered



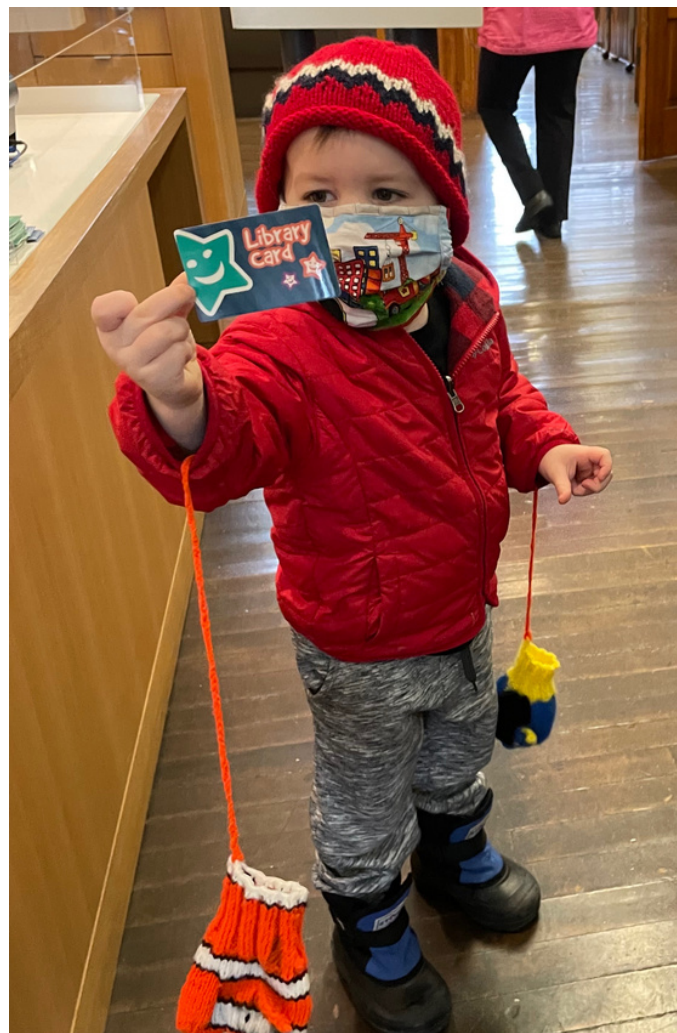
people attended a program

5332



programs hosted

1157





Community Engagement Update



Christina Pottie Communications and Engagement Lead

The continuance of the global pandemic had a marked effect on our libraries and communities again this year, and not all of them were negative. Helping people book vaccination appointments, print proof of vaccination records, and fill out required travel documents brought many people into the library and allowed us to elevate our position as a vital community resource. Being the main spot for people to get rapid test kits has also brought thousands of people into our libraries. Many came for the tests but stayed for the card!

Our Caring Calls telephone project has helped vulnerable community members connect with us and thanks to a generous grant from Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia we were able to continue offering this service in 2021.

The Lunenburg Lit Festival continues to be our marquee public event and we hosted another spectacular weekend featuring a diverse selection of writers from across the province. Writers and readers alike were thrilled to be attending a live event even with attendance limits in effect. During the year we also hosted several authors and speakers at all of our branches – it was gratifying to see people trust us to create events using health and safety protocols that kept us all safe.

We made strides this year to reach the province's goal of being universally accessible by 2030. We formed a community based Accessibility Advisory Committee and worked towards creating a prescribed public sector accessibility framework and plan. With a grant from ACCESS-Ability NS we were able to install an accessible workstation at our Bridgewater, Liverpool, and Lunenburg locations.

Another area of community work we have been making great strides on is in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion. In conjunction with community input we have created an action plan that we are updating quarterly. Our board passed an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion statement that they passed in January of 2022, this statement includes a call to action for our Board, employees and volunteers to challenge ourselves to carry out this work on a personal and institutional level, with empathy and mutual respect.

Thank You

We know that SSPL is a cherished community resource, and it wouldn't be possible without the continued support and the generous donations from our borrowers, staff, board members, community groups and corporations.

Without your generosity, amounting to \$27,000 in gifts, we wouldn't be able to make meaningful connections that South Shore residents rely on.

It is thanks to the kindness of our donors that we're able to lay the foundation of learning for so many.

2021 Major Donors

Anne MacLaren

Anonymous Donors

Community Foundation of Nova Scotia

Harold McGee

Sibley Medical Incorporated

Karen Hanson

South Shore Hospice Society

Lynn Hennigar

Gift a Book Donors

Thank you to South Shore Public Libraries 2021 funders:
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, Municipality of Chester,
Region of Queens, Town of Bridgewater, Town of Lunenburg,
Town of Mahone Bay, and the Province of Nova Scotia.



Report to the Community

2021/2022

LOCATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE & BOOKMOBILE

135 North Park
Street
Bridgewater NS
B4V 9B3

902-543-2548

ALEAN FREEMAN LIBRARY

5060 Highway 210
Greenfield, NS
B0T 1E0

902-685-5400

LUNENBURG LIBRARY

97 Kaulbach Street
Lunenburg NS
B0J 2C0

902-634-8087

MARGARET HENNIGAR PUBLIC LIBRARY

135 North Park
Street
Bridgewater, NS
B4V 9B3

902-543-9222

THOMAS H. RADDALL LIBRARY

145 Old Bridge
Street
Liverpool, NS
B0T 1K0

902-354-5270

BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick Hirtle
Cynthia Bruhm
Councillor Jenni Birtles
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Stacey Colwell
Councillor Tina Connors
Councillor Michelle Greek
Cathy LeBlanc
Marie Hogan Loker
Diane Racette
Tom Sheppard
Wilma Stewart-White
Mark Taylor
Kara Turner

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jeff Mercer	Acting Chief Librarian
Lynn Robart	Executive Assistant
Christina Pottie	Communications & Engagement



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