



**2021-2022**

# **Aurora Public Library District's Annual Report**



# Executive Summary

The last twelve months have been a time of retrenchment, of planning, of laying the foundation for future growth. It's been a disjointed year, with the worst surge of the pandemic delaying a return to full service. From the vantage point of summer 2022, we can look back on those difficult times and appreciate the progress we've made towards a more normal present and hopefully, a calmer future.

In September of 2021, the library board selected StudioGC to create a master plan to guide renovations at both branches. A series of public input sessions followed in the spring and early summer, and we're looking forward to presenting a complete plan in late 2022. In the meantime and after some supply chain disruptions, West Branch sports new paint and carpet. A series of community surveys chose the color palette, and it is beautiful. Building on this success, we used a similar process to select the color scheme for the interior of the new bookmobile – delivery is scheduled for spring 2023.

Over the last year the library board revised every one of our public facing policies with a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. As a result, the Aurora Public Library District is fines-free – no more overdue fines! Your library card will never expire, until and unless you move out of Aurora. It's easier than ever to get that card, thanks to online registration; and your card gets you access to more books, movies, and music through our membership in LinkIn, a group of the largest and best libraries in northern Illinois. All of the policy changes were designed to make library service easier and more accessible for those who face barriers of race, class, income and education level – and that makes library service more accessible for everyone.

In the winter of 2022, both the library and the library's Foundation received notice of grant awards from the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. These grants total more than \$550,000, and we thank our representatives in the Illinois State Legislature for their advocacy and support.

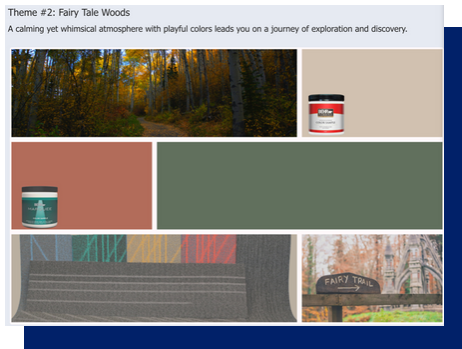
During the worst times and the best times of this year, the library has found a way to provide service to the community. As our community becomes more comfortable with in-person services and programs, we see that the number of people who visit the library, check out physical materials, attend programs, and use computers grow every month. We are so happy to see you all again – and we look forward to enjoying better times ahead, together.

# Highlights

## Community Engagement

### West Branch Refresh

After 20 years the West Branch got a new look: over 450 residents responded to our survey and Fairy Tale Woods was the community favorite. West Branch was closed for 2 days in March for carpet installation in the entrances and there were 10 days of limited service for paint and flooring throughout the branch.



The results are worth the disruption!

### The Community Drives the Design of the New Bookmobile

As we started to build the new Bookmobile, customers were at the forefront of that vision. We conducted surveys to determine the internal color scheme and the external design of what residents want to see rolling around town. Voting for the interior was in summer 2021 and the exterior survey began in March 2022 and ran through until National Bookmobile Day on April 6. Nearly 600 responses were received with a clear winner -- which will be revealed in fall 2022.



# Highlights

## Making History

### Fine Free, Forever Cards, & Forward Together

In August 2022, the library board approved a policy making the Aurora Public Library District fines free! No more fines for late returns! Similarly, new forever cards never expire. In addition, library policies were reviewed and rewritten with a diversity, equity, and inclusive lens in mind. A new local history policy represents the Aurora community better; an updated study room and meeting room policy removes fees for nonprofit organizations; the revised collection policy ensures that library materials reflect our community. These changes in policies gives everyone better access to the library by removing barriers, so that we can truly be a place that welcomes everyone.



Most popular social media post in 2021-2022

## First Library Card Contest



The library had its first ever library card contest in spring of 2022, inviting all Aurora residents to submit a design. The contest had a total of 78 entries and was followed by a community survey which determined the winner. 3,013 votes were counted and Dagny Tang (9) was declared the winner of the contest! An popular exhibit displayed all submissions to the community. The winning library card design was launched September 2022 during Library Card Signup Month.

# Planning for the future

## Space Planning with Studio GC

The library hired Studio GC in September 2021 to begin planning renovations at Eola Road Branch and West Branch. Community conversations were held to gather input from the community. In May 2022, meetings included with West Side families, East Side families, seniors, teens and new adults, business owners and entrepreneurs, Spanish speakers and 2 general sessions were open to all. In addition, an online survey with a video presentation was available to the community. During these sessions, Studio GC was able to gauge community priorities centered around creativity, lifestyle, services, technology, social interest, and age-specific interest. From the meetings, Studio GC was able to begin initial sketches for the renovations at both branches. More to come!



# Serving our Customers



**8,624 Study Room Reservations**

667% increase\*



**23,417 Database Sessions**

26% increase\*



**32,063 Internet Sessions**

156% increase\*



**854,999 Items Circulated**

5% increase\*



**452,834 Collection Size** 5% decrease\*  
**91,208 e-materials Collection size**



**152,932 e-Materials Circulated**

2% decrease\*



**142 Employees to Serve You Better!**

3% decrease\*

# Connecting with our Customers



**405** Live Virtual Programs with **4,936** Attendees  
25% increase\*

**1,127** Live In-person Programs with **13,902** Attendees  
123% increase\*



**417** Home Deliveries  
24% decrease\*



**70,668** Questions Answered  
158% increase\*



**341,113** Visits 139% increase\*  
Eola: 163,497 | Santori: 123,272 | West: 44,152 | Bookmobile: 10,192



**2,369** Curbside Pickups 1,150% decrease\*  
143 West Branch | 931 Eola Road Branch | 1,295 Santori Library



**190,000** Website Visitors 7% increase\*

**348,000** Website Visits 1% decrease\*



**666** YouTube Subscribers

80% Increase  
**6,621** Facebook Fans  
20% increase

**1,577** Instagram Followers

55% increase  
**612** Twitter Followers  
9% increase

# Foundation



The purpose of the Aurora Public Library District Foundation is to innovate literacy solutions to help the Aurora Public Library District nurture an educated, enlighten, and enriched diverse community.



## PROVIDING VULNERABLE CHILDREN WITH RESOURCES

Fiscal year 2022 brought more literacy resources to children most in need. To date, **25,000** packets have been delivered by Aurora's food pantries and preschools who serve children with financial hardship.

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## RAISING RESOURCES VIRTUALLY

The second *Lace Up for Literacy* virtual 5K was fun and helped raise needed resources for the new Bookmobile and Bookmobile endowment fund. The endowment fund is being established for maintenance and replacement of the Bookmobile.

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## FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Made possible by a grant from the Aurora Women's Empowerment Foundation, Aurora Public Library District Foundation Director's Nisha Floyd and Mireya Luna taught young women about *wants versus needs, budgets, credit, and so much more!*

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## DUELING PIANOS, AWARDS, AUCTION & MORE!

Doubling the net proceeds from previous events, guests enjoyed themselves! The Lifelong Learning Inspiration Award was presented to the Aurora Area Interfaith and the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantries and the Thomas J. Weisner Educational Collaboration Award was presented to Michael Isaacson, now the Executive Director of the Kane County Health Department.

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# Foundation

## INNOVATE LITERACY SOLUTIONS More fiscal year highlights:



We're planning for The Magic of Literacy - December 3, 2022!

2022 Theme ~ *Step Into Narnia*



Interior reveal of the new Bookmobile

We were grateful to honor the Dunham Foundation (left) for their grant which made it possible to begin the design and planning of the new Bookmobile. The Farmer's Market (right) was a great way to share the interior reveal with more residents!



Other generous gifts and beginning the process of a grant from the State of Illinois completed the funding of the new Bookmobile and will also help establish a special endowment fund for the future needs of the Bookmobile. The new bookmobile will arrive early in 2023. Our next effort is to fund a new Mini-Bookmobile!

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 greater than \$226,000 was received in philanthropic, auction, and other in-kind donations, along with event proceeds. As of June 30, 2022, the endowment was a little greater than \$4.4 million.

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

