



Aurora  
Public  
Library  
District

# Annual Report

## July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

## Executive Summary.

Looking back at this most exceptional, challenging, unprecedented year, it's hard to find the distance we need to make sense of it. It's been an extraordinary year of growth and change, and there's more to come. Even as we reflect on the last year, it's important to look ahead at the possibility of the next.

On July 22, 2020, the Board of Library Trustees adopted an equity and inclusion statement reaffirming the library's commitment to racial justice and equality. The library embarked on a slate of programming to support this vision, including a partnership with Study Circles Aurora, which uses intentional conversation to improve understanding and respect among the diverse individuals and groups in our community. The board later hired a consultant to guide the library's efforts. In the months since, we've revised our policies with an equity lens, adjusted our hiring practices, and we look forward to staff training and a review of the library's program and collection offerings. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are our core values as a library, and this work will help us serve you better.

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, library staff refocused their work on keeping the lines of communication with the community open, and providing as much service as we could, as safely as we could. We made the wrenching decision to close our buildings to the public on March 17, 2020. We retooled our collection to focus on digital materials while we couldn't circulate our physical collection. We learned how to take our programs virtual so that we could continue to engage the community. Staff worked from home answering customer communication through email, social media, and over the phone. As the country began to open up, we provided drive up service and curbside and home delivery of physical materials beginning in May 2020. We opened our reconfigured for social distance public computing areas in June 2020; and we opened for in-person visits by appointment in July 2020. We provided access to unbiased information on the virus and the vaccine, and we worked with community partners to help connect staff and customers to vaccination appointments as they became available. We continue to closely watch the development of the pandemic as we work to keep our spaces safe for staff and customers, and to help our community begin to heal from the devastation of the virus.

And finally, on July 1, 2020, the City of Aurora Public Library became the Aurora Public Library District. In Illinois, library districts have elected boards, and so April 6, 2021 was the historic first election for library trustees. Ryan Cytryn, Joe Filapek, Paul LaTour, Sandeep Londhe, Matthew Orr, Melinda Riddick and Suzanne Stegeman were officially seated at the May 26, 2021 board meeting. We thank the last board of the City of Aurora Public Library for their years of service, their dedication, and vision.

# Highlights - EDI efforts

**On June 24, 2020 the Aurora Public Library District board released an equity and inclusion statement which included the implementation of a new equity, diversity, and inclusion pillar as part of the strategic plan.**



A group was created to begin implementing the EDI pillar by developing a pillar name, statement and action plan. 10 individuals made up the group including staff at all levels and locations, board members and a community member. As part of the group's plan, Reesheda Graham Washington (RGW) was hired as a consultant to assess library procedures, offer recommendations to provide a more inclusive space for customers and staff and provide training for staff to offer a better customer experience.

In Summer 2020, we partnered with Study Circles Aurora (now Study Circles Illinois), a community group with the mission of transforming our community through dialogue, using the dialogue to change processes developed by every day democracy. Library staff helped facilitate 2 seasons of 6 session Dialogue Groups, one in Fall 2020 and one in Spring 2021. This experience gave staff a chance to meet and communicate with members of the community on critical issues of race, while also learning more about their concerns and hopes for their community. Staff participation crossed departments and locations. We had 138 attendees for the Fall 2020 sessions and 67 attendees for Spring 2021.



With the EDI pillar, there was a focus on programs that provided windows to view into someone else's experience and mirrors to reflect on one's culture and opportunity to explore one's culture.

One example was an evening with Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, the #1 New York Times bestselling author, National Book Award winner, historian, and one of the country's leading anti-racist voices, who discussed his book *How To Be An Antiracist*. With 11 partnering libraries this program had a total of near 6,000 attendees to the virtual program.

In the spring, we had a visit with Dr. Eve L. Ewing a sociologist of education whose research is focused on racism, social inequality, and urban policy, and the impact of these forces on American public schools and the lives of young people. With 12 partnering libraries this program had a total of 746 viewers.



# Highlights - Service & Access

**COVID-19 presented many challenges for APLD, our community and our nation. As an organization our focus was to persevere and find innovative ways to help our community heal and be a place for support when our community was in great need.**



**On May 18, 2020, the library introduced curbside hold pickup at all library locations. Customers were able to reserve materials, schedule an appointment and safely pickup their materials without getting out of their vehicle.**

**Kits were created and distributed via curbside. Kits were a way to provide fun, creative crafts for all ages.**



**June 13, 2020 public computer appointments were added. APLD recognized the use of computers and internet access was an essential need to Aurora. Appointments for public computers were introduced which required a new software to schedule appointments, rearranging of facilities to provide socially distanced computer stations, and training of staff to provide remote assistance to customers.**



**As numbers for COVID began to decrease, the library added Browse and Go appointments on July 15, followed shortly by study room reservations. Appointments helped limit the number of customers and limit the time customers were in the library.**



**The Outreach Services department expanded their home delivery service in order to accommodate customers who met certain criteria.**

**JULY 1, 2020  
WE CONVERTED  
TO A DISTRICT!**

# Highlights - Materials & Programs

In order to safely and securely serve the community during a lockdown, APLD shifted its resources and budget to prioritize e-content and digital resources.



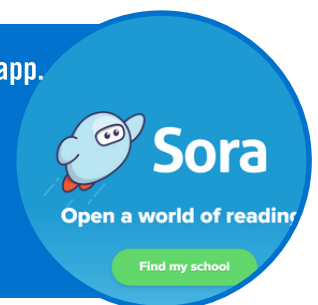
Virtual programs began April 1, 2020. This included a robust weekly program with customer favorites such as storytimes as well as new programs including APLD Cooks, Pets Show and Tell and many more. Providing virtual programs allowed staff to be more creative with the programs being delivered, gave more access to customers to attend a program at their leisure and expanded the opportunities of presenters!

With our website as a primary channel for customers to engage with the library, new pages were created to highlight e-learning resources, staff recommendations, COVID Crisis Assistance for businesses and individuals, a curation of virtual things to do for free, community resources, and much more!



PressReader was added to our library's collection in November 2020 in response to the restriction of print magazines and newspapers during the pandemic. It features thousands of newspapers and magazines from around the world and in different languages. From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 we had 166,320 article opens.

In the fall of 2020, District 131 started utilizing Sora. Overdrive's school library app. Through this partnership we have added 864 new users from District 131 since the fall of 2020 to June 30, 2021. The selectors who develop the children's and teen's overdrive collections have seen the holds and checkouts rise, as well as the recommendations for titles to add to our collection.



# Statistics

**521** TOTAL HOME DELIVERIES



33 DIFFERENT KITS  
**1,631**  
KITS DISTRIBUTED

TOTAL CURBSIDE PICK UPS

**29,633**



477 West Branch | 11,975 Eola Road Branch | 17,181 Santori Library

**388** <sup>total</sup> pre-recorded programs

**498** <sup>total</sup> LIVE virtual programs



TOTAL VIRTUAL PROGRAM VIEWS

**48,977**

<http://>



**WEBSITE 16.85K USERS**  
PER MONTH +48% INCREASE


**28.95K VISITS**  
PER MONTH +33% INCREASE

**Fan Favorite**  
**45,849 views!**




**368**   
Subscribers

**FOLLOWERS**  **2,368** +2.5% INCREASE

 **5,519** +17% INCREASE

 **1,017** +366% INCREASE

 **564** +22% INCREASE

# Statistics



142,632  
TOTAL  
VISITS

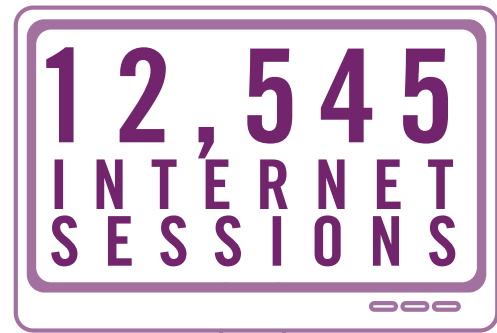
1,123 STUDY ROOM RESERVATIONS

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

TOTAL 6,209

DATABASE SESSIONS

18,464



12,545  
INTERNET  
SESSIONS



156,915  
Total  
E-circ

811,766  
ITEMS CIRCULATED

48,244 NEW TITLES | 476,432 COLLECTION SIZE

146 TOTAL STAFF

18 GOODBYES (4 Retirements & 14 Resignations)

20 NEW HIRES

We answered  
27,439  
of your  
questions

## New Bookmobile campaign: \$24,300 - Bridge to Hope



## Literacy Fund for Vulnerable Children: \$10,500

Throughout the pandemic, the Foundation has worked to provide literacy packets to Aurora's most vulnerable families through a partnership with the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry and Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry. Since April 2020, more than 15,200 literacy packets have gone to Aurora's vulnerable children



## First Virtual Event: \$14,800 - 5K for Literacy



## Other: \$330,600

Unrestricted donations, endowment, APLD programs and specific library location donations



Since 2008, Aurora Public Library Foundation has received greater than \$5,000,000 in philanthropic support. We are grateful for the generosity and kindness of our donors. Please visit [APLFoundationIL.org](http://APLFoundationIL.org) for the Honor Roll of Donors.

**The Aurora Public Library District's  
Board of Trustees, Foundation Board  
of Directors and staff thank you for  
another great year!**



**Thank you!**