



ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Waterl∞
PUBLIC LIBRARY



FROM OUR CEO

2016 was another great year at WPL with staff bringing an enormous energy to their jobs. Our amazing volunteers dedicated over 4,500 hours to WPL. We had our challenges - construction in UpTown Waterloo and being closed on Fridays at the John M. Harper Branch - had an impact on our 2016 statistics, resulting in fewer physical visitors and library use overall.

But, new memberships were up across the system, especially at the McCormick Branch. The number of programs offered increased as did attendance. We made tremendous strides towards fulfilling our Strategic Plan. We created an entirely new website. Our numbers on social media keep on climbing. We continue to play a vital role in the social, economic, cultural and literacy needs of our community.

Thank you to the staff, volunteers and Board members that continue to make WPL a success!



Laurie Clarke

CEO, Waterloo Public Library

FROM OUR LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

Recently, an acquaintance – a successful business person in Uptown Waterloo – shared his ‘library story’ with me. Every day, he walks across the street and into the Main Library, to capture 10-15 minutes of calmness, during his busy day. He may read the papers, browse the stacks, or sit in a quiet corner. But he relies on this library to settle his mind, daily. This story reminded me of the power of the public library to provide something unique, for every citizen.

I would like to thank my fellow board members for their continued passion for and active advocacy for the Waterloo Public Library. Thank you to Jude Doble, our Vice Chair, John Strong and Ian Gilchrist for their leadership on our committees.

I would like to thank our CEO, Laurie Clarke, for being an incredible leader and a wonderful person to work with. To the excellent staff at the Waterloo Public Library – thank you isn’t enough. You have stood tall throughout all our ups and downs, always serving the public with skill and grace.

Finally, we all owe a great deal of thanks to the citizens of Waterloo. We will continue to work hard for them and for their public library.



Ms. Karen Scian

Chair, Waterloo Public Library Board

2016 LIBRARY BOARD

Ms. Jude Doble, Vice-Chair

Ms. S. S. Ahmad

Ms. Alison De Muy

Mr. Ian Gilchrist

Ms. Rachel Harder

Ms. Helen Kaluzny

Mr. John Strong

Councillor Angela Vieth

BECOMING A CREATIVE CATALYST

WPL continues to embrace the role of creating lively experiences for the community. The annual *STEAMheat* event, in its 3rd year in 2016, featured numerous community partners including HIVE Waterloo, Ontario Early Years Centres, UW Let's Talk Science and Communitech, and drew over a thousand visitors to our Main Library. This exciting event provides an opportunity for people of all ages to engage in new ways to explore and learn at WPL through STEAM-related activities.

WPL is also dedicated to providing opportunities for creativity in our programming and is proud to be a leader in introducing "Risky Play" in children's program. "Risky Play" is the concept of allowing young children to play in risky ways to build their confidence and help them learn limits. One category of "Risky Play" involves the use of "Dangerous Tools" such as hammers, saws, knives, and drills. WPL has over two years of experience using these tools in our maker programs with children ages 2 and up. The "Risky Play" programs are extremely popular, with enthusiastic participants and waiting lists for each session. WPL continues to be committed to building innovative programs like this that help create a community learning and discovery environment.

To inspire our adult members, WPL launched the e-learning power of Lynda.com, providing thousands of career-supporting courses available free of charge with your library card. Lynda.com course completion populates your LinkedIn profile to let employers know you are engaged in current skills development.



MOVING BEYOND OUR WALLS

WPL is always looking for ways to bring our services and programs to the community, to go where we are needed.

By engaging in various conversations within the McCormick community, a programming partnership with *Better Beginnings Waterloo* has led to very successful joint after school programming in 3 schools in the McCormick Branch catchment area. Library staff provide technology and expertise, Better Beginnings Waterloo provides space and support. It's a win-win situation.

WPL partnered with the Waterloo Region Small Business Centre to develop an approach for referral of business clients to the library for market research. This project combined the one-on-one coaching of the Small Business Centre with one-on-one help from skilled library staff to find relevant market research for individuals preparing to start a new business in Waterloo.

To expand our services to the east side of the City, WPL provided a family storytime experience at RIM Park every Thursday morning with stories, literacy activities and maker stations.

Our school outreach continued to grow, with 5,800 kids participating in 180 programs, both within local schools or scheduled visits at our library locations.

PUBLIC

COMPUTERS
65,400


WIFI
188,264

1,388,075
IN PERSON & 


VIRTUAL VISITS 



Waterloo

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Endless Possibilities



TELLING EVERYONE THE STORY

WPL understands the transforming role of the library in today's world. By telling our story, WPL can demonstrate the various ways in which we are responsive to the needs of our community and can share the ways in which the library has had an impact on the lives of the citizens of Waterloo.

Our 3rd annual fundraiser, *After Hours @ The Library*, drew an audience of almost 200 enthusiastic guests, who enjoyed an evening of food, drink and exceptional storytelling from local celebrities. Funds raised went towards purchasing iPads for our children's programs. Integrating technology into our programs and services is one of the major focuses in our Strategic Plan and providing access to iPads allows us to continue to create a hands-on learning environment. WPL is committed to ensuring that our children's programs reflect the interests and passions of the creative kids in our community.

WPL's Visiting Library Service continues to be one of our most well-loved programs, where volunteers essentially take the library to the community.

In the words of one of our long-time VLS volunteers, Susan Parry:

"We have learned together that VLS is about much more than just delivering books. The warm human contact during the time that the two of us spend just chatting is extremely important. It is clear that both of us are enriched by the relationship.

When I go out into the community, I have come to realize that I represent the WPL to citizens who might not otherwise connect with the library. When wearing my volunteer badge or pushing my carts full of books, I have met people in coffee shops, in parking lots, and even within the library who are most interested in and impressed by the fact that the VLS program exists.

As a volunteer, I benefit from my involvement with VLS. The library staff has always been friendly and supportive, making it a pleasure to be a volunteer. I feel that my skills and efforts are valued and that I am making a contribution. Those whom I have served have enriched my life through their acceptance, their friendship and their expression of gratitude."

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY

“ We loved ‘Babies: The Finer Things Club’! We were introduced to so many new ideas. We really had fun! Thank you so much for this wonderful program – we look forward to more programs in the future. ”

“ I love WPL because the people working there are nice and kind. I like the scavenger hunts. I love the books, CDs and movies. ”

“ I love this library because it is a community haven with endless resources for all. ”

“ The staff are always incredibly helpful and friendly. ”

“ I love my library because it’s awesome! I love the books, I love the librarians, and I love the community and the space. ”

“ Great variety of programs for kids (LEGO, crafts, MakeyMakey, Reading with Animals). And they’re all free! ”

“ There are stories about princesses! I love princesses! ”

“ I love the library because it’s a gathering place for the community. ”

New Members



DESIGNING CONNECTIONS

WPL wants to connect with you. Whether it's through an in-person experience at one of our branches, or through social media, we want to ensure that we are always listening to what you have to say and serving you in the best ways possible.

In 2016, a new, streamlined version of wpl.ca was launched. The updated website provides a better user experience, improved digital access to library collections, is easier to navigate and features a more contemporary look and feel, in alignment with our brand.

Our staff are committed to life-long learning in order to keep their skills current and in turn, provide customers with excellent service. WPL's 2016 Staff Development Day featured workshops about *Conflict De-Escalation*, *Thriving in Change* and *Reader's Advisory*, all of which were embraced by staff as great learning opportunities.

In addition, staff have continued expanding their competencies in new technology, participating in skill building exercises and workshops on a regular basis.

The user experience at the McCormick Branch has been improved with new shelving, signage, paint and materials. Included in this re-design was a reworking of the staff and borrower services spaces, which results in much better workflow and, therefore, customer service.



CREATING ENGAGEMENT

As a community leader, WPL is always looking for ways in which we can partner with other community organizations. The synergy created from these partnerships inspires dynamic new programs and services for our customers.

The launch of a new early learning strategy, EXPLORE PLAY LEARN, exemplified WPL's focus on early literacy. EXPLORE PLAY LEARN is based on *Every Child Ready to Read 2* and promotes the message to caregivers, that 5 learning practices (Read, Write, Talk, Sing, Play) are key to developing early literacy skills. Launching this strategy involved creating new standards for all early learning programs, staff training, creating a dedicated EXPLORE PLAY LEARN picture book collection and educating parents about how to develop early literacy skills in the home.

The *Every Kid a Card* is an initiative of the four local library systems and is a long term, multi-project campaign that has the goal of connecting every child in Waterloo Region with a library card. In 2016, the group worked with public health to have invitations to join the library included in the baby packages that are distributed to parents of all new babies in the Region (approximately 6000 babies!).

WPL was dedicated to responding to the needs of our community and worked closely with the YMCA to create additional English Conversation Circles to support Syrian newcomers in the Region.



THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

Main Library

35 Albert Street
Waterloo
519-886-1310
Ext. 110

John M. Harper Branch

500 Fischer-Hallman Rd N.
Waterloo
519-886-1310
Ext. 310

McCormick Branch

500 Parkside Drive
Waterloo
519-886-1310
Ext. 213