

LIBRARY

JOHN M. HARPER BR



2020 Annual Report

Waterloo
PUBLIC LIBRARY

IN THIS REPORT

About Us	pg 2
Message from Our CEO	pg 3
Message from Our Board	pg 4
Library as Space & Place	pg 5
Spotlight: Eastside Branch	pg 7
Library as a Catalyst	pg 9
Spotlight: Virtual Programs	pg 11
"Of Course, the Library!"	pg 13
Spotlight: Fine Forgiveness	pg 15

OUR AUDACIOUS GOAL

Our audacious goal is to be a transformational force in the development of Waterloo and its citizens.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to fulfill the multiple literacy needs of our community.

OUR VALUES



Learning & growth



Free exchange of ideas



Being engaged & responsive to needs



Right of everyone to access info

Waterloo

FROM OUR CEO

2020. A year we will never forget. The library has been closed, offered curbside pick-up only, been open for browsing, check-out and technology use – you name it, we have done it.

And staff have done a wonderful job! Curbside pick-up of holds became the very popular “WPL To Go” service. We then added book bundles – tell us what you like and we will put together a selection of ‘Surprise Me! Bundles for Adults’ or ‘WPL Kids Express’ bundles. Book bundles quickly became a sought after favourite. Virtual reference service handled over 47,000 questions. Programming quickly pivoted to online, offering over 800 adult and children’s programs with almost 26,000 attendees. New program partners were added to our already extensive list.

Our digital resource use soared by 37%. To support this, we increased our digital content, adding many new titles to downloadLibrary. We also added new resources including Kanopy, an online streaming service, and Simply Analytics, a very valuable resource for both start-ups and established businesses. We launched a puzzle lending collection to help entertain families spending their time at home. We adapted our services and collections to continue to transform lives and create connections during the pandemic. Libraries played an even more integral role in these unprecedented times.

Having offered an extremely successful “Fine Forgiveness” weekend just prior to the pandemic, we confirmed what we thought – fines create barriers to use. In July, we waived fines for the remainder of 2020 and hope to see this as a permanent reality in the future.

One purely delightful event did occur in 2020. The construction of the new Eastside Branch began in September, with opening planned for Spring 2022. We thank our City partners for making this project possible and sustainable.

To our Library Board, I am so thankful for your support and trust during a very difficult year. And, of course, I cannot thank WPL staff enough for what they have achieved during this past year. Your creativity, resourcefulness and willingness to serve our community in the best possible way, during many challenges and upheavals, has been truly amazing. The joy on the face of staff when customers were allowed back into the library says it all. The WPL team is a team like no other.

Laurie Clarke

CEO, Waterloo Public Library

FROM OUR BOARD

2020 was a year like no other. While our physical library spaces remained largely closed - under the direction of Region of Waterloo Public Health and the Province of Ontario - our entire organization worked tirelessly to find creative and unexpected ways to serve our library community. The pandemic vocabulary of curbside, contactless and quarantine became second nature to all - with every new piece of safety legislation, our organization dug a little deeper to find new ways to activate our community, through the library system.

On behalf of the entire board, I would like to thank our CEO, Laurie Clarke, for leading her dedicated team to new places, in difficult circumstances. The WPL Team has kept their collective gaze on the future - through developing innovative programming, fostering new partnerships, and stewarding the ongoing construction of the new Eastside branch - and our public library system will emerge from this crisis in great shape, in so many ways.

I would like to thank our library board members for their continued support and commitment, during these challenging times. These are volunteer roles and you have all leaned into challenging conversations and difficult decisions, during a time when your own work and family obligations are heightened.

I would like to thank Mayor Dave Jaworsky and Councillor Diane Freeman for their steadfast commitment to the Waterloo Public Library. I look forward to seeing the fruits of our collaborative efforts - a sustainably-funded four branch public library system in Waterloo - in the coming year. Finally, we all owe a great deal of thanks to the citizens of Waterloo. We will continue to work hard for them and for their public library.

Karen Coviello

Chair of the Waterloo Public Library Board

2020 LIBRARY BOARD

Karen Coviello, Chair

Dawn Charlton, Vice Chair

Diane Freeman, City of Waterloo Councillor

S. Ahmad

Rachel Harder

Kelly McManus

Frank Mensink

Idrisa Pandit

John Strong

Beisan Zubi

library as space & place

The Waterloo Public Library will foster inclusion and understanding through the library's place in the public realm.

the numbers



58,134

active members



1,012,236

borrowed items



923,918

in person & virtual
visitors



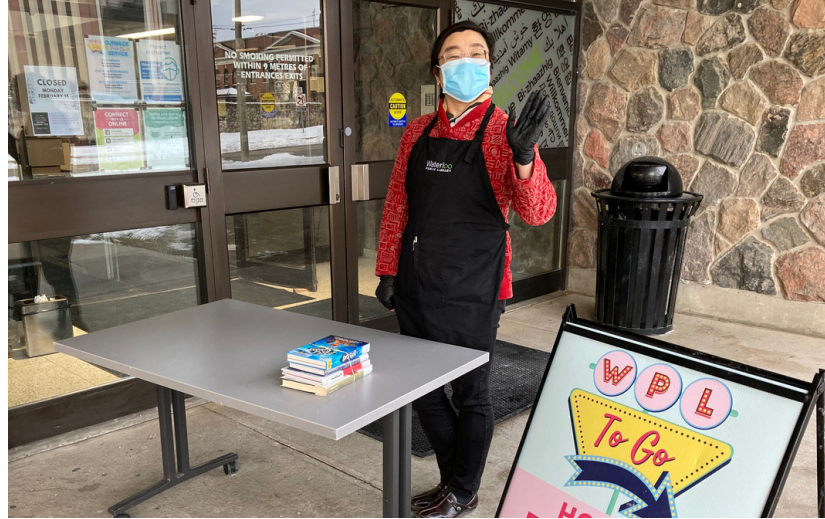
18,784

visitors to Our Ontario
(local history site)

I love my library because during COVID-19, the library has been a lifeline of connection. I have received grab bags that feel like they were made for me. My family has attended trivia nights, knitting nights, book club gatherings, and scavenger hunts. The library has given us a place to go when we have to stay home...my kids have never known life without the WPL, and we consider the library an important part of our city!

- Jenn B.

WPL TO GO CURBSIDE PICK-UP SERVICE



92,224
items distributed



164,625
holds filled

spotlight: eastside branch

15,516 SQ. FEET OF SPACE FEATURING:



Bring Your
Own Device
Bar



Urban
Lounge



Study
Rooms



Digispace



Gamerspace



Naturespace



We are eagerly anticipating the opening of the Eastside Branch in Spring 2022. With this new branch, we are able to expand our reach and make it easier for more communities in our city to access library services.

The Eastside Branch has been thoughtfully planned, incorporating feedback from the public. It will be a contemporary space, designed with the community's needs at the forefront, including offering special lending collections that align with the natural surroundings of the library.



library as a catalyst

The Waterloo Public Library will spark connection, inspire collaboration and take literacy to the next level.

the numbers



145 volunteers provided an average of **100 HOURS** per week

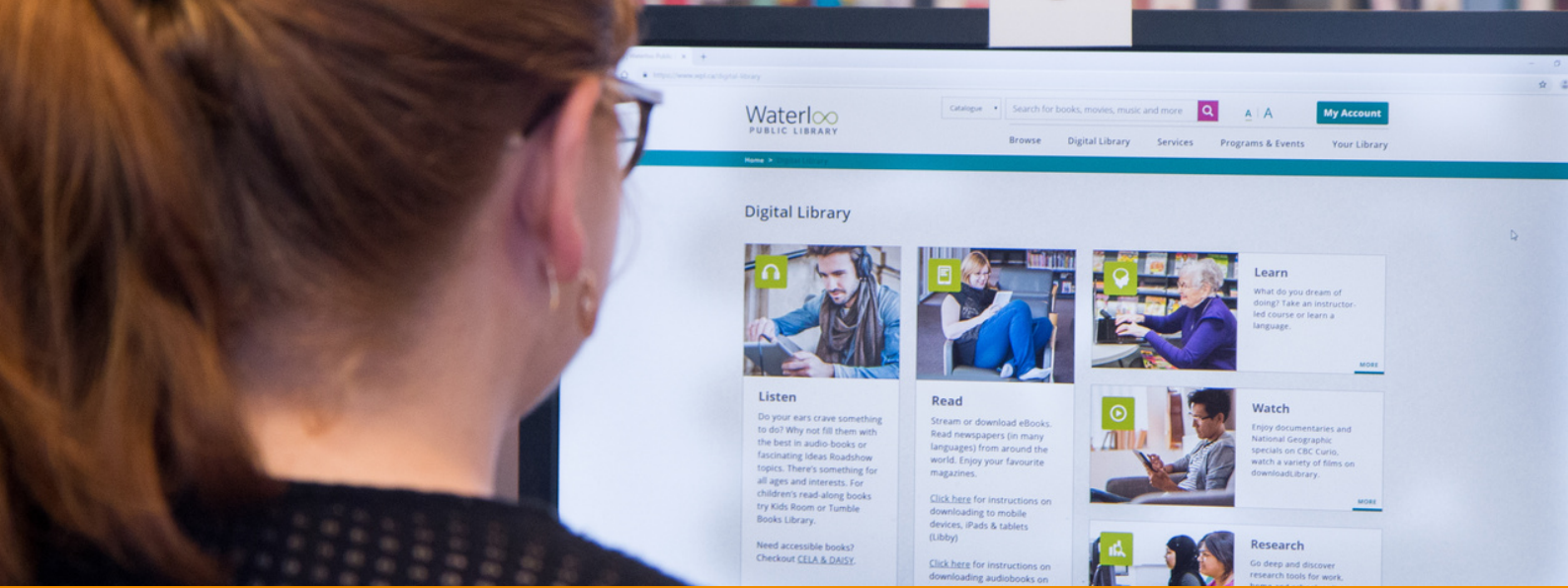


440 volunteer hours contributed by the **Teen Events Team**



1,121 participants in our **Tech Playground** school outreach program in just the first 2 months of 2020 with a total of **45 VISITS**

This program saw us bringing tech to schools where educators and students could play and learn. It was so widely received that we had bookings made with almost every elementary school in Waterloo when the pandemic hit.



Love the eBook and eAudiobook selection! The convenience and ability to borrow without leaving your home has been especially helpful during lockdown.

- Lori M.

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS ON THE RISE



37%

eBooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers & eAudiobooks



35%

New users in downloadLibrary



145%

Use of digital learning products (Gale Courses & LinkedIn Learning)

PARTNERSHIPS & OUTREACH



Renison Lecture Series

with Renison University College



Lumen Festival

with City of Waterloo



Monica House & Local Libraries

oriented residents to our programs + lent a sewing machine, a hotspot & laptops

spotlight: virtual programs

CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY & BEYOND!
INTRODUCING A WHOLE NEW SET OF PROGRAMS:



Live
Streaming
Programs



Play
Anytime
Programs



Kit
Programs



Virtual
Field Trips



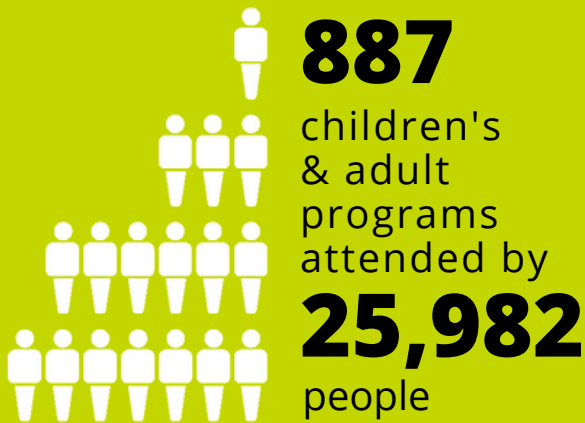
Online Reading
Challenges
ReadSquared

In March 2020, our programs & events team quickly pivoted to a virtual programming model, creating new ways for people to learn, connect and engage while staying at home.

A library is so much more than books! I have had the opportunity to join in children's programs with my daughter and meet other moms, make crafts, enjoy a variety of literacy activities in a reading kit for my daughter, use a step counter for fitness, plant seeds in my garden, and visit museums. There are so many amazing free opportunities through a library and our communities wouldn't be the same without them!

- Kristina T.

BY THE NUMBERS



MOST POPULAR



Paint-Alongs
(Live Streamed Video Series)



Holiday Baking



Celebrate Diwali



Chanukah Storytime



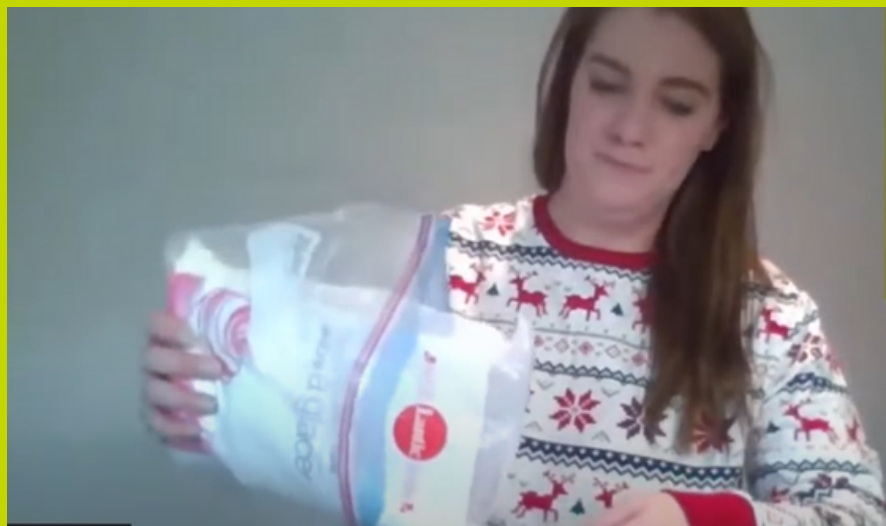
Virtual Escape Rooms
(Play Anytime Programs)



15 Minutes Every Day Video Series



Halloween Bags
300+ handed out!



"of course, the library!"

The Waterloo Public Library and its staff will foster delight, creating a community narrative that declares, "of course, the library!"

the numbers



900

questions answered weekly



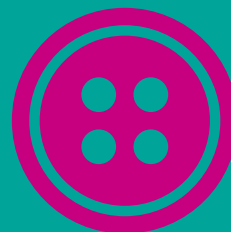
486

Hotspots were borrowed



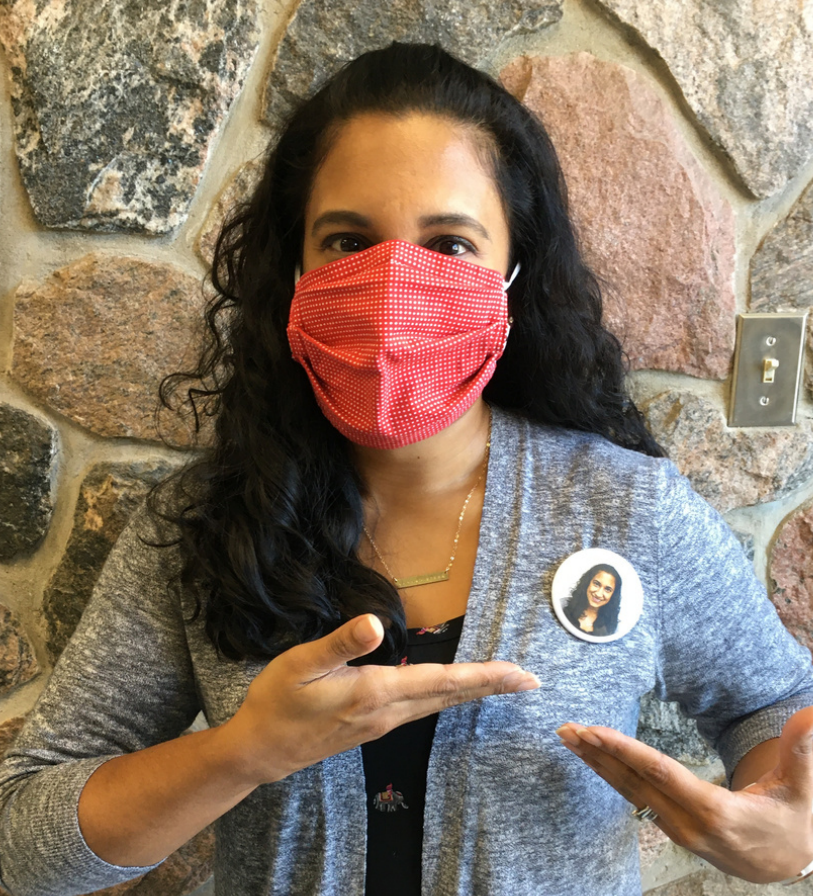
33,974

visits to Check It Out (WPL's Blog)



637

buttons made for 211 groups & organizations (as part of The Button Project)



We love the library because it has provided a sense of connection and community at a time when that can be hard to find. From borrowing board games to play as a family, to online programming for both children and adults, to the joy and surprise of opening a book bundle picked out just for you by a friendly, local librarian. The WPL has been a bright spot for our family during the pandemic.

- Cristina Y-S.

SOCIAL MEDIA



3,407

Facebook likes



7,952

Twitter followers



3,269

Instagram followers



270,266

Flickr views

SPOTLIGHT: YOUTUBE



25,387

YouTube views



**Live
Streaming &
Video Series**

BOOK BUNDLES



62,770

items went out in our
**Surprise Me! Book
Bundles** for adults and
WPL Kids Express Bundles

spotlight: fine forgiveness

MAKING THE LIBRARY MORE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

In February 2020, WPL held a very successful Fine Forgiveness event, waiving overdue fines and welcoming almost 400 customers back to the library.

In July, in an effort to remove financial barriers so that customers could access library services during an especially difficult time, overdue fines were eliminated for the remainder of 2020.



**Photo taken pre-Covid*

Soon after the pandemic started, we were left bored at home. Lo and behold, WPL came to the rescue! We looked forward to safely picking up our books, interacting with the friendly staff and getting special treats on holidays such as Halloween. WPL also made us feel valued and supported by extending the loan period. Thank you for being there for us during these challenging times, we love and appreciate you!

- Zahra N.

FINE FORGIVNESS EVENT FEBRUARY 14 & 15, 2020



11,053
fines waived for
1,724
customers



661
cards renewed
in 2 days
825%



8,570
items returned
147%

I served a mother who had an expired card and substantial fines. Her 3 children also had expired cards with fines. This mom's life had suddenly become very difficult. She was so grateful to have those fines waived and cards renewed. She's thrilled that she and her kids can come back to the library again and she expressed her gratitude repeatedly throughout the interaction. By the time I renewed the last card, I was in tears too.

- WPL staff member

Connect With Us

519-886-1310 x124

askus@wpl.ca

wpl.ca



Locations

Main Library

35 Albert Street

Waterloo, Ontario N2L 5E2

John M. Harper Branch

500 Fischer-Hallman Road North

Waterloo, Ontario N2L 0B1

McCormick Branch

500 Parkside Drive

Waterloo, Ontario N2L 5J4

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