

*Board of Trustees of the Upper Sandusky Community Library*

*Minutes*

*January 11, 2024*

The Upper Sandusky Community Library Board of Trustees convened on Thursday, January 11, at 12:45 p.m. in the Library Large Meeting Room with the following members present: Ms. Jenny Romich, Ms. Amy Aldridge-Ritchey, Mr. Todd Leightey, Mr. Brian Kimmel, and Ms. Ann Kemerley. Ms. Dianne Grafmiller and Mr. Ben Buckland were absent. Director/Fiscal Officer Kathleen Whitt and Deputy Fiscal Officer/Technology Coordinator/Assistant Manager for Facilities Patricia Davidson were also present, as was Brian Hemminger of the *Daily Chief-Union*.

Organizational Meeting:

Ms. Romich called the meeting to order at 12:45 and requested nominations for Board officers. Nominations were moved and seconded to retain for President: Ms. Romich; Vice President: Ms. Grafmiller; Secretary: Ms. Kemerley; and to reappoint Director Kathleen Whitt as Fiscal Officer and Patricia Davidson as Deputy Fiscal Officer. All present approved the motion.

Ms. Romich in her capacity as notary administered the oath of office to Director Kathleen Whitt as Fiscal Officer and to Patricia Davidson as Deputy Fiscal Officer. Ms. Davidson in her capacity as notary administered the oath of office as Library Trustee to Ms. Romich, who is starting a new term.

It was agreed that committee assignments would stand as follows:

Building & Grounds Committee:	Ann Kemerley, Todd Leightey and Amy Aldridge-Ritchey
Finance Committee:	Ben Buckland, Jenny Romich and Brian Kimmel
Friends Liaison:	Dianne Grafmiller

It was moved and seconded to pass a resolution authorizing the Fiscal Officer and Deputy Fiscal Officer to pay the bills with the understanding that payments be ratified at the regular meetings of this Board. In a roll call vote, all approved the motion.

It was agreed to retain the current calendar for monthly meetings on the second Thursday of the month. The meetings will begin at 12:00 p.m.

The Board then reviewed the Annual Report for 2023 as presented by Ms. Whitt. Mr. Kimmel noted a mathematical error in statistics for library visitors. It was moved and seconded to approve the Annual Report as corrected. All present voted in favor of accepting the report. The full report is attached to these minutes.

At 12:50, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the Organizational Meeting.

Regular Meeting:

At 12:50, the Regular Meeting convened. President Jenny Romich asked for public comments. Hearing none, Ms. Romich asked if there were corrections or additions to the distributed minutes of the November meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Romich declared the minutes stand as distributed.

Next on the agenda was a motion to ratify the payment of the bills. Ms. Romich asked if there was any discussion or questions. Mr. Kimmel asked about tracking expenditures for the

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elevator upgrade project. The Board requested Ms. Whitt to create a spreadsheet showing the estimated cost of the contract and dates and amounts of expenditures.

There was no old business.

Under new business, there was a brief meeting of the Records Commission. The Records Commission consists of the entire Board and the Fiscal Officer (Ms. Whitt). Ms. Whitt stated that she has identified records that are eligible for disposal under the Records Retention Schedule approved by the Board. The request to destroy the eligible records was submitted to the State Archives of Ohio for approval, which she has received. A motion was made and seconded to approve destruction of records having met their retention dates. All present approved the motion.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Whitt reported that:

1. Adult Outreach and IT Specialist Holly Higgins's last day at the library was November 17. On December 11 we welcomed a new Adult Outreach Coordinator, Taryn Korody. Taryn comes to us from the Mohawk Community Library, so she is already familiar with our online catalog and assisting library patrons, so she already has a head start on her training. She dived right into the Adult Outreach role, updating the information and reaching out to patrons, and is planning to start going to WCSNR for their monthly visit next week.
2. On December 16 we received the final payout from the Christina Nelson estate, in the amount of \$8,118.92. We received the initial notification of this bequest in June 2021, an initial payment of \$15,000 in December 2021, and a second one in June 2022 for \$8,000. The total amount we received from this bequest was thus a little over \$31,000, for which we are very grateful.
3. The elevator project has begun, with work on the electrical and fire panels. The main construction work is scheduled to begin on February 12, when the elevator will be out of operation for several weeks. In addition, the library Board room is unavailable, as we have had to move operations from the office adjoining the elevator vault to accommodate the work. The large meeting room is still available for use by library programs and meetings and for the public.
4. With return to regular school schedules after the holidays, story times and school visits have resumed, as well as STEAMPunks, which featured a visit by Bigfoot researcher Amy Bue on Monday, January 8. This event was opened up to the general public and was very well attended.
5. Our adult winter reading program is in progress January 2-February 17. Participants get a scratch-off ticket for an opportunity to win an instant prize each time they come in to check out books, and the first 40 to sign up received a library logo hot beverage mug. Completed scratch-off tickets will be entered into a drawing for grand prize, a Keurig beverage maker.
6. On January 10 we began a 4-week beginning American Sign Language course presented by veteran sign language interpreter Keith Falzone. This Wednesday evening course is open to the public, with no registration or experience required.
7. On Saturdays January 13 and 20, ten teams will compete to assemble a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle in two hours. The team that finishes first or has the most pieces put together will win a prize. Since this was so popular last year, we decided to schedule two different dates. We've had people call to sign up who said they were driving from two hours away to participate in the competition.

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8. On January 18, Patti Davidson will introduce a new twist on her popular culinary series, transitioning from “Taste of the World” to “Taste of History.” The debut event will feature dishes from Ancient Egypt.

9. Other January programs include the 100 Book Club Halfway Hoorah for participants to check in and see how they are progressing, and an “introduction to Narcan” presentation by Wyandot County Health.

10. On December 20, the Wyandot County Budget Commission announced that the Ohio Department of Taxation had reduced their estimate for 2024 distributions from \$918,075.00 to \$908,667.00. This would mean a decrease from an estimated \$330,481.80 for our library to \$327,120.12 for calendar year 2024.

11. The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the January 2024 Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution of \$35,451,717 – which is \$4.5 million (or -11.19%) below ODT’s original estimate that was issued in July 2023; and \$7,569 (or -0.02%) below ODT’s updated estimate issued in December 2023.

12. According to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), overall state tax receipts for the month of December came in 11.5% or \$263.7 million below estimates. OBM claims the state budget for FY24 is still on solid footing. OBM Director Kim Murnieks issued the following statement: “Monthly revenues were negatively impacted by large income tax refunds paid to filers who requested extensions for the 2022 tax year. This historic level of December refunds was driven by shifts in payment strategies for pass-through entities who elected to take advantage of tax law changes for federal tax purposes. Even so, when tax receipts, investment income, and other non-federal income to the General Revenue Fund are combined, fiscal year-to-date revenues are on track. While it is unlikely that income tax refunds of this magnitude will recur in future Decembers, this shift will be taken into consideration as we forecast future income tax estimates by month.”

13. Memorial/Honor/Donations:

In memory of Faith Cheney	Ralph & Sue Smith Custom Glass Solutions
In memory of Susan Stimpfle	USHS Class of 1957
In honor of Pastor Kathleen Shuck	First Lutheran Church
Donation	Charles and Jean Gottfried

There were no Items Not on the Agenda.

Ms. Romich asked if there were any other items for discussion. Hearing none, it was moved and seconded at 1:15 to adjourn.

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President

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Secretary

**2023**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**UPPER SANDUSKY COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Jennifer A. Romich	President	December 31, 2023
Dianne Grafmiller	Vice-President	December 31, 2028
Ann Kemerley	Secretary	December 31, 2024
Amy Aldridge-Ritchey		December 31, 2029
Brian Kimmel		December 31, 2027
Todd Leightey		December 31, 2025
Laurie A. Scheck	(Jan.-Sept.)	December 31, 2026
Benjamin C. Buckland	(Oct.-Dec.)	December 31, 2026

**STAFF**

Kathleen Whitt (Director/Fiscal Officer)  
Jill Stansbery: Youth Services Coordinator/Assistant Director  
Patricia Davidson: Deputy Fiscal Officer/Technology Coordinator/Assistant Manager for Facilities  
Lisa Andres: Youth Services Specialist  
Katherine Bardon: Cataloging Assistant  
Annette Cheney: Catalog Specialist  
Holly Higgins: Adult Outreach Coordinator & IT Specialist (Jan.-Nov.)  
Rachel Keirns-Moore: Programming & Display Coordinator, Newsletter Editor  
Taryn Korody: Adult Outreach Coordinator (December)  
Cheryl Lyon: Cataloging and Adult Programming Assistant  
Jennifer McKee: Library Assistant, Genealogical Search Assistant  
Hailey Rossel: Library Assistant (June-December)  
Krystal Smalley: Marketing and Social Media Coordinator  
Lynn Gottfried: Custodian/Maintenance Assistant

**HOURS**

Monday through Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The library was closed for the following holidays in 2023:  
Monday, January 2 for New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday;  
Presidents' Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth (June 19); Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans' Day; Thanksgiving Day; Christmas Day.

The library was closed on April 1 due to a power outage.

The library was open for business 301 days.

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## OVERVIEW

The library circulated 139,742 items in 2023, an increase of 11.4% from 2022. Average daily circulation was 463.4 items. Overall circulation for the SEO Consortium was up 11.57% from 2021. Circulation of materials in the juvenile collection (not including YA) was about 32% of total circulation. Movie circulation was up slightly to 12.47% from 12.03% in 2022. Circulation of e-books was up to 12,510 from 9,734 in 2022—an increase of 28.5%, and an all-time high for e-book circulation at USCL. This represented 8.95% of total circulation, up from 7.76% in 2022. The Ohio Digital Library, in which we participate, reported 9.1 million checkouts in 2023—also a record number. Resource sharing among SEO libraries has stabilized with the contract with Priority Dispatch. Our delivery driver is excellent: he doesn't miss deliveries and we are confident that materials shipped from other libraries are getting to us in a timely manner. Outgoing loans to other SEO libraries increased by about 20.6% over 2022; incoming increased by about 16.3%.

Highlights for the year include:

- The number of visitors to the library increased by 1.5%, with a total of 92,134, as compared to 90,755 visitors for 2022. This is still about 37% below the count of 145,179 visitors in 2019.
- The library's 4.5 mil levy was successfully renewed in the November election. We are very grateful to our community for their continued support.
- The elevator upgrade project is finally underway. The project was put out for bid in January, and the bids were opened on February 6. The library board selected Davis and Newcomer to carry out the upgrade at their February 9 meeting. Contract details having been worked out and signed in June, it was then necessary for the contractor to complete previously scheduled projects. As of December, electrical and fire panel work had been done. The project is scheduled for completion in spring 2024, with the main part of the work to begin mid-February, when the elevator will be out of service for several weeks.
- We were delighted to receive a 2023 grant from the McCarthy Family Fund through the Wyandot County Community Foundation to have a permanent StoryWalk® set up at Stepping Stones Park. The park department will install the frames in spring of 2024. Since the StoryWalk® through downtown is so popular, we will continue that as well.
- In January, we installed a Holocaust Remembrance Day display featuring research done by Patti Davidson and creative work by Rachel Keirns-Moore. On Holocaust Remembrance Day (Jan. 27) news broke that a local couple was homeschooling their children in Nazi ideology. In response, Krystal Smalley came up with the idea for the library to host an educational program on the Holocaust. She looked into the national Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., but didn't find what she was looking for there. Further research led her to the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center in Cincinnati. The Holocaust & Humanity Center offers a speakers' bureau, which features survivors and families of survivors who are available to tell their stories. Patti

suggested we request Henry Fenichel professor emeritus of physics at the University of Cincinnati, because he himself is a survivor.

On February 27, we hosted a Zoom webinar with the options of watching Henry's virtual presentation at the library or registering to watch it from home. A total of 46 people attended the program in the library or remotely. They were able to hear Henry's story and to ask him questions. A few days later, Krystal was invited by the Holocaust & Humanity Center's Chief Community Engagement & External Relations Officer to attend their March board meeting via Zoom to share our story and how their resources have been able to help us. She gave them a brief timeline of events, the feelings expressed by the community over the revelations, and their reactions to Henry's presentation. She received this response the following day: "Thank you so much for joining our board meeting last night to share our mission moment. I am not exaggerating when I say that our board was blown away by the impact we were able to have together. They were so tremendously moved. Your remarks were the highlight of the whole evening... Thank you for all you are doing to be an upstander in our community—someone who sees a need and takes action. It's so admirable and inspiring."

On March 27, Krystal was notified by the Center that she had been selected out of hundreds of applicants as one of twenty finalists for the Cincinnati Upstander Awards. The message stated, "You exemplify what it means to be an upstander – an individual who harnesses their character strengths to meet their moment and pursue justice, both great and small, inspiring others to do the same." While the Center named Krystal as the finalist, she being the person in contact with them, the entire Holocaust remembrance display and program was a team effort by Patti Davidson, Rachel Keirns-Moore and Krystal. The team was invited to attend an Upstander Reveal Breakfast on May 11. The Upstander Awards were announced at a ceremony on June 11 with award-winning journalist Katie Couric as master of ceremonies. Almost the entire library staff were able to attend the gala event and see our coworkers awarded the Sam and Roma Kaltman Regional Award for Love of Learning at the Cincinnati Upstander Awards banquet. It was exciting to have our coworkers honored in this way for their efforts to educate the community with their Holocaust Remembrance display and programming.

## **GENERAL**

Staff hours increased slightly from about 8.72 to 9.1 FTEs, as we hired an as-needed library assistant in June. Adult Outreach Coordinator & IT Specialist Holly Higgins resigned in November, and Taryn Korody started as our new adult outreach coordinator in December.

The SEO consortium continues to use SirsiDynix's Symphony online catalog and Enterprise public access portal. In 2022, SEO began using the Patron Point service to notify patrons of holds that have become available, and of items that have automatically renewed, as well as those that failed to renew due to holds or having reached the renewal limit. In 2023, they opened up to SEO member libraries the possibility of using Patron Point to send out messages for a variety of purposes,

including birthday greetings, welcomes to new card holders, etc. We are still figuring out how to do this but plan to take advantage of it in 2024.

The library uses Unique Management Services (UMS) for collection of unreturned materials and unpaid fees. In 2023, 76 new accounts were submitted to UMS; 82 accounts had action on them (materials returned or fees paid). We collected \$1,103.07 on placed accounts, and materials valued at \$2,555.93 were returned during the year. Statistics provided by Unique state that cumulative recovery on library accounts by UMS show a return on investment of 5:1 for the past 12 months. We also use UMS to notify patrons of overdue items, saving a considerable amount of staff time. Unique also notifies patrons of available holds if they request notification by phone, while emails and text notifications are now handled through Patron Point.

In 2023, the library received 55 monetary memorial or honor donations totaling \$3,610. In addition, four families either requested specific materials be purchased or donated the materials themselves. Donations were received from Charles and Jean Gottfried, the Pythian Sisters of Ohio, the Mohawk Community Service Club, Wyandot Memorial Hospital, and the USANDO Literary Club. We also received the final payout from the Christina Nelson estate, in the amount of \$8,118.92, bringing the total amount from this bequest to a little over \$31,000; and a grant of \$6,330.15 from the Columbus Foundation's David H. and Mary Lois Stansbery Endowment Fund for media and programming to promote the study of science, history and philosophy.

## **ADULT PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

### **HOMEBOUND DELIVERY AND OUTREACH**

We now have 18 patrons in private residences, Wyandot County Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (WCSNR) and Fairhaven enrolled in our Homebound Program. The monthly mini-library we were sending to WCSNR started experiencing difficulties with getting items returned, so we are now checking out items directly to residents again. Materials are delivered by volunteers from the Friends of the Library, who are very dedicated and often develop friendships with the patrons they deliver to. Adult Outreach Coordinator Holly Higgins also began visiting WCSNR once a month to not only talk about books, but also to bring memorabilia from the Heritage Room, the Wyandot County Museum, and Norweld's Memory Kits. These group sessions were well-attended with 12-14 residents participating in each one.

We continue to meet with Amy Gardner from the Council on Aging to work together to connect with seniors. Holly attended a number of Council on Aging events this year to promote the homebound program and get to know the seniors, including their book club and Senior Day at the Wyandot County Fair. In addition, we were invited to "pop up" over the summer at Highland Village to reach out to residents there. Holly and our youth services staff visited about every two weeks. Participation by residents was slow to begin with, but began to grow as time went on. We would love to find similar ways to get out into the community to connect with people who otherwise don't know about library services or who can't get here.

## **BOOK CLUBS**

The library has three adult book clubs: Common Readers, which has a dedicated group of readers who each month read the same book, which was selected by the club members; Inglorious Bookworms, which focuses on a different genre every month; and BookTalk, which allows readers to talk about the books they are reading individually at that moment.

### **COMMON READERS**

Common Readers is a fairly formal group, with the members voting on the titles to be read each month; they meet monthly except for July and December. USCL book club facilitator Krystal Smalley preorders copies of each month's selected title in various formats from other SEO libraries for anyone wishing to participate and facilitates the discussions.

Common Readers was in-person in 2023, aside from a special virtual event with an author. Common Readers' attendance averaged 14 members over the 10 months the club met, an average that equaled pre-pandemic numbers. The most attended gathering occurred in April when the group read Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*. Three of the ten meetings also saw non-members attend the discussions.

One of the highlights of Common Readers in 2023 was the October discussion of *Daughter of the Morning Star* by Craig Johnson. Common Readers member Scott Moore, who has attended author signings with Johnson and is a big fan, was able to bring the best-selling author to the meeting virtually and have him speak about his book, life, and writing process.

### **INGLORIOUS BOOKWORMS**

Inglorious Bookworms entered its second year, its purpose being to meet the needs of readers who prefer reading genre books. Readers focused on fantasy, science fiction, mystery, romance, and horror, a new genre for the year.

Inglorious Bookworms had 11 different members attend the various discussions and averaged five people per session. The most well-attended was our first horror book of the year, *The Haunting of Ashburn House* by Darcy Coates, in April.

### **BOOKTALK**

BookTalk averaged three members who attended the program to talk about books they were reading. These discussions often ended with those same books being put on hold or checked out by another member.

Due to the death of one of the members in November, and a second member stating she would not be able to attend the majority of discussions, it was decided that BookTalk would not return in 2024.

## **OTHER PROGRAMS**

### **CRAFT PARTY**

Craft Party is a monthly in-person program designed to promote social interaction and creativity. Upon arrival, snacks, drinks and conversation starters are provided.



Participants make the first of two crafts and then participate in a brief party game with prizes. Then they make the second craft and receive a party favor reminder for the next session. An average of 18 participants attended the ten meetings (there was no meeting in January or August).

### LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is a noontime gathering that meets monthly to share recipes and cooking tips and enjoy a potluck meal. Facilitated by Cheryl Lyon, Lunch Bunch averaged 15 participants a month; attendance was higher in the summer months, and the December meeting was the best-attended, with 21.

### TASTE OF THE WORLD

Patti Davidson hosts this food-oriented program, which broadened its scope from Taste of the Town to Taste of the World this year, to feature dishes from around the globe. This event takes place every other month. In 2023 attendees learned about and enjoyed

egg rolls and yum-yum sauce (China), Lebanese 7 spice meatballs, Filipino pancit, jerk chicken tacos from the Caribbean, and Israeli kibbeh and tahini cookies.

### TECH CONNECT

Tech Connect helped patrons 34 times throughout the year. Krystal and Holly helped patrons with a variety of issues, from teaching a patron how to place holds through the lists on their library account, to teaching patrons how to use their new phones or Kindle, to connecting a smartphone to their car via Bluetooth.

### ADULT READING PROGRAMS

The Cabin Fever Reliever Winter Reading Program ran from January 3 to February 3. Every time patrons checked out books, they would receive a scratch-off ticket for a chance to win an instant prize. The ticket also served as an entry into our "Night on the Town" Grand Prize, which included a gift card for dinner at Don Tomaso's and two tickets to the Star Theatre's production of M\*A\*S\*H. We had 43 adults sign up for the winter reading program and 109 scratch-off tickets used.

The Adult Summer Reading Program, "All Together Now," was held in June-July, concurrent with the children's and teens' programs. After doing bingo for a number of years, we simplified the 2023 program. When patrons signed up, they received a bookmark on which to keep track of their reading. Once the bookmark was completed (which meant they read five books), they would receive an entry form to enter into our Kindle Paperwhite or gift basket prize drawings. We had 106 adults sign up for the summer reading program.

Other adult programs included:

- Jigsaw Puzzle Contest (2 events)

- Sweet Seasons – Colleen Clark

- Card Creations – Joy Wilson

- Alzheimer's: Healthy Living for Body & Brain – Alzheimer's Association

- Holocaust Speaker – Henry Fenichel

- (Baked) Pi Contest

Craft Supply Swap (3 days)  
Jurassic Park Interactive Movie  
Edible Landscapes – Joyce Clinger  
Plant Swap (3 days)  
Justice Mobile – Ohio KAN  
The Mad Hatter's Family Tea Party  
Sourdough Secrets – John Charlton  
Kindness Rocks  
Donut Day Summer Reading Sign-Up  
Local Author Night (3 events)  
Crazy about Orchids – Holly Gayheart  
Family Feud  
Friends Trivia  
Which Is Better book discussion  
Which Is Better movie screening  
Succulent Workshop  
Plant Swap (5 days)  
Embroidery by Susan – Susan Riedlinger  
S'more Party & Pumpkin Glow  
Book Turkey Workshop  
The Road Less Traveled – Russ Lyon  
Elf Interactive Movie  
Wood 'N It Be Fun – James and Diane Hogan

**SUMMARY:**

Overall, an estimated 1,378 people took advantage of our adult programs this year.

**FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

The Friends of the Upper Sandusky Library is a 501(c)3 non-profit public charity. The Friends currently have approximately 25 individual members and 10 family memberships. Friends participate in fund-raising, provide refreshments for library programs, help pay for library programs, and purchase materials and furniture for the library. This year they supported adult and children's programming, as well as helping pay for library staff to attend the Upstander Awards banquet on June 11. The Friends' Annual Book Sale and Santa's Secret Store were both quite successful this year. The book sale earned over \$1,500 for the Friends, and the Santa's Secret project enabled many children to purchase inexpensive holiday gifts for friends and family. As usual, the Friends decorated the library beautifully for Christmas.

The Friends also donate board books in the Born to Read program, which works with Wyandot Memorial Hospital to distribute early literacy materials to babies and young children through local physicians' offices. This year they also made a donation to the Wyandot County Imagination Library, which sends a monthly book free of charge to enrolled children from birth to age five.

## **YOUTH SERVICES**

### **STORYTIMES**

#### **TINY TOTS STORYTIME**

Storytimes for young children are presented by Jill Stansbery. Tiny Tots StoryTime is held 3 times a week for children birth through age 3 and their adult caregivers. This program's goal is to introduce reading, sharing and getting along with children their own age while having the comfort of a parent or caregiver. There were 2,160 participants in 2023, averaging about 15 per session.

#### **PRESCHOOL STORYTIME**

Preschool StoryTime is held each Monday morning for children ages 3 to 6. The kids listen to stories, do finger plays and look forward to science experiments. This year 545 people attended Preschool StoryTime, an average of about 16 attendees over 34 meetings. Miss Jill also carries her storytimes to about half a dozen preschool classes each week, including Head Start. In about 135 visits, she reached an average of 19 children each time.

#### **CLASS VISITS**

First grade classes come to the library once a month from October through May. The students learn about authors and illustrators, both fiction and non-fiction. Miss Jill and Miss Lisa read stories, and they learn to do an experiment they can try at home. Students also learn how to behave in the library and how they should treat books.

Union kindergarten classes have also started to visit the library once a month. Union and East second grade classes made ornaments and decorated one of the library Christmas trees, after which they enjoyed some stories and an experiment. The Union third grade classes have also come for a story time.

The library was fortunate to coordinate with the Upper Sandusky Schools to have author/illustrated Richard Cowdrey present a program. All ages enjoyed his talk and were given paper and pencil to draw Fiona the hippopotamus!

#### **STORYWALK®**

Our downtown StoryWalk® continues to be posted, with a new story every month. Kids are encouraged to write a code letter from each page of the book that is posted in local business windows. Upon completion, they return to the library and tell a librarian the code in order to get a prize. This helps us to know how many kids are doing the StoryWalk®. The StoryWalk® concept was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and was developed with the help of Rachel Senechal, Kellogg-Hubbard Library.

This year we received a grant from the McCarthy Family Fund through the Wyandot County Community Foundation to have a permanent StoryWalk® set up at Stepping Stones Park. The park department will install the frames in spring of 2024.

#### **GINGERBREAD HOUSE WORKSHOP**

Our Gingerbread House building has become a family tradition. It is offered 2 nights with the library supplying the frame and the frosting. It is amazing how creative kids of

all ages become as they transform a cardboard frame into a masterpiece. Fifty-five houses were decorated with 80 people attending.

## **OTHER CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS**

### **THAT THURSDAY THING**

That Thursday Thing is held each Thursday during the school year for school-aged kids. We have a core group that comes to enjoy crafts, games, snacks and the occasional special speaker, such as archaeologist Jeb Bowen and his wife, or representatives of Wyandot County Health talking about healthy food choices. 391 children attended That Thursday Thing in 2023.

### **PROGRAMS AT SCHOOLS**

Students at Union School learned how to use measuring cups at Math Night, in which the library was invited to participate. Our project was to measure oatmeal, after which the children received their own measuring cup and a bag of oatmeal cookies.

Attendance was 125.

The library also participated in the literacy night at the Kid-Z-World daycare center. It is always fun to be able to promote the joy of reading! There were 15 in attendance.

Youth services staff Jill Stansbery and Lisa Andres, together with Adult Outreach Coordinator Holly Higgins, brought books, games, and other activities to Highland Village about every two weeks through the summer to reach out to residents there. Participation was slow to begin with, but we began to see more as grow as the summer went on, especially as children talked about it with their friends. We were able to reach about 45 people in this way.

## **TEEN/TWEEN PROGRAMS**

### **STEAMPUNKS**

The STEAMPunks program provides opportunities for students in grades 6-12 to fulfill community service obligations by assisting at library programs and helping the staff in a variety of ways, as well as participating in monthly meetings that include fun and educational activities. The STEAMPunks mission is to promote healthy, happy and productive citizens by providing youth development opportunities through a variety of programs and activities that cultivate community growth and appreciation and that include elements of science, technology, engineering, art and math. Members also advise Youth Services Specialist Lisa Andres on library materials and activities for tweens and teens. STEAMPunks met on the second Monday of the month this year. Activities this year included making puppets and putting on a puppet show inspired by Mo Willems's book characters, Rube Goldberg machines, making chia pets and growing flowers, an escape room, a library-exploring scavenger hunt, an eclipse safety program presented by the Armstrong Air and Space Museum, and a dinosaur trivia game. About 48 students attended STEAMPunks events in 2023.

### **HUB**

Teen/Tween Coordinator Lisa Andres presents a craft or book-themed program once a month at the HUB ("Here U Belong" – the Wyandot County youth program). Some of

the activities they have worked on are Play-Doh animation and the dinosaur-themed COSI Learning Lunchbox kits. She had about 129 kids in attendance this year.

#### **OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMS**

DiNovember returned, kicked off with a Dino-Stomp on November 4. Children were greeted by Miss Jill and her dinosaur, who led the dino-stomp-song around the library. Krystal and Rachel helped the kids dig for dinosaur bones, make a craft and decorate cookies, and Jill read stories, did fingerplays and showed the kids an experiment. This second Dino-Stomp event had about 45 people in attendance.

Five children completed the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten challenge in 2023.

#### **SUMMER READING PROGRAMS**

The theme for this year's summer reading programs was "All Together Now." The elementary students in the Summer Reading Club enjoyed completing BINGO activity sheets, recording reading and other activities, and earning prizes for each BINGO, while teens and tweens received scratch-off tickets for instant prizes. Each BINGO sheet or scratch-off tickets was then used as an entry to win one of the prize drawings at the end of July.

Eight hundred and fifty-eight children from age 3 through high school signed up for the Summer Reading Program, which ran from June through July. Some of the events held during the summer included afternoon movies, "Birds of Prey" presented by Angie Ford, the FFA "Bringing the Farm to the Library," Lori Arnold with her puppet show and our own Miss Lisa offering a painting party. A virtual program with the Cleveland Aquarium allowed us to be up close and personal with the underwater critters without the long drive. There were about 340 participants at the programs.

"Wee Read" was the summer reading program for children from birth to age 3. Twenty-eight little ones participated in this program.

#### **SUMMARY:**

Approximate number of children's/youth activities held at the library: 296

Total number of people participating in the activities held at the library: 6,395

Approximate number of children's/youth activities held outside the library: 240

Total number of people participating in the activities held outside the library: 4,435

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING**

The goal of social media for USCL is to inform, entertain, and engage our patrons and others about USCL and the activities and the programming we provide. In 2023 we targeted Facebook and Instagram in our efforts, led by Marketing and Social Media Coordinator Krystal Smalley.

The library's largest platform, Facebook, continued its steady growth. Our total Facebook follows increased from 2,123 in December 2022 to 2,328 in December

2023. The increase of more than 200 followers is double the number of followers we gained between 2021 and 2022.

The library's Instagram account continued to see growth in followers, ending the year with 550. This social media platform continues to be an area that we can improve upon, especially with Reels and videos. Instagram Stories were utilized in 2023 to showcase the library's new books each week, which has helped with follower interaction.

While we did not post public videos to the library's YouTube channel in 2023, people continue to find older videos to watch. Notably, the videos watched have been the culinary ones posted as part of the Kids Can Cook and What's Cookin' virtual programs during the pandemic. The channel was also used to post the recorded author interview with Craig Johnson, which is not available publicly. We ended the year with 28 subscribers, 259 views, and 4.7 hours in watch time.

A few changes and updates were made to the library's website to stay current.

- The What's Cookin' page has been remade into the Culinary Programs page, which now features Lunch Bunch and Taste of... The schedules for both programs are included on the page as they are made available to the adult programming department.
- The Book Clubs page also had a makeover. BookTalk has been removed. The full schedules for Common Readers and Inglorious Bookworms, including links to the books, have been added, as well as the lists of past books read.
- The full 2024 holiday closing schedule has been added to the Hours and Location page.
- Graphics are being embedded on the individual pages on the website. While not visible to someone browsing the site, these images will appear when someone shares the URL on Facebook. This makes the links look more complete when shared on social media channels.

We continued to make use of the website's alerts function, which allows us to add notifications at the top of the page of closures or any other timely and important information.

In 2023, the website had 19,258 sessions (a session is defined as the period time a user is actively engaged with a website. All usage data, including screen views, events, etc. is associated with a session). This is a decline from last year's 22,825 sessions. Our best months pertaining to sessions occurred in March (2,118). We saw a total of 54,865 pageviews (pageviews are the total number of pages viewed, including repeated views of a single page) compared to 37,772 pageviews in 2022. The homepage and the calendar consisted of the most visited pages. Our top months in pageviews were October (19,681 - This huge jump in pageviews occurred on Oct. 21. This could coincide with the postponement of Trail of Terror. The most visited page was the homepage followed by Trail of Terror 3 event and the calendar) and March (3,375).

Krystal sends press releases on a bi-monthly basis to New Vision FM, the Wyandot Chamber of Commerce, the Daily Chief Union, the Findlay Courier, and Joy Wilson for the community calendar. She also sends weekly emails to the Daily Chief Union with a list of new books at USCL.

Krystal continued to meet with Jon Bowlus of New Vision FM radio station in Upper Sandusky on the first Tuesday of every month to record an interview. That interview is aired twice a month to help promote library activities. The station also records public service announcements that Krystal sends them by email monthly.

The library's monthly newsletter, titled "Cover to Cover," is edited by Rachel Keirns-Moore. Rachel also designs posters, signs, Facebook ads and website storyblocks to promote library programming and keep the staff and public informed on what is happening at the library.

## **INTERLIBRARY LOAN AND RESEARCH**

We received 44 requests by USCL patrons for materials not owned by any SEO library. Of these, 42 were filled. In addition, the library responded to requests for copies of 33 obituaries from local newspaper back issues and carried out 18 historical research projects. Historical research projects included requests for cemetery plot locations, plat maps of early Wyandot County settlers, information on Wyandot Indians, and old marriage licenses.

## **COMPUTER USAGE**

The library has 10 public-use Internet computers. Patrons use these to check email accounts, surf the web, play games, create documents in MS Office applications, and make use of the Cypress resume-writing aid and NUWAV Legal Documents software, as well as accessing numerous research and hobby databases supported by the State Library of Ohio. We contract with Buckeye IT to provide security and monitoring services to increase our cybersecurity capabilities and keep the computers running well.

Average use of the library's public computers in 2023 was 284 a month, up from 248 per month in 2022. (The average in 2019 was 796 per month.) Thanks to the efforts of Buckeye IT technicians, we were again able to track the number of users accessing the library's Wi-Fi starting in January, with only partial capture in August and September. There were 904 known sessions using the Wi-Fi in 2023.

## **MEETING ROOMS**

In addition to use by the library for its programming needs, the library's meeting rooms were used 201 times by outside groups, including the Friends of the Library, Angeline School, Central State University, Family and Children First Council, Girl Scouts, Marion Technical College, Modern Woodmen, North Central Ohio ESC, Ohio KAN, the Ohio Mennonite Conference, Open Door, Upper Sandusky Hispanic Involvement, Wyandot County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Wyandot County Council on Aging, the Wyandot County Historical Society, Wyandot County Republicans, Wyandot

County Right to Life, Wyandot County School Counselors, the Wyandot County Tracers, and a group teaching English as a second language. A number of individuals used them for meetings, homeschool school testing, studying or tutoring when not in use by groups.

## **ELLISON ROOM**

The Ellison die collection for making cutouts for signs, scrapbooking, classroom materials, etc., was used 90 times by the public, as well as for creating library programming materials and signs. In addition to USCL's own collection of dies, patrons can request dies from SEO for use at our library.

## **3D PRINTER**

This year we added the possibility for patrons to request printing of items using our Dremel 3D printer for a nominal fee. We had 7 patron requests, including a car part, spinning wheel parts, a board game piece for a student's school project, and walls for a Dungeons and Dragons game board. We have also used the printer for a wide variety of library programs and displays, including a bear and tree for a shadow program, as well as many others. To date our printer has seen nearly 1,000 hours of use.

## **SHOWCASES AND DISPLAYS**

Rachel Keirns-Moore creates most of our library displays. We typically have four to six display areas, which are updated monthly to feature special programs or topical themes. Rachel also coordinates with community groups who may use the large showcase in our front vestibule to share their projects and mission. Displays by library staff in 2023 featured Holocaust Remembrance, Dream Big (MLK), We Love Mo Willems, April Showers...May Gardens, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, World Turtle Day, Buffalo Soldiers, Cruisin' for a Good Book, Hispanic Heritage Month, What Is An Eclipse?, Thankfulness, Smart Cookies Read, and many, many more.

The Wyandot County Hall of Fame (February), the Wyandot County Farm Bureau (March), the Wyandot County Health Department (April), Open Door Resource Center (August), MOPS (September), and the Lions Club (October) used the large display case to highlight their groups.



