

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

The Ruth Enlow Library
of GARRETT COUNTY



Community + Opportunity

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Christian Mash, President
Fred Fox, Vice-President
Tina Buckel, Treasurer
Diane Nye-Paugh
Linda Ashby
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Director: Thomas Vose

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ruth Enlow Library uses its collection, programs, services, and technology to transform its community:

- By championing literacies and lifelong learning
- By bringing people and groups together; and
- By promoting democracy and civic engagement

OUR VALUES

- I. Equal access for all
- II. Intellectual freedom
- III. Lifelong learning
- IV. Reliability of information
- V. Fostering democracy
- VI. Diversity
- VII. Social responsibility
- VIII. Privacy
- IX. Service
- X. Stewardship of public resources
- XI. Collaboration



NUMBER OF PROGRAMS:

839
(+15.4%)



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE:

19,327
(+26.9%)

TOTAL CIRCULATIONS

214,623
(+0.5%)
Adult: 121,790
Juvenile: 92,833
In-house: 5,804
(-2.0%)
Electronic: 41,374
(+15.8%)

SUMMER READING CLUB 2023

650 Participants Registered
(463 Kids, 61 Teens, 126 Adults)
2935 Books Read
41 In-Person Programs
69 Passive Programs
1,379 Attendees Combined
235 Log Completions



MATERIALS COLLECTION

92,587 Physical items
(-3.3%)
111,055 Virtual items



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



While 2023-24 had its fair share of significant challenges, I'm very proud to say that the Library this year delivered for its community once again. We made significant progress towards some key goals, brought some amazing new people onto our team, and are now positioned to be even stronger than before.

Looking over our statistics, I am of course first struck by the jump in programs offered and patrons participating. This is partially due to the big increases across the board in our Summer Reading participation in 2023, where we doubled the number of programs offered and had 60% more people come overall, with 27% more signups than the previous year and 44% more people seeing it through to completion – our staff worked hard to make this happen! Two new partnerships also made a huge difference this year. The County (thanks to the leadership of Cheryl DeBerry and Nathaniel Watkins) acquired a grant enabling us to distribute Chromebooks free to income-qualified households in the community – initial response was staggering at our distribution events and we continued to give them out over the course of the year, a role we were proud to fill. We also began a very productive partnership with the Maryland Food Bank, serving as host sites for their Mobile Market in Grantsville and Friendsville.

Our statistics also contain a mea culpa this year. In years past, we had been providing our count of total registered patrons – which, this year, was up a healthy 4.7%. Going forward, we will be switching to “active” patrons – those who have used their card within the last three years. Fortunately this number has increased year over year as well by 1.6%, driven partially by over 1,200 new card signups - we're glad to see more and more people discovering and finding value in their Library!

But the Library has seen a lot of other great positive developments this year. Our Hoopla and Palace apps are seeing heavy use, with 15.8% more people checking out e-books this year – and yes, our paper book checkouts are up as well! We created a new Virtual Tourism program at the Main Library thanks to a grant from the Library Services and Technology Act that people can come in and try anytime with our VR goggles. Nintendo Switch video games can now be checked out for the first time as well. “Let’s Talk” sessions (formerly “Choose Civility”), aimed at encouraging people to chat in the real world and compare notes on issues that they care about have restarted at last after COVID forced a hiatus. And our digitization project continues, with the vast majority of Northern High School and Southern High School’s yearbooks now available, as well as Garrett County’s Vacation Guides dating back to the 1950s – all thanks to partnerships with Garrett County Public Schools, the Garrett County Historical Society and the Deep Creek Lake Property Owners’ Association!

There’s a lot of excitement in the air, too, with some major projects making great progress! Thanks to the Town of Kitzmiller, we have a new ADA-accessible entryway that looks amazing, and thanks to the Master Gardeners and our own Diane, Kitzmiller Library also has a Community Garden. The Friends of the Library started a scholarship for both high schools awarding graduating seniors interested in Library-adjacent careers. And, of course, the Friendsville Library continues to progress – design is completed and we look forward to groundbreaking this October!

Your Library has a lot to be proud of, and 2024-25 is shaping up to be even more exciting – stay tuned!



YEAR IN REVIEW

Number of Library Visits =
118,700 (+0.9%)

Reference Questions Answered =
14,046 (-8.0%)

1,253 New Library Cards



% of County with Active Cards =
45.7%

Active Patrons =
13,262 (+1.6%)

