



ANNUAL REPORT 2021–2022

To the Springfield-Greene County Library Board of Trustees
From Executive Director Regina Greer Cooper

July 19, 2022

Even though COVID-19 continued to be with us into the new fiscal year, the Library was able to begin lifting some restrictions in July 2021. On July 18, branches added back many hours that had been taken away with the onset of the pandemic in 2020. Meeting rooms were also opened to the public, furniture was moved back into the branches, masks requirements were dropped and more staff were hired to resume offering more services to the public. By fall 2021, the Library began offering in-person programming again after months of only virtual and outdoor programming. The Library District continued to work closely with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department to offer space for vaccine clinics at all 10 branches. The Health Department was very appreciative of our partnership and felt that providing clinics in library branches helped to meet people where they were. We continue to offer this service to our visitors as COVID “has not left the building.”



Not only did several of our staff contract the disease, but in July 2021 our longtime IT Director David Patillo was hospitalized with it and we lost him to the disease in August. We left his position open for many months to give ourselves time to grieve our loss. We all worked together to keep our IT Department up and running before posting, interviewing and hiring a replacement. Former employee John House returned to the Library in this position in March 2022 after having received a degree in math and computer science from Drury University and working in the field of Information Technology.

Board member Ashley Norgard left the Board of Trustees at the end of her second term on the Board. Board member Tez Ward resigned from the Board due to additional commitments he needed to take on. The Springfield City Council appointed retired Greene County Public Administrator David Yancey to replace Ms. Norgard, and Chris Bozarth with CID Engineering to fulfill the rest of Mr. Ward's term. Greene County appointee Don Chenevert, Jr., left the board at the end of his term and the county appointed Samuel Snider as his replacement. Mr. Snider is an employee of Commerce Bank and the Mayor of the City of Willard. Michelle Nahon Moulder resigned her board position in January 2022 due to increased job demands. Her replacement was recently proposed at a Springfield City Council meeting and will be voted on at the council's July 25 meeting.

The Friends of the Library kept right on making money and supporting the Library. The Fall Book Sale brought in a total of \$143,049.95 and the spring sale totaled \$167,698.40, the second-highest total in the history of the event. The Friends approved a total of \$173,202 to help pay for a second, 24-hour library kiosk on the east side of Springfield. It will be known as Library Express East. The installation has been in progress this year and we hope to open it for service in August. We have received \$55,492.50 from the Friends for the kiosk so far and will receive the remainder of the funds in FY23. The Friends funded their traditional projects such as the plant service, the Summer Reading Program, musical events for all locations and the Associate Director's budget, which provides for unexpected expenses for all branches throughout the year. In addition, they sponsored a special Springfield Symphony Concert in November as well as other programs. They also provided a donation shed at The Library Center for Friends book sales.



Gay Wilson became the new Development Director this year. The job changed a little; not only does she help raise funds for the Library, she does so by working with the Library Foundation and writing private and government grants. This year a new endowment was created: The David Patillo Library Innovation Endowment. It began as a fund with donations from people in memory of David and then became an endowment when the ICON Users Group disbanded and directed its remaining funds there. The endowment is designed to help fund new technology for the library. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Library Foundation Board and the Library Board of Trustees for the first time to guide the Foundation's work going forward.

The staff's Inclusion Committee was created and began holding monthly meetings. In September they adopted a mission statement which reads in part: "We are dedicated to the ongoing work of making all patrons and library staff feel invited and welcomed in The Library regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, nationality, disability, age or any other distinguishing characteristic or trait." The Board approved the addition of the holiday Juneteenth for the Library District. This new federal holiday is celebrated on June 19 every year. All library locations are closed on that day and staff receive a paid holiday. The Library's first in-person program in the fall was Black History of Springfield presented by Springfield native West Pratt, Missouri State University Chief Diversity officer and Assistant to the MSU president. The Library also now has an active Refugee Support Committee which looks for ways that the Library can serve new refugees in our community. This year's One Read title was the first one to be written by a person of color. Bestselling author Britt Bennett was interviewed at The Library Center by Dr. Ashley Payne from Missouri State University about her book "The Vanishing Half."

Several new services were added this year. Automatic Renewals for patrons launched on July 1, Notary service and another Heirloom Seed Library collection were added to Schweitzer Brentwood Branch. A new online room scheduler went live on October 1, online library card registration was added, and Sunday hours expanded to eight hours at The Library Center, Library Station and Schweitzer Brentwood Branch. MOBIUS added St. Charles City-County Library; Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas; Bettendorf Public Library in Iowa; and Calvary University in Kansas City. The new Show Me Missouri website features stories of Missouri & Missourians for the last 200 years through the lens of historically and culturally significant objects and critical interpretation by historians and others. We expanded our Maker Space with sessions for families and adults at the Midtown Carnegie Branch, and we improved fax service with a new system.

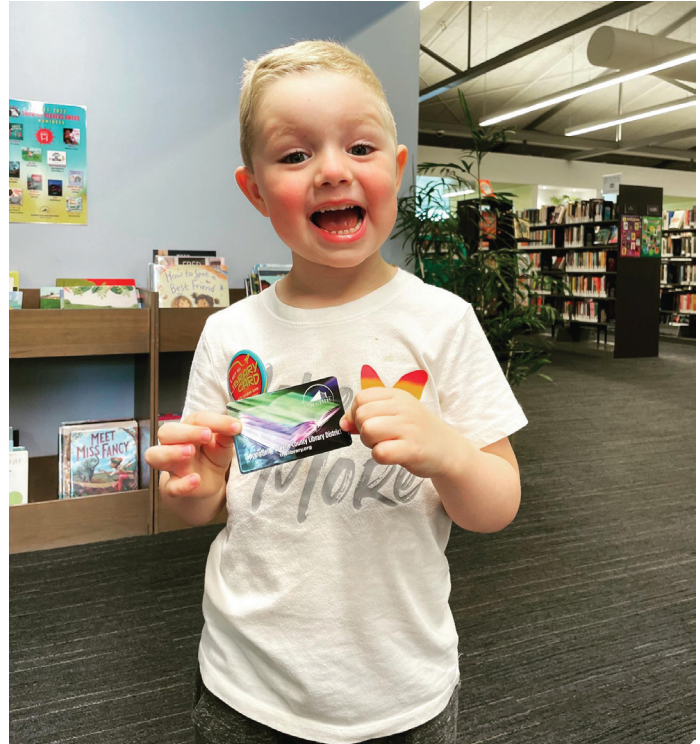


The Summer Reading Program participation increased by 7% over 2020. Beyond the Book YouTube video series was created by Midtown Youth Services staff Ashley Fillmer and Sarah Allen. The series received kudos from the State Library. We added more Story Walks around our community. Outreach Services introduced Pop Up Libraries this summer funded by a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. Takeout Kits continued to be popular at all branches throughout the system. The kits originated during the pandemic when we could not have in-person programming.

PBS visited us this year to tape for its series, “Taste of History,” by interviewing Gina Marie Walden about the partnership between the Springfield Community Gardens and the Library’s Heirloom Seed Library. Ozarks Public Broadcasting/KSMU and Enactus sponsored the StoryCorps visit to the Ozarks. The StoryCorps trailer was parked on The Library Center parking lot for about a month while their staff recorded interviews from many citizens from the Ozarks. The StoryCorps interviews are archived at the Library of Congress and aired on local NPR stations across the country including KSMU.



Advocacy with the State of Missouri was very successful this year. Community Relations Director Kathleen O'Dell and I participated in the Springfield Metro Partnership events on January 6 in Jefferson City. Missouri Library Association Advocacy Day on February 8 was moved to the Zoom format, where I met with each of our representatives. We advocated for library funding through the Secretary of State's office and for the first time were granted a much more realistic amount of the collected Athlete and Entertainers Tax for Libraries across the state to purchase materials for collections. We also began advocating in January for ARPA funds from the state for bricks and mortar. Board President Emily Denniston worked with State Sen. Lincoln Hough towards the end of the legislative session to get our requests over the finish line. We have been awarded \$6 million for maintenance and improvements throughout the District and \$4.5 million for building a new library branch in Republic.



Staff retirements this year included Lisa Merrill, Quality Control Processing Clerk in Collection Services 40 years; Leanne Burgess, Business Office Clerk 19 years; and Shelli Kaminski, Between Friends Gift Shop Manager for 20 years.

Staff began working on the Strategic Plan goals in July. A revision of the District's Personnel Policy Manual was finished and approved by the Board. The Library Station debt service was paid in full on April 12. We created the new position of Finance Director, which was filled by former Business Office Manager Melissa Davis.

Highlights from this year include:

FACILITIES

- Library Express East
- Midtown Carnegie Branch parking lot restriped and refinished
- Gates installed at the Library Station to accommodate the branch as a polling location
- Floor replaced in the Youth Services office at The Library Center
- Roof replaced at the Library Station
- Renovation of the coffee shop space at The Library Center to welcome a new vendor, Seattle Roast
- Carpet replacement in The Library Center auditorium and meeting rooms A&B
- Ash Grove Branch outdoor sign replaced

FINANCE

LSTA Grants

- Technology Mini Grant, \$26,570 to replace desktop computers in rural branches
- Summer Reading Program promotional grant, \$2,086.47
- Seeding a Healthy Life, \$9,250 to promote health and cultural literacy
- Technology Ladder grant of \$37,722 to upgrade The Library Center auditorium audiovisual control system, and install a new audiovisual system in the Midtown Carnegie Branch upstairs meeting room
- LSTA grant, \$11,019.92 to replace public computers and printers at The Library Center and Library Station
- LSTA Summer Reading To Go, \$4,000
- LSTA Laptops for in-library checkout, \$6,101.25
- LSTA Show Me Missouri, \$10,166.68.

Friends of the Library \$197,897 in distributions

The Library Foundation, \$58,051.61 in distributions. Donations to the Foundation include:

- The Hospice Foundation of the Ozarks, \$13,218
- Melissa Adler Appreciation Fund, \$525
- Taste the World passports fundraiser, \$1,680
- Holiday bookplates, \$425
- Donations in honor of retiring Foundation President Laurie Edmondson, \$450
- Maria Denise Leduc Trust, \$126,899.83
- Fianna Hansen Memorial, \$757.16
- Three Help-A-Librarian projects were funded by patrons at The Library Center, Library Station and the Republic Branch for a total of \$773.

Other

- Federal ARPA funds through Missouri State Library, \$124,900
- American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Libraries, \$10,000
- Tangled Bank Studios/PBS, \$1,000 for wildflower seeds and programming materials
- Missouri Arts Council Community Touring grant of \$900 to host the StoneLion Puppet Theatre
- Missouri State Library grant of \$15,800 to purchase STEM kits
- Dollar General Literacy grants for Outreach Pop-Up Library, \$3,000
- NASA At My Library, \$1,600
- Library Cares Grant, \$25,000
- Missouri Humanities Council Struggle for Statehood series, \$1,500

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- Death and Dying Series
- Missouri Statehood Traveling Exhibit
- David Sedaris at The Gillioz
- One Read featuring Britt Bennett, author of “The Vanishing Half”
- Symphony in the Stacks with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra
- Exoplanets exhibit and programming from NASA

AUTHOR VISITS

- David Sedaris
- Britt Bennett
- Laura McHugh
- Caitlin Doughty
- Grady Hendrix
- Stephen Graham Jones
- David Harrison
- Nancy Allen and Tony Messenger
- John Rutherford and Bill Piston
- Brooks Blevins
- Abby Burnett
- Tom Koob and Curtis Copeland
- Bo Brown
- Marideth Sisco
- Brandon Weston

RECOGNITION

- Special Districts 2021 Technology Innovation Award to Brian Grubbs, Local History & Genealogy Manager
- John Mongell Spirit of Rotary Award to Kathleen O’Dell, Community Relations Director
- Library Journal Star Library
- Ozark Empire Fairgrounds won 1st Place in the International Association of Fairs & Exhibitions for the Friends of the Library Sales in 2021

STATISTICS

- 2,547,364 total district circulation
- 989,665 total district traffic

These figures have increased over FY21 but are lower than normal because of the continued pandemic.

Regina Green Cooper