



STRATFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Our Mission

We are an equitable, safe and welcoming community where everyone can explore, learn, create and be inspired.

Our Vision

We are a place where hope and wonder fly.

We envision a Library which connects people, inspires learning, literacy and curiosity; and sparks change for a better community.

2023 - 2026 Library Board

Michael Corbett - Chair
Mackenzie Kipfer - Vice Chair
Jo-Dee Burbach - City Council
Laurie Brown
Philip Connolly
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Dear Friends

Just when we thought we couldn't get any busier – we did! Stratford Public Library offered more services and programs in 2024 than ever before. We welcomed more than 144,000 visitors through our doors and a further 475,000 to our website. We also increased our membership to 11,300 card holders – that's the highest number it's been in over a decade!

Stratford is growing, and demand for library services are growing with it. In the Library Board's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, they committed to addressing the library's significant space needs. In March 2024, SPL requested to be considered as part of the Grand Trunk Renewal project. With the desire of the community to keep SPL downtown, the GTR is thought to be the perfect location for this to happen. In partnership with the YMCA of Three Rivers and the City of Stratford, this presents the best opportunity to define and enhance the Grand Trunk site as a true community hub for Stratford residents. While no decision has been made at this time, we continue to advocate and work towards providing a library that is the right size for our community.

SPL leveraged many partnerships with local organizations. By working together, we expanded our ability to build a stronger community. The Stratford-Perth Museum, Stratford Festival, the Rotary Club of Stratford, and the Kinsmen Club are just a few of the over 62 groups and organizations who have helped over the past year.

The amazing staff at the library enables us to do the amazing things we do – impacting both in our community and in the library sector. In 2024, three staff were recognized for their contributions. Melanie Kindrachuk was awarded the Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award by the Ontario Public Library Association and Sherri Bennewies and Lorraine Gordon were honoured with the Technical Services Award by the Ontario Library Association. We are so proud of them!

As we look forward, let us celebrate the achievements of 2024 and continue to build a future where Stratford Public Library stands as a beacon of knowledge, community, and endless possibilities.

We have many ambitions and ideas for improving public library services in Stratford. We know you do, too. Please don't hesitate to contact us and let us know what you would like to see more of, less of, or maybe things we could start or stop doing altogether. We aim to see this community reflected in everything we do, and to that end, your feedback is essential.



Krista Robinson
CEO / Library Director



Michael Corbett
Board Chair

**"Such a friendly place with helpful staff and a strong sense of community.
Good collection and they even have seeds for planting!"**

By the Numbers

You came, you browsed, you borrowed - a lot! Demand for library services in Stratford is strong and growing. Thank you for using the library!

465,176

materials circulated



Up 4%

44

items borrowed
per active
member



143,917

in person
visits

Up 7%



11,346

active card
holders

Up 6%

filled

73,096

requests



1,654

new library cards
issued

24,635

reference questions
were answered



Up 9%



11,604

public computer
sessions

Up 18%



13,772

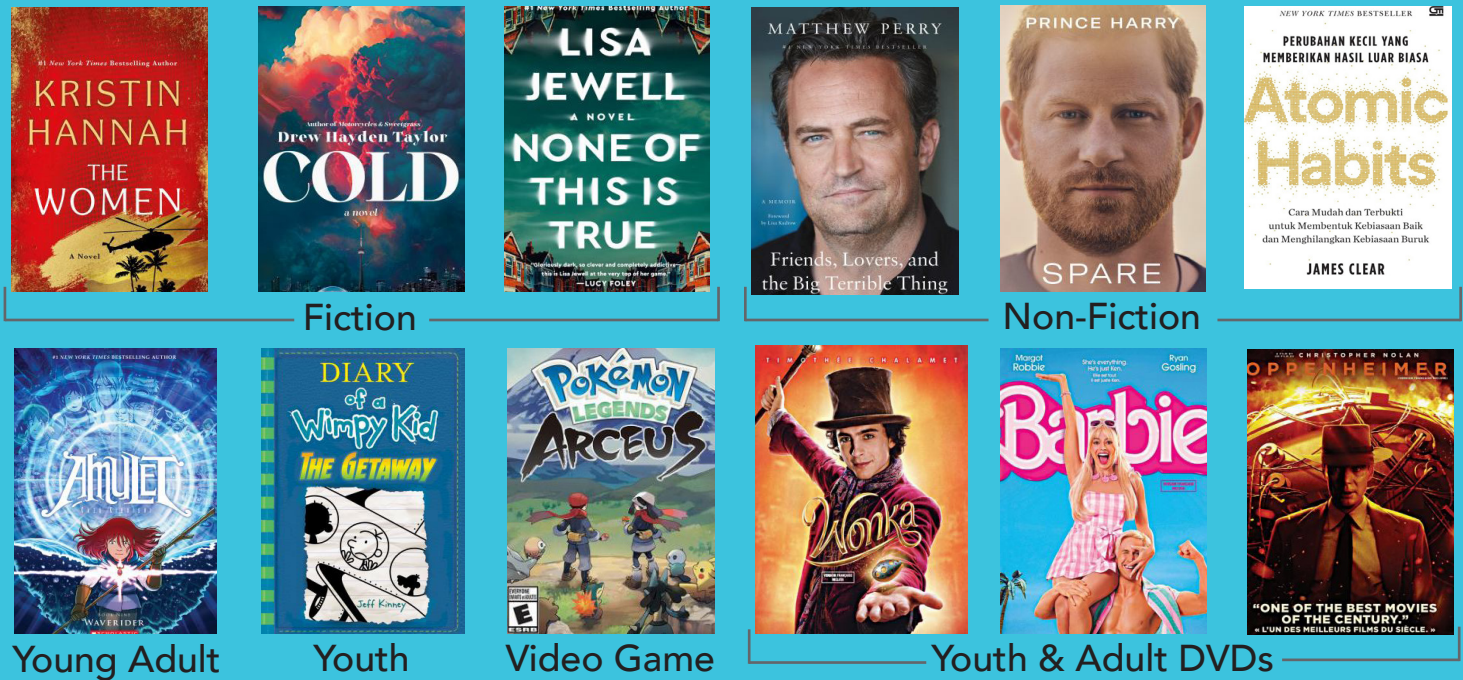
wifi connections

Up 11%

"I just listened to my 12th audiobook on Libby since the beginning of 2024...I think it's getting to be a slight obsession...LOL. So grateful for SPL!"

Your Favourites

The community's love for bestsellers and blockbusters was evident in 2024. Here are the most borrowed titles in various categories.



Community return on investment is **significant**.

In 2024, for each municipal dollar invested in the library, the social return on investment is **\$6.64**.
A total economic impact of \$19,343,872!

Calculated using the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit created by the Ontario Library Service and the NORDIK Institute.

"The Library seems to be the last bastion of truly committed public service."

Programs and Outreach

The library takes great pride in providing not just fun and entertaining programs and services, but also those which are impactful and educational. They support the community and change lives by providing community connections, engagement and inclusivity.



25,347 people attended **903** programs

3,026

residents met
with us at **13**
community events

1,828

people attended
77 STEAM
programs

5,192

students were
visited in **144** class
visits

Volunteers made

463

deliveries to people
who are unable to visit
the library

165

people were helped
by volunteer
Tech Tutors

71

newcomers were
helped at SPL by the
YMCA Settlement
Services program

"Our library is phenomenal and so well run. Very responsive to community needs with super staff. We are fortunate indeed"



2024 was another record breaking year!

1,163 kids took part in SPL's TD Summer Reading program.

In total, **7,003** people participated in **128** free summer programs!



Oldest daughter: "Dad, can we keep reading even after summer reading is over?"
Dad: "Of course we can, just because the summer is over doesn't mean the library closes..."

Youngest daughter: "That's right, the library is going to be here FOREVER!"

Celebrating Our Staff



In 2024, Melanie Kindrachuk was awarded the Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award by the Ontario Public Library Association for her contributions to the field.

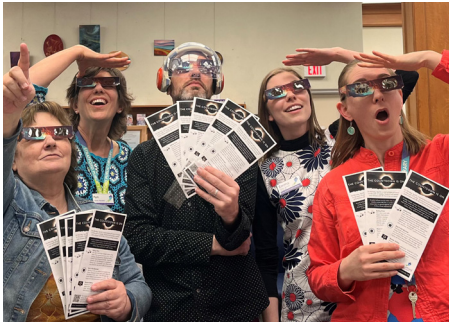
Sherri Bennewies and Lorraine Gordon were also honoured with the Technical Services Award by the Ontario Library Association. This was in recognition for their work updating Indigenous and LGBTQ+ subject headings in the catalogue.



"Staff are amazing! Always a great time. My kids tell everyone and they can't wait to share stories and memories. We liked that there was no cost as well as so many options for all ages. Really impressed."

2024 Highlights

We are always looking for new and exciting ways to meet our community's needs. Here are some of the many ways we supported you in 2024.



Eclipse Glasses

SPL offered free solar eclipse glasses to keep library patrons safe during the April 8th solar eclipse where 99.1% of the sun was covered.



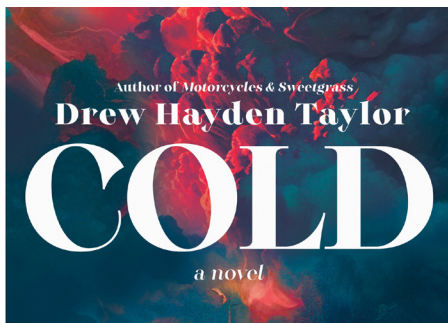
New Kits

With help from a New Horizons grant, we purchased Brain Health kits, Exercise at Home kits and launch pads to keep aging adults active in mind and body.



Welcome to Stratford!

In collaboration with the City of Stratford and other community partners, we designed a webpage and package of resources for new residents.



Perth County Reads

We partnered with the other libraries in Perth County to create a county wide book club. Cold by Drew Hayden Taylor was the inaugural title discussed.



Swiftie Party

We joined in Taylor mania and offered a night of all things Taylor Swift. Over 200 people joined in singing and swapping bracelets. It was a night to be remembered.



Stratford Warriors

The Wonder Pass collection was expanded with the addition of a Stratford Warriors regular season pass. Thank you Stratford Warriors!

"I underestimated what one half hour once a week with a reading buddy could do. Adding this once a week was a simple break to our home reading. The success comes because of the friendly faces of the volunteers, their encouraging words, the relaxed but focused time, and the reward at the end to play a quick board game before leaving."

Thank you, Donors!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donors. Whether it is a donation to the Snack Stop or to the MakerSpace, or a financial donation to the library in general - supporting the library means investing in the future of our community.

A special thank you to:

Elliott Motors
Kinsmen Club of Stratford
Perth Community Futures Development Corporation
Rotary Club of Stratford
Start Stratford Holiday Art Show
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
Teahen Family Nutrition & Wellbeing Fund
Estate of Thomas Coulter
And the dozens of individuals who also supported SPL in 2024



"Free third spaces are so rare! Having an indoor activity where we don't have to buy something feels really special"



**Libraries are important
community hubs.
Please support yours!**
splibrary.ca/donate

splibrary.ca
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