



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

RESILIENCE • DETERMINATION • INNOVATION • HOPE 



2021 was an extraordinary and challenging year for our community, our nation, and for all global citizens as we all entered the second year of the Pandemic. Our library staff answered the call to serve during the Pandemic in non-traditional ways, and 2021 was no exception. Some of the darkest days of the Pandemic occurred during the early days of the 2021 holiday surge, just as the vaccine began to be available. This tested our Public Health Services Department's ability to respond, and a call for additional assistance from County Departments to assist in the COVID-19 effort went out. Our full-time branch supervisors, along with additional full-time library staff, performed contact tracing for our Public Health Services Department. Our branch Youth Services librarians stepped up to assist with branch operations as they juggled their Youth Services responsibilities. The Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library was closed to the public as our facility was needed for the first vaccine pod through late February, when the operation moved over to SCCC. Our role with the Pandemic pivoted to providing COVID-19 information by late February, and the McChesney Room was set up for vaccine appointment assistance for the public in March, as we reopened the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library for limited service. Community volunteers worked alongside library staff in setting up vaccine appointments for our community members. We were proud to be able to assist the County at this crucial time.

SCPL staff were incredibly resilient and dedicated as they continued to provide access to information, resources, educational materials, and virtual/hybrid programming for families. Our libraries reimagined the ways that we could continue to fulfill our library mission and serve our County residents over the past two years of the Pandemic. We took action to innovate and adapt our services and programs to continue to meet the needs of our community. We operated at a 50% staffing level until September, when some of our part time staff were able to return to work to support the increase in days and hours of operation.

Our County libraries extended necessary lifelines to community members facing job losses, healthcare crises, and remote work and learning challenges during an unprecedented and uncertain time. Library staff proved to be essential "first restorers" or "second responders." It also proved to be a year of opportunity, as libraries kept our community connected in ways that made us "Stronger Together." While our buildings may not have been open periodically, our patrons and libraries stayed connected. Information resources were a phone call, email, or "chat" away, digital collections were available 24/7, and programs were available online.

As we approached the end of the year, we were honored to have the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library serve as the site of the County's first vaccine POD for children aged 6-11 years, which gave us all great hope that brighter days were ahead! We look forward to focusing on our library mission statement as the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational institution for our community in 2022.

Definition of resilience from Merriam Webster

1: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change

YOUTH SERVICES



In 2021 the library and the Youth Services Department realized a new definition of “business as usual”. Adjusting to interruptions in service, new job duties, and innovative ways of serving youth & families was now “business as usual”.

The Department’s diligent work at resuming elements of library service paid off in 2021. In the areas of circulation, literacy initiatives, events for youth and families, and community connections, the data improved from 2020. Concerning circulation in 2021, the digital, print and AV children’s and young adult borrowing rate increased forty-five percent overall compared to the previous year.

Literacy

As the acuteness and severity of the pandemic lessens, literacy in all its forms is re-emerging as the primary driving force of the Youth Services Department’s mission. The world has shifted its focus to adjustments resulting from pandemic life, and so too has library staff. Children need literacy education now more than ever, and as school and other routines resume, learning will take center stage. A phenomenal opportunity exists for the Youth Services Department to showcase collections and build programs that help parents and children gain literacy skills. Literacy initiatives such as summer reading, STARS, Children’s Book Month, Storywalks, and the Schenectady County ABC

Hunt were successes of 2021. Summer reading and program attendance was improved upon.

2021 YOUTH SERVICES STATS

Total Registered Readers:	1,592	Total Hours Read:	12,440
Total # of Programs:	94	Total Program Attendance:	3,335

The Schenectady County ABC Hunt and a Children’s Book Month reading challenge took place in the spring and fall, respectively, with outstanding success for these new projects. The ABC Hunt was a month-long contest for County residents to identify the locations of particular letters that were photographed from across the County. The Youth Services Librarians supported the Children’s Book Month literacy initiative with a reading challenge in November that attracted 115 participants.

Read for the Record was another popular literacy event held in October where 50 families received an art kit from the Tang Museum, a free copy of the book **AMY WU AND THE PATCHWORK DRAGON**, and read the story along with Ms. Chinasa on YouTube. An outreach-based literacy effort was undertaken in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Rotterdam. Lastly, the community collaborative early literacy initiative STARS (Schenectady Takes Action for Reading Success) resumed in July 2021 after pausing in March 2020. Book deliveries to the WIC office on Franklin Street resumed in late July and resumed at SiCM Food Pantry in August. Twenty deliveries were made throughout the last half of 2021 by volunteers from the Wildwood Program with a total of 1,016 new and diverse books, being distributed. The SiCM Food Pantry is maintaining a high volume of STARS book distribution.





Technology

For programming purposes, amplification systems were needed for outdoor events like the summer series **Programs in the Park**. The MVLS Summer Program Mini-Grant funds were secured to purchase equipment such as speakers and microphones that the Department used in summer 2021, and has great potential for future outreach. A second significant update in the area of technology was the installation of AWE learning computer stations at the renovated Woodlawn and Scotia branch libraries. Nearly all libraries within SCPL have AWE computers at the end of 2021.

Virtual programming became a regular occurrence, primarily using platforms hosted by YouTube, Google Meet and Zoom. Programming highlights included innovations in take home sets like STEAM Grab & Go projects, Adventures with Yarn, Story Times to Go, a Bubble Tea kit, and Holiday Take and Make's. Newly designed, fresh classes for pre-school and school aged children, and families included Imagination Stations, Create-A-Story Time, Color & Chill, an Outdoor Escape Room, and Blues Boogie. Pop-Up Story Times, Programs in the Park, and new Storywalks in additional locations took the place of weeks of summer programs scheduled across all locations. Other new activities included the Spooky Scavenger Hunt during Halloween week, virtual Cooking Classes, the Teen Fall 5 Photo Challenge, Outdoor Crafternoons, and Pop-Up Video Game days. A handful of long-standing programming partnerships resumed in 2021 such as Baby Café, parenting classes with Brightside Up, 4-H classes, My Daughters and Me groups, SCAP outreach visits, Schenectady County's Early Intervention Program summer picnic, and visits to day care facilities like Pooh's Corner and Wonderland Nursery.



Partnerships

The following partners co-sponsored youth services classes, visited the library or were served with outreach to their location. New bridges were established through an ALA funded grant opportunity, virtual/in-person events and library volunteer opportunities. Resurrected and newly formed partnerships included:

- DEC School Seedlings Program (new)
- Schalmont Work Based Learning Program (new)
- Quaker Street Summer Day Camp (new)
- Blues Network of the Capital Region (new)
- Dance Alliance and the National Museum of Dance (new)
- Tang Museum
- Vale Urban Garden
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Schenectady and Rotterdam
- SCAP Family Engagement
- Scotia-Glenville, Niskayuna, Schenectady City, Mohonasen, Schalmont, and Duanesburg School Districts
- SiCM
- Pooh's Corner Childcare Center and Wonderland Nursery
- Parson's/Northern Rivers Early Head Start
- Wildwood Program



ADULT SERVICES



Covid-19 continued to impact library services in a significant way throughout 2021. Adult Services staff adjusted programs and services accordingly to best serve the community. Amid closures and staffing deficits, certain goals were necessarily scaled back. However, basic library services continued as conditions permitted and progress was made on goals.

Collections

Hoopla eContent offerings were expanded in March 2021 to include Flex titles. These popular titles are offered with a variety of licensing options. With this platform, we now have the ability to improve service by decreasing wait times for popular titles and selecting the most relevant content for our community. SCPL adult eContent circulation increased by 14.9% over 2020, surpassing our goal of a 10% increase.



Ordering librarians reviewed collections at Woodlawn, Scotia and Glenville, where branch renovations were planned, selecting updated materials and re-prioritizing collections for space and budget allocations. Weeding of library collections is always an ongoing process as the librarians remove outdated or damaged material, and where deemed necessary, replaced outdated items with current materials. A focus for 2021 was a review of the non-fiction collection. Keeping up with public demand for more digital content, which many in our community got a taste for during the Pandemic, continues to be a challenge. Budget constraints have not only limited the print collections we can provide for our patrons, but it also diminishes the amount of money spent on the digital collection our patrons are increasingly requesting.



Information Services

The Pandemic increased the demand for factual information related to all aspects of COVID-19 including information on availability and locations for vaccine appointments. Library staff set up vaccine appointment services in the McChesney Room allowing Schenectady County residents to call or come in-person to schedule appointments. A core group of library staff and community volunteers assisted in this effort. With staffing levels at 50%, we could not have done this without our volunteers!



In addition, County residents relied on our libraries for other types of information and services – from questions related to stimulus checks and benefits, to help with technology. 283 online chats were answered, 38 local history research requests were completed and we had 29,873 user sessions across our 11 database subscriptions.

Print and online information for community members had to be updated throughout the year as our range of services went from just curbside, to “Grab & Go,” to browsing and expanded services. Interlibrary loan service resumed as libraries in the region were able to reopen, with similar limitations regarding hours and days of operation and limited staffing.

The library subscription to NewsBank/ America’s News (*image to right*), now includes access to digitally scanned pages of the Schenectady Gazette and Albany Times Union from early 2021 to current.



Adult Programming



Schenectady County removed the Adult Programming Coordinator from the 2021 library budget due to the uncertainty of the fiscal impact of the Pandemic on County operations. The position was reinstated in the summer of 2021 and we were delighted to welcome Julie Dahlie, from our Youth Services department, into the Adult Programming position in the Fall, as it had been vacant over a year and a half.

An Adult Programming Survey was conducted across nine locations with a great response from the community members who were anxious to have programs return to their branches. Craft programs, Health & Wellness, Continued Education, and Cooking classes were the most requested programs on the survey, which will prove to be very useful for 2022 program planning. Our world has dramatically changed due to the Pandemic, and hybrid (live and virtual) programming became the new norm. By offering hybrid programs, patrons could still participate with pre-recorded videos or live ZOOMs from the comfort and safety of their own home.

It was evident that in order to implement hybrid programming in a meaningful way, upgrades needed to be made to our current programming technology in the McChesney Room. The Friends of the Library, who pay for all of our programs, provided the funds for a dedicated programming computer to be stationed at the podium.

Programming highlights included the Dreams of Equality program series, Outdoor Yoga, Foundations in Financial Management, REELS film series, Adult Coloring, the Young Musicians Forum, Job Corps, author Ann Van Hine, a "Handmade for the Holiday" series and "Reggie Harris: Freedom Songs and Civil Rights" which was presented in collaboration with MVLS libraries.



SCPL presents
An Author Visit with:
Ann Van Hine
Sunday, November 21st
2:00PM
 -McChesney Room in Central Library-

Ann Clark Van Hine is the mom of two grown daughters, the widow of a FDNY firefighter, a retired small business owner, a docent with 9/11 Tribute Museum, and published writer. Since September 11, 2001, Ann has had numerous opportunities, all over the SA and internationally, to share the story of God's presence and peace as she navigated "a personal loss in the midst of a national tragedy."

Book available to purchase at:
The Open Door Bookstore & Gift Gallery

Reggie Harris
 Freedom Songs and the Civil Rights Movement

Wednesday
April 21
6:30pm

Exclusively on: **zoom**

Register @ SCPL.org to get the Zoom link.

UNDERSTANDING IMPLICIT BIAS & MICRO-AGGRESSIONS:
 TIPS TO RAISE AWARENESS & DO BETTER

presented by **JASON BENITEZ**
 VICE-PRESIDENT OF TALENT, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION, CAPITAL REGION CHAMBER

MONDAY, JUNE 21st @ 6:30PM

SCPL

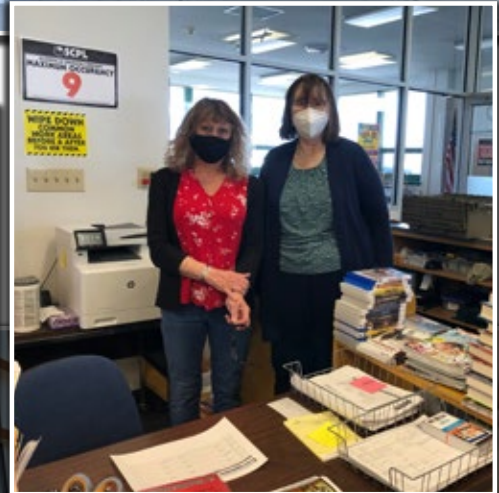


BRANCH REPORT



Library operations in 2021 were a year like no other. All nine libraries had reduced hours and days of operation, and operated in curbside mode for a portion of the year. Branches were also partnered together to maintain staff health and safety, as well as to continue serving all communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The natural crossover of patron usage determined the pairings: Niskayuna and Woodlawn; Phyllis Bornt and Mont Pleasant; Scotia and Glenville; Rotterdam and Quaker Street. Staffing levels were drastically reduced with approximately 24 position vacancies due to the Pandemic's impact on library operations. Despite this, staff rose to the challenges and by March 2021, we opened our doors to the public to browse our collections for "Grab and Go" services, with curbside service still available by request.

Through the summer, with the vaccine more widely available, on-boarding to fill the vacancies was underway. Over 15 new employees were hired by the close of 2021 to prepare for the next phase of increasing hours and ceasing the paired approach to service. In September all nine libraries were operating independently with another increase in hours from October through the end of 2021. Both staff and patrons were excited! While library staff and our communities continue to recover from the impact of COVID-19, there is comfort in the fact that the year ended with the focus back on the SCPL mission!



FACILITIES REPORT

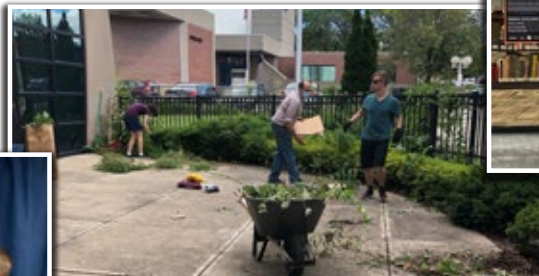
Despite the Pandemic, improvement to our library facilities moved forward in 2021. The exterior improvements to the Scotia Branch Library proceeded, as did the construction of a program room addition to this historic library, with a target date of completion by December 31, 2021. The library closed to the public after the Village of Scotia's annual Holiday on the Avenue event on December 5, 2021 to complete interior renovations including painting, the installation of a new circulation desk, some electrical work, and the delivery of some furnishings was completed.

The Woodlawn Branch Library was also closed to the public for the first half of 2021 as the renovation of the library was undertaken. New flooring, window treatments, furnishings, and a new circulation desk were installed. A new meeting room for library programs and community use was added. Electrical work and fresh wall paint finished off the new look and layout. A new roof and HVAC system were also installed. A celebratory reopening occurred in June.

With assistance from Union College, Metroplex, and DSIC, landscaping improvements were made to the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library. Electrical vehicle charging stations, similar to what was installed at our Central Library a few years back, will be installed at all remaining branch libraries in 2022.

The planning process for a renovation of the Glenville Branch Library, thanks to a generous bequest from a former patron and volunteer, was undertaken with an anticipated start date of March 2022.

HVAC work began at the Niskayuna Branch Library, with phase two slated to be finished in 2022. Planning also began for an interior upgrade to the Niskayuna building which is slated for completion in the Spring of 2022.





BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Just as our staff had to adjust throughout 2021, our Board of Trustees did too as they supported us, every step of the way! They volunteered their time to assist our staff with making vaccine appointments and working at the vaccine POD's, supporting our County's Pandemic efforts.

Trustee Sharon Jordan was recognized by the Mohawk Valley Library System with the Harold and Junice Wusterbarth Volunteer Service Award for her years of work for her leadership over the years overseeing the construction of two new branches, and renovations of others, as the Chair of the Board's Building Committee.

With days and hours of operation at 50% through most of the year, the Trustees worked with Administration to submit a 2022 library budget that created a more stable staffing model for the future. We are grateful that the Legislature supported many of their recommendations.

The Legislature appointed Deborah Escobar and Angela Blair Tatem as Trustees on our Board, and we enthusiastically welcomed them as library advocates. We thank Dr. Bill Levering for his years of service to the Board as his term of office concluded December 31, 2021.



GRANTS • AWARDS • BEQUESTS

New York State Public Library Construction Grant
Awarded by the Mohawk Valley Library System

S.T.A.R.S. Early Literacy Program Grant
Awarded by the Zonta Club

Dream and Do Grant
Awarded by the Mohawk Valley Library System

New York State Legislature Aid for the Scotia Branch Library
Awarded by the New York State Legislature

Bequest for the Glenville Branch Library
Awarded by the estate of Whitney G. Denio



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Our Friends of the Library were as dedicated, resilient and innovative as our library staff were in 2021! As some restrictions were lifted and our community health rebounded for part of the year, the amount of donations steadily increased which meant the book sorters, the online book sellers, A Second Look and Whitney Bookstores volunteers were quite busy. Socially distant book sales were conducted with necessary health precautions in place. The Friends did not miss a beat! In the Fall, it was announced that the building housing the Whitney Book Corner was for sale and that the lease would soon end. A Friends Committee began working with Metroplex to ensure a new location would be found. Nevertheless, they persisted and there is good news to be announced by our Friends in 2022!

The Friends also continued their ever popular Monday Noon Programs throughout 2021. Starting off completely virtual utilizing Zoom, and then transitioning to a hybrid programming model of in-person and Zoom when the pandemic numbers seemed to stabilize at times, it continues to be well attended by dozens of people each week.

The Monday Noon Programs were not the only Friends program series that took a dive into the deep end of the virtual pool. The Beat The Snow Concert Series was shown exclusively pre-recorded on YouTube, as audiences were not allowed to be in the McChesney Room during the Winter of 2021.

If you are not already a member of the Friends and love what they enable us to do at or libraries, you can support them in two ways:

1. become a member of the Friends and receive their newsletter full of wonderful information;
2. volunteer a few hours a week or a month. They are in great need of help to ensure that their mission of helping our library system thrives. There are lots of skill sets needed – whether manually assisting with donated books, serving on a committee, or helping at their stores or at the annual book sales, there is something for everyone!

Books Sandwiched In
a free book talk series
MONDAYS at NOON
SEPT 13 thru OCT 25
Attend in-person in the McChesney Room
or virtually on **zoom**
For program schedule and topics,
visit: scpl.org or friendsofscpl.org

Friends
BEAT THE SNOW
WINTER CONCERT SERIES
2021



LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S FAREWELL REPORT



Ten years ago, I was appointed Director of the Schenectady County Public Library System by the County Legislature during a fiscally challenging time as our Board of Trustees was charged with restructuring the library system. Despite these challenges, our Board of Trustees and our staff adapted to doing things in a new and different way. Our Trustees were deeply committed to our library mission and pledged to continue working towards a long-range plan to meet the financial challenge, while still fulfilling our mission.

In 2012, the abrupt closing of the Hamilton Hill Branch, located in the Carver Community Center, was a great loss of library service in one of the neediest parts of the city. Our County leaders and Trustees committed to finding a way to bring service back to the neighborhood. An extensive search of existing locations did not yield a site suitable for 21st

library service and the Legislature committed to securing a site to build a new library. The Board of Trustees received a large bequest from former branch librarian Phyllis Bornt, and with the help of County Capital funds, the Friends of the Library, NYS Public Library Construction funds, Metroplex, and donations from local philanthropic foundations, the money was secured and the new library at 948 State St. opened on February 26, 2016, which made an enormous impact on the community. The success of this branch was the impetus for the County Legislature to begin plans with the Board of Trustees to build a new library in Mont Pleasant, which opened in May of 2019. Many other improvements were made to the infrastructure of our facilities, including to the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library with new circulation and information services desk, RFID self-check out system, and an exterior sidewalk and landscaping project.

Bornt was just the beginning of a series of improvement projects that our County leadership team and Trustees collaborated on. In addition to building two new libraries, it was a privilege to work on plans for the renovation and completion of the Quaker Street, Woodlawn, and Scotia Branch libraries. Scotia was fortunate to have a program/community room added which is a wonderful addition to this historic building. Work on renovations of the Glenville, Niskayuna and Rotterdam libraries began and will be completed by mid-2022. Our facilities have had vast improvements over the past ten years! I am grateful for the commitment that has been made by our County Legislators and our Board of Trustees to improve the infrastructure of our libraries that our community relies on.

On the operational end, the Board of Trustees prepared budgets and advocated to our County Legislature to support the strengthening of the staffing model of the library system. For years our library system relied on the use of part-time and substitute staff to regularly staff our libraries, which led to a disruption of operations at some locations. The Board recommended converting many of our part-time positions to full-time to adequately staff our nine locations, and added several new librarian positions, a graphic design position, additional full-time senior library clerks, three special patrol officers to enhance library security, and two full-time cleaners. I am grateful the County Legislature supported many of the budgetary recommendations that enabled the Board of Trustees to carry out our library mission and to provide a more stable operation.

In August, I announced my retirement to the Board of Trustees and our County Manager, slated for the end of April 2022, to allow sufficient time to undertake the search for my successor. The world is in a period of transition due to the Pandemic and the library system is also. We look forward to fully resuming our library mission as a literacy leader in the community, in 2022. I am proud of the work our library staff was able to provide our County and its residents over the past two years, during the darkest days many have ever faced. 2022 holds great promise for our library system and hope for a brighter future. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve Schenectady County and its residents. I have been blessed to have worked with wonderful staff over the years and have great confidence there is a strong team in place as we look to the new year, to carry on the work!

With Gratitude,

Karen Bradley, Library Director



STATISTICS



CIRCULATION
2020: 320,428
2021: 638,914






REFERENCE QUESTIONS:
?

2020: 24,211
2021: 19,653

VISITOR COUNT:
2020: 289,644
2021: 271,036

OF REGISTERED RESIDENT BORROWERS:
2020: 66,238
2021: 62,401

eCONTENT CIRCULATION   


2019: **116,609**

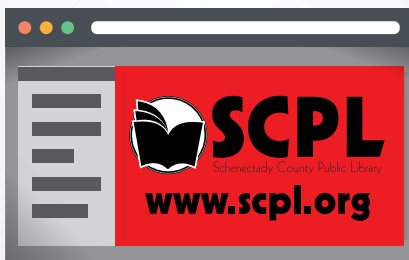
2020: **131,659**

2021: **135,714**

Our digital e-content of ebooks, graphic novels, audio books, music, and movies on Hoopla & OverDrive continue to increase year over year.

+3%

	2020	2021
	# OF ATTENDEES:	# OF ATTENDEES:
	19,541	14,750
ADULTS	3,491	2,283
CHILDREN'S	16,050	12,457



WIFI USERS

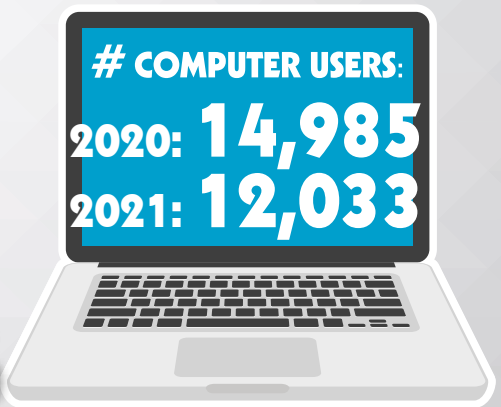
2020: 46,159
2021: 37,212

WEBSITE VISITS:
2020: 332,995
2021: 608,125



COMPUTER USERS:

2020: 14,985
2021: 12,033



* COMBINED FROM ALL 9 SCPL LOCATIONS.



SCPL
Schenectady County Public Library

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Central Library
99 Clinton Street
518.388.4500

**Phyllis Bornt
Branch Library
& Literacy Center**
948 State Street
518.372.4393

**Glenville
Branch Library**
20 Glenridge Road
518.386.2243

**Mont Pleasant
Branch Library**
1036 Crane Street
518.386.2245

**Niskayuna
Branch Library**
2400 Nott Street East
518.386.2249

**Quaker Street
Branch Library**
133 Bull Street, Delanson
518.895.2719

**Rotterdam
Branch Library**
1100 N. Westcott Road
518.356.3440

**Scotia
Branch Library**
14 Mohawk Avenue
518.386.2247

**Woodlawn
Branch Library**
2 Sanford Street
518.386.2248

www.scpl.org