



TOPEKA &
SHAWNEE
COUNTY
**PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**2024
ANNUAL
REPORT**

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A Year of Learning & Connections

Marie Pyko, Chief Executive Officer

I am so proud of the role our library continues to play for our children and adults focused on literacy, learning and engagement. We keep looking for new and innovative ways to strengthen and support each person in our community.

The 2024 annual report offers a glimpse into the vibrant tapestry of stories, learning and community connections that define the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library.

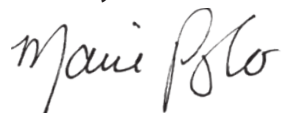
Our first year of the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan launched with new initiatives, services and spaces. Working with young adult interns from Washburn University and the Topeka Center for Advanced Learning and Careers (TCALC) we took our digital skills training classes out into the community to meet people where they live. Our newly remodeled fiction wing provides a warm and inviting space for adults to browse books, meet with friends, study and relax next to our beautiful new fireplace. The Summer Reading program delighted thousands of children and adults in explorations of stories, music, activities and art. *The Floor is Lava*, our summer children's art exhibit at the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery welcomed more than 22,000 visitors to explore and learn about the awesome power of volcanoes through science.

We hosted nationally recognized authors and experts to ensure our community could listen, learn and connect. From a bestselling mystery writer to a direct descendant of Frederick Douglas and Booker T. Washington, we offered many memorable events in 2024.

Even as our library building continues to bustle with activity, we know people have busy lives and we continue to hit the road with our Bookmobiles, the Learn & Play Bus, our @Home delivery service, Red Carpet delivery and @Work delivery. I continue to be in awe of our experts who delight and support both preschool and elementary school classrooms with Outreach Storytelling and Classroom Connections.

Finally, I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our dedicated staff, our passionate volunteers and our amazing partners. I know we can continue to build on the resiliency of this community and work together to help all Topeka and Shawnee County thrive.

All the best,
Marie Pyko



Connect



Website Redesign

At the beginning of the year the library launched a redesigned website with a more prominent search bar, larger and more colorful graphics, and highlighted primary sections. The goal of the redesign was to help people discover library services, resources and fun they may have missed.

Increasing reading at Juvenile Detention Center

The library received a \$21,500 grant to increase incarcerated children and teens' access to age-appropriate reading materials. The project titled "If You Seed It, They Will Read It" is providing the Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center with new materials for the reading level and interests of youth. The previous library within the center consisted of donated used adult books. Librarians Alex Henault and Scarlett Fisher-Herreman identified the need and applied for the grant.

"Through our project, we are supporting this hidden community of young readers with

“If You Seed It,
They Will
Read It”

access to juvenile and young adult books,” said library CEO Marie Pyko. “This project is a first step in building connections to youth who need and deserve access to high-quality library services and collections.”

“If You Seed It, They Will Read It” is one of four 2024 projects awarded funding by the Lyrasis Catalyst Fund that provides support for new ideas and innovative projects. Lyrasis is a nonprofit member organization serving the global landscape of academic and public libraries, scholarly research, archives, museums and galleries.

ion



Dr. W. Walter Menninger and former staff shared memories of working at the renowned Menninger Clinic before it left Topeka in 2002. Event was co-hosted by Shawnee County Historical Society. *Pictured above:* Dr. C.F. Menninger in his offices at 727 S. Kansas Ave in 1889. (TSCPL)



◀ L to R: Library staff Alex Henault and Scarlett Fisher-Herreman

Collaborating with high school designers

Topeka Center for Advanced Learning & Careers (TCALC) students in the Web and Digital Communications Pathway took on the assignment to create promotions for the library's Summer Reading program. Students worked with the library's graphic designer and social media specialist to create promotions for each of our regular summer activities. This gave students some real-world experience and gave the library teens' perspective on summer reading.



Student Jordyn Tombs, library staffer Karen Watson & student Valeria Sanchez



Space



The Fiction Wing features a fireplace, work tables and Readers Lounge

Fiction & Nonfiction Wings

Step into the bright, open and relaxing fiction and nonfiction wings to find a book, work on your device, chat with a friend, meet with a book group or escape into your latest read. We've made our book wings more comfortable and easier to navigate. Formerly known as the east and west wings, these spaces have been beautifully renovated and reorganized.

FICTION



FICCIÓN

Wayfinding Signage

We made it easier for everyone to find their way around the library. Each space in the library now has a sign that clearly describes what happens in the space in English and Spanish. We also added directional signs at the bottom and top of the stairs and at the elevators.

Learning



Convert analog media to digital with our Memory Lab

You now have access to hardware and software to convert your VHS tapes, vinyl and cassette tapes to digital. You can take a quick in-person class or online class to learn how it's done. Then you can reserve a time for a Memory Lab workstation.

Expanding crafting inspiration

Our customers enjoy demonstration events that show many ways to use the library's Cricut machine with examples. Cricut is a die-cutting machine that cuts several different materials like paper, vinyl and cardstock with detailed designs.



Bringing Technology to the Community

The Library Foundation received a \$78,470 Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) grant to increase digital literacy in Shawnee County. The Level Up Shawnee County program addresses the multifaceted nature of digital literacy by focusing on three key components – physical navigation of technology, collaborative engagement and employment readiness. The program, which is run by the library, aims to empower individuals and bridge the digital divide within Shawnee County.

“The program recognizes the importance of connecting and working with others in the digital world,”

said Library CEO Marie Pyko.

“The grant allows us to provide paid interns to be technical trainers to expand the library's reach and provide high school and college students real-world experience.”



Student interns Aleks Westjord, Valeria Sanchez, Daniel Gutierrez and Jayden Lindsey

Teens & DnD



Teens get together to play Dungeons & Dragons each week.

Joy

Total visitors
to the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery

38,129

up 24%



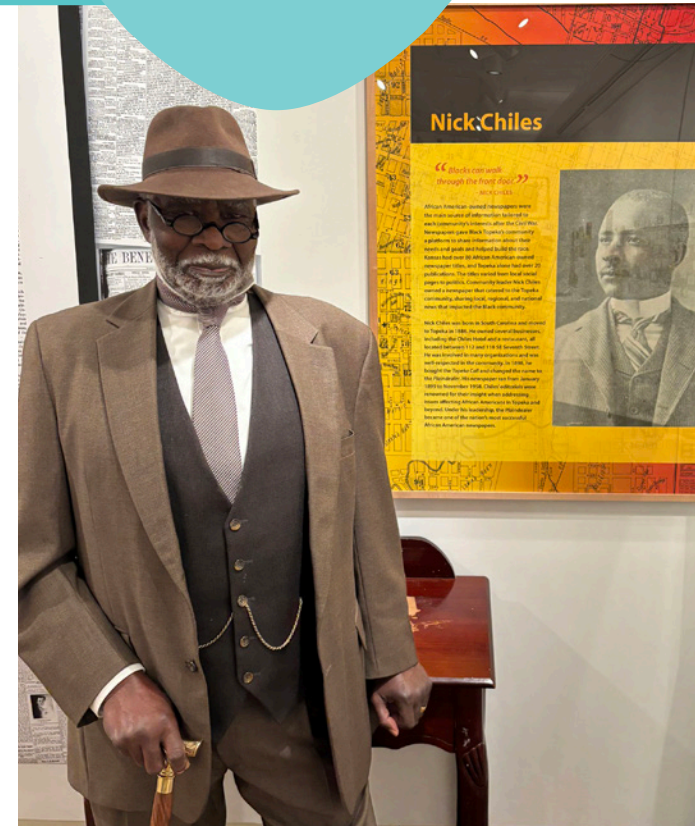
Kids tossed balls into the exploding volcano at the interactive kids exhibit *The Floor is Lava*.

Art Exhibits

The Alice C. Sabatini Gallery brings joy through art events, art activities and four main exhibits each year. Gallery staff also curate several small exhibits throughout the library to give visitors opportunities to explore a wide variety of art and artists.

Four main 2024 exhibits:

- *Light and Shadow*
- *Our Stories and Sorting Out Race*
- *The Floor is Lava*
- *Through the Lens*



Foster Chisholm is role-playing as Nick Chiles during the *Our Stories* exhibit. Community leader Nick Chiles owned a newspaper that catered to the Topeka community, sharing local, regional, and national news that impacted the Black community.

DEC 15, 2023 - FEB 11, 2024



Light and Shadow

Visitors discovered how light and the human eye work together to see the world, explored the dynamics of light through hands-on activities, and examined how artists interpret light to communicate their unique perception of the world. The exhibit included art from the library's collections along with borrowed works from Kansas artists Ye Wang and Lisa Grossman.

FEB 23 - MAY 19



Our Stories & Sorting Out Race

During the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board decision *Our Stories: African American Topeka Before and After Brown* honored generations of African Americans in Topeka, the tight-knit neighborhoods they built, and how their legacies continue to shape the city. *Our Stories* was a collaboration between the Black American Blueprint Collective and the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery.

Sorting Out Race is a traveling exhibit that uses commonly found thrift store items such as salt-and-pepper shakers, children's books, and antique advertising cards to guide a community conversation about stereotyping and historical cultural perceptions of race. *Sorting Out Race* is supported by the United We Stand: Connecting Through Culture initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Humanities Kansas. The exhibition was created by the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College.

JUNE 1 - AUG 18



The Floor is Lava

Kids got hands-on experience with the tools volcanologists use, played interactive games to learn more about volcanoes and created fun crafts during our summer art exhibit for children. They also discovered art that highlights unique aspects of how volcanoes work, and how volcanoes have captured the imagination of artists. This exhibit set an attendance record with **23,007** visits.

SEPT 6 - DEC 1



Through the Lens

Visitors explored the technological and artistic innovations in capturing images. The exhibit showcased a range of historical photographic methods from the earliest days of photography through Polaroid cameras. Artwork in *Through the Lens* included borrowed works from the Beach Museum of Art and independent photographic artists such as Mary Dorsey-Wanless and National Geographic photographer Jim Richardson.

Joy

7 days in 60 seconds

Get a short highlight of weekly library happenings through social media videos. Every week our social media specialist Jayna McFarland gives viewers a quick rundown of the week's top events through the Monday Minute on Facebook and Instagram. Teens also get highlights of teen-specific events through a weekly iTEENery created by the teen librarians and posted on Saturdays.



Readers Love Earning Prizes

We had three all-ages reading challenges in addition to the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten challenge.

Winter Reading Challenge

Read 3 books in January

1,719 ACTIVE READERS **UP 48%**

8,427 BOOKS READ **UP 21%**



Summer Reading Challenge

3,284 ACTIVE READERS **UP 25%**

8,850 BOOKS READ* **DOWN SLIGHTLY**

1,014,547 MINUTES READ* **UP 50%**

*birth - 12 years old tracked minutes; teens & adults tracked books

Fall Reading Challenge

Read 3 books in October

823 ACTIVE READERS **UP 21%**

4,204 BOOKS READ **UP 14%**



1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Kids birth to Kindergarten get an additional year-round reading challenge.

362 ACTIVE READERS **DOWN LESS THAN 2%**

308 REWARDS REDEEMED **DOWN 22%**

364 NEW REGISTRATIONS **UP 15%**

Meeting authors

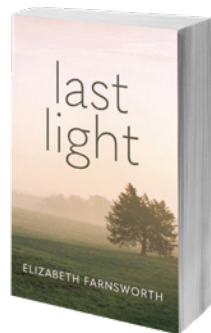
Many readers love meeting the people who write their favorite books and new authors who are expanding their reading options. Each author who visited the library in 2024 focused on a different genre.

Young adult and adult fiction author **Lara Avery** started and ended the year by presenting at two very different library events. In February she participated in our Galentine's Day celebration of uplifting reads about friendship, romance and valuing ourselves. In November she spoke about her journey as an author at the Friends of the Library Annual Event.



Lisa Scottoline, a bestselling author of more than 35 novels including the Lisa Rosato & Associates series, visited the library in September. Her works have been featured numerous times on the New York Times bestsellers list and she has been awarded the prestigious Edgar Award for her crime novel *Final Appeal*. Scottoline thoroughly entertained a packed Marvin Auditorium with her hilarious stories of her family and life as an author.

Journalist **Elizabeth Farnsworth** discussed her first novella, *Last Light*, historical fiction set in Topeka and the Flint Hills inspired by true events. She also shared anecdotes from her fascinating life and answered questions about her long career as a foreign correspondent and Jim Lehrer's substitute anchor on the PBS NewsHour.



Horror, fantasy and sci-fi author **Dane Kroll** presented with his wife **Lara Avery** at the Friends Annual Event. Kroll is a writer with a passion for giant monsters, horror and adventure whose books are fast-paced, action-packed, and filled with twists and turns.



Moderator Autumn Friedli interviews authors Dane Kroll & Lara Avery at the annual Friends Special event.

Joy

Every Child Should Have Books in their Home



Total books mailed in Year 7
(April 2023-24)

78,568 up 5%

Actual number of children enrolled by December 2024

5,688 down 5%

\$1,444,228 total dollars raised

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is funded by Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, United Way of Kaw Valley and the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

Eli loves when his mom and dad read books to him. He receives books in the mail each month through the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Taking Stories on the Road

Kids can never get enough books, songs and stories. The Outreach Storytellers often give child care activity directors ideas for everyday story sharing. Storytellers provided outreach storytimes to 19,699 children at 60 sites around the county.



Outreach Storytellers (front) Rhonda Cathey, (back from left) Theresa Girdler, Jenna Glaze, Melissa Meinhardt

Kids Having Fun

Play and fun are two of the best partners for learning. The next few pages show examples of a fraction of the fun we had this year with preschool and elementary age kids while we built reading, science, engineering and artistic skills.



Teaching children about mosquitoes



Storytime



Learning from a mad scientist



School Age Fun egg drop with the Topeka Fire Department

Connecting Students

Classroom Connections offers 17 interactive, free programs designed to engage elementary students in a variety of exciting topics like animals, science, history and language. These 30–45 minute sessions immerse students in hands-on learning, sparking curiosity and creativity while fostering a love for learning. Each teacher can request up to three programs per semester, making education a fun and unforgettable experience for every child.



Students at Whitson Elementary showing their creative talents as they learn about the wonders of animals.



Volunteers help at the popular summer tie-dye event



STEM gets slimy.

Joy



Using magnifying glasses to get an up-close look at plants.



With the Kids Library renovation underway, Preschool Storytime moved to the Learning Center. Three times a week, Storytime provides kids with stories, music and interactive fun.



National guest speaker, Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. co-founder of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDI) and Topeka historian Marty Patterson

Latest Genealogy Tools & Celebrating Culture

Identity Quest & Heritage Celebration attendees learned about the latest research tools to help them find their identity and view heritage research demonstrations in November.



African Americans Renewing Interest in Spirituals Ensemble, Incorporated (ARISE) performing at Identity Quest. ARISE is made up of Kansans dedicated to uplifting, sharing history and inspiring peace through song and storytelling.



Raven shares her father-daughter story about their love of lowriders.

Lowriders at the Library

More than 700 people enjoyed the Lowrider Culture Fest in September.

Going to car shows together was special father-daughter time for Joshua and Raven. They were proud of his lowrider 1994 Nissan Hardbody 821 pickup truck, customized with his own special touches – you might have seen it featured in library publications after last year’s Lowrider Culture Fest. Joshua dreamed of giving Raven a car of her own. When her



hopes were set on a shiny red 1978 Lincoln Continental, he was determined to buy it for her. But the day before he was set to make that purchase, Joshua died. Knowing how badly he wanted Raven to have this car and to work on it with her, his family decided to go ahead with the purchase. Now Raven and her mother, Meghan, continue his legacy by working on the cars and exhibiting them together. Raven told us about their cars and what it means to share them at the 2024 Lowrider Culture Fest.



People



Lissa Staley 2024 Library Journal Mover & Shaker

Community Connections Librarian Lissa Staley received a 2024 Library

Journal Mover & Shaker award as a Community Builder. Staley's work includes coordinating community navigators to provide individuals walk-in assistance at the library to identify needs and make referrals. She supports voter education and nonprofit organizations, coordinates library trivia and the local National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) activities. Staley said she enjoys helping people make connections to the community and each other. This is all in addition to helping people find great reads and access library resources.



Gallery staff recognized as Outstanding Art Enhancers

Staff of the library's Alice C. Sabatini Gallery received the Kansas Art Education Association Outstanding Art Enhancer Award in 2024. This award

recognizes the exemplary contributions of individuals, groups, institutions or businesses that significantly enhanced art education or art in their community.

Katie Keckeisen wins 2024 Kansas Association of Broadcasters Award

Local History Librarian Katie Keckeisen won a first place Kansas Association of Broadcasters award in the Editorial / Commentary category for her story "Topeka's Flirtation with Fraudsters: Mediums and Spiritualists" on Kansas Public Radio Station KANU. She shared a longer version of this story on the library website and during a well-attended event at the library.

Social Media

Things are looking up for the library's social media! After our first full year with a social media specialist, followers are up by about 1,500 across all platforms. Content is up with hundreds more posts and videos enticing customers to get involved with library events, use our resources and share in the library joy. Reach is up with videos, photos and promotions seen by 200,000 more people than in 2023 and they keep coming back. On Facebook alone, our content was viewed 1.2 million times this year!

Most importantly, customers have engaged with content in our social media channels at unprecedented rates. Every like, save, share, comment, message and video view is a powerful customer touchpoint, adding up to more than 323,000 interactions.



22K FOLLOWERS UP 1,117
1.2 MILLION VIEWS
55.7K CONTENT INTERACTIONS UP 11.6%
480K+ REACH UP 61.9%
105.7K 3-SECOND VIDEO VIEWS UP 121.7%



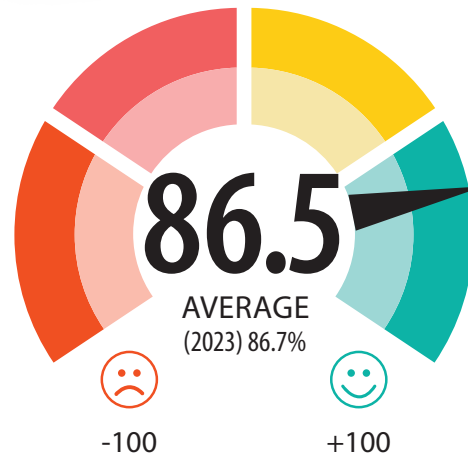
3.6K+ FOLLOWERS UP 365
154.2K VIEWS
38.2K REACH UP 236.7%



259K VIEWS DOWN 18%
1,625 ALL-TIME FOLLOWERS
UP 44% 85 NEW SUBSCRIBERS



50.5K IMPRESSIONS UP 11,625%
831 ENGAGEMENTS UP 83,000
6,852 FOLLOWERS DOWN 2.7%



Net Promoter Score (NPS)

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

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

FINANCIALS

Sources of Financial Support

Taxes	\$ 19,498,331
Fees & Reimbursements	\$ 316,330
Contributions	\$ 628,211
Grants & State Aid	\$ 69,466
Investment Income	\$ 937,043
Interfund Transfers	\$ -
Total	\$ 21,449,382

Library Expenditures

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 12,470,855
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 3,522,523
Debt Service	\$ -
Library Materials	\$ 2,004,689
Equipment & Capital Improvements	\$ 2,043,094
Programming & Events	\$ 160,569
Interfund Transfers	\$ -
Total	\$ 20,201,730

CARDHOLDERS

42% of all households in Shawnee County have an active library account



ASK A LIBRARIAN



We responded to **268,262** questions via walk-in, phone, email & chat UP 26%



COLLECTION



Our combined physical & digital collections give customers more than **2.3 million** items to choose from UP 19%

WIFI & COMPUTER USE



WiFi sessions **380,647** use UP 2%
84,393 hours UP .4%



Computer sessions **88,829** DOWN 8.2%
94,428 hours UP 2.9%

EVENTS

Event attendance **50,936**
DOWN SLIGHTLY 5%
(excludes exhibits, outreach, internal and training)



DIGITAL LIBRARY



catalog **727,094 total** visits UP 34.9%
330,537 unique visits UP 45.5%

website **546,720 total** visits DOWN 17%
329,967 unique visits DOWN 21%

Unique visits measures the number of individuals who visit a site. Total visits measures the number of times a site has been visited. If an individual visits a site multiple times, this number is reflected in the total visits.

CIRCULATION



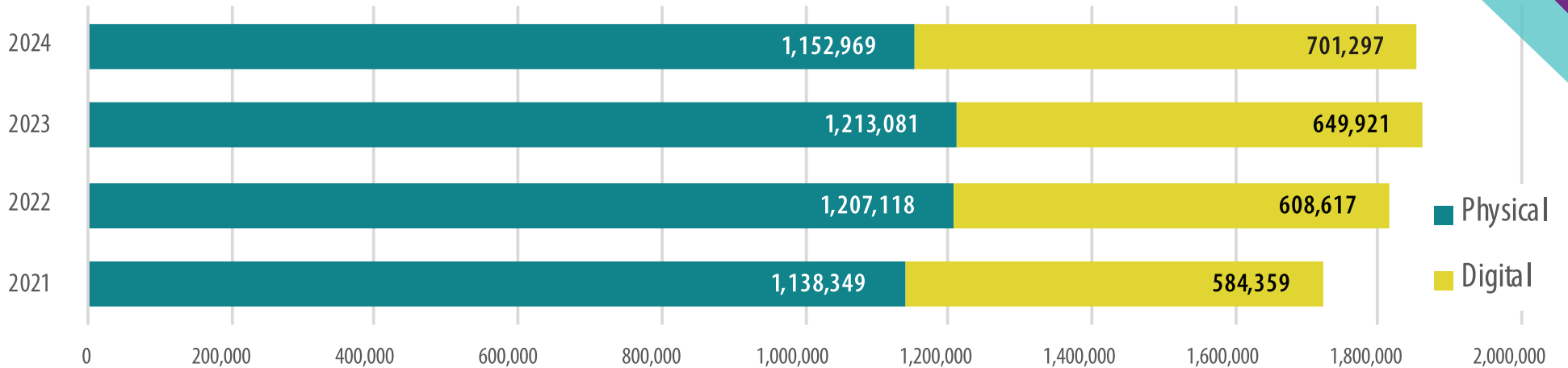
You checked out **1.85 million** items DOWN SLIGHTLY 7.9%

Digital Downloads **701,297** UP 6.8%

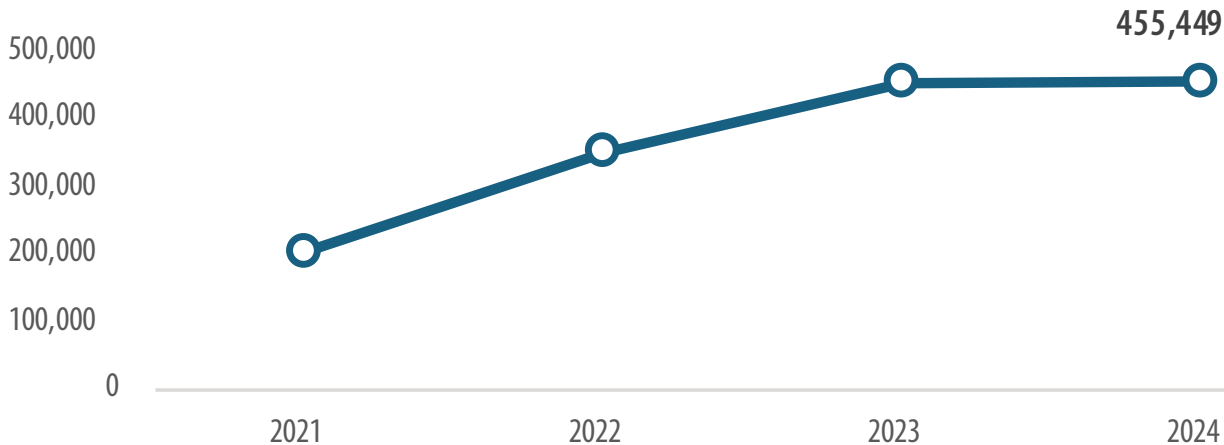


Curbside Service **5,217** checkouts DOWN 70%

TSCPL@Home **41,040** checkouts UP 3.1%



VISITS



MEETING ROOMS

24,452 meetings were held in all public meeting rooms UP 7.5%



RETIREMENTS

with much appreciation for their service and best wishes in retirement!



Paul Brennan
31 years



Kyler Carpenter
25 years



Jennifer Jones
27 years

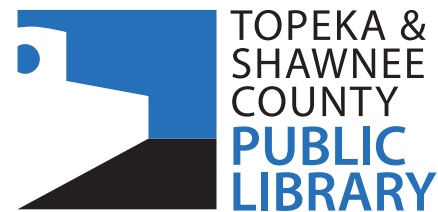


Liz Paris
7 years



Susan Shafer
30 years

*Stay
curious*



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