



Agenda: Board of Trustees
August 1, 2024, at 4 pm
Conference Room, Downtown Library

Literacy, Access, & Inclusion

Library Board President – Monica Challenger

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - o Minutes:
 - July 11, 2024
 - July 17, 2024
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Board Education: Fiscal Year Comparisons – Dara Schmidt
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
 - o Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - No Action
- H. Library Director’s Report
- I. Old Business
- J. New Business
- K. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **September 5, 2024 at 4 pm**, in the Community Room, Ladd Library.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email musilj@crlibrary.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
July 11, 2024

Board members in attendance: [President] Clint Twedt-Ball, [Vice President] Monica Challenger, Jade Hart, Chris Casey, Jeremy Elges, Susie McDermott, Ana McClain (in person); Elisabeth Hepworth, Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: Rafael Jacobo

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Erin Horst, Jessica Musil, Patrick Duggan, Todd Simonson, Wes Shirley, Jessica Link (in person)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

A. Call to Order

- Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4 pm. Mr. Twedt-Ball reflected on his time with the trustees. When he was recruited, he felt he understood libraries but never thought of them in a larger systemic construct. Ms. Schmidt gave him a copy of *Palaces for the People* to understand how libraries impact communities. He served on the Personnel and Policy committee and got a deeper understanding of the thoughtful structures to uphold libraries. He got to know the library teams, their work, and the respect this library commands at national conferences. Mr. Twedt-Ball noted it's not an easy time to be a trustee and yet they are vanguards of a sacred institution. He feels like this group helps to elevate the library, and can help move toward big dreams for the community. He personally thanked Ms. Schmidt for her leadership and opportunities.

B. Nominating Committee – Susie McDermott

- **Action:** Slate of Officers FY25
 - Monica Challenger (President) & Jeremy Elges (Vice President). Ms. McDermott shared the Slate of Officers for the upcoming fiscal year. The committee made the recommendation as they believe the trustees are positioned well to have Ms. Challenger as President and Mr. Elges as Vice President. They will bring a lot to the table for the library, especially as we move into the new library campaign. *The committee's recommendation for the Slate of Officers carried with unanimous approval.*
- Passing of the Gavel to new President. Mr. Twedt-Ball officially passed the gavel to the new board President Monica Challenger. She shared that feels honored to be President, especially under Mr. Twedt-Ball's mentorship. She is especially honored as she is the first African American President to serve this library.
- Recognition of Clint Twedt-Ball, President. Ms. Challenger shared praise for Mr. Twedt-Ball who started his tenure with the library in 2016. As a compassionate leader, he served on the Advocacy Committee and as chair of Personnel and Policy before being elected as Vice President alongside then-President Jade Hart. Mr. Twedt-Ball was elected President and also served to help shape the future of the Westside Library project. His contributions and advocacy as a trustee will be missed as his term ends as President and trustee. In recognition of his service, Ms. Schmidt presented him with a chair in Whipple Auditorium with his name engraved in the plate to honor his trustee service and a photo collage spelling CLINT, the letters of which are photos from around the library, to recognize his presidency.

Mr. Twedt-Ball exited the meeting at 4:12 pm.

- Welcome of Ana McClain, New Trustee. Ms. Challenger welcomed the newly elected trustee, Ms. McClain. Those present introduced themselves and their respective roles with the library and trustees. She moved to Cedar Rapids in 2012, and with her husband owns Lion Bridge Brewery. Ms. McClain and her family are avid library users and is happy to serve on the board.
- C. Consent Agenda – **Action**
- Minutes:
 - June 6, 2024
 - June 20, 2024
 - Special Event Application
- Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. McClain seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- D. Public Comments and Communications
- There being none, the meeting continued
- E. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- Ms. Tyler reported. She recently returned from American Library Association (ALA) conference in San Diego. She presented on how to use library stories to influence and impact community members; in addition, she shared our Advocacy Toolkit.
 - The Foundation accepted and signed a purchase agreement for the other parcel of land. The buyer has six months due diligence period and two opportunities to extend their timeline for decision-making. In the interim, the land remains on the market and the buyer is confidential until the deal is complete.
 - The Foundation sent an appeal for the Westside Library campaign to 1,300 households, which has garnered donations in the first few days. They will also host two upcoming events – trustees will receive invitations. First, a reception to honor former trustee and Foundation member Chuck Cebuhar, instrumental in building the 1985 library, and receive a donation for the new library campaign. And second, a campaign donor reception is August 15 to honor donors who have given so far. Ms. Schmidt will provide updates on the project at the event and we'll have a save the date for the groundbreaking event.
- F. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- Ms. Slappey reported on Friends sales practices. The Friends, in addition to sales within the library buildings and at Farmers Markets, also sells books online with a dedicated team of Friends volunteers.
- G. Board Education: Service Enterprise – Jessica Link
- The library was recently re-accredited as a Service Enterprise organization. The certification is awarded to organizations that strategically leverage volunteers to achieve operational efficiency and greater social impact. The certification is beneficial for us as it allows us to use the research-based tools to improve our program. The program has three domains – Impact and Outcomes, Establishing the Foundation, and Best Practices in Volunteer Engagement – along with four characteristics each.
 - The library's volunteer program was launched in 2013 and we were initially accredited in 2015 with re-accreditations in 2021 and 2024. Our overall score is 94%, with all domains rated higher than 91%. Ms. Link highlighted one of the characteristics under Establishing the Foundation: Leadership Involvement, which was awarded 97%. This specifically has two criteria for board involvement.
 - The volunteer program has several upcoming goals. Ms. Link plans to continue building an online and self-paced orientation; develop opportunities at the Westside Library; engage more volunteers to expand the Books by Delivery program; and shift volunteer onboarding from open door to role-specific opportunities.
 - Ms. Casey asked about volunteer turnover. This depends on the role – some volunteers are highly dedicated and trained, such as holds hunters, and less likely to turnover. Other

roles, like adopt a shelf program, have a higher turnover. Ms. Link is looking to find a right-size investment and faster training for those higher turnover roles. Regardless of role, we wish to create advocates with any volunteer. Ms. Challenger asked about volunteer recruitment methods. Currently, recruitment is paused as we build capacity. In general, recruitment is very passive as our community seeks us. When we recruit, we use the website as well as Volunteer Match and Volunteer Now through United Way. The buildings and staff interactions are also passive recruitment tools.

H. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
 - The committee did not meet in June and there is no report at this time.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Challenger presented the May 2024 financials. We're in a good position as we move toward the final month of the fiscal year. Finances are strong and are reviewed regularly by the board committee and the City Finance department to ensure we are within budget. Ms. Schmidt reminded everyone that we won't get June financials for next meeting. The City will take several weeks to confirm numbers to ensure accuracy. Ms. McClain asked how the library tracks financials regularly if reports are two months behind in board packets. The library has many predictable expenses such as personal services for salaries and benefits as well as contracted vendor fees. The Materials department spends the most and they can track their spending day-to-day while purchasing new materials. City Finance has several layers of checks and balances to ensure we remain within budget.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** 5.01: Volunteer Policy. This policy, which upholds the importance of volunteers and their roles, had a minor wording edit to clarify that volunteers do enrich library services.
 - **Action:** 6.01: Staff Endorsement. The committee did not recommend any changes at this time.
 - **Action:** 6.02: Human Resources Authority. The committee re-affirmed this policy. *The committee recommendation to approve the reviewed policies as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.*
- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Resolution to Formally Accept Transfer of Land Ownership. This resolution is the library formal acceptance of land ownership from the Foundation to the Library. At the July 23 meeting, City Council will also vote and accept the gift and transfer ownership. At the June meeting, the Library Foundation board voted to gift the land. Ms. Tyler shared how this gift will continue to support the community for generations, as it will be built in one of two HUD development zones to build affordable housing within the City. The zones are based on census tracts and the current Ladd Library property is no longer in one of those zones. Ms. Schmidt noted that the formal acceptance of the land is a culmination of an incredible gift from the Library Foundation. Ms. Challenger thanked library leadership, trustees, Ms. Tyler, and Ms. Slappey for their efforts to develop this project for our community.
 - The Foundation has a warranty deed for Parcel A. A final plat will be filed and following approval, the land can be re-zoned. The new cross street, which will be built and the library's address, will be called Sandberg Lane.
 - Ms. Schmidt reported that Jason Stancliffe, City Facilities Manager, will work with the library as project manager to help coordinate City services and contractor needs for this build. Building Services and the ADA team have approved designs and we anticipate bid approval will go to City Council on July 23 to then release the bid.

The committee recommendation to approve the resolution to formally accept Parcel A for the Westside Library project as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.

- I. Library Director's Report
 - Ms. Schmidt reported that while the new library project moves forward, there has been several new people in City leadership positions. She is building relationships and has started routine meetings with the City Finance Director.
 - Ms. Hart asked about the hotspot program, which ended June 30. A majority of the Metro Library Network (MLN) devices were lost or stolen regularly. Materials Manager Erin Horst and Technology Solutions Supervisor Patrick Duggan analyzed data about how the hotspots were being used and also researched needs to fund a sustainable program. Data showed the hotspots were not being used by those who needed it and were routinely checked out by those who did not live in Cedar Rapids. It would also cost approximately \$200,000 to maintain the program including replacing the lost or stolen devices. There is momentum behind a federal program to impact the populations who need a hotspot.
- J. Old Business
 - There being no old business, the meeting continued.
- K. New Business
 - There being no new business, the meeting continued.
- L. Adjournment
 - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:19 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, August 1, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
July 17, 2024

Board members in attendance: Elisabeth Hepworth and Susie McDermott (in-person); [President] Monica Challenger, [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Chris Casey, Jade Hart, and Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt and Jessica Musil (in-person); Patrick Duggan and Amber McNamara (via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. New Business
 - **Action:** Resolution Formal Transfer of Land Ownership. At the last board meeting, we had a resolution to formally accept the transfer the land from the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation to the Library. This updated resolution is required to move forward with land transfer to include the City of Cedar Rapids as the previous resolution did not meet requirements by the City Attorney.
Ms. McDermott motioned to approve the resolution. Mr. Elges seconded. The resolution of land transfer unanimously passed.
- C. Adjournment
 - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, August 1, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

Cricket league

Parents hope to build new tradition in Iowa

Living, 10A



State softball

Williamsburg repeats as Class 3A champion

Sports, 1B



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Iowa hospitality shines as RAGBRAI nears end



Riders stop for a drink Friday during the penultimate day of RAGBRAI in Fairfield. Riders made the 84.8-mile ride from Ottumwa to Mount Pleasant, where they would spend the night before ending the 434-mile ride today in Burlington. (Geoff Stellfox photos/The Gazette)

'I didn't know that I could love Iowa and be more proud'



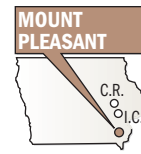
Terry Rassi and his wife, Irene, of Goshen, Ind., play the fiddle for riders Friday during the penultimate day of RAGBRAI as riders pass through Fairfield. The Rassis have been operating as a RAGBRAI support team for 20 years.

By Andy Hallman, Southeast Iowa Union

Thousands of cyclists Friday streamed into their last overnight stop of Mount Pleasant as they neared the end of their 434-mile trek across the state in the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa — the hilliest route in the event's 51-year history.

The southern route this year bypassed the Corridor, bringing cyclists instead through the closest meetup town of Fairfield and the overnight stop of Mount Pleasant. The ride, which got underway Sunday in Glenwood and ends today in Burlington, included an optional 15.5-mile century loop — which made for a 100-mile day — on Friday near Wayland.

Riders began their next-to-the-last day in Ottumwa, and stopped briefly in Eldon before coming to Fairfield to grab lunch, dance to live music and rest their legs before hitting



► RAGBRAI, PAGE 7A

High prices for digital content put libraries in a bind

C.R., I.C. libraries face costs far higher than print copies

By Grace King, The Gazette

The Iowa City Public Library this month changed what materials are available to patrons through one of its digital library services in an effort to conserve its funds.

That service, called Hoopla, allows library cardholders to borrow content such as movies, TV shows, music, audiobooks and e-books for free. It's available any time of day and doesn't have wait lists — so items can be checked out immediately.

But libraries pay a fee per item checked out by patrons, ranging from 99 cents to \$3.99 per item in Hoopla. The Iowa City Public Library changed its collection offerings in Hoopla — one of many digital library services offered — so it doesn't offer anything to patrons that costs the library over \$1.99.

"The cost became too high for us to keep up with. We don't make these decisions joyfully," said Anne Mangano, collection services coordinator for the Iowa City Library.



Anne Mangano
Iowa City Public Library

The Iowa City Public Library isn't alone in trying to budget for the cost of digital material that often is far more expensive than print. According to the Urban Libraries Council, major publishers have placed severe restrictions on e-book and audiobook lending models. This includes prices that far exceed the print equivalent, time limits on titles purchased and content that can be removed with little or no notice from the offerings.

"As digital technologies become increasingly inseparable from the ways people learn, work and interact, public libraries' abilities to afford access to e-books and

► LIBRARIES, PAGE 7A

Johnson County auditor resigns for health reasons



County Dems will hold convention to find replacement candidate

By Megan Woolard, The Gazette

IOWA CITY — Johnson County Democrats are planning a special convention to nominate someone to run for county auditor after Travis Weipert resigned from the job,

citing health reasons.

Weipert, who was unopposed in the June Democratic primary, was running for re-election in the Nov. 5 general election.

Weipert, auditor since 2013, resigned Thursday in a letter to the Johnson County Board of Supervisors and notified the deputy elections commissioner of his intent to no longer pursue re-election.

At this point, no Republican is running for the job, which pays \$120,000 a year.

Ed Cranston, chair of the Johnson County Democrats, told The Gazette the party "definitely will" hold a convention to select someone to run for the post, though the convention is in its early planning

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Mount Pleasant resident Holly Frary stops Friday to rest in Fairfield during Day 6 of RAGBRAI. (Andy Hallman/Southeast Iowa Union)



Riders drop their bicycles and take a rest Friday during the penultimate day of RAGBRAI in Fairfield. (Geoff Stellfox/The Gazette)

Auditor/Race for successor is wide open

► FROM PAGE 1A

stage with no date announced. General election ballot vacancies due to candidate withdrawal must be submitted to the county's commissioner of elections no later than 5 p.m. on the 69th day before the election — meaning late August.

Chris Edwards, accounting deputy in the Johnson County Auditor's Office, will be the acting auditor until Johnson County supervisors appoint an interim to serve the remainder of Weipert's term.

Rod Sullivan, chair of the Board of Supervisors, said the board will appoint an interim auditor "as soon as possible."

"It's a big job and an important job," Sullivan said. "That office does a great job of getting out the vote, and I'm confident that whoever wins that election will continue to do that."



Rod Sullivan Johnson County supervisor

The Auditor's Office is responsible for administering local, state and federal elections and maintaining the county's voter registration record. It also maintains records of property ownership for taxation purposes and handles accounts payable and payroll for the county government.

"I am grateful to the people of Johnson County for the privilege of serving my community and am incredibly proud of what my office and my amazing staff have done to improve access to voting in Johnson County," Weipert wrote in his resignation letter.

He did not specify the health reason that led to his resignation.

Linn County Auditor Joel Miller, who has worked with the Johnson County Auditor's Office throughout Weipert's time in office, said the two offices have had a "friendly rivalry" when it comes to the work they do to support voters.

"But I had no idea that there was plans to resign, so I was caught off guard like everyone else was," Miller said.

Comments: megan.wollard@the-gazette.com

RAGBRAI/Riders bear down and earn their fun

► FROM PAGE 1A

the road again and traveling to Brighton, Wayland, Trenton and eventually Mount Pleasant.

Holly Frary of Mount Pleasant was on her maiden voyage of RAGBRAI. She had been training since February and logged 1,200 miles in five months to get in shape.

"I've cycled for many years, but never had the opportunity to take an entire week to ride," she said. "This is the first opportunity I've had to ride the entire week, so I jumped."

Frary said the highlight of the ride so far has been an increased appreciation for her home state.

"I didn't know that I could love Iowa and be more proud of this state, but RAGBRAI has proved me wrong," she said. "The overall hospitality of the towns and the riders."

"I've met people from all over the world this week. When you're riding with 20,000 to 30,000 people every day, you have that one common thread. You're all here for the same passion, the same reason, and that's really cool to me."

Frary said most riders assumed that the most gruel-



Riders enter the Fairfield city limits Friday during the penultimate day of the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa. Riders made the 84.8-mile ride from Ottumwa to Mount Pleasant on a balmy Friday morning. The ride ends today in Burlington. (Geoff Stellfox/The Gazette)

ing day of the week would be Day 3 from Atlantic to Winterset because it would be so long (82 miles, the second longest day) and the day with the most feet of climb at 4,519, when no other day had more than 3,200 feet.

However, Frary said it was actually the following

day, from Winterset to Knoxville, that really wore her down.

"We rode about 160 miles in two days with 8,000 feet of elevation, so that last 10 to 15 miles of Wednesday's ride was really mental for me," she said. "It got really hot, and I was starting to feel

some fatigue. But there were a ton of farmhouse stands with pickle juice, electrolytes and lemonade. There are tents and tables set up the entire route to fuel us as we go."

Comments: (641) 575-0135; andy.hallman@southeastiowaunion.com

Libraries/Digital borrowing has exploded in recent years

► FROM PAGE 1A

audiobooks and other e-content like streaming movies are more important than ever," the Urban Libraries Council said in a statement this month.

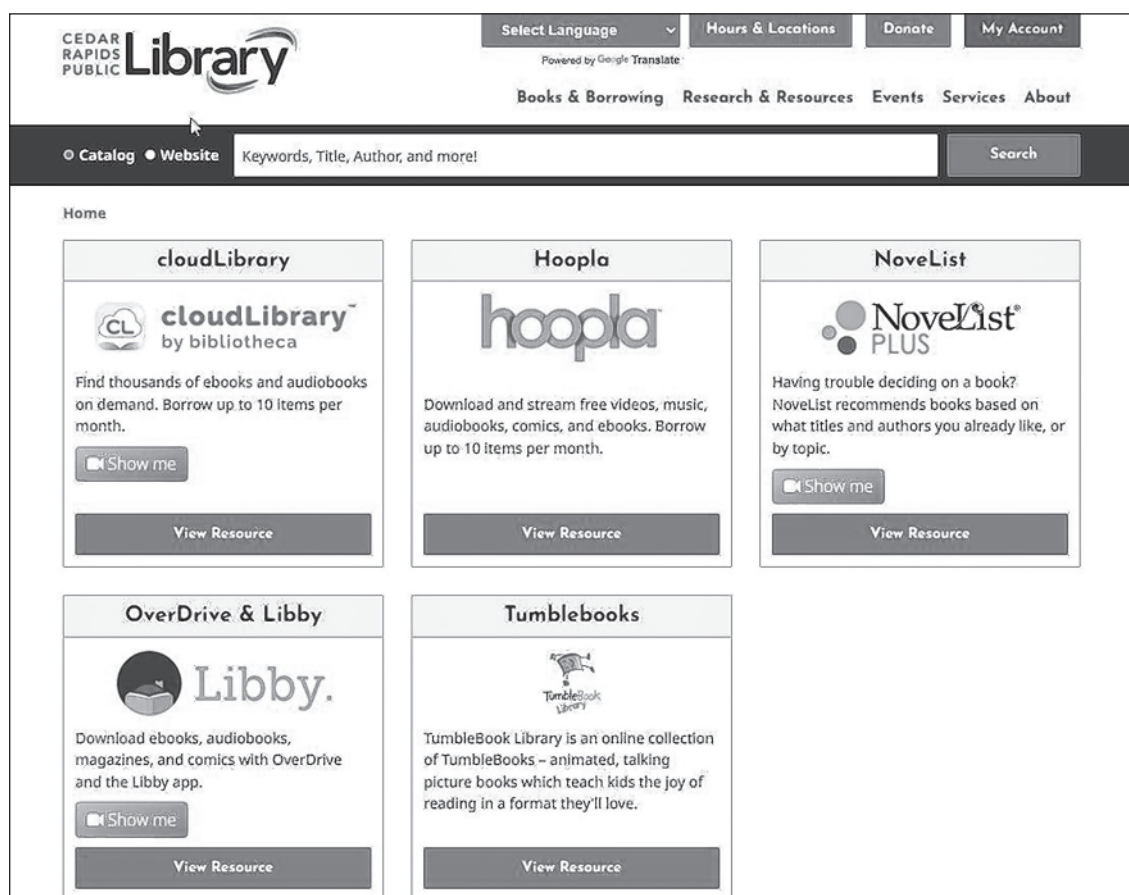
The statement urged "major e-book and audiobook publishers and streaming services to institute fair, transparent and flexible licensing models for public libraries."

There has been a 34 percent increase in digital book borrowing alone since 2019, according to the council. "Without changes made to how libraries build their e-content collections, taxpayer funded library budgets cannot adequately meet the growing demand and provide equitable access for all," the council said in their statement.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library has a limit on the number of digital checkouts a patron can make — 10 a month in Hoopla "to make sure we don't completely blow the budget for the year in two months, because that could happen if you're not taking control of it," said Dara Schmidt, the library director.

One of the other most popular options for checking out digital materials is called the Overdrive or Libby app. In this app, the library pays for titles that then are made available to patrons. There often are long waiting lists — up to six months — for digital materials because the library can "lend" only as many titles of one book as it has purchased.

For example, if the library pays for six copies of one book digitally, only six people can check out that book at one time.



A screen capture of the Cedar Rapids Public Library's list of digital library services shows ways patrons can access digital materials free with their library card. But the libraries' cost for the digital materials has soared.

"When you buy a book, you own that book, but if you're purchasing digital copies of things — whether it's an e-book or an audiobook — it's more like a rental fee," Schmidt said.

Although libraries are buying digital copies of books, they often have to renew that purchase — at two to three times the cost of a physical book — every two to three years to keep it in their catalog.

That's also why there's a

limit to what titles are available digitally.

Both Cedar Rapids and Iowa City librarians said they prioritize buying newer trending books over repurchasing back catalogs. The most popular digital material the Cedar Rapids library distributes is adult fiction, especially in the romance, fantasy and mystery genres, Schmidt said.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library splits its \$650,000 annual book budget about 50-50 between digital and print ma-

terials, Schmidt said. That includes the downtown location and Ladd Library in Cedar Rapids' southwest quadrant. While local libraries share collections, the Marion and Hiawatha public libraries have separate budgets for their materials.

About 60 percent of the Iowa City Public Library's annual budget for books is spent on digital material, Mangano said.

"Ideally, I would like it flipped to match what people

are checking out," said Mangano, since physical books still are the majority of the library's circulation.

Schmidt said the cost of digital materials for libraries is the industry's version of "price gouging."

"The cost is so high in comparison to the average consumer, and we are government entities using taxpayer dollars. How is that an OK thing that we are increasing prices just for public use?" she said.

Cedar Rapids library materials manager Erin Horst said it might cost an individual \$12 to buy a digital book from Amazon. "But I'm paying \$70 to get a library copy that's the same thing. It's something you try to explain to patrons because they say, 'Why don't you have more?' And this is the reason."

"We want to be sure we're being respectful of intellectual content and making sure everyone gets paid for the work they've done, but it's too much for a public entity to keep up with," Horst said.

In the last year, the Cedar Rapids Public Library saw a 950,000 circulation for print and digital materials. While the budget is split evenly, the number of print books being checked out by patrons still is higher, Schmidt said.

"I probably have three or four books checked out on my phone right now, but I would prefer a physical copy," Schmidt said. "A lot of people will tell you they like the feeling of a book, but I'm not going to carry five books with me at the same time. The convenience factor of having it on my phone is great."

Comments: (319) 398-8411; grace.king@thegazette.com

Ladd Library



CONNECTING RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity Center Connects Job Seekers to Resources and Employment

When the Cedar Rapids Public Library flooded in 2008, operations moved to the westside location in Westdale Mall. The increased focus on the westside branch and its services made it clear that this part of the community needed a permanent, well-rounded library. In 2013—the same year the new downtown location opened—the Ladd Library opened on Williams Boulevard.

More than a decade later, the Ladd Library has grown into a valued resource for nearby residents. When the Opportunity Center opened in Ladd in 2019, the library became a place where people could access a wide range of additional resources.

“The core focus of the Opportunity Center is to provide resources to the community to support employment and job training goals,” said Erin Maeder, Opportunity Center Program Coordinator. Through resume workshops, computer skills classes, mock interviews, and career fairs, the Opportunity Center helps people find employment.

Most clients are seeking help with completing job applications or writing a resume. Others are not sure what careers they are interested in or how their skills will translate to the workforce. The Opportunity Center can connect those people with assessments and then job training programs.

These services can have a big impact on the local economy; many employers struggle to find qualified people to fill their open positions.

Unfortunately, those visiting the Opportunity Center sometimes have more pressing needs.

“A lot of times people are facing multiple challenges,” Erin said. “I work closely with a lot of organizations to get people connected to essential resources first, so we can get to a point where we focus on employment goals.”

Erin can connect visitors to resources because of strong partnerships with other local organizations. The Opportunity Center itself is a collaboration between the Library, Kirkwood Community College, United Way of East Central Iowa, HACAP, and the City of Cedar Rapids. Other partners include IowaWorks, Goodwill, Catherine McAuley Center, DeltaV Code School, and the Financial Wellness Center at Horizons.



*Erin Maeder, Opportunity Center
Program Coordinator*

The Opportunity Center is also connected to 70+ service providers via My Care Community. This collaboration allows agencies to make digital referrals to one another and see what services an individual might qualify for. The Opportunity Center might connect a client to unemployment benefits, job training, or tuition assistance, but also healthcare, housing, childcare, or other services through My Care Community.

The Opportunity Center refers more people to the Catherine McAuley Center (CMC) than anywhere else. Among other services, CMC provides immigrants and refugees with job coaching, workplace English classes, and connection to employers.



Jon Dayton (left) speaking with an attendee at a computer skills workshop.

“Employment staff meet with clients both at the CMC offices as well as onsite at the Opportunity Center,” said Renae Popelar, Interim Director of Refugee & Immigrant Services. “We provide these clients with resume building, application assistance, and employer outreach services to promote stability.”

This partnership is especially important in the Westdale area, where many immigrants and refugees live.

“This area is known for being a resource desert,” Erin said. “There are so many low-income families around here, so placing the Opportunity Center here was strategic. The new Westside Library will be just a few blocks away, and that was very intentional.”

The Cedar Rapids Public Library is currently raising funds for the new facility and expects to break ground this fall. In the Ladd Library, the Opportunity Center is currently in converted staff offices. The space has served its purpose, but it is less than ideal.

“The Opportunity Center will be easier to find in the new building,” Erin said. “We will also have more small office spaces, where employers and community partners can work one-on-one with clients.”

More than fifty people have used the Opportunity Center each month over the last year. With a more visible and versatile space, library staff hope to increase that number in the future.

Scholarships Awarded

Congratulations to the dozens of students who received scholarships through the Community Foundation in 2024. Totalling more than \$124,000, these scholarships are an investment in our community’s future. Scholarships are made possible by the generosity of donors who support education through the Community Foundation. To view the 2024 scholarship recipients, visit gcrf.org.



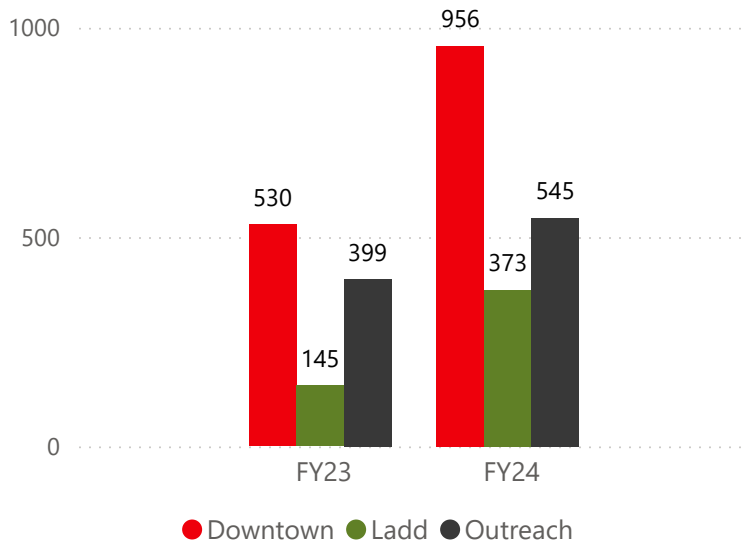
Claire English, Donor Relations Associate, presents scholarships to students at Alburnett High School.

Learning Cohort for Small and Grassroots Nonprofits Announced

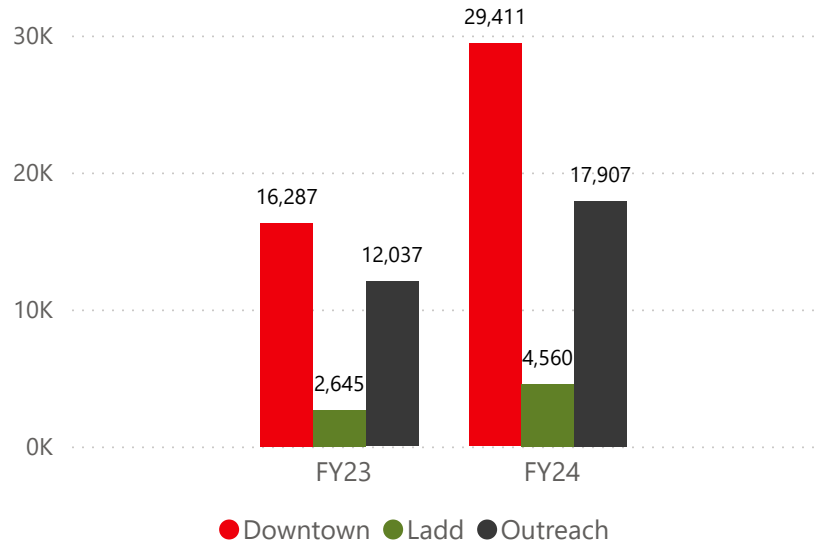
Nonprofit staff, board members, and volunteers of small and grassroots nonprofit organizations serving Linn County are invited to participate in a new three-session learning cohort in the fall of 2024. To learn more and register, visit gcrf.org. Registration is required by Friday, September 6.

Programs

of Programs



of Attendees



1,074

FY23 Total Programs

1,874

FY24 Total Programs

30,969

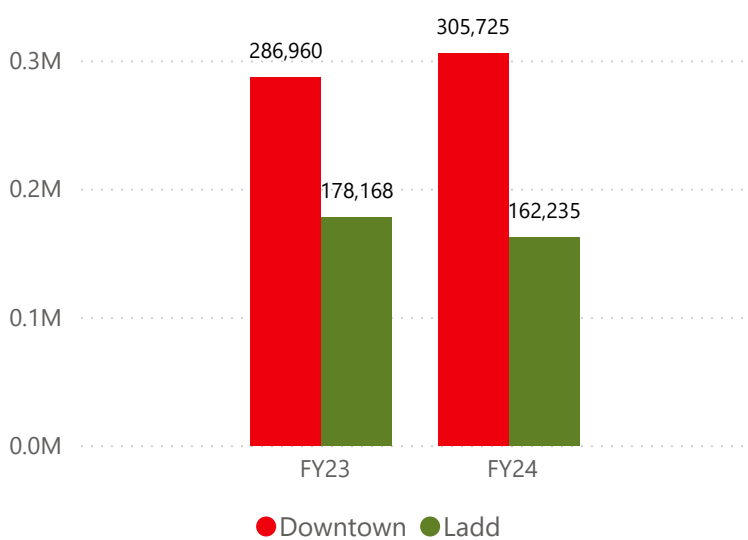
FY23 Total Attendees

51,878

FY24 Total Attendees

Borrowing & Collections

Physical Circulation



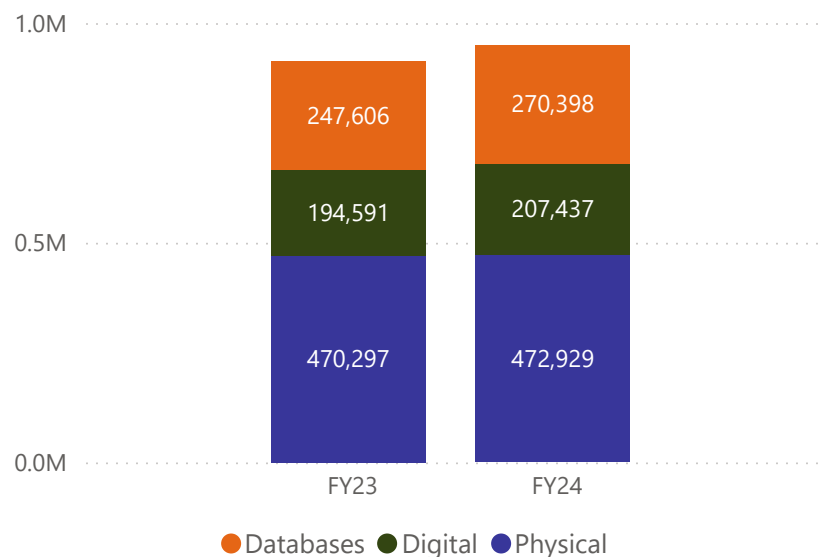
465,128

FY23 Physical Circulation

467,960

FY24 Physical Circulation

All Materials Circulation



912,494

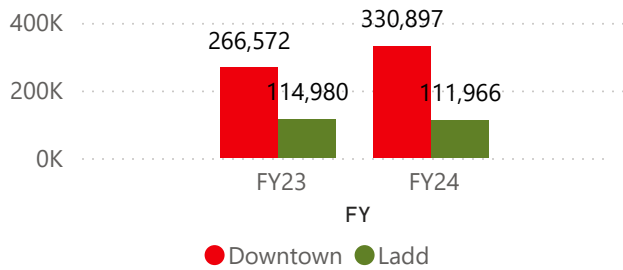
FY23 Total

950,764

FY24 Total

Visits

of Physical Visits



381,552

FY23 Visits

442,863

FY24 Visits

Cardholder Information

30,954

FY23 Active Cards

31,033

FY24 Active Cards

108,876

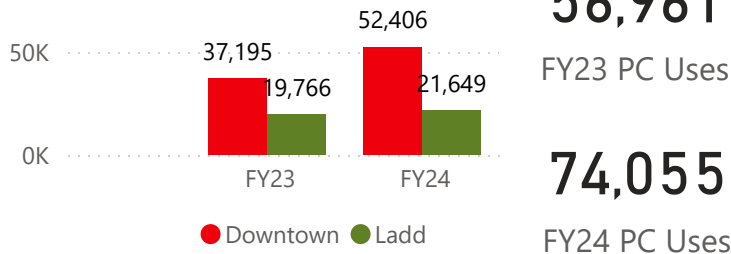
FY23 Actual Cards

55,736

FY24 Actual Cards

Technology Access

PC Uses



56,961

FY23 PC Uses

74,055

FY24 PC Uses

170,175

FY23 Virtual Visits

125,618

FY23 WiFi Sessions

182,750

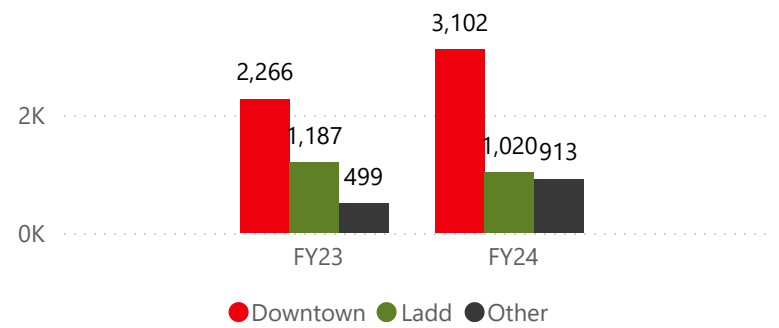
FY24 Virtual Visits

102,084

FY24 WiFi Sessions

Volunteers

Hours



3,952

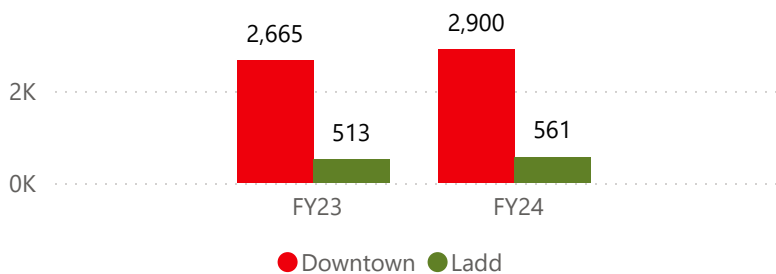
FY23 Hours

5,035

FY24 Hours

Meeting Room Use

of Reservations



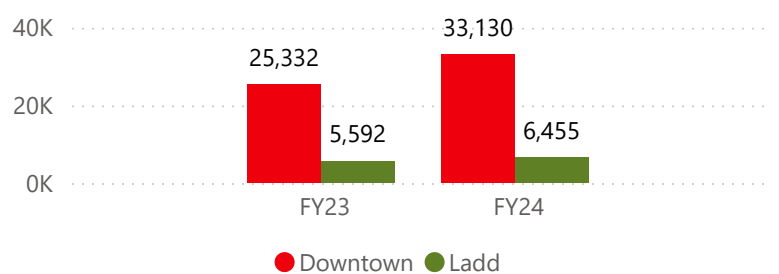
3,178

FY23 Reservations

3,461

FY24 Reservations

of Attendees



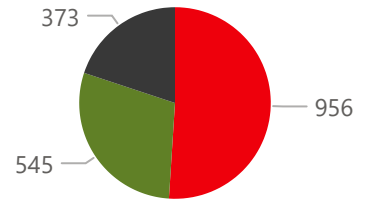
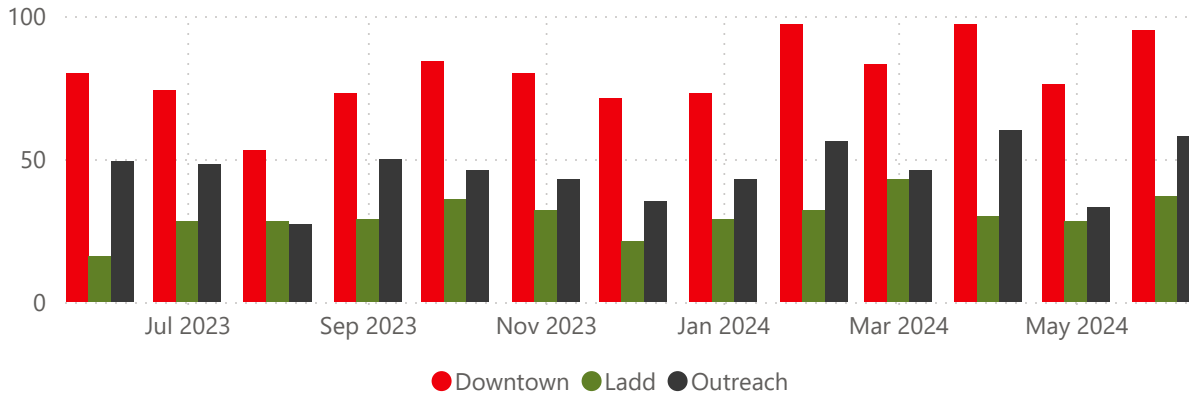
30,924

FY23 Attendees

39,585

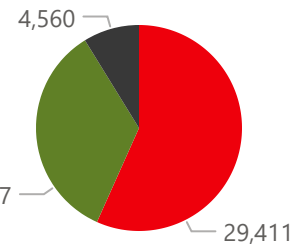
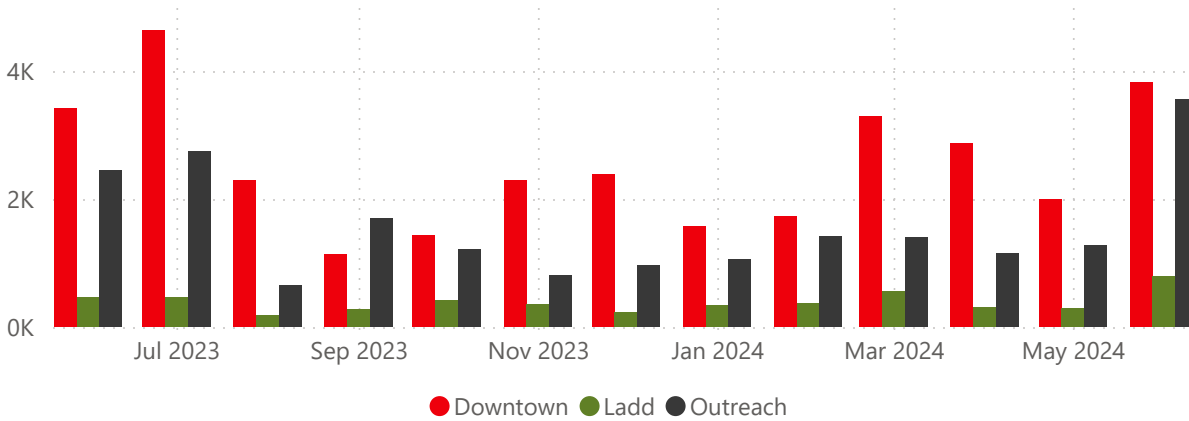
FY24 Attendees

Programs



1,874

of Programs



51,878

of Attendees

Programming had another whirlwind month as the Summer Reading Challenge was in full swing. Dozens of programs and events happened each week, from story times in the parks to outreach to child care facilities, to Maker Spaces appointments, Baby and Toddler play time, Dungeons and Dragons, and so, so much more. We welcomed our friends from the Iowa State Extension’s Insect Zoo, met life-sized dinosaurs, held new furry friends, and sang and danced with Tom Pease (for the 40th year!). And it all culminated in our End of Summer Reading Party Ren Faire, where hundreds of patrons met the King and Queen, learned to sword fight, rescued the damsel in distress, and learned how to become a pirate. The Summer Reading Challenge also moved along at a rapid pace, with patrons reading and logging literal millions of minutes and counting this summer. Minor changes have led to massive improvements, and there will be some very exciting updates once the program concludes on August 10.

I helped make cards for a mom and her kid last weekend. I went through the familiar ritual of asking the child for her name and birthday. She only needed a little help from Mom, which is admirable given that she was four.

After finishing the cards, I asked what I could help with. The daughter told me dragons were the primary concern of their visit. As I searched for suitable material, the mother chuckled. She shook her head, tears in her eyes. She dabbed at them and said, "This is her first card. And I was a library kid. I wasn't expecting for this to be so emotional. It's just... I was a library kid."

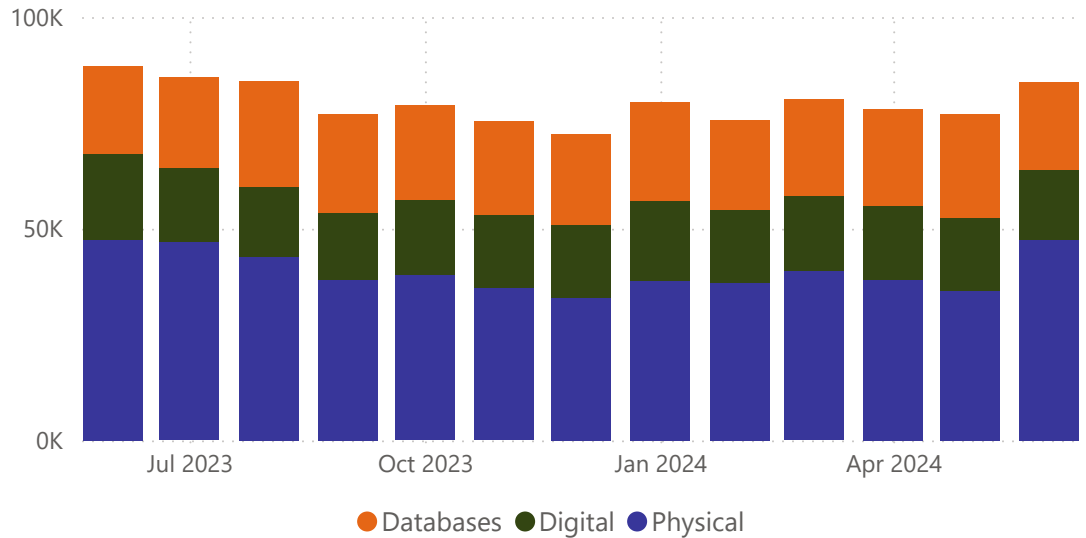
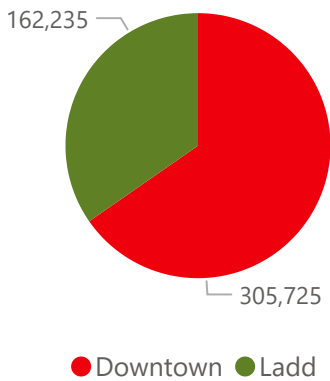
She laughed again, a little shaky. "I guess this is what we're doing now. I'm sorry." I told her not to worry. After all, I was library kid too. We found a good dragon book. - Tait Larson, Patron Services Specialist

A patron gave some really positive feedback about this year's Summer Reading Program at the library. She was happy that our program focuses so much on reading instead of strictly earning prizes, while encouraging people to continue reading further through the opportunity to receive additional entries into the drawing at the end of the program. She thought it was very clever to offer extra entries by getting people to read further, and appreciated that the goal felt authentically focused on reading for the sake of reading, not because a prize is expected at the end. - Abby Cornelison, Patron Services Specialist

Borrowing & Collections

270,398 Databases 207,437 Digital 467,960 Physical 4,969 Technology 950,764 Total

Physical Circulation, by Location



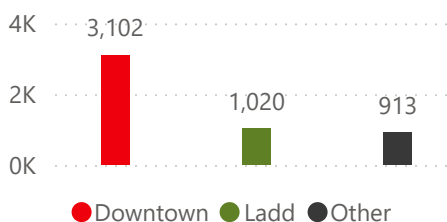
The Materials team is placing orders for fall new releases with September and October being some of the busiest publishing months of the year. Our expanded summer QuickPick selection has been a success with plenty of positive feedback from patrons and staff, so the team will look to expand that to more collections for next summer. Our new collection of Tonie boxes and Tonie characters are out for circulation and are largely checked out so we'll expand the selection of characters to meet patron interest. Erin Horst is chairing a committee of Metro Library Network (MLN) staff to evaluate ILS products for an RFP (request for proposals) in the coming months. Doing the process regularly will help us control costs for ILS products and update contracts to include new additions to the software or offload anything that isn't working as we like.

Volunteers

5,035

Total Hours

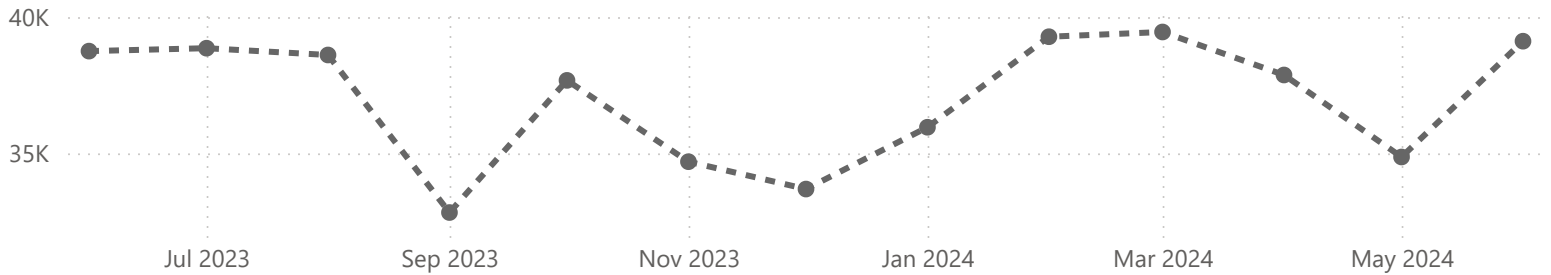
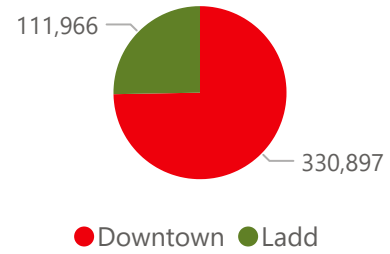
Volunteer Hours



June and July have been busy months for our Volunteers Corps members. These volunteers help with special programs and events hosted by the Programming team staff. Since June 1, 36 volunteers have supported eight different programs for a total of over 100 service hours. From assisting with the Summer Reading kick-off and closing parties to movie nights to Pride programs to plant swaps, volunteers have played a critical role at some of our largest events this summer. Their assistance makes events like these more enjoyable for patrons and manageable for staff. A huge shout out to Ashely Burns, Administrative Assistant to Volunteers Services and the Foundation, for her work in recruiting, communicating with, and supporting these many volunteers! Volunteer Hours in June 2024: 345

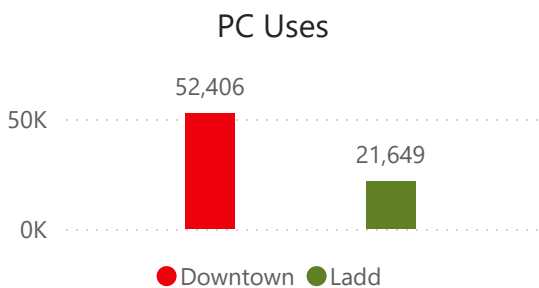
Visits

442,863
Physical Visits



The Public Service Team has seen great success this summer in many areas. The team did a great job promoting the summer reading challenge – getting people excited and keeping up interest throughout the summer. The team also did a great job of using their training with KERA, de-escalation, and Mandt to provide a welcoming experience throughout the summer. Overall, we saw fewer issues compared to previous years, and the nature of the issues seemed to be less severe compared to years past. One specific example of this work came from an interaction with PSS Sampurna Ghosh and Branch Supervisor Trevor Hanel. Sampurna has been working with an individual about an ongoing behavior issue using KERA. After several attempts not working, Sampurna reached out for assistance from Trevor who made a connection with the individual. He took time to listen, was able to get compliance with the issue and provide access to a community partner’s resources to meet the person’s need. This is just one of many great examples Public Service has done using training in practice.

Technology Access

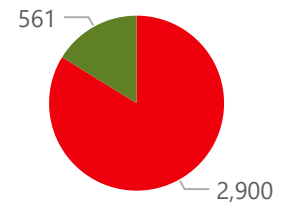
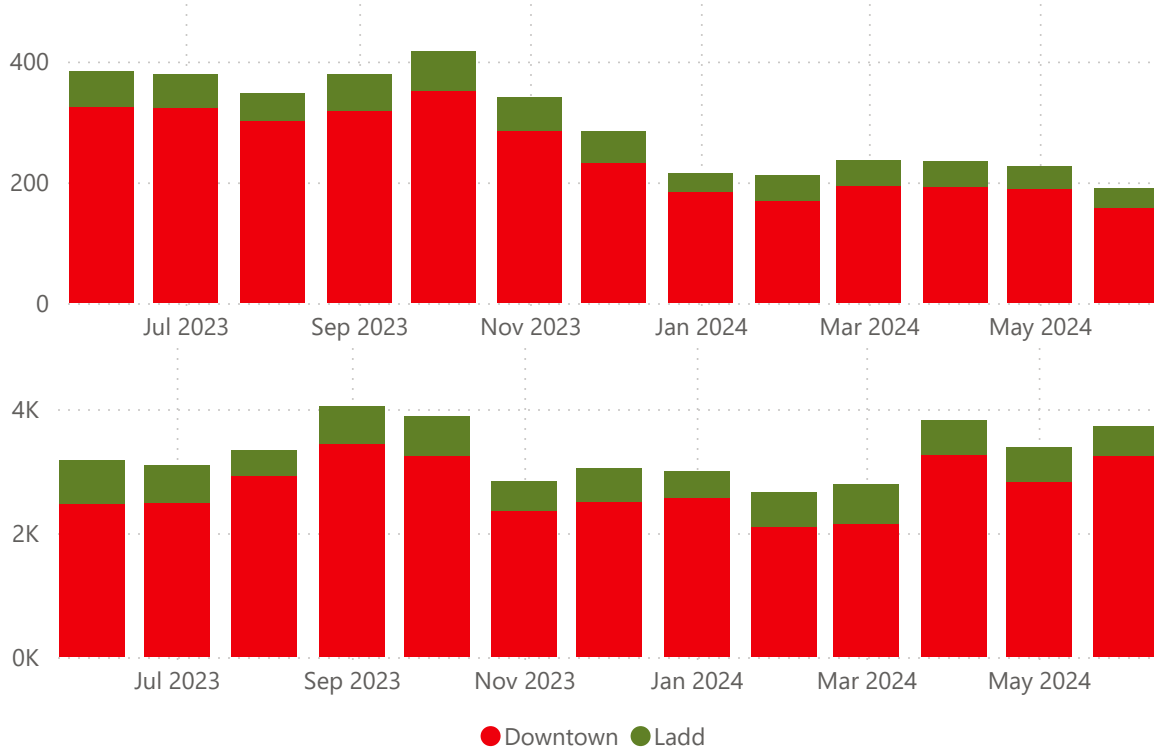


182,750
Virtual Visits

102,084
WiFi Sessions

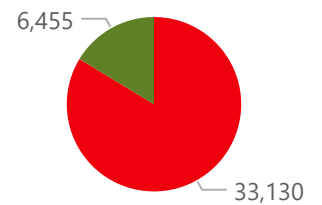
The Technology Solutions team is beginning installation of the new backup storage server to ensure uninterrupted operations in case of a major server failure. The library was thankfully unaffected by the international service outages last week as we don’t use that particular product for security. Outlook and Teams were functional throughout the outages. The team continues to work with the IT department at the City of Cedar Rapids and has recently started testing to implement the Alertus system, which is a citywide alert system for active shooting incidents.

Meeting Room Use



3,461

of Reservations



39,585

of Users

In June, we had 185 reservations, serving 3,231 patrons. Patrons celebrated life events with us including two weddings and one vow renewal. In addition, the library hosted summer fun in the way of auditions for Playtime Poppy, YMCA Camp Staff Orientation and music recitals. There were the usual board meetings, business meetings, special interest groups – like crafting, playing music and games - and support groups, Medicaid informational meetings, WIC Clinic, and interviews for jobs. Additionally, the library hosted special elections, and the Economic Alliance came back to host career planners from higher education institutions from across the state. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community held a Pride Affirming Service.

Community Relations is excited to switch from Summer Reading to start focusing on fall. We had a great time capturing stories and sharing the fun happening inside our libraries and out in the community all summer long. We are currently working on the fall issue of OPEN+ magazine, which should be out mid-August. We're also prepping our stories and strategy for the FY2024 Annual Report, which should be complete in October. We're sad to say goodbye to our summer intern, Trey, who has helped capture so much video content for us over the past two months. We also said goodbye to Elizabeth Yusko, our literacy coordinator, after the end of her grant funded position with us. We are thankful for the passion and knowledge she put into her work at the library since January 2020 and wish her all the best in the future.

A family of native Spanish speakers came to the front desk wanting to print documents. They were trying to use their phone to translate what they wanted. Though I'm not very comfortable with speaking Spanish, I have studied it and wanted to make them feel more comfortable, so I started conversing with the patrons in Spanish and was able to explain the printing process and what I was doing for them. So, though my Spanish isn't great, the patrons were able to get what they needed and were able to feel more comfortable being understood in their native language. - Alexandria Bibbs, Public Service Associate

