

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

SOUTH SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARIES



South Shore
Public Libraries
TURNING PAGES SINCE 1972

2023

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.





A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

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.

The past year has been a time of change here at South Shore Public Libraries. We've seen a change in leadership in our organization, and the cascading wave of energy that change has brought to our staff team, our Board, and the organization as a whole has been vital and invigorating. If you're reading this message then chances are you're one of our library patrons.

People like you continue to help demonstrate to our provincial and municipal funding partners, as well as our private supporters, just how important library services continue to be for folks from all walks of life.

South Shore Public Libraries is thriving because of you – and in a world where the cost of everything seems to be spiralling perpetually upward, to be able to offer free or low-cost programming and universal access to knowledge is more critical than ever.

In more than a decade of writing remarks for annual reports, to my recollection I've never done anything like this – but, as I type today, I'd like to offer each of you a challenge for the coming year:

Each time you cross the threshold and enter one of our branches, or climb aboard our beloved bookmobile, take a moment as you do so and thank one of our amazing staff members for the important work that they do.

Those working for SSPL are invaluable and dedicated members of each of our communities. They strive together each day to promote our common and collective good, to engage us, and to ensure that we are continuously talking to and learning from each other.

Over the past three years, through the pandemic and as we now tip-toe into the mid-2020s, our staff have been true leaders in supporting and building up our citizens. The backbone of our organization, coming to work is more than just a job to them and, as such, they deserve the utmost thanks for everything they contribute to our communities.

PATRICK (PAT) HIRTLE

BOARD CHAIR



ACTING CHIEF LIBRARIAN

50 years! 50 years of public library service on the South Shore, and we're still going strong!

A group of likeminded folks got together in 1972 with the goal to achieve quality library service and good books to read for the people of Lunenburg. This idea quickly spread to a library in Bridgewater and a bookmobile for rural residents. Story time for the kids was probably part of the plan, as I'm sure were community book clubs to discuss the popular titles of the day and reference services supporting local researchers. I think they'd all be astonished, and proud, to see the Library of today, with our gardening clubs, meditation classes, art workshops, knitting circles, afterschool tutoring, 3D printing, downloadable ebooks, cooking clubs, computer classes, internet safety courses, Lego robotics, board game collections, and the Lunenburg Lit Festival – and that's just a small sample of what is on offer at your local library in Lunenburg and Queens Counties, 50 years from when we started!

Looking forward, we know we will continue to work with our borrowers and local organizations of all types to expand our services, build and improve our collections, and offer programs for all ages and interests. If you have ideas or suggestions for what you'd like to see at the library, let us know! I'd also like to take this moment to extend a very warm welcome new members to the SSPL team – Office & Finance Manager Alisa Hemeon, and CEO/Chief Librarian Ashley Nunn-Smith. Their guidance will be invaluable as we continue to grow and improve our service.

It may be hard to see exactly what the future will hold, but I know one thing for certain – the shared vision that started it all, of a public library providing great service and good books to read, will always to be at the heart of everything we do!

JEFF MERCER

ACTING CHIEF LIBRARIAN



Puppet Time

THEATRE

"Thank you
for your
contribution
to a healthy
community!"

Message From Borrower Written
on Christmas Thank You Tree





LOCATION UPDATES

Lunenburg

The Lunenburg branch has had a special focus this year on creative arts programs that foster health and well-being.

A couple of very popular kids programs have been Cursive Writing for Beginners and Open Art Table. Additionally, from January to May, our paper-snipped story teller Tanya Barnett has graciously created several beautiful art displays for the wall and windows.

It's been a busy and successful year with many new faces and great community building. We look forward to continuing with this momentum in the year ahead, with more creative programs, special guests, music, meditation and other healthy living programs, while continuing to be a gathering space for various community groups and growing in our role as a community hub.

Bookmobile

This has been a year of adjustments. People were still trying to re-enter communal unrestricted life after the global pandemic. Circulation of items continues to increase as patrons become more comfortable with using the new SamePage catalogue. The Bookmobile attended the SSPL 50th Anniversary Party at the Lunenburg Academy and welcomed many new faces aboard.

Continuing a year of adjusting we had two long time Bookmobile crew members retire,- clerk Karen Cook after 25 years of service, and driver Dave White retired after piloting our series of Bookmobiles since 1983. We wish them all the best.

Thomas H. Raddall, Liverpool

The Thomas H. Raddall Library challenges itself to be a vital part of the Queens County community, providing a range of services to our patrons so that they may be better served, informed and entertained.

Keeping the public informed is a crucial part of what we do. The branch has hosted several information sessions with our community partners.

The branch is firmly rooted in the community we serve and those beyond. We have provided complimentary meeting space for several not-for-profit and volunteer groups, and strive to be a safe space for all.

We wish to thank our, staff, presenters and community partners for all of the hard work and dedication to the branch and our borrowers.





Margaret Hennigar, Bridgewater

The Margaret Hennigar location has had a lot of new staff members for borrowers to meet this year. Branch Coordinator Katherine Sharp left for a new career opportunity in September and Sophia Hopkins took over that role in November. We were excited to see so many familiar faces come back in full force this year and delighted to see a whole host of new ones.

We continue to strive to be a welcoming, safe space for everyone.

The staff at Margaret Hennigar Public Library appreciate the support of all the people that come through our doors to read, use the computers, play, learn, visit their neighbours, and work. Thank you to our hard-working volunteers who donate their time to get our shelves full.

Alean Freeman, Greenfield

The Alean Freeman branch is now back to regular open hours; Wednesday evenings and all day Saturday. We'd like to thank our regular patrons for their patience in waiting for this return to our regular hours, and we look forward to welcoming new borrowers.

Community Engagement

The main focus of community engagement this year has been to work on our strategic priority of creating welcoming, safe spaces for all. To do this we've been looking inward and outward. We have been making strides in staff development, guided by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action adopted by the Board in 2021; staff have independently completed two courses, we held an all-staff training session, and more courses are now in progress.

Community-focused engagement saw us participating in new leisure-based programming ventures, with Scrabble and chess clubs being established at two locations. We have also hosted several learning opportunities for adults this year, with highlights including an environmental series in Bridgewater, a local history series in Liverpool, and creative arts programming in Lunenburg.

Our premier community event, the Lunenburg Lit Festival, was somewhat derailed by Hurricane Fiona, but we did enjoy great participation in the three events that weather allowed. We had great fun with the Bookmobile as a community ambassador at the Gold River Pow Wow and as an entry in the Christmas on the Lahave Parade of Lights in Bridgewater. We also brought the old Bookmobile out of retirement to do month long visits at Aspotogan, Bridgewater Elementary, and New Germany Elementary.

It's been an enjoyable and fruitful year and we will continue to build connections in the community and work to meet new and ongoing needs in the year to come.

YEAR IN NUMBERS



2,203

new library cards



154,073

in person visits



323,721

items checked out



37,842

digital items borrowed



93,382

hours of free WiFi



137,340

website visits



15,979

questions answered



people attended a program

8,739



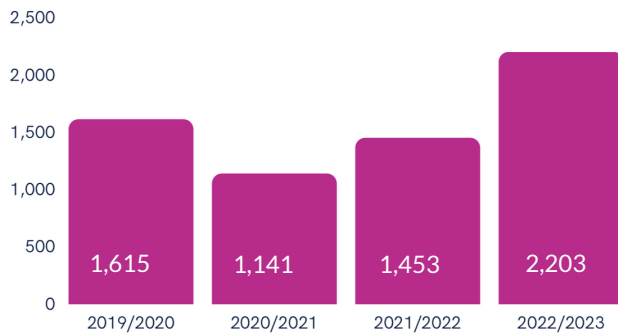
programs hosted

1,638

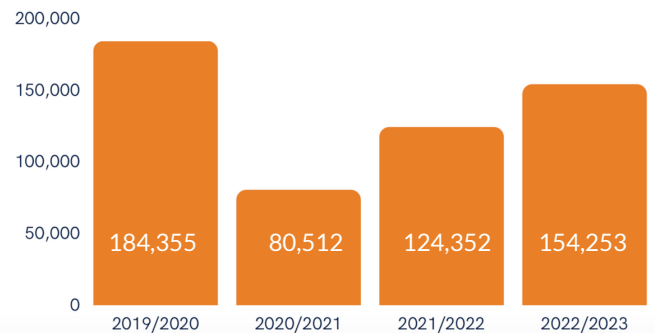


YEAR TO YEAR COMPARISON

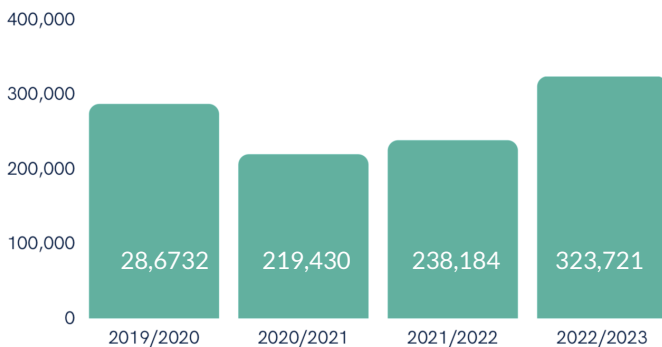
New Members



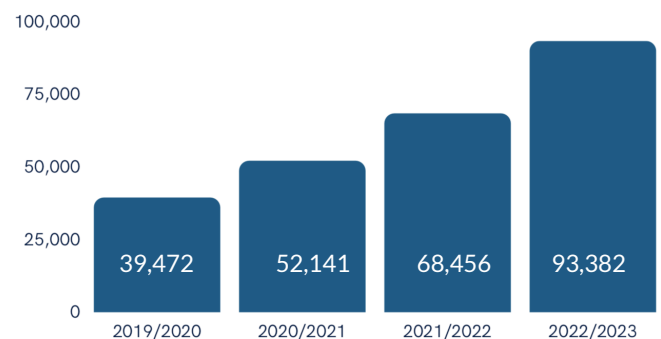
Visits to the Library



Items Checked Out



Hours of Free WiFi Provided



THANK YOU

We know that SSPL is a cherished community resource, and that 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 \$25,000 in gifts, we wouldn't be able to make the 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.

2022 Major Donors

Anonymous Donors

Bob Bent

Harold McGee

Karen Hansen

Literacy Association of Nova Scotia

Macroy Investments Limited

Mary Holt

Peter & Wenda Thompson

Sabine Gannon

Sibley Medical Incorporated

Suzanne Amos

WP Moore

Thank you to South Shore Public Libraries 2022 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.

