

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 22, 2024

CONTACT: BRANDI GILLETT
TELEPHONE: 519-271-0220 X116
EMAIL: BGILLETT@SPLIBRARY.CA
WEBSITE: WWW.SPLIBRARY.CA



2023 WAS A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR SPL

Stratford Public Library has released its 2023 annual report, highlighting a significant period of growth and positivity for the Library. SPL welcomed a new CEO, launched a new Strategic Plan, and saw an increase in all aspects of library service.

“The increase in usage of the library since the pandemic has been overwhelming. Every day over 1,200 people used the library either in person, or through our online tools. And the exciting thing is that each person came to us for a unique reason - whether it is for information, recreation, or a place to just *be* in the community – all free of charge.” says CEO Krista Robinson.

The library saw more than 134,000 visitors through its doors in 2023, a 29% increase over 2022. Circulation of library materials jumped 9% from the previous year with just under half a million physical and digital items borrowed by library users. A few new collections were also added this past year including puzzles, board games, and de-codeable books to help new readers.

Programming was another area which saw significant growth. Almost 22,000 people attended 676 programs. This was a 53% increase over 2019, the last year not impacted by the COVID pandemic. Most impressive was the participation of children in the library’s summer reading club, where 1,066 or 1 in 4 school aged children in Stratford registered for the TD Summer Reading Club and over 5,000 attended summer programming. Popular events like Drag Storytime and eco-friendly programs such as Drop n’ Swaps emphasized the library’s commitment to inclusivity and environmental stewardship, a focus of the new Strategic Plan.

Staff answered over 11,000 reference questions, and issued more than 1,700 new library cards. Additionally, the community utilized the public internet and Wi Fi services 21,878 times. Furthermore, 153 newcomers engaged with the YMCA Settlement Services program.

“Taking library services out into the community including at the Stratford Perth Museum, area parks and the Mall and collaborating with our exceptional community partners has been vital to our success this past year. We are grateful to our partners for their support in providing locations to meet the demand of the programs while we seek a facility that can adequately accommodate the increased community demand.” says CEO Krista Robinson.

Other service highlights include the creation of the Snack Stop community food pantry, creation of the Tales & Trails story walk at the Stratford Perth Museum, Drag Storytime, unveiling of the library garden renewal project, and creation of a board game and puzzle collection. Several of these new services have been implemented in partnership with area organizations and groups such as the Stratford Perth Museum, Rotary Club of Stratford, Garden Stratford and The Stratford Pride Community Centre.

To read the full Annual Report, visit the library website at splibrary.ca.

###

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Krista Robinson, CEO at 519-271-0220 x112 or krobinson@splibrary.ca