SPL Report to the Board

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2024
FROM: KRISTA ROBINSON, CEO | LIBRARY DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: 2023 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

BACKGROUND

Performance statistics are used to identify usage trend and inform operational decision making.

Data for 2023 is noted below and reports on the following measures:

- Monthly card usage
- Physical Circulation (direct and renewals) of all materials
- Digital Circulation (direct and renewals) of digital materials
- Reference queries
- Visitors to the library
- Programs (in-house and outreach) and attendance
- E-Services (website visits, select online database usage)

CONSIDERATIONS

Year-over-year comparisons are excellent at illustrating trends in library usage, but the data can be artificially affected by unexpected or unusual conditions (e.g., weather closures). The following conditions have affected performance data in this report:

COVID-19 Service Interruptions

- SPL closed on March 13, 2020 at 6pm to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Reopening began with limited curbside pickup on June 9. The library operated on reduced hours, offering a mix of open to the public by appointment alongside curbside hours from August until December 26, 2020 when Provincial regulations mandated the return to curbside service only.
- The Library reopened on February 22, 2021 for regular browsing and computer use with capacity restrictions while still offering curbside pickup. This level of service was in place until April 3 when all public libraries in Ontario were mandated to return to curbside service. During this shutdown, SPL offered computer use by appointment. SPL reopened at regular hours but at limited visitor capacity on July 5, 2021
- SPL began to offer printing and laminating of proof of vaccination cards for the public on September 15, 2021.
- December 29, 2021, SPL returned to curbside service, with reduced hours because of limited staff available due to the spread of COVID-19.
- SPL resumed regular service on January 25, 2022.
- 2023 was the first full year since 2019 where the Stratford Public Library did not experience any closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other Closures and Service Changes or Interruptions

- On April 18, 2019, the Ontario Library Service announced due to provincial funding cuts they would be ceasing the provincial InterLibrary Loan delivery service. Until then, PCIN used the ILLO delivery service to transport items borrowed between its libraries. Delivery between libraries was on a limited schedule using the PLOW van until early 2021 when PCIN secured its own delivery van and driver. ILLO between other Ontario libraries and universities was suspended until August 1, 2019.
- When the library reopened in 2021 after the COVID-19 shutdown, it upgraded its people counter system, automating the counting. Statistics prior to 2021 would not be an appropriate comparison.
- The children's floor was closed between February 28 - March 2, 2022 to recarpet half of the area.
- The library was closed from November 20-27, 2022 for recarpeting of the adult floor.
- While the library was temporarily fine free during the COVID-19 pandemic closures, it became officially Fine Free on April 4, 2022.
- Digital magazines were added into Overdrive (downloadLibrary / Libby) December 2020 providing access to thousands of additional titles.

MONTHLY CARD USAGE

The monthly card usage captures the number of cards used to check out physical materials or which are authenticated for digital services. Digital services may include borrowing digital collections, using certain library databases, or logging into the public computers.

Some cards are used by individuals while some are used by households so this is not an accurate number of library users.

Card usage continues to grow year over year. Average monthly usage in 2023 was up 5% over usage in 2019.

PHYSICAL CIRCULATION

Physical circulation and renewal of materials has surpassed preapandemic numbers for the second year in a row. In 2023, a total of 301,469 physical items were borrowed. This equates to 38.8 items borrowed per active card.

March, July and August continue to be the busiest months. This correlates with the higher number of visitors during these months.

DIGITAL COLLECTION CIRCULATION

Digital collection circulation covers the circulation of the library's ebook, audiobook, digital magazine, and streaming video collections. The second half of 2023 has seen a dramatic increase in usage of these collections. This may be attributed to increased awareness of digital magazines in downloadLibrary and a rise in usage of Kanopy for streaming video as the community attempts to cut costs to combat the higher inflation. Kanopy has seen a 19% increase in plays over 2022

VISITORS TO THE LIBRARY

Monthly visits to the library continue to grow year over year. March, July and August continue to be the busiest months of the year. This is due to the larger number of programs being offered and associated attendance. In total, 2023 had 134,884 visitors through the library's doors, a 23% increase over 2022. With the library being open 2,905 hours in 2023, this works out to 46.5 visitors per hour open.

REFERENCE

Reference covers the informational queries received by the staff at our information desks. Questions are received in person but also by email and phone. Questions cover general queries, but also technical support, readers advisory and more intensive research assistance.

The below statistics do not include the over 17,000 vaccination receipts printed and laminated by staff in 2021 and 2022.

PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH

Programming and outreach into the community is an integral part of the Stratford Public Library's service to the public. The events and programs offered are responsive to the interests and needs of the communities served. All programs are designed with measurable outcomes and evaluated regularly. The Library additionally reviews suggestions for events and programs, using various mechanisms to gather community input to assist in setting programming priorities and plans.

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adult	Session / Events	58	16	40	62	72
	Attendance	973	230	663	1,475	2,212
Children and Family	Session / Events	428	139	241	410	387
	Attendance	13,444	11,663	13,871	15,383	15,167
Teens	Session / Events	52	7	89	157	163
	Attendance	536	57	3,908	5,652	3,712
MakerSpace & Tech	Session / Events	250	114	198	234	274
	Attendance	2,042	5,202	1,081	1,645	2,962
Class Visits	Session / Events	55	6	17	68	132
	Attendance	1,501	164	392	2,844	4,273
Outreach	Session / Events	24	1	5	9	15
	Attendance	1,844	32	435	1,366	2,555
TOTALS	**Session / Events**	**867**	**283**	**590**	**940**	**1,043**
	Attendance	**20,340**	**17,348**	**20,350**	**28,365**	**30,881**

E-SERVICES

SPL offers a variety of online resources, including Kanopy (film); Gale Courses (online courses); PressReader (magazines and newspapers). Online databases include Ancestry (library edition), Mango Language Learning, and many other products. This is just a subset highlighting the more popular tools.

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ancestry Library	Searches	53,996	66,539	78,063	61,315	82,767
Beanstack	Activities		639	875	876	889
CreativeBug	Logins			1,180	898	955
Gale Courses	Logins	3,441	3,910	3,060	2,199	2,125
Kanopy	Views	5,978	7,226	8,179	5,886	7,078
Mango Languages	Logins		423	661	636	519
Press Reader	Uses			5,865	11,653	15,667
Tumblebooks	Uses		1,770	1,043	478	352
Website	Visits	135,330	121,332	158,410	149,139	149,541
TOTALS		**198,745**	**201,839**	**257,336**	**233,080**	**259,893**