

WWE

**Explore.
Discover.
Connect.**



**Willoughby-Eastlake
Public Library**

We explore. We discover. We connect.

ANNUAL REPORT | 2024



FROM OUR DIRECTOR | ERIC LINDERMAN

I am pleased to share that 2024 was a great year for Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library (WEPL). As you can see in this report, we have continued to provide the resources and services for the benefit and enjoyment of the communities we serve. We have also added new services in response to the growing popularity of our public programs.

2024 was especially good for the programs we offer for all ages, with large increases in attendance over the prior year. These programs include summer reading activities, which are effective in building kids' reading skills during months that school is not in session. Programs for teens include art clubs, makerspace activities, and career exploration.

The library also provides important outreach to seniors who may not be able to make it to the library. We offer complete services at the library inside the Willoughby Senior Center, as well as book discussion groups at the Eastlake Senior Center, the Willowick Senior Center, and Ohio Living Breckenridge Village.

If you have not been to the library lately, I encourage you to check us out at one of our libraries in Willoughby, Willowick, Eastlake and Willoughby Hills, and online at we247.org. Also, get a library card if you don't have one. You can still borrow books at any of our locations, and the card will get you access to even more online.



FROM OUR 2024 BOARD PRESIDENT | DIANE PETRUCCIO

It has been a busy few years for the Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library with the renovations done on our three major buildings, but that doesn't mean the work has stopped. In 2024, we began working with our architects to start finalizing plans to renovate the former Citizen's Bank Building to make it our permanent administrative space.

As you may know, we have been renting space to house our administration personnel, as well as our Materials & Processing and Interlibrary Loan Departments. These are critical behind-the-scenes operations that get books and other materials into the libraries, and efficiently move materials between libraries, making the most of the community's investment.

Fiscal management and careful budgeting, along with a great deal of discussion and debate made it possible

for us to purchase a building we could call a permanent home. As the project continues into 2025, we look forward to the future and the opportunities we can offer to our patrons with the use of this additional space.

If you are a regular visitor to our buildings, you know the offerings we have available to you. If you have not visited in a while, stop in and see what we have. Whether you like to hold a book in your hand, read it on your tablet, listen to it on your phone or in your car, we have you covered. If you need access to a computer, a laptop, or some other technology, we are here for you. Do you need a passport? Something notarized? We have programs for all ages, along with movies, music, sensory friendly toys, help and assistance for home schoolers, support for crafters, and even a library of "things" available. Stop in and see what today's library offers you.

2024 Board of Trustees

Diane Petruccio, **President**
Jeff Mackey, **Vice-President**
Ashley El-Khoury, **Secretary**

Board Members

Frank Buttari Nick Monin
Catherine Clampitt Sue Roseum

*Board Member Eric Foisel stepped down in September 2024. Thank you for your service, Eric!

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



KID LIBRARIANS

Our Kid Librarian program, where children get to curate their own book displays, is a hit! After communicating with Children's Services Manager Sarah Vargo, a librarian from Ireland City Libraries (Drumcondra Branch, in Dublin) wrote to share that their Junior Librarians initiative was underway and a great success! How about that international Library Love! [CLICK here to see more pictures!](#)



VETERANS DAY BOOK DONATION DRIVE

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our community, our Veterans Day Book Donation Drive was a HUGE success! We sorted and packed nearly fifty boxes of books, which were distributed to Louis B. Stokes VA Medical Center, the Volunteers of America Domiciliary, Legion post 112 in Madison, and Legion post 214 in Willoughby. Thank you to all who donated, our staff who worked hard to organize and execute the Drive, and, of course, to our Veterans, for all they have sacrificed for our country.



In 2024, the Willowick Library collaborated with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank again to provide free lunch for kids ages 18 & younger. We served over 1,000 lunches on 98 days. Total attendance for 2024 was 1,198!



TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

The total solar eclipse was amazing! We distributed 6,700 pairs of eclipse glasses to community members and had eclipse viewing events at each of our four libraries. After the eclipse, we partnered with Astronomers Without Borders on their Eclipse glasses recycling program. AWB help to bring glasses to people around the world who may not otherwise have a safe way to view eclipses directly. We sent 4,000 pairs of glasses to the Astronomy Club of Kosovo!



BY THE NUMBERS

In 2024, we welcomed **265,332** visitors to our four Libraries.

CIRCULATION & USAGE

Total Items Circulated (Physical & eMedia):	1,040,425 (↑3%)
Meeting Room Usage:	2,060 (↑5%)
Database Searches:	116,857 (↑4%)
Reference Assistance Transactions:	71,244 (↑18%)

PROGRAM & STORYTIME ATTENDANCE

Total:	39,930 (↑36%)
Children's Program Attendance:	18,478 (↑31%)
Teen Program Attendance:	2,968 (↑67%)
Adult Program Attendance:	10,938 (↑51%)
Storytime Attendance:	7,546 (↑22%)
Summer Reading Participants:	2,256 (↑31%)

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I use the computers often, which is so helpful. Printing important papers is wonderful. Once I had a family crisis (a death) and was asked to coordinate everything. I was in panic mode. I didn't have a smart phone yet. I went to the library minutes before closing and the lady at the desk helped me check out a hot spot. I was so grateful I started to cry. I wanted to hug her.

~ Linda

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PASSPORTS

In 2024, we processed 1,157 passports and 1,298 passport photos between our Willoughby and Willowick Libraries.



BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

We have 90 total computers (9 juvenile) available to the public in our Libraries.

2024 Circulation & Usage

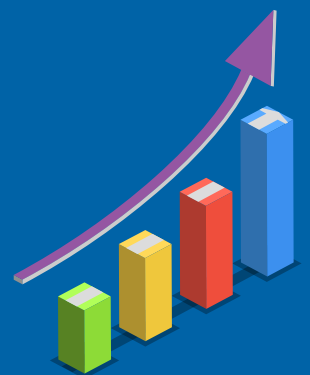
Public Computer Use Sessions:	40,346 (↑4%)
WiFi HotSpot Checkouts:	911
Laptop/HotSpot Bundle Checkouts:	735

[Sign up for Digital Learning Programs](#)

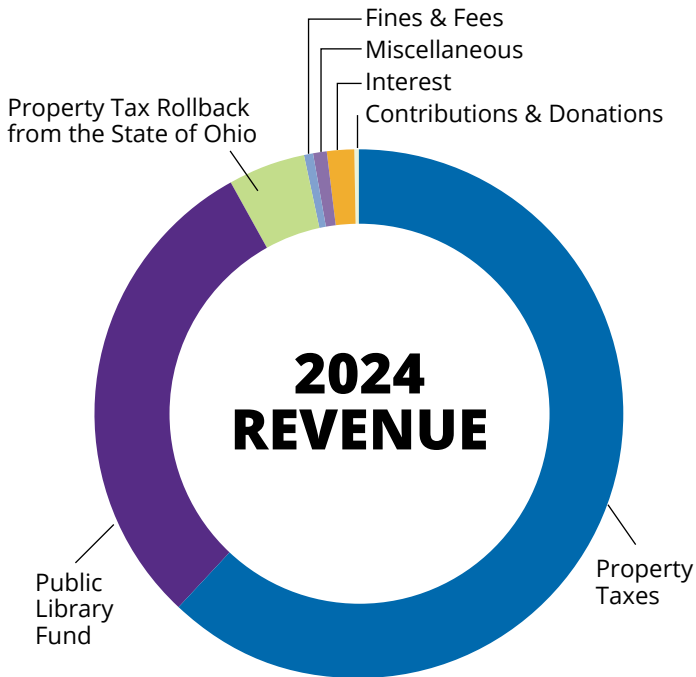
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Each \$1 spent by Ohio public libraries returns a total economic value of \$5.

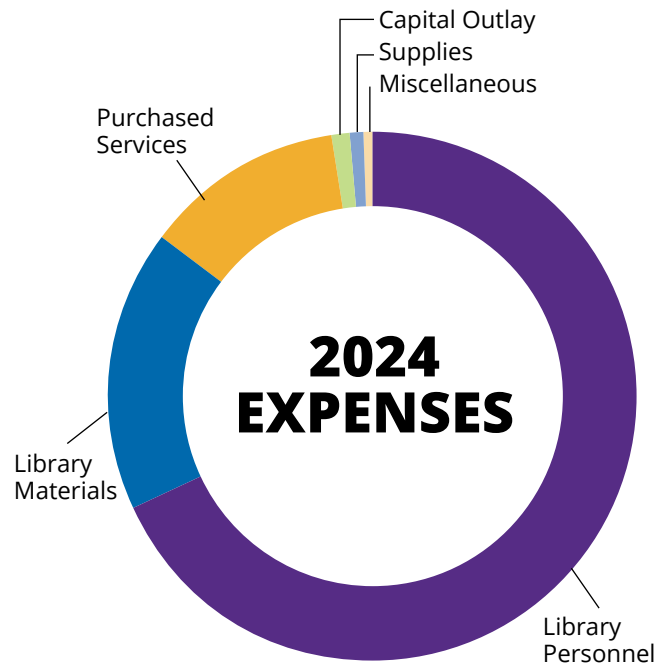
(Ohio Library Council Return on Investment Study)



FINANCIALS



Property Taxes	\$4,982,209.20
Public Library Fund	\$2,395,716.88
Property Tax Rollback from the State of Ohio	\$392,978.93
Fines & Fees	\$34,563.17
Miscellaneous	\$63,123.77
Interest	\$150,796.37
Contributions & Donations	\$684.00
Total	\$8,020,072.32



Library Personnel	\$4,626,006.33
Library Materials	\$1,158,802.62
Purchased Services	\$834,950.35
Capital Outlay	\$67,713.57
Supplies	\$66,826.34
Miscellaneous	\$22,554.11
Total	\$6,776,853.32



We now offer complete services at the library inside the Willoughby Senior Center.



EASTLAKE LIBRARY

36706 Lake Shore Blvd. | (440) 942-7880



Our newly renovated Eastlake Library had a busy year that saw a return to full-scale programming and services!

Staff member Tammy was awarded a grant from the Great Lakes Science Center to participate in the Eclipse Ambassador Program, which involved training, a kit of supplies (a telescope, lens, 1,000 glasses, access to slides and educational resources, and a viewing station) and \$1,000 to host an Eclipse Viewing Party.

Our Signature Event, *Mystery After Dark: Murder on the Eastlake Express*, was a hit! We were excited to welcome back The Candlelight Mystery Players for an interactive Murder Mystery program to solve the Murder on the Eastlake Express.

We launched a successful series of programs in collaboration with the Cleveland Museum of Art along with a series of programs focused on World War II. Both of these series were available in the library on online via Zoom.

The Teen Art Club had yet another year of creative success. Additionally, Teen Librarian Cathy offered the following art programs: Faux Gothic Windows, Wire Bonsai Trees, and Fire Ink for Teens and their Parents. We also hosted the Summer Dungeons & Dragons series for Teens the summer of 2024.

The Children's department held the first annual Bluey Bash, A Halloween Carnival, Polar Express Storytime (complete with photos with Santa), Messy Play Storytimes, and Story Lab (a science-themed storytime). Children's Librarians Sam and Jennifer are hosting monthly scavenger hunts for kids and continue to rotate the toys in the expanded play area for our younger patrons to enjoy.

We are also very excited about our maker space, the Lake Effect Lab. In 2024, we launched Make it Monday events to teach patrons about the different machines in the Lab via one-on-one appointments.

Visitors	43,480
Physical Items Circulated	197,028
Children's Program Attendance	1,945
Storytime Attendance	1,986
Teen Program Attendance	387
Adult Program Attendance	842



WILLOUGHBY LIBRARY

30 Public Square | (440) 942-3200



2024 saw a continued growth in our storytime offerings, which resulted in the planning of extra sessions for some age groups in 2025.

Our Teen Homeschool programs began branching out to include visits to local businesses to learn hands-on skills, including the Lake County Airport and Lake County Metroparks.

Our Tuesday Night Ladies' Book Club and Delicious Discussions Book Club, which takes place at different restaurants in Downtown Willoughby, continued to grow in popularity. The bi-weekly Willoughby Writer's Workshop and monthly Learn and Play Chess Club both became firmly established in 2024.

2024 saw another year of wonderful partnership with the City of Willoughby, Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce, and Heart of Willoughby on such events as Willoughby ArtsFest, Last Stop Willoughby, Outdoor Movie Nights, and Miracle on Erie Street, which saw 280 patrons come to the library for crafts and photos with Santa!

Visitors	80,565
Physical Items Circulated	260,554
Children's Program Attendance	3,286
Storytime Attendance	2,117
Teen Program Attendance	696
Adult Program Attendance	2,124



OUR MISSION

The Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of our community.

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Our four library locations serve the communities of Eastlake, Lakeline, Timberlake, Waite Hill, Willoughby, Willoughby Hills, and Willowick.

WILLOUGHBY HILLS LIBRARY

35400 Chardon Road | (440) 942-3362



Willoughby Hills Library offered the following recurring programs in 2024: Music and Movement, Movies at the Hills, Murder at the Hills, and Gardening Club.

In addition to our recurring storytimes, we offered a wide variety of children's programs. Outback Ray's Amazing Animal Show and Meet Moana brought in large groups of people!

Teens got crafty and handy at the Library in 2024! Program highlights included 3D Paper Snowflakes, Homeschool Teens: Intro to the Sewing Machine, Sew a Standard Size Pillowcase, Magazine Silhouette Art, and Car Tips for Teens.

Adult Programming saw local authors and local history among its highlights, including programs like Mounds Club: The Mob & The Great Lake County Robbery, Paul Orlousky: Stories Behind the News from 50 Years on Cleveland TV, Meet President Teddy Roosevelt & Mrs. Edith Roosevelt, and An Evening with Terry Pluto.

Our staff participated in many City of Willoughby Hills community events, including Music Fest, Touch a Truck, the Halloween Party, and Christmas Card Lane.

Visitors	29,038
Physical Items Circulated	111,945
Children's Program Attendance	1,257
Storytime Attendance	593
Teen Program Attendance	135
Adult Program Attendance	1,111



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Amelia learned so much during the **Sewing Machines for Beginners** class that she was able to fix this tiny toy sewing machine that she was gifted several years ago, and she is currently using it to make doll clothes!

~ Katie S.

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WILLOWICK LIBRARY

263 East 305th Street | (440) 943-4151



2024 was a fun and busy year at Willowick Library.

We held a system-wide event, which was a library themed speakeasy. This evening of Prohibition-themed programming included a mocktail demonstration from our in-house mixologist Bryn, a presentation on the history of brewing in Cleveland by Michael Williams of Great Lakes Brewing, and a discussion about The Rise and Fall of the Cleveland Mafia with local author Rick Porrello.

We also held our first Around the World (Without Leaving Willowick) event in 2024. This day-long program offered community members a chance to learn about different cultural groups in our area and included the following performances: Japanese folk dancing, Scottish dancing with a bagpiper, an African drum circle, a Ukranian Egg demo, Croatian tamburitans, and American square dancing.

Our Gems and Jewels of Northeast Ohio program series was a hit and included informative and entertaining presentations from the following organizations: Lake County History Center, Local Historical Societies, Holden Arboretum, The Painesville Railroad Museum, The Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center, The Fairport Harbor Museum and Lighthouse, Lake View Cemetery, Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum, James A. Garfield National Historic Site, The Mentor Marsh and Carol H. Sweet Nature Center, Rockefeller Park Greenhouse, and University Circle.

We also held another successful WEPLCon in 2024. This is a day of celebrating anime and geeky fandom, featuring raffles, panels, cosplay, local vendors, and more!

Our storytimes were regularly attended, along with recurring children's programs like Music & Movement and Playgroup. We also continued our tradition of Noon Year's Eve, which gives youngsters a chance to play, hear stories, make crafts, and then count down the New Year at noon.

We acquired a mobile cooking cart, which has allowed us to offer a wildly successful series of cooking classes for children and adults!

Visitors	112,249
Items Circulated	229,271
Children's Program Attendance	3,386
Storytime Attendance	1,779
Teen Program Attendance	833
Adult Program Attendance	2,533



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We applied for our daughter's passport a few weeks ago at the Willowick library. It was such a quick, easy process - 100 times better than going to the post office! So glad this service is offered!

~ Jennifer J.

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PARTNERSHIPS

W-E LIBRARY BOOSTERS & VOLUNTEERS

We would like to offer our heartfelt gratitude to the W-E Library Boosters, who continually bring to the attention of the community the purpose and usefulness of the library while raising funds to help support the library in its various services.

In 2024, the Boosters funded over \$4000 in programs/events and library materials.

Their 2024 Book Sale earned \$1767 in sales + 295 in membership dues.

Their ink cartridge recycling program is an eco-friendly and innovative way to help our community while also helping our Library.

Our thanks also to all of the volunteers who helped the Boosters to accomplish all of this.

We would also like to thank the organizations and volunteers who help to maintain our seven **Little Free Libraries** at these six locations throughout our service area:

Eastlake City Hall
Eastlake Community Center
Fiona's Coffee Bar & Bakery

Miracle League Park
Osborne Park
Todd Field

STORYWALKS AT LOCAL PARKS

We added a new Storywalk at Manry Park in Willowick!

And be sure to continue to visit our Storywalk at Osborne Park in Willoughby!

Thank you to Willoughby and Willowick Parks and Recreation Departments for these wonderful partnerships!



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This is such a great idea. The Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library staff continues to be innovative in serving its patrons.

~ Kevin B, Facebook comment on the free Little food pantry at Willoughby Library, in collaboration with Willoughby Arts Collaborative, Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce.

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Community Partners

Asa's Angels
Breckenridge Village/Ohio Living
Cleveland Seed Bank
Eastlake Senior Center
Forbes House
GFWC Ohio Eastlake Women's Club
Fine Arts Association
Greater Cleveland Food Bank
Help Me Grow
Here We Grow Again
Itsy Bitsy Land
Kennedy Preschool
Kid Friendly Academy
Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood
Lake County Council on Aging
Lake County General Health District
Lake County Historical Society
Lake Humane Society
Lakeland Community College TLC
Little Learners II
Little Scholars
North Coast Lions
Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library
Papillion Enrichment Center
PCs for People
Pembroke School
Project Noelle
Shoregate United Methodist Church
Special Olympics
St. Mary's Head Start
The Heart of Willoughby
United Way of Lake County
University Hospitals (Lake West)
Willoughby Arts Collaborative
Willoughby Historical Society
Willoughby Parks & Recreation
Willoughby Senior Center
Willoughby United Methodist Preschoolers
Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce
Willoughby-Eastlake Schools
Willowick Food Pantry
Willowick Parks & Recreation
Willowick Senior Center

LIBRARY GRATITUDE



In November of 2024, we asked our patrons to let us know why they were thankful for the Library. The responses were overwhelming. While we can't print them all, we offer this sample, and our gratitude back to our wonderful community!

I moved to the area this summer and was lonely and looking for a welcoming community space to do my remote work, meet people, and check out materials. When NE Ohio had the tornadoes and I lost power for a week, the library let me charge my lifesaving medical devices. Thank you! ~ Rachael



Libraries ensure access to all types of media and facilitate learning for everyone. They are essential for growth and foster education and learning. I am thankful for the library because they keep us free. ~ Trisha

I think the library is the best deal in town. There are so many services and many are free. ~ Debra

I am thankful for the library because it supplies me with knowledge, entertainment, and kindness for free! ~ Paula

I get to spend quality time with my three baby girls. ~ Lucie



I love the sense of community, the calm feeling of being surrounded by books and by people who question more than they answer, the excitement of children's programs, the ability to give my children choices of books for free and seeing friends. ~ Jenni



The Library allows me to visit all kinds of new worlds through reading. ~ Karen

Our library is a wonderful and welcoming place. My children love coming to the programs, we've held birthday parties here, and staff know us by name. Everyone is so helpful when I am looking for a specific resource. ~ Tricia H



I am thankful for the library for many reasons! Most importantly, it was a place that I could bring my kids when they were little and we were living on a single income. They experienced wonderful social opportunities with storytime and evening programs. They were able to use a computer

before we owned one. The best part is that they grew to love and respect books. ~ Julie

I love the sense of community, the calm feeling of being surrounded by books and by people who question more than they answer, the excitement of children's programs, the ability to give my children choices of books for free and seeing friends. ~ Jenni



ON THE HORIZON



New Administrative Offices

We are so excited about the opening of our new Administrative Offices later this year!

Our current Administrative Offices have been housed at Eastlake City Hall since 2015. We are deeply grateful to the City of Eastlake for this partnership opportunity.

In 2021, during the pandemic, we purchased the old Citizens Bank building at 38115 Euclid Ave. At that time, we were beginning our plan for the renovation of our Eastlake Library. With that renovation complete in the summer of 2023, we moved forward with plans for the renovations of our new Administrative Offices.

Our Administrative Offices house roughly 20 Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library (WEPL) employees, including Library Administration, the Finance, IT, Marketing & Outreach, HR, Materials and Processing (MAP), and Interlibrary Loan Departments (ILL), along with our Children's Services Manager.

In many ways, the Administrative Offices are where library materials are born and make their way into community members' hands.



Features of the New Administrative Offices

In addition to giving us a permanent home for this section of the WEPL staff, this new space offers opportunities for us to deepen our connections with the community. They include:

- A large green space in front of the building that we will upkeep and continue to use for Willoughby Public Library programming, with hopes of extending this for programming for other community partners.
- Solving a prior parking shortage for people who wanted to use our Willoughby Library.
- A community space available for periodic public use by outside groups for meetings of 50 people or less.
- Permanent home for W-E Library Boosters book sales.

Check us out online! Click the icons!

