



DURHAM COUNTY
Library

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2023

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



The modern library has gracefully transformed into more than just a repository of books; it has evolved into a vibrant community living room that fosters connections and enriches lives. Embracing this role, Durham County Library offers spaces that reflect the comfort and warmth of

a welcoming living room. Meeting you as you walk through our doors are cozy reading corners, inviting seating arrangements, and a peaceful atmosphere that welcomes everyone to linger and learn. As the world becomes increasingly digital, the library is a communal haven and a testament to our commitment to providing spaces where people can come together, share ideas, learn, and partake in the simple joy of human interaction.

As your community living room, the library enhances its traditional role by offering a diverse range of events and activities that facilitate interaction and growth. Book clubs, workshops, computer access and classes, storytelling sessions, and discussion forums create opportunities for individuals to connect over

shared interests. These interactions transcend generational divides, fostering a sense of belonging and nurturing a culture of lifelong learning. As technology accelerates the pace of life, the library's purpose as a community living room becomes even more critical, offering a space where individuals can not only connect to the digital world, but can also reconnect with each other in meaningful ways.

Even in a modern library, the library's traditional roles are still firmly in place. Checking out a book is a delightful ritual that bridges the gap between imagination and reality. As you, the reader, approach the counter or a self-checkout kiosk with your chosen book, there's a sense of anticipation for the untold stories and unexplored knowledge. The librarian's warm smile and dedication to public service translate into the handing over of not only a book, but also a key to uncharted territories. We are proud to preserve the library's traditional role as a lender of books while also looking toward our bright future as a community. We look forward to serving you in another great year.

Best Wishes,

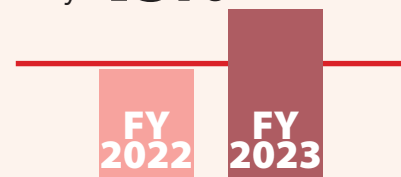
Tammy Baggett-Best

“To me, working in a public library means service to all. I didn't realize how much I enjoyed serving people until I worked in a library; public service is my passion and a part of who I am. I take pride in being a servant leader for my community.”

— Stephanie Fennell, Library Deputy Director

STATISTICS

Public computer usage increased by **45%**



ACCESSIBILITY

As part of our commitment to ensure the library is available to all members of the community, Durham County Library is proud of its wide variety of accessibility-oriented services and programs. From our Sensory Calming Room and Multi-Sensory Environment at Main Library to our large print collection and assistive technology kits available throughout the system, Durham County Library ensures everyone is able to use our resources. Furthermore, our Older Adult and Shut-In Services (OASIS) program provides specialized outreach to



library patrons who are unable to visit our locations due to age, illness, physical disability, or incarceration. Our OASIS team can help bring the library to you with talking book referrals, reminiscence therapy kits, books by mail, and so much more. We also strive to ensure our events are accessible to all; our online event calendar can be filtered for events that have accommodations available and for high and low sensory stimulation. If you have further questions about accessibility at the library, please contact our Accessibility Services Coordinator at 919-560-0183.

LIBRARY FEST: THE STORYTELLING EDITION:

In celebration of National Library Week and all that libraries do, Library Fest is an annual community celebration that showcases the many diverse ways the Library is a part of the Durham community. The third year of the festival highlighted Storytelling and featured 42 programs with over 1,900 attendees.

In line with the year's Storytelling theme, nationally recognized and award-winning authors Terry McMillan and Sean Sherman headlined with free talks at the Carolina Theater of Durham and the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. The week not only showcased a tour of Jeghetto's Entertainment, performing puppetry with expertly hand-made puppets at each Durham County Library location, but also programs on how to tell the story of your business, a jazz concert, immersive art experiences, storytelling through quilts and genealogy, and various other programs for patrons to explore. In a continued effort to support the local community, the Eats and Treats initiative returned, and vendor participation doubled, featuring 20 local businesses creating speciality menu items and beverages for the week of Library Fest. This year's Library Fest also featured a logo design from contest winner Jessica Lundin. Library Fest was made possible not only through donations from the Durham Library Foundation, the Forest at Duke, and Durham County Library but also through the contributions of 10 additional community organizations.



PROGRAMS



LIBRARY LABYRINTH: The annual Library Labyrinth returned in October. Staff turned a meeting room into a spooky forest maze that included bats, bugs, witches, a werewolf, and more! To make things interactive, staff incorporated fiber optic lights and sensory items into the maze. Six sensory-friendly hours were offered for families, and 744 people made it through the Spooky Forest over four days. And of course, lots of candy was enjoyed by all!



“As the Library Facilities Manager, working in the public library means I provide a safe environment for staff to thrive and grow so they can continue to inspire and transform lives throughout Durham.”

— Sandra Lovely, Assistant Director for Planning & Facilities

STATISTICS

We offered a total of **4,952** programs with **105,823** attendees in FY23



PROGRAMS



RISSI PALMER: The Library's Small Business Center (SBC) is a hub dedicated to workforce development and entrepreneurial support. A favorite SBC industry to explore is the music sector. Durham's thriving music scene features talent across all genres, and one of our biggest programs this year featured country recording artist Rissi Palmer. The subject of a recent PBS *American Masters: In the Making* documentary, Rissi held a hometown screening at Main Library on March 15th before the official premiere of the film. Over 140 close friends, family members, and admirers gathered in the auditorium for the event.

NATURAL BUILDING WORKSHOP:

The Natural Building Workshop, created in partnership with the Mud Dauber School of Natural Building, gave patrons the opportunity to discover the benefits of using locally sourced and sustainable building materials. During the workshop, the presenter lectured on a variety of natural building techniques and their applications in different environments. Additionally, patrons got hands-on experience using cob and straw bales to build a mock wall and feel the materials.



YOU CAN DO HAIR TOO!:



You Can Do Hair Too! was an educational program for caregivers on how to style their children's hair. Targeted toward family members and caregivers who had little or no hair experience, the

program featured cosmetologists from a downtown Durham hair salon. Bringing talent and skill from outside the library to provide a learning experience for patrons is an important part of programming at Durham County Library. We plan to continue helping families and children learn important life skills like these for years to come!

“Working in a public library system means the ability to reach underserved populations with information regarding free and beneficial programs, resources, and services.”

— Stephanie Bonestell, Public Relations Officer



GIANT ORIGAMI: The Library hosted a 2023 Library Fest event, Make Giant Origami, for tweens and teens. Erim Akpan, a former Teen Book Club member at Durham County Library, returned to the library this year to teach participants how to create giant origami figures using flip pad paper, markers, and various art materials. Creativity was in full swing with tweens and teens making cranes, hats, and their own inventions! Teaching this ancient art form was so much fun, and we were so pleased with the community's enthusiasm.

STATISTICS

Our total circulation increased from

2,530,199 items
to **2,869,561** items

FY
2022

FY
2023



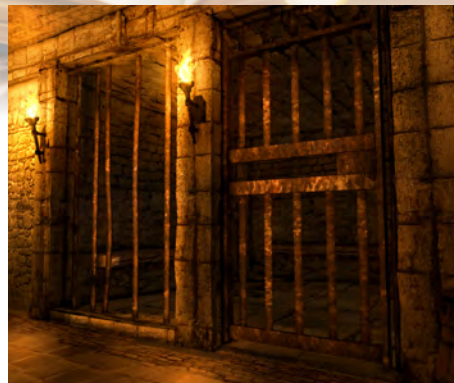
ANNUAL POETRY WALK:

April is National Poetry Month, and to celebrate, Durham County Library collected poetry submissions from local poets to display throughout the Library. This year, team members created an indoor poetry walk with arrows guiding visitors along a path through the building. The walk displayed 30 poems that were submitted by local poets of all ages, the youngest being 10 years old. This annual poetry display is a beloved tradition that has been growing each year, and the librarians are already looking forward to next year's submissions!

“Working in a public library affords me the opportunity to have an impact across the community. We move the needle regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, serving as our society’s great equalizer. Libraries are truly for everyone.”

— Tammy Baggett-Best, Library Director

DUNGEON SYNTH: What is Dungeon Synth? It is the soundtrack to adventure and peril, the key to a portal in the back of your mind where childhood dreams and nightmares dwell! Dungeon Synth is fantasy synthesizer music made by Mahr G’Didj and his Master of Lore. Program attendees heard an introduction to the vast undiscovered worlds of Dark Dungeon Music.





PERCY JACKSON ESCAPE ROOM:

Over the course of three days, the Teen Advisory Board held a Percy Jackson-themed Escape Room for tweens and teens. A total of 50 participants worked together using critical thinking and problem-solving skills to master the Escape Room. Each small group of approximately six participants had 30 minutes to solve the puzzles and find the Camp Half Blood Flag before the Hellhounds and Harpies were set loose on the campers!

“One of the Library’s greatest resources is its staff. As the Library’s HR person, I love that I have a hand in hiring the people who provide awesome library programs and services for our community.”

– Lakesia Farmer, Library Human Resources

BEHIND-THE-SCENES SOFTWARE UPDATE

POLARIS

This year the library transitioned to a new integrated library system (ILS). This is the software that all libraries use to carry out library functions: circulation, reference, cataloging, acquisitions, and more. These functions are separate from the online catalog patrons see.

As a local government entity, when a contract ends for any service which costs more than \$40,000 per year, the Library needs to solicit bids. While the Library had previously been using Horizon from Sirsi-Dynix, Sirsi-Dynix chose not to submit a bid for Horizon. This meant that the Library would transition to a new ILS no matter which vendor we chose.

The bid process lasted about one year from 2020 to 2021. The Library received four bids which were evaluated by a committee of library staff. The Library selected Polaris from Innovative Interfaces as the product that best met our needs. The migration process started in September 2022. Completing the service profiles and creating the beta version lasted five

months. February through April focused on staff training with test data, correcting mistakes, and looking at processes. May was spent preparing for the data transfer that would happen in June. Because most library services like public computers, study room reservations, e-book checkouts, and other online services authenticate against the ILS, a lot of behind-the-scenes work had to happen to ensure these services would continue to function for the public during the transition period. After all data transferred in early June, we fixed any issues we discovered and reconnected all our services with Polaris. Reconnecting the online public access catalog to the new ILS was a particularly big job.

While most of the work that happens in Polaris is invisible to the public, there is greater efficiency behind the scenes. The catalog crashes less often, individuals can opt-in and opt-out of keeping their reading histories, and there are fewer steps for carrying out several staff functions.

We would like to thank the public and staff for their patience during this transition.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

STATISTICS

Circulation of children's materials went up **18.8%**

FY 2022 FY 2023

PROGRAMS

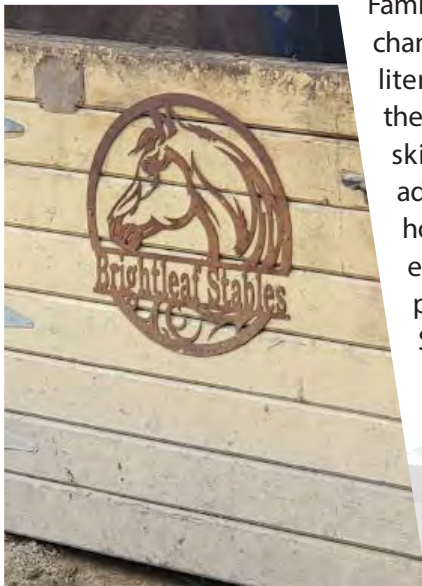
INFORMED REAL ESTATE SERIES:

Once a month from December through March, the Library hosted real estate experts to present and answer questions about a variety of topics. The focus of these presentations included a homebuying seminar, rent-to-own and other financing options, basic home maintenance, and preparing for aging parents and their property. Our library patrons came with great questions, and the series was an excellent way to inform our community. Sometimes, simply knowing where to start can be a huge advantage when tackling such a weighty subject. This Informed Real Estate Series was co-sponsored by the Clemmons & Co. Real Estate firm.

STORYTIME WITH HORSES:

A patron favorite, Storytime with Horses has always been a well-attended program that is loved by all. This partnership with Brightleaf Stables allowed our youngest patrons the opportunity to get safe, hands-on interaction with a horse while also engaging in early literacy practices through storytime.

Families in attendance had the chance to participate in an early literacy storytime and boost their creativity and early motor skills with a craft, all while admiring the horses that are housed at the stables! We are extremely grateful for the partnership with Brightleaf Stables and the time, effort, and resources that they provide for Durham County Library to offer this program.



“The library is one of the few places where people from every possible background share the same space and experiences. Everyone is welcome and can have access to whatever resources and services we provide.”

— Kathy Makens, Assistant Library Director for Resources & Finance

LOCATIONS



Main Library

300 N. Roxboro St., Durham, NC 27701
919-560-0100



East Regional Library

211 Lick Creek Ln., Durham, NC 27703
919-560-0862



North Regional Library

221 Milton Rd., Durham, NC 27712
919-560-0236



South Regional Library

4505 S. Alston Ave., Durham, NC 27713
919-560-7409



Southwest Regional Library

3605 Shannon Rd., Durham, NC 27707
919-560-8593



Bragtown Branch Library

3200 Dearborn Dr., Durham, NC 27704
919-560-0210



Stanford L. Warren Branch Library

Temporarily Closed
1201 Fayetteville St., Durham, NC 27707
919-560-0270

- @DurhamCountyLibrary
- @durhamcountylibrary
- @DurhamCountyLib
- Durham County Library

DurhamCountyLibrary.org

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



Tammy Baggett-Best, Library Director
Stephanie Fennell, Library Deputy Director
Sandra Lovely, Assistant Director for Planning & Facilities
Kathy Makens, Assistant Librry Director for Resources & Finance
Stephanie Bonestell, Public Relations Officer
Lakesia Farmer, Library Human Resources

FINANCIALS

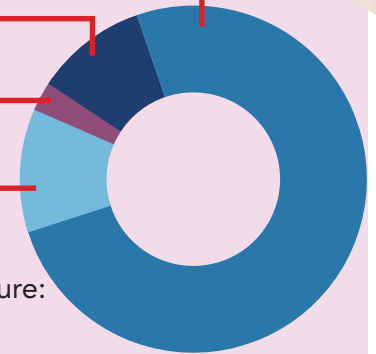
Salaries and Benefits:
\$10,093,946

Operating:
\$1,400,346

Library IT:
\$363,353

Collections:
\$1,544,356

Total Expenditure:
\$13,402,001



FROM LIBRARY FAMILY



The Library Board of Trustees serves to advise the Library Director to make Durham County Library the best it can be. Consisting of nine members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, the Board of Trustees listens closely to the needs of the community regarding the library system. Members of the general public are encouraged to apply for these appointments!

“We go to the library to learn new things, to be entertained, to share common interests, to find help with a job search or in completing a tax return, and even to find refuge in a storm. Libraries are an essential component in our lifelong learning.”

— Hank Kinsley, Chair, Library Board of Trustees



The Durham Library Foundation was founded by devoted community members who shared the simple belief that public libraries are among the most important institutions in our society. By supporting Durham County Library programming with grant funds, the Durham Library Foundation contributes to making Durham a county with a world-class library system. Among the programs supported by the Durham Library Foundation are Library Fest, the Digging Durham Seed Library, and Women Run Durham.

“Our library system makes world-class facilities and resources available to everyone in Durham. I love that!”

— Arthur Rogers, President, Durham Library Foundation



The Friends of the Durham Library support the library in multiple ways: programming grants, ongoing programs, and staff scholarships. Over the course of their 40-year history, the Friends of the Durham Library have raised over one million dollars through secondhand book sales and memberships. 2022 saw the Friends return to in-person pop-up sales at library locations in addition to online and in-person sales at their bookstore, Books Among Friends. Be sure to look out for more in-person sales, and check out ShopFODLNC.org for all the best deals on used books!

“Our country is a democracy, and the free exchange of ideas is important to ensure that citizens are informed and engaged. The library provides books and services that ensure all perspectives matter and offers the promise of a better life.”

— Kathy Jackson, President, Friends of the Durham Library