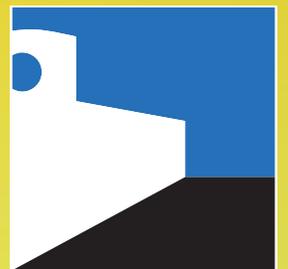




2021 Annual Report



TOPEKA &
SHAWNEE
COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



Marie Pyko, Chief Executive Officer

Hello!

2021 was a year that the library continued to re-focus our view of what matters most to our community and how we serve it. We thought the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic would retreat, and the library would somehow be “normal” again, with vaccinations for everyone. Library staff did emerge better protected. Expanded services invited customers to use their library how and when they needed it. Customers used the library in person, online and through our outreach services. We loved seeing people in the library building sharing time with us, bringing their family and friends to work through the Rainforest Adventure maze or enjoying a nice cup of coffee again at the Millennium Café. Community members told us they appreciated the opportunity to go somewhere that was “safe” because of the precautions we have practiced during the pandemic.

For me, this is a season of gratitude and anticipation. After more than 30 years at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, I had the privilege of stepping into the role of CEO last October. When I started as a storyteller in December 1991, I quickly learned what a powerful and impactful role libraries play in communities – especially ours. Our library helps make all things possible for those who walk through our halls. It’s an honor to serve you and our community and I’m excited about what’s ahead for our great library! On behalf of all of the library staff, the Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library, thank you for your support in 2021. I hope you enjoy our year in review and I am eager to take the next step in our journey.

Warm wishes,
Marie

Board of Trustees

- Jim Edwards, Chair
- Kacy Simonsen, Vice Chair
- Joan Hicks, Secretary
- Shawn Leisinger, Treasurer
- Kristen Brunkow O’Shea
- Beth Dobler
- Peg Dunlap
- Jennifer Miller
- Liz Post
- Jim Ramos

Library Officers

- Marie Pyko, Chief Executive Officer
- Thad Hartman, Chief of Staff
(Interim CEO Dec 2020 - Oct 2021)
- Kim Strube, Chief Financial Officer
- Jesse Maddox, Chief Human Resources Officer

So, what else should you know about Marie?
Learn why she became a librarian and most importantly, what books are in her book bag. [All this and more on PAGE 16 ►](#)



Board of Trustees

FROM LEFT: Beth Dobler, Joan Hicks, Kacy Simonsen, Kristen Brunkow O’Shea, Liz Post, Shawn Leisinger, Peg Dunlap, Jim Ramos, Jim Edwards, Jennifer Miller



Library Officers

FROM LEFT: Kim Strube, Jesse Maddox, Marie Pyko, Thad Hartman

COVID

continues to impact library & community



2021 was year two of the COVID pandemic. The library staff and services continued to make changes and improvements to help community members use the library. The following briefs highlight this work.

Vaccinations, Masks & Social Distancing

The Shawnee County Health Department included library staff in round 2B of people eligible for vaccination, which allowed staff to be vaccinated starting in March. In May an anonymous staff survey showed that more than 90 percent of staff who responded to the survey (81% of staff responded) were vaccinated. This helped reduce the risk of COVID infection for library staff and visitors.

In addition to vaccination, the library required or strongly encouraged library visitors to wear masks in the building and on bookmobiles for most of 2021. Staff in the building were required to wear masks most of the year. We also recommended staff and visitors practice social distancing.

Library Services Impacted by COVID-19

January 4, 2021, the library building reopened with limits after being closed for much of December 2020. Initially we focused on what customers needed most – computers, fax, copying and scanning. A team of library staff worked at length to develop phased procedures for library operations. As COVID levels decreased during the year, more and more library services became available.

COVID Testing

The library parking lot was a host site for free COVID testing offered through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

No Contact Services

The pandemic also brought opportunities for the library to reinvent new services to provide what our customers needed.

- Online virtual appointments with librarians for tech help, genealogy research and job help
- TSCPL@Home delivering books, movies and music to doorsteps gained users
- Curbside service continued even after the holds room opened in June.

Keeping readers engaged with:

- outstanding book reviews on The Bookmark Podcast
- staff selecting new reads for customers through the Browsing Just for You service
- 3 Reading Challenges where people read more than 5,000 books
- Book Clubs meeting online and on social media for engaging book conversations.

People loved take and make projects that let them take the library experience home. We offered art and craft kits, Discovery Steam Ahead Kits with STEM learning projects, and Summer Adventure Bags with craft projects and animal facts.

“This was the
best day of my life!”

— SAID TWO LITTLE GIRLS

“This is a **wonderful library**,
what a great summer program!”

— SAID A MOTHER

“That was
FUN, Mommy!
I want to go **AGAIN!**”

More than
15,000
visitors had a
**Rainforest
Adventure**



The summer of 2021 was a mix of virtual and in-person events but the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery’s “Rainforest Adventure” topped its all-time record visitors for an art exhibit with more than 15,000 visits from people in Shawnee County and surrounding communities. The maze was also a popular destination for people to bring friends and family visiting from out of state.

The Rainforest Adventure by Minotaur Mazes provided a physical and mental challenge as you descended through the four layers of the rainforest. The gigantic 2,000 square foot maze covered the entire gallery with its striking graphics, physical activities and challenging questions that were both entertaining and educational.

The kids didn’t leave empty-handed and nearly 18,000 “Adventure Bags” were given out that included supplies for a fun craft, word puzzles and rainforest information. Adventure Bags were also given out at food distribution sites around Topeka.

This 20th annual art exhibit for children was made possible in part by The Library Foundation through contributions from the Sabatini Family Foundation and The National Endowment for the Humanities.

“ I loved it. It was probably my **favorite** exhibit so far! ”



“ I’m **surprised** - that was actually **cool!** ”

— SAID A BOY WHO HAD BEEN APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE MAZE

Supporting early literacy & kindergarten Readiness



When I was asking her (Ellie) favorites she spontaneously shared that her favorite place is the library.

– NICKE MASONER, ELLIE'S MOM

We are always working to have every child in Topeka and Shawnee County ready for kindergarten and create more fans like Ellie. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, StoryWalks®, Call-a-Story, Call-a-Joke, storytimes, Sherry Hess' parenting blog and Good Ideas for Learning Through Play videos help parents and caregivers with early literacy and early childhood development tools and activities.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a free book gifting program that mails high-quality, age-appropriate books to children from birth until their 5th birthday, to their homes monthly. At the end of 2021, the Imagination

Library had a total enrollment of 5,682 or 49 percent of the children under 5 years old living in Shawnee County. The program costs about \$30 per child per year. The Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library raise funds to support the TSCPL-United Way of Greater Topeka program.

Learning Through Play

We created a new video series for adults working with young kids. These are short clips, demonstrating fun ways to play and bond with kids. The librarians also emphasize the importance of interacting with babies, toddlers and preschoolers, whether it's time in the garden or time for a bath. There is time for learning through play every day!

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

In September 2020 we started the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten (tscpl.org/1000books) program that encourages parents to read to their kids frequently. Research shows that reading to your child is the most reliable predictor of school success. Using the library app, parents track the books they read to their child. Kids receive a special reward for each 100 books read. During 2021, 339 kids enrolled and recorded 39,717 books.



Annabelle and Kai reading at home. They have read hundreds of books toward 1000 Books Before Kindergarten.

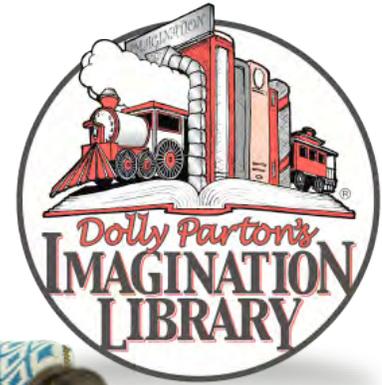
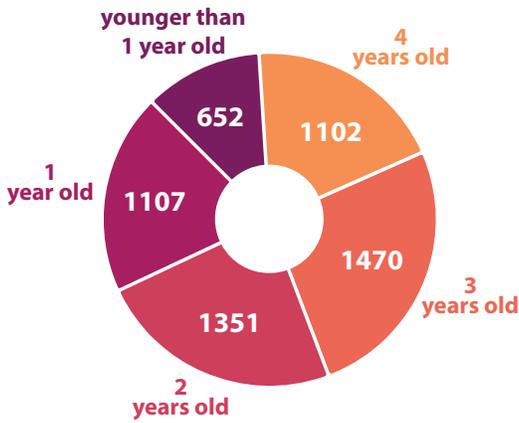


Luke goes on a StoryWalk®.



Nylah just picked up her free book, *Grumpy Bird*, during Kansas Reads to Preschoolers.

Age of children enrolled



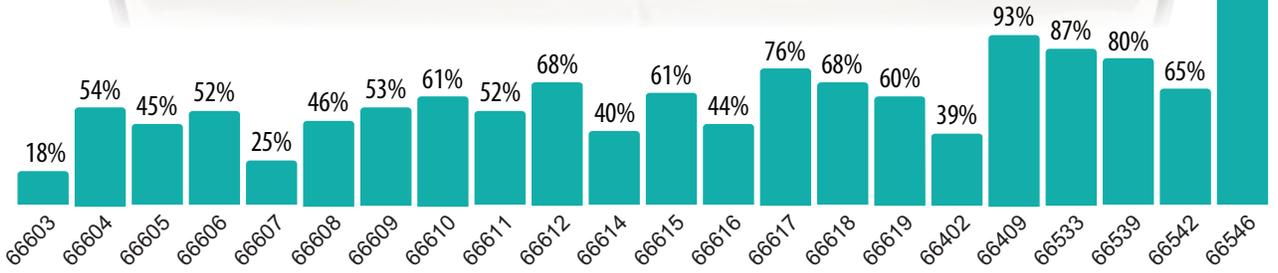
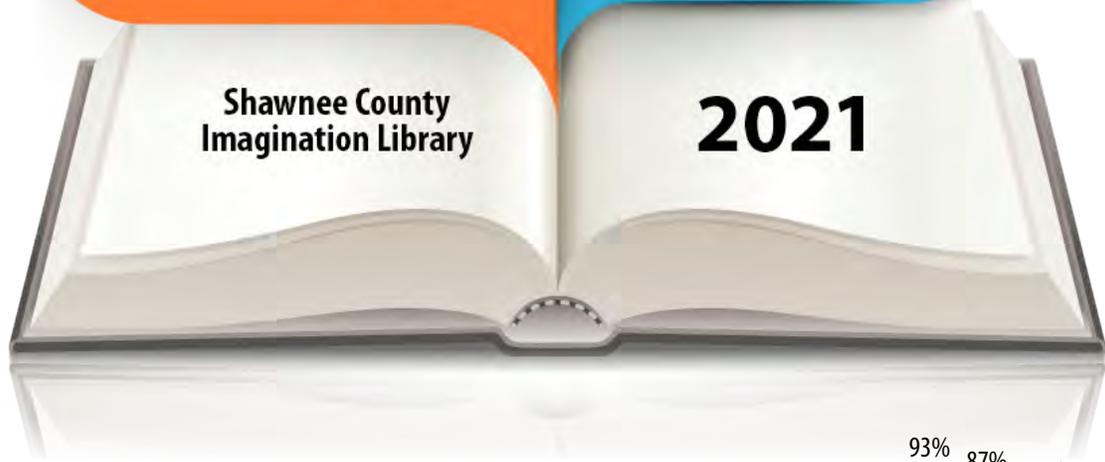
April 2017 Program enrollment began

Actual number of children enrolled by December 2021 **5,682**

Total dollars raised **\$1,096,063**
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, United Way of Greater Topeka and Kansas Health Foundation

72,920 Total books delivered in Year 5

Year 4 Costs **\$149,126**
(paid by donations)



*Reflects frequent change of population in this zip code.

Percent of children signed up by zip code

The library's role in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

URBAN LIBRARIES COUNCIL

Race and Social Equity Statement

As leaders of North America's public libraries, we are committed to achieving racial and social equity by contributing to a more just society in which all community members can realize their full potential. Our libraries can help achieve true and sustained equity through an intentional, systemic and transformative library-community partnership. Our library systems are working to achieve equity in the communities we serve by:

- Eliminating racial and social equity barriers in library programs, services, policies and practices
- Creating and maintaining an environment of diversity, inclusion and respect both in our library systems and in all aspects of our community role
- Ensuring that we are reaching and engaging disenfranchised people in the community and helping them express their voice
- Serving as a convener and facilitator of conversations and partnerships to address community challenges
- Being forthright on tough issues that are important to our communities

Libraries are trusted, venerable and enduring institutions, central to their communities and an essential participant in the movement for racial and social equity.

Adopted by Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library Board in October 2017

Deliberative Conversations

The library hosted several conversations in 2021 to give community members an opportunity to practice listening with empathy and respect, considering other perspectives, and weighing the trade-offs of possible actions. These are National Issues Forums developed in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. The following topics were addressed: rebuilding the economy, alcohol and drug use, mental illness, youth and opportunity, and reframing Topeka and workshopped the racial equity in the community with Topeka contributing to a national issue guide that will be used all over the country.

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN RACIAL JUSTICE BOOK CLUB



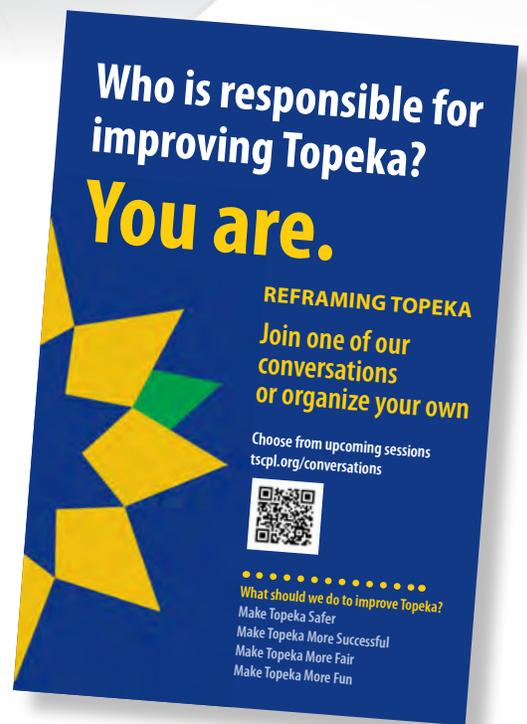


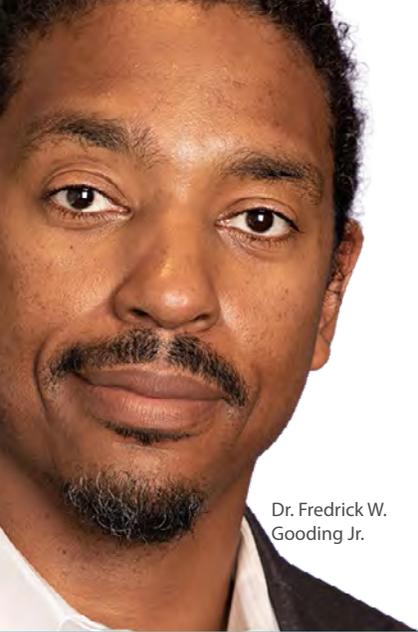
21-Day Challenge

In March the library and the YWCA Northeast Kansas' 21-Day Challenge for Racial Equity and Social Justice encouraged people to read an article, listen to a podcast or reflect on a personal experience to help discover how racial and social injustice impact our community. The library coordinated, participated, and facilitated discussions that were specific to our community. Lissa Staley led two sessions a week extending the YWCA's reach.

Racial Justice Book Club

The library and the YWCA of Northeast Kansas host the Racial Justice Book Club with 150 members. The book club meets virtually each month and features books written by Indigenous people and people of color.





Dr. Fredrick W. Gooding Jr.

Meeting Authors Face to Face

Virtual events dominated our author visits

Nine authors visited the library in 2021

“My goal is attend as many author events as possible whether I intend to read the books or not. They are so fun to listen to. So passionate.” –NICKI

MIRRIAM-GOLDBERG WORKSHOP

“Your efforts bringing this like-minded group together and supporting creative writing are appreciated. I truly enjoyed the presentation, writing prompts, and conversation.” –CARMAINE

PETROGLYPHS

“I really enjoyed listening to the authors’ perspectives about their research and their book project. I cherish my copy. I missed their previous talks elsewhere earlier when the book was released so it was great to have another opportunity to “meet” them.” –KIM

Poet Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg conducted a writing workshop for writers of all genres

Ben Montgomery launched his history book

Dr. Fredrick W. Gooding Jr. discussed his nonfiction book

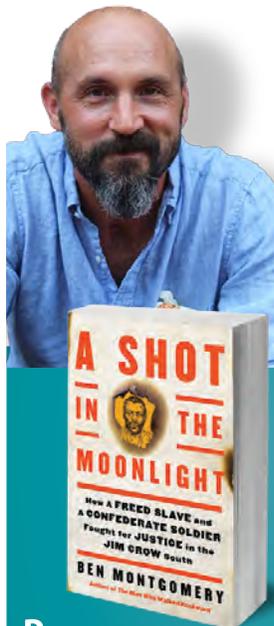
Rex Buchanan, Burke Griggs and Joshua Svaty discussed their nonfiction book

Kansas Poet Laureate Huascar Medina talked about how he uses poetry to help us find our voices, share our words and discover what truly connects us.



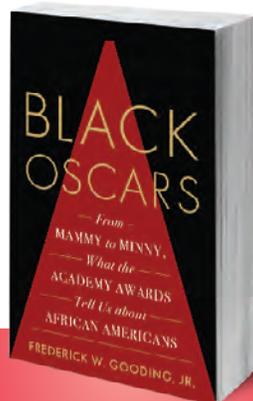
Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

JANUARY



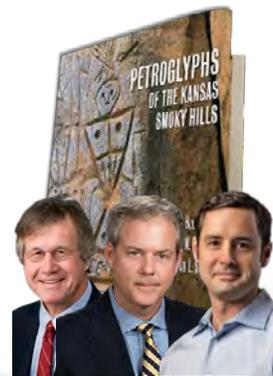
Ben Montgomery

JANUARY



Dr. Fredrick W. Gooding Jr.

FEBRUARY



Rex Buchanan
Burke Griggs
Joshua Svaty

FEBRUARY



Huascar Medina

APRIL

Let's Geek Out

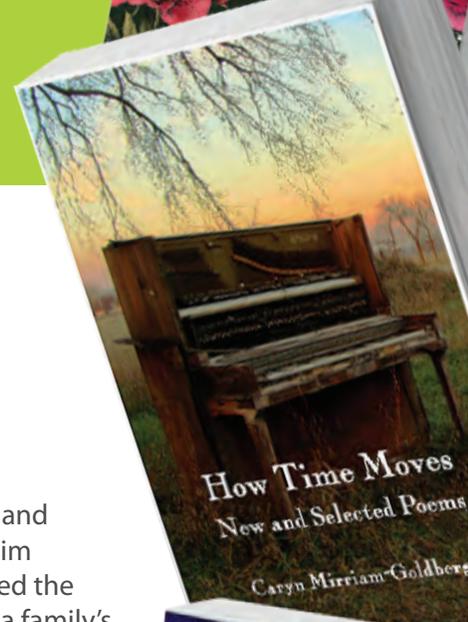
Readers librarian,
Miranda Ericsson



Author visits are one of my favorite ways to engage with our community of readers. Meeting authors face-to-face is exciting and powerful. Hearing authors speak about their work deepens our appreciation and understanding of what we have read.

Readers often commented how much they laugh at our events, or share that they were moved to tears. Author visits are also an opportunity to meet other fans of the books to “geek out” together in a shared, memorable experience at the library. In 2021, we hosted a diverse line-up of fiction and nonfiction authors, and proved that virtual events can have the emotional impact and energy of an in-person event. Hybrid events at the end of the year brought readers together in our building while still offering the convenience of virtual attendance.

“I really enjoyed Sarah Penner and Andrew’s conversation. You are a fantastic host and library advocate. Great program!”
—SUSAN



PARR DISCUSSION

“It was well organized, and very informative. It was nice to see an author I’d read talk about their book.” —FRAN

SPROWELL & DULTMEIER

“It was very real and honest. Books have an impact.” —BETTY

Sarah Penner talked about her best-selling debut novel

Young adult author Miranda Asebedo held a teen writing workshop and talked about her books

KelLee Parr talked about his books and adoptive genealogy research with genealogy librarian Sherri Camp

Author Nancy Sprowell Geise and her co-author Jim Dultmeier shared the powerful story a family’s loss of their daughter to a drunk driver in the nonfiction book



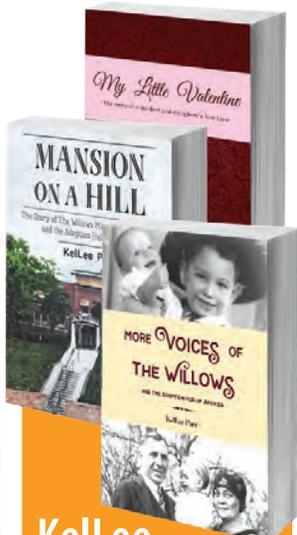
Sarah Penner

MAY



Miranda Asebedo

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER



KelLee Parr

NOVEMBER



Nancy Sprowell Geise & Jim Dultmeier

DECEMBER



SnapShots '21

Friends of the Library – 50 years of support

2021 was the Friends of the Library's 50th anniversary! The organization started when a group of library supporters created a campaign to encourage Topeka residents to support a library expansion. In August 1970 the library expansion was the only funding measure on the ballot that passed. Pleased with their work, the group decided to become a membership organization and the Friends of the Library was incorporated in March 1971.

When the library was under construction (to complete the 1970s expansion) Friends members volunteered to help patrons navigate the building. The Friends also held a

book sale fundraiser to purchase furniture for the new Topeka Room. This fundraiser was intended to be a one-time event, but people began asking when the next book sale was going to be held.

Here we are 50 years later still having book sales to the delight of our community. Since 1971 the Friends have distributed more than \$1.9 million to benefit the library. The books sales expanded to include a retail store, Chandler Booktique, and online sales through Amazon.com and Thriftbooks.



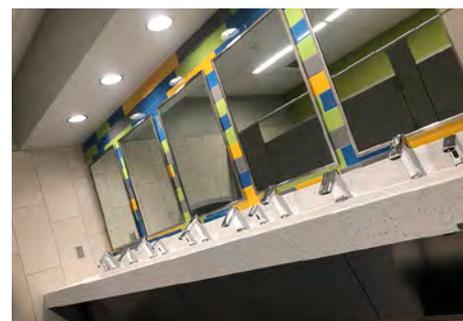
Millennium Café Makeover

The Millennium Café got a facelift and opened in the spring with a contemporary look that includes new flooring, comfortable seating, high table seating overlooking Claire's Courtyard and a grab-n-go cooler. In late November the Café opened with 2Chefs Catering providing an excellent dining experience.



Chandler Booktique Fixed-up

The Friends of the Library Chandler Booktique got a little fixer-upper before it reopened in February with a new floor plan, flooring and a huge display window that invites shoppers.



Refreshed Restrooms

All the public restrooms were upgraded. In addition to new flooring, new fixtures and bright colors, the new restrooms have touchless faucets, soap dispensers and hand dryers.

Neighborhood Revitalization

The library extended its participation in the City of Topeka's Neighborhood Revitalization Plan/Program through 2024. We have been a member since 1995.

Library Staff recognized for their work in the community



2021 Jayhawk Area Council's Top 20 Under 40
Erin Aldridge
 The Library Foundation
 Executive Director

2021 YWCA Woman of Excellence
Sherri Camp
 Genealogy Librarian

ArtsConnect Liz Stratton Art Champion Award
Kyler Carpenter
 Kids Library Musical Storyteller

Elected secretary of library and information studies honor society Beta Phi Mu, Beta Epsilon Chapter
Autumn Friedli
 Public Services Supervisor

Served on City of Topeka's Planning Commission and Local Landmarks Commission
Donna Rae Pearson
 Local History Librarian

Certified Leadership Coach
Lissa Staley
 Librarian

Leadership Topeka Class of 2021
Kim Strube
 Chief Financial Officer

Success Story

Natalie Moreland shared:

“ I recently got connected with one of our regular customers, Jaiden, and it's been so fulfilling to choose books that match her interests. Jaiden is one of our regular customers who normally comes in at least once a week and loves to browse, going home with a stack of 40 or so picture books, and she reads every single one. Having gotten to know her and her grandparents over several years, I know what she enjoys and its fun to pick out books for her. I know Jaiden will be so excited when she can come back in and choose her own books, but for now curbside pickup and personalized browsing are meeting her needs.”



Building our community of readers

Top City Reads Together

Our Facebook group Top City Reads Together reached 500 members. The group shares new book recommendations and author visit details, discusses what they are reading in comments and during live online book discussions, and interacts with librarians. During the summer the group selected two books *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett and *River of Doubt* by Candice Millard to all read and discuss. Checkouts for these books were very high with a total of 273 checkouts for *State of Wonder* and 197 checkouts for *River of Doubt* during the summer.

Book Rich Environment

The library collaborates with Topeka Housing Authority and the United Way of Greater Topeka on the Book Rich Environment initiative. The goal is to provide quality age-appropriate books to kids and families in Deer Creek, Pine Ridge and Echo Ridge. The initiative also held a Read and Ride event to encourage reading and bike safety at the end of the summer.

Additionally, as part of the collaboration the library received a \$4000 grant from the Rotary Club of Topeka Foundation to support this initiative. The monies were used to develop and purchase literacy and learning kits for the neighborhoods and provide additional books so everyone who attended our joint programs were able to have good books to keep. This was the fourth year with this collaboration.

La Comunidad

Art Exhibit Highlighted Local Latino Artists

Local Latino artists shared their heritage and artwork to bring the fall La Comunidad exhibit to life in the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery. The exhibit focused on community and shared experience with displays of murals, paintings, sculpture, dance, music and costumes. By mixing cultural traditions with contemporary stories, this group of Topeka artists showcased the depth of talent and vision in our community.

La Comunidad activities and events drew big audiences including a low rider car show (first car show at the library!), a salsa dance performance and lessons, artist talks, live flamenco music and dancing, art workshops, and live mariachi music.



Mario Garcia *Jugando con Colores* (Playing with Colors) 2017



Andy Valdivia, *Our History*



Library trustee Jim and wife Shelley Ramos



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Financials

Sources of Financial Support

Taxes	\$ 18,810,109
Fees & Reimbursements	\$ 273,687
Contributions	\$ 187,902
Grants & State Aid	\$ 76,929
Investment Income	\$ 44,977
Interfund Transfers	\$ 1,782,022
Total	\$21,175,626

Library Expenditures

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 11,704,135
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 2,275,492
Debt Service	\$ -
Library Materials	\$ 1,728,539
Equipment & Capital Improvements	\$ 991,741
Programming & Events	\$ 100,302
Interfund Transfers	\$ 1,782,022
Total	\$18,582,231



Net Promoter Score (NPS)

NPS can be generalized as measuring customer loyalty. The high and positive NPS indicates people were satisfied with their recent experience at the library and are willing to tell others.

18K
FOLLOWERS
ON FACEBOOK



7,198 PEOPLE
FOLLOW US
ON TWITTER

203,668

VISITS TO THE LIBRARY

3,928
TOTAL MEETINGS



DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS,
THE LIBRARY LIMITED PERSONS IN A
MEETING SPACE

YOU CHECKED OUT

1.7
MILLION ITEMS



40%
OF ALL
HOUSEHOLDS
IN SHAWNEE
COUNTY HAVE AN
ACTIVE LIBRARY
CARDHOLDER

IN-PERSON / ONLINE

1,771
APPOINTMENTS



WE RESPONDED TO



68,990

QUESTIONS VIA WALK-IN,
PHONE, EMAILS AND CHAT

CURBSIDE SERVICE

188,946
CHECKOUTS



TSCPL@HOME

48,873 CHECKOUTS

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS
584,359



OUR COMBINED PHYSICAL
AND DIGITAL COLLECTIONS
GIVE CUSTOMERS

THAN
1.4
MILLION ITEMS
TO CHOOSE FROM

1,190,829

ITEMS IN OUR DIGITAL COLLECTION
INCLUDE BOOKS, AUDIOBOOKS,
MOVIES, MUSIC AND MAGAZINES

296,939
PHYSICAL ITEMS IN
OUR COLLECTION



Marie Pyko New Library CEO

Telling stories leads to dream career

“We will innovate, we will inspire and we will connect our community so everyone continues to live their best life.”

-Marie Pyko

On Oct 22, 2021, Marie Pyko became Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library’s Chief Executive Officer. She replaced former CEO Gina J. Millsap, who retired Dec 1, 2020. Thad Hartman, Chief of Staff, served as Interim CEO before Pyko’s selection.

Let’s get to know our new CEO. For anyone who loves the library, getting to know someone always involves a discussion of books. Pyko answered some book and library questions including a few slightly silly ones. First, she shares a little about her new role.



In 2001 Red Carpet Supervisor Pyko, worked with David Leamon, former library executive director, at a donor recognition event.



In 2006, the Jeanne & Cotter Hirschberg Lecture featured former U.S. Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum (center) who spoke about The Challenge of Change. Former library CEO Gina Millsap and Public Services Manager Pyko co-hosted the event.



CEO Marie Pyko is the 16th executive and 10th woman in 151 years to lead our library.

"I am so honored to be chosen to lead our amazing library," said Pyko. "I didn't know when I decided it would be fun to tell stories at the library close to 30 years ago, I would be joining an amazing library family. Every day is exciting and often different. We really do make a difference in people's lives. I look forward to working with our staff on our next plans for Topeka."

What is the most recent book you loved?

Win by Harlan Coben – I love anything Coben writes and love that so many of his books have been made into series. I am reading **The Dilemma** by B.A. Paris right now and am loving it too.



The Big Read *Their Eyes were Watching God*, Marie with KU Chancellor Robert Hemingway and Anne Hurston

What's one of your favorite moments/projects in the 30 years you've been at the library?

There really are too many. I loved all of our community reads with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) but **Their Eyes Were Watching God** was truly memorable. We were one of 10 communities to pilot the Big Read program. I was invited to present testimony before Congress in Washington D.C. on the importance of literary reading with the NEA

Chairman Dana Gioia. That was life changing. It was so wonderful to brag about how amazing Topeka, Kansas, is and talk about our program.

Another favorite memory is serving as project manager for the redesign of the Kids Library. It now has fun and engaging imagination spaces including our salt-water aquarium filled with colorful coral, clown fish (Nemo) and tang fish (Dory) and the bottom half of a tyrannosaurus rex to help hold up the building. It is still my favorite space to spend time in because of the laughter and play you see every day.

Is there a book or genre you love that people might be surprised to find in your tote bag?

Not sure if it would be surprising, but I really enjoy dystopian and speculative fiction. I like seeing how people would cope when all we know is different. My first read of speculative fiction was **Fatherland** by Robert Harris. The premise is what would happen if Hitler won World War II. I just couldn't put it down.

Most people wouldn't be surprised to know I am still a big Jane Austen fan. I re-read **Pride and Prejudice** and **Persuasion** every few years. I love strong women characters faced with the challenges of society.

If you were a book character, who would you be?

Another of my favorite authors is Patricia Cornwell and I have longed to be as adventurous as chief medical examiner Kay Scarpetta.

What is the library's biggest strength right now?

Our biggest strength now is what has always been our strength – our staff and their energy and commitment to excellence and innovative service. We really are a team that works together to get things done. Library leaders are not afraid to try something new like we did during the pandemic with Curbside Pickup, TSCPL@Home and Browsing Just For You. We can regroup when we need to and develop a program, service or initiative quickly. Staff are very community and service oriented. We listen to the emerging trends in our community and determine how the library can best respond.



(right) 2013-Former Library Foundation director Kathy Groesbeck and then Public Services director Pyko, celebrated the opening of the Kids Library, a renovation project that re-invented the youth space into an interactive family destination in 2007

*Stay
curious*



1515 SW 10th Ave | Topeka, KS 66604

785 580-4400 | tsctl.org

Hours Mon-Fri 9AM-9PM | Sat 9AM-6PM | Sun NOON TO 9PM