

Southeast Steuben County Library

# UNBOUND

online and in the community

# 2021



*Report to the Community*



# Southeast Steuben County Library 2021 Report to the Community

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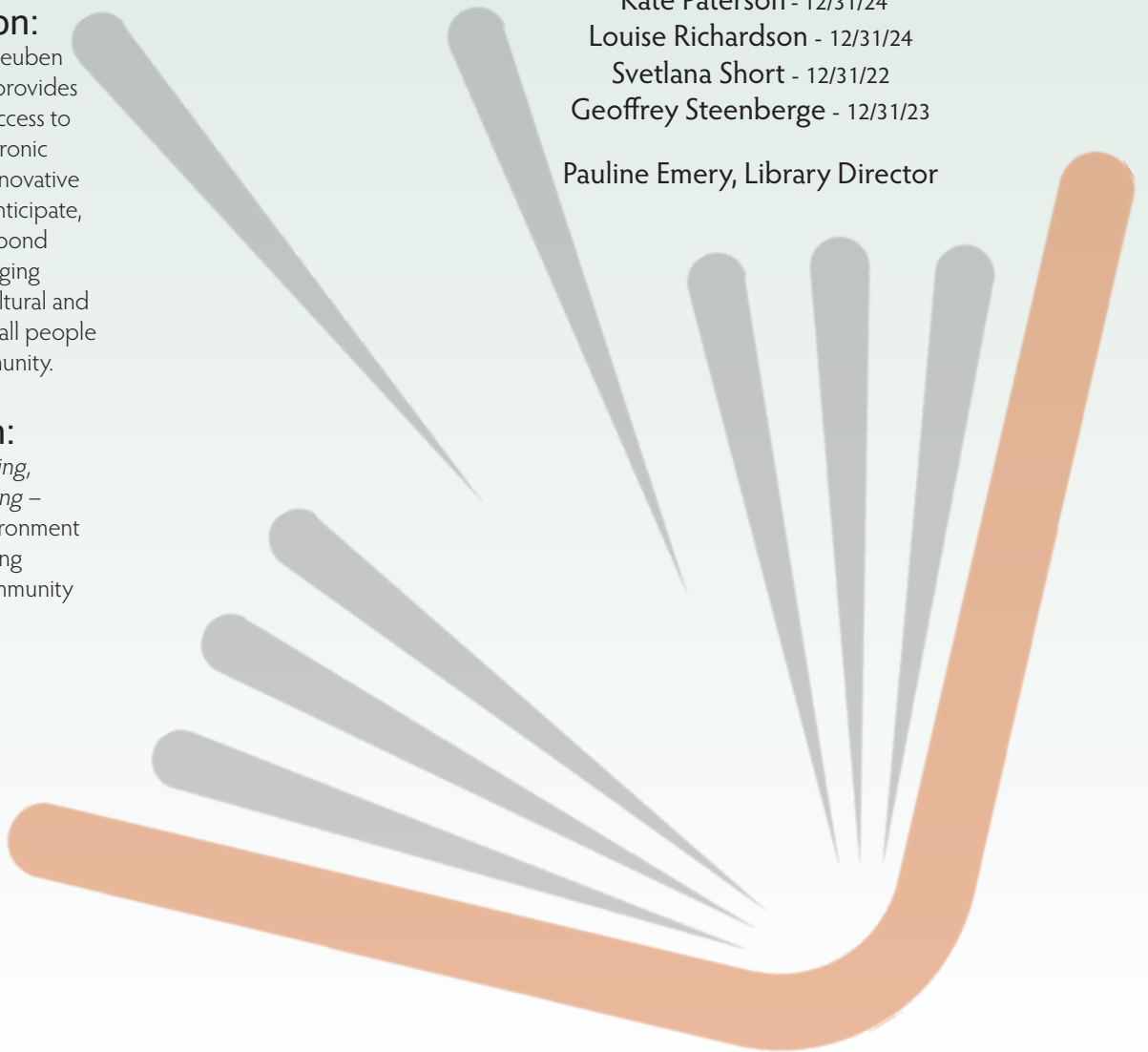
Pauline Emery, Library Director

### Our Mission:

The Southeast Steuben County Library provides free and open access to collections, electronic resources and innovative services which anticipate, support and respond to the ever-changing informational, cultural and leisure needs of all people within our community.

### Our Vision:

*Informing, Inspiring, Enriching, Amazing* –  
Creating an environment that fosters lifelong learning and community connections



# Library 2022 Annual Report

## *FROM THE DIRECTOR:*

Anticipating and responding to the changing needs of the people we serve has always been central to the mission of the Southeast Steuben County Library. In recent years the pace of change has quickened, presenting new challenges and new opportunities. Who would have imagined that your library would serve as a distribution center for free COVID home test kits? Who would have imagined that federal funds would allow us to offer 90-day checkouts of laptops with portable Wi-Fi hotspots, providing broadband access and computing power to those who need it most? Who would have imagined the enduring popularity of the library's virtual and virtual-live hybrid programming?

As shown in our 2021 Report to the Community, we move forward as a library by evolving our services and programs to meet the needs and aspirations of the times. And we will continue our efforts to serve you as we meet future challenges and opportunities.

Today the library has come to understand, more than ever, the need for inclusive, safe, adaptable community spaces. In planning for the future, we feel it is essential that we adhere to environmental best practices and Universal Design principles in our facilities renovations. We reduced the library's environmental footprint recently by replacing our old boiler and chiller with a state-of-the-art green HVAC system that also zaps pathogens and filters the air. Prior to that, we replaced our old public toilets with handicapped-accessible restrooms, and we implemented many other health and safety improvements. These renovations and improvements were undertaken only after diligent fiscal planning, grant writing and fundraising, to minimize the cost to library taxpayers.

In 2021, the library started work on a long-range strategic plan we hope to complete by the end of 2022. But there is a major improvement underway already.

Thanks to a major gift from the Walker family, in fall 2022 the library's children's area will undergo a much needed and welcome transformation. The new Mary Lu Walker Children's Room will honor the memory of one of the nation's beloved singer-songwriters. Lugging her guitar, South Corning resident Mary Lu Walker shared her music during children's story hours at the library for many years, and she gave so much, in so many ways, to the community at large. We know you will be delighted with the new Mary Lu Walker Children's Room and we hope you will join us for the ribbon-cutting celebration.

Here at the library, we look forward to a future of hope, innovation and community involvement. Please join us in our excitement for the days to come!

*Sincerely,*

*Pauline Emery, Library Director*

## Library use rebounds from pandemic lows

In 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, library usage rose significantly from 2020 lows. Fifty-five percent more books and other physical items were checked out in 2021 than during the prior year; 130,446 items in all. Combined with digital checkouts, the library circulated 175,339 items in 2021, and was rapidly approaching pre-pandemic circulation levels.

Digital holdings grew, as 1,861 new selections were added during the year. Even so, digital checkouts did not keep pace, with fewer checkouts in 2021 than in 2020 (see bottom graph).

More than 26,000 children, young adults and adults attended lively and enriching Southeast Steuben County Library programs, with a panoply of virtual, in-library and hybrid sessions.

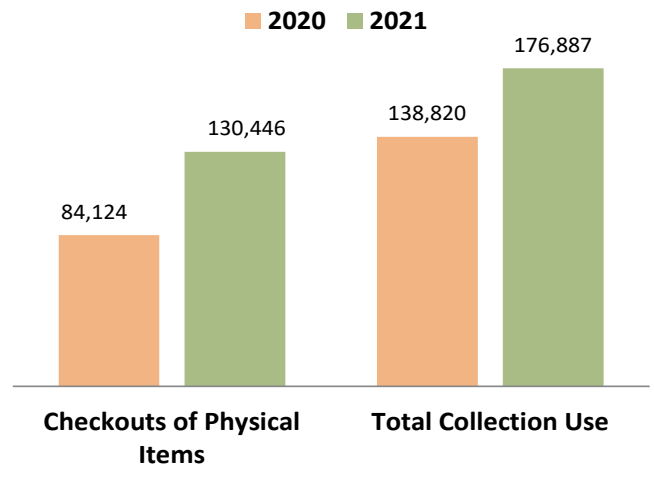
Community members made 68,804 visits to the library in 2021; up 50% from 2020. More than 200 patrons benefitted from one-on-one Tech Coaching at the library.

The library held 399 programs for adults in 2021, drawing 3,222 participants. Reference Department staff assisted patrons 9,072 times, not counting digital literacy one-on-ones. Children's program attendance topped 22,400, including 4,968 Children's Summer Reading Program attendees.

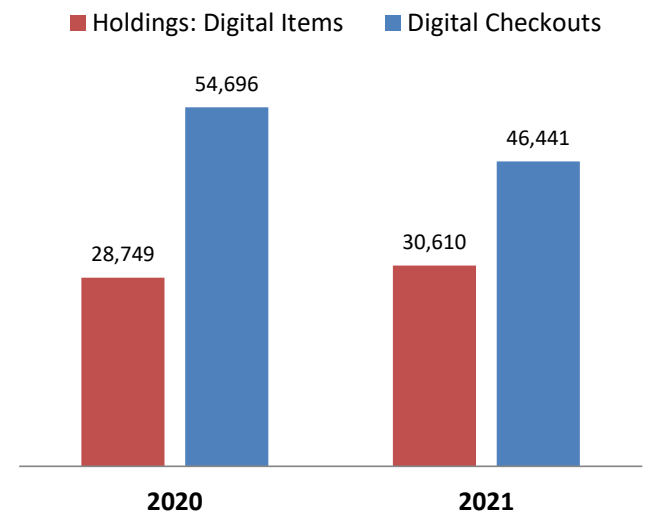
High-speed public computer sessions totaled 6,160, up from 5,438 in 2020. The library's newly enhanced 24/7 free Wi-Fi hotspot attracted 25,884 users.

Programs for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) have become popular in many of New York's libraries. Southeast Steuben County Library's Coffee, Tea & English programs drew 945 participants in 2021, with 121 program sessions.

### Print Materials, Checkouts & Collection Use



### Digital Holdings & Checkouts



Visitors to the library website, [www.ssclibrary.org](http://www.ssclibrary.org), increased from 30,170 in 2020 to 73,568 in 2021.

Adult literacy programming in the library, a collaboration with GST-BOCES, drew 593 attendees to 115 classes.



# Library 2021 Annual Report

## *Lifelong Learning by the Numbers ...*

- 15,416 = Registered Resident Borrowers**  
These borrowers live or work within the library's chartered service area.
- 607 = Registered Non-resident Borrowers**  
Most non-resident borrowers reside or work within the wider STLS region. Others pay an annual fee for borrowing privileges.
- 22,420 = Children's Program Attendance in 2021**
- 95 = # Summer Reading Program Sessions**
- 5,057 = Attendance at Summer Reading Events**
- 945 = Coffee, Tea & English (ESOL) Participants**  
(English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- 9,072 = Reference Questions & Transactions**  
Does not include public computer usage.
- 215 = Digital Literacy (Tech Coaching) Participants**  
Includes one-on-one and group sessions.
- 44,893 = Digital Checkouts by Library Cardholders**  
eBooks - Audiobooks - Periodicals - Videos
- 175,339 = Total Circulation of Materials**



*The library completed several New York State funded health & safety upgrades in 2021. Top, left: these included replacing loose wiring and outlets in the Creation Station with fixed raceway electrical outlets. Bottom, left: eight raised electrical floor boxes were replaced with recessed receptacles. Right: a new Community Room folding partition replaced a worn out partition. Other improvements included security system and fire safety system upgrades.*



One-on-one sessions with Southeast Steuben County Library tech coaches have helped hundreds learn how to optimize their use of computers and handheld devices. If you have questions about how to use your eReader, tablet, smart phone or computer, we can help. It's free! Call us at (607) 936-3713 Ext. 502 and ask about Tech Coaching, or email [diglit@stls.org](mailto:diglit@stls.org).

### *Library Objectives in 2022*

- Rename, redesign and renovate the Children's area. The new Mary Lu Walker Children's Room will honor the memory of one of the nation's beloved children's singer-songwriters and was funded in part with a generous gift from the Walker family.
- Make 30 Access-to-go laptop & Wi-Fi hotspot kits available to adult library cardholders for 90-day checkouts. The library's Access-to-go program has been fully funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services under the federal Cares Act.
- Replace many of the library's public access PCs with new internet-enabled laptops. Public computing in the library goes wireless, thanks to a broadband access grant from the Adirondack Regional Commission and Southern Tier Library System. Up to 30 laptops will circulate for in-library use.
- Complete the library's long-range Strategic Plan, including facilities and financial projections.

# Library 2021 Annual Report

## Inroads to a New Normal: Highlights of 2021

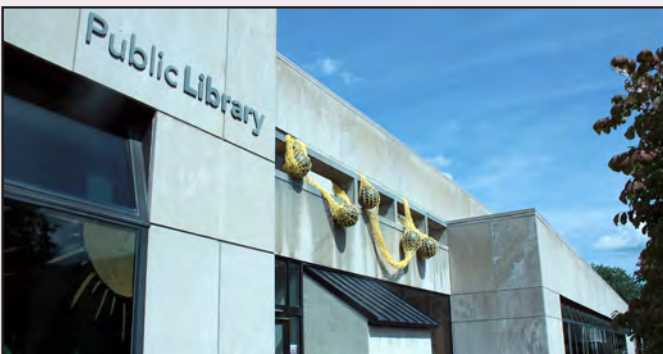


**IMAGINE:** Organizer Meghan O'Toole, center in green, cuts the ribbon on Sept. 2, launching IMAGINE, a weekend long open air public arts project in Nasser Civic Center Plaza.

### Friends Book Sales Return!

After a long pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Friends of the Southeast Steuben County Library book sales returned in Spring 2021. Enthusiastic community support during that 'Mini-Sale' in the library encouraged the group to hold its 2021 Fall Book Sale at the East Corning Fire Hall. Pent-up community demand for gently used books, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and more led to another successful September sale.

The 2022 Spring Book Sale will be held in the Laura Beer Community Room, spanning three weeks, from June 4 - 24. Entry on the first day of the sale requires membership in the Friends organization.



### Artwork On the Library?

Outreach Coordinator and Mixed Media Artist Erica Unterman worked with local artists to mount regular public art displays inside the library. Her own *exterior* installation, shown above, was a first, complementing the library's linear architecture with artful weaves, curves and flow during the IMAGINE celebration.

Erica has since gone on to pursue art full time, and we wish her well!

### IMAGINE the Possibilities

Southeast Steuben County Library participated in a weekend long arts festival held Labor Day weekend in Nasser Civic Center Plaza. IMAGINE was organized by Meghan O'Toole and the ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes, with support from the City of Corning, the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Elmira Little Theatre and many others.

The project was conceived as a demonstration of the plaza's potential as an arts park and as a celebration of culture and community, live and in person after so long.



**HOPE:** Library Director Pauline Emery addresses Imagine's opening crowd on Sept. 3. She said Labor Day weekend's transformation of Nasser Civic Center Plaza into an arts exhibition and community participation space gives everyone hope for a better future..

### Broadband Access Funded

Two Southeast Steuben County Library broadband initiatives were funded in 2021. A CARES Act grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) lets the library circulate 30 laptop & Wi-Fi hotspot kits to adult library cardholders. Each Access-to-Go kit includes Microsoft Office 365 and a mobile hotspot for internet connectivity. Borrowers can take the hotspots home - or on the road - for up to 90 days.

A separate grant from Southern Tier Library System and the Appalachian Regional Commission helped the library purchase 30 laptops for public use in the library. These devices, along with the library's supercharged Wi-Fi, will replace some of the fixed workstations removed during COVID to allow for safe social distancing.



## Financials in Brief

In 2021, the library tax levy covered 65 percent of the library's total operational expenses for the year. Grants, Annual Appeal donations and matching funds totaled \$218,915 and covered another 17 percent of expenses. A \$159,980 Paycheck Protection Plan loan offset 12 percent of expenses. The remaining 6 percent gap was more than covered by endowment earnings and service fees. Total expenses were \$1,283,033. A \$96,312 surplus was added to Capital Reserve.

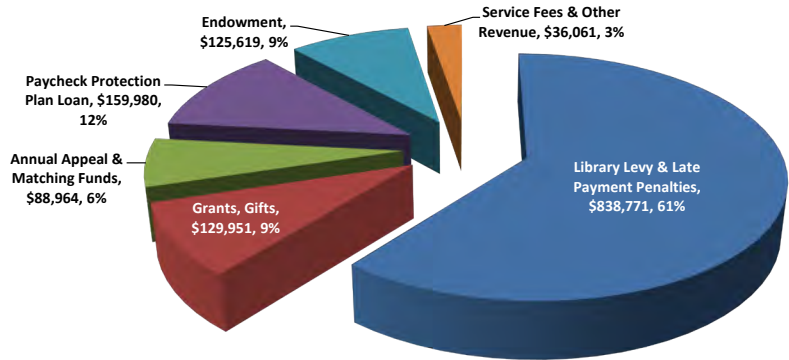
Patron services, library materials, equipment, programming, utilities and other facilities costs made up 79 percent of spending, with only 21 percent of outlays used for administrative and business expenses. Total fund-raising expenses were \$1,443, less than 1 percent of expenses. The library spent \$845,613 on employee compensation (payroll, taxes, benefits and insurance) and awarded \$3,000 in scholarships to college bound high school seniors. The library spent \$68,697 on circulating materials in 2021.

On the income side, local taxpayers contributed \$838,771 to the total. Grants, and gifts totaled \$129,951. The Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Plan added \$159,980. Donations to the library's Annual Appeal totaled \$98,833, an all-time record.

Library service fees, reimbursements and other income brought in \$36,061, or 2.6 percent of library income.

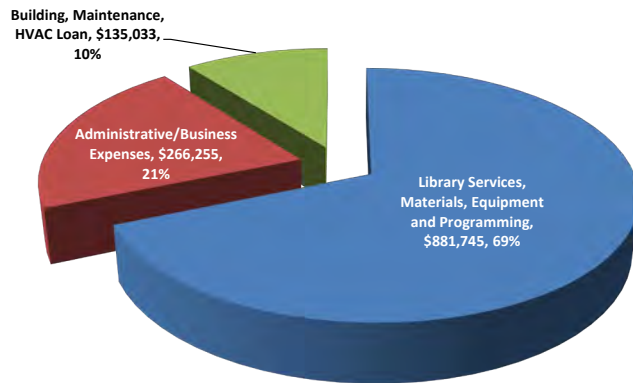
Savings over budgeted expenditures were realized in numerous expense categories including legal and auditing expenses. The library's operational budget ended the year with a net income of \$96,313. These funds were transferred to the Capital Reserve account for future facilities upgrades.

## 2021 Library Income



Total Income - \$1,379,346

## 2021 Library Expenses



Total Expenses - \$1,283,033

\*\$96,312 added to Capital Reserve



**Bright Spot on a Rainy Day:** Civic Center Peace Garden lends color to a soggy spring morning in the plaza outside the library.

## 2021-22 Annual Fund Drive Thank You, Donors

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### Enrichment Circle (\$100 - \$249)

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Linda J. Fields

The Southeast Steuben County Library extends thanks to Annual Campaign Co-Chairs Marcia D. Weber and Mary H. Bacalles. We gratefully recognize the individuals and organizations that contributed to our 2021-22 Fund Drive, ending March 31, 2022. More than 270 donors contributed \$98,833 to enhance library resources and programs for everyone.

Donations received after March 31, 2022 will be acknowledged in next year's 2022 Report to the Community. We are grateful for your support!



## 2021-22 Annual Fund Donors

### Enrichment Circle (Continued)

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