



# HURON COUNTY LIBRARY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Huron County  
**Library**







“ The library is such a valuable resource to our community. I had no idea all that the library offers.







# 2023 Annual Report

## Huron County Library

The Huron County Library is a county-wide library system with 12 convenient locations serving residents throughout the County. The Library serves as an inclusive and vibrant community hub that offers the traditional library services with new and innovative offerings to meet the changing needs of our diverse communities.

In 2023, the Library adopted the following vision, mission and values statements as part of its new strategic plan that will serve as guiding principles for delivering Library services in Huron County for 2024-2028.

### Vision

Imagine More: a place to learn, connect, create, and grow.

### Mission

Huron County Library brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and support a thriving community.

### Values

- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Literacy
- Collaboration
- Curiosity
- Fun!

### 2023 in numbers...

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**17,107**

Library card holders

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**279,125**

Items circulated

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**47,583**

Catalogue visits

“

I just wanted to comment about how many good books have come out over the last year. I don't know what we would do without the library.



**Beth Rumble**  
*County Librarian and  
Director of Cultural  
Services*

# A Message from the Director

What a great year it was for Huron County Library!

In 2023, the library developed a new Strategic Plan. At the heart of the plan is connection. Connecting Huron County residents to information, one another, new ideas, new skills and more. It is our hope that the library can help residents fulfill their many diverse needs. We offer Snap Circuits and Cubelets to develop STEAM skills, programs such as puzzle competitions to develop social connections or 'Remember When' discussions to share memories. We also have resources such as PressReader which allow you to read news from all over the world and materials in a variety of languages. We hope that in 2024 you visit a branch, go to our website, follow us on social media, or subscribe to our eNewsletter to learn about all that's happening.

At the beginning of 2023 we were delighted to win an Ontario Public Library Service Award for the In Your Backyard program which was selected for the Minister's Award for Innovation. This award recognizes successful new approaches that demonstrate a positive impact in the community and are of continued value to public libraries. This program (and recognition) demonstrates the ingenuity of staff as well as their collaborative approach.

Lastly, the library is excited to be receiving an extremely generous donation of \$195,000 from the McCall MacBain Foundation. These funds will be received over a three year period and will be used to create teen spaces in several library branches and support dedicated programming for teens across Huron County. Both the County and the Library have recognized youth as a priority over the coming years and this funding will help accelerate our commitment to engaging with youth.

# A Message from the Board Chair

2023 was a very exciting year for the Huron County Library with the development of a new Strategic Plan that will guide the Library through the next five years. The new plan invites Huron County residents of all ages to imagine more from their Library and the Library Board couldn't be more pleased to support the priorities laid out in this plan. As the new vision states, libraries are places for learning, connecting, creating, and growing. We recognize the vital role our 12 library branches play in their communities, and we look forward to learning, connecting, creating, and growing together in 2024.



**Doug Harding**  
*Huron County Library  
Board Chair*

## 2023 in numbers...

**67,287**

Adult Fiction  
checkouts

**29,277**

Adult Non-  
fiction checkouts

**35,803**

Picture book  
checkouts



I am so grateful for this service and all you do to keep books coming my way!

# Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Developing a new Strategic Plan to help guide the Huron County Library was a focus for much of 2023. Through public consultation early in the year, library staff gathered feedback from the community to help shape the plan that will guide library services, resources and programs for the next five years.

Completed and launched in early 2024, the new plan invites the public to explore all the creative ways libraries bring people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and support thriving communities.

## Strategic Priorities:

- **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities:** Huron County Library champions equity, diversity, and inclusion to reduce barriers and create welcoming spaces within our communities.
- **Innovation:** Huron County Library is a learning organization; trying new things, embracing failure, and engaging in feedback.
- **Communications:** Huron County Library ensures that individuals are aware of the services, resources, and spaces available to them.
- **Youth:** Huron County Library actively seeks out input from youth to ensure they feel welcome and represented at the library.
- **Literacy:** Huron County Library advocates for the spirit of lifelong learning and provides access to resources that promote various forms of literacy.

Imagine More:  
a place to learn,  
connect, create,  
and grow.



## 2023 in numbers...

85,063

Audio & E-book  
checkouts

714

Classes taken through  
Creativebug

8,110

Movies & TV  
streamed

“ I use the library all the time, but you won't see me. I use the CloudLibrary app and love the convenience.

# Libraries Transforming Communities

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) resumed in 2023 after the first round of this project was interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based off the method developed by the American Library Association, the library hosted roundtable community conversations and interviews across Huron County in an effort to identify what people's concerns and aspirations are for their communities. Information gathered from these conversations was shared with community partners and used to help achieve the aspirations identified by the community.

The information gathered through these community conversations was also used to help shape the library's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

## Outcomes to date from the LTC project:

- **Welcome to the Neighbourhood:** Welcome to the Neighbourhood packages were created and distributed through select library branches to provide community information to newcomers.
- **Community Calendars and Newsletters:** A lack of community event and service information was identified as a barrier to community participation. Several community calendars were created.
- **Networked Community Groups:** Two community groups formed to address community concerns.



## 2023 in numbers...

4,009

Facebook  
followers

1,166

Instagram  
followers

289,288

Website  
page views

“ Thank you for this online experience! ...I don't have to leave my fireplace, lounge chair & steaming coffee to complete library business.

# Celebrating our successes

The Huron County Library was very pleased to be the 2023 recipient of the Minister's Award for Innovation in recognition of the In Your Backyard program. The award was presented to staff at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference in February.

In 2022, inspired by Ontario's West Coast tourism program, library staff hosted In Your Backyard, a virtual local travel series that highlighted several hidden gems found across Huron County. Building on the popularity of the program, the library partnered with Huron County Economic Development to offer a summer giveaway that further encouraged people to explore these hidden gems for a chance to win a Huron County weekend get-away. Locations represented each municipality and were chosen to ensure they were accessible and free for everyone to enjoy.

## In 2023, the library also celebrated:

- **McCall MacBain Foundation:** The library was awarded \$195,000 from the McCall MacBain Foundation over three years to support dedicated programming for teens and to create teen spaces in several branches.
- **International Dyslexia Association Ontario:** \$500 was received from IDA Ontario to purchase selection of decodable books that were added to the accessible collection.



## 2023 in numbers...

19,766

Digitized  
Newspaper page  
views

1,466

Internet hub  
checkouts

20,481

DVD  
checkouts

“ I think it is great that you have the new decodable books.



# Programming

Library programs returned in a big way in 2023! With all branches fully open to the public, staff rolled out a wide variety of programs for a range of ages and interests. Virtual programs continued to be offered, giving patrons options based on comfort level and accessibility.

## Highlights of programming offered through the year:

- **Passport to Discovery:** Young patrons were invited to pick up a passport from their local branch to begin a full year of learning, reading, doing, and having a whole lot of fun! They were encouraged to visit their branch each month to pick up a themed craft kit and activity sheet.
- **Huron County Author Talk:** The library launched a podcast for writers, readers, and all those intrigued by the art of the written word. Each episode features local authors discussing a number of topics. In the fall, the library partnered with the Huron County Museum to host a live event and book fair.
- **The Tiny Art Show:** The Clinton Branch made 5"x5" boards available to artists of all abilities and invited them to get creative making tiny art. The art was displayed at the branch through the month of April.
- **Remember When:** This interactive storytime for older adults was held at several branches and was designed to engage participants in sharing their own stories and memories from growing up in their communities.
- **Puzzle Competitions:** Several branches hosted competitions to determine who was the fastest puzzlemaker around!



## 2023 in numbers...

**1,631**  
Programs

**16,419**  
Program  
participants

**392**  
Tech tutoring  
participants

“ Thanks for being a big part of my social life with all the amazing activities!



# Celebrating Diversity

Each year, staff work hard to find unique ways to help make people feel welcomed and supported in our communities. Staff frequently shared reading recommendations to help expand our understanding of one another. Highlights from our collection were shared to honour Black History Month, Alzheimer Awareness, Pride Month, Mental Health Awareness, Autism Acceptance, Transgender Day of Visibility, Ramadan, National Indigenous History Month, and more.

## Some highlights of supporting our diverse communities:

- The Huron County Library made it easier to identify First Nation materials with the addition of an orange feather to book spines.
- Staff partnered with the Huron County Museum to support the first ever Huron County Pride event held in Goderich.
- In celebration of Newcomer Welcoming Week, Seaforth, Goderich and Brussels Branches hosted Meet Your Neighbour evenings to help build social connections in our communities.
- Exeter Branch partnered with St. John's Ambulance and Canadian Mental Health Association to host Paws and Play, a therapy dog game night.
- The library supported Huron County Immigration Partnership and Cultural Programs to host English Conversation Circles and the publication of the Tastes Like Home community cookbook.



## 2023 in numbers...

**349**

Newcomer  
outreach  
participants

**20,455**

Large print  
checkouts

**1,073**

Accessible  
resource  
checkouts



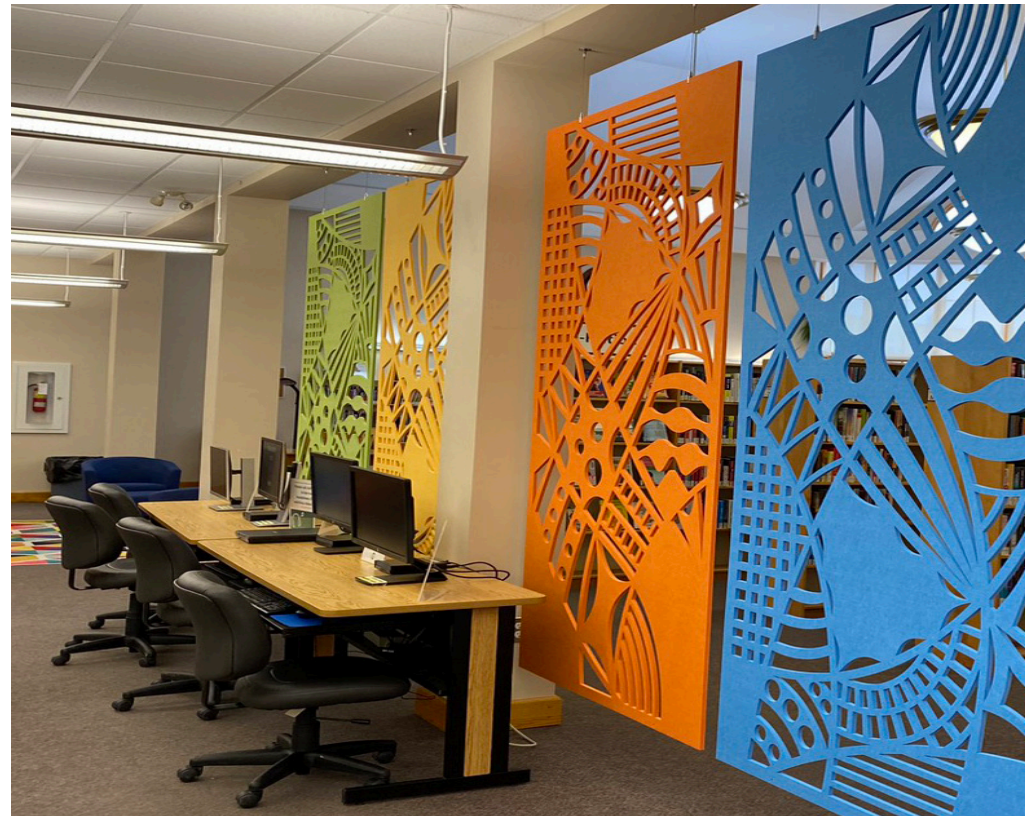
You and your staff really show kindness to everyone and make sure everyone knows they are welcome.

# Improving services

The Huron County Library is always working to improve the services we offer to our patrons, whether through improving our physical spaces, building our collections, or supporting the needs of our communities.

## Service improvements included:

- Exeter Branch underwent a space refresh with the addition of a comfortable, colourful teen lounge, improved play and storytime area, centralized public computers and new colourful acoustic baffles, and updated office space to create a more efficient workspace for staff.
- Since October 2023, the Huron County Library has made free period products available at all branches as part of a pilot project started by the Huron-Perth Period Poverty Task Force.
- Holds pick-up lockers were installed at Goderich and Bayfield, giving patrons the ability to pick up their holds when it's convenient to them. Once fully operational in 2024, the lockers will be accessible to patrons 24/7.
- In an effort to move away from the use of plastic bags, the library made reusable tote bags available to patrons to borrow to carry home their library items.



## 2023 in numbers...

**572**

Reusable tote bag checkouts

**170,588**

In-branch visits

**19,708**

Hours of service

“

I am so thankful my son and I have the library to come to. We are new to this country and are trying to meet new people and find things to do.

# 12 Branches serving Huron County

## Alice Munro Branch

**Address:** 281 Edward St., Wingham  
**Phone:** 519-357-3312  
**Email:**  
WinghamLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Bayfield Branch

**Address:** 18 Main St., Bayfield  
**Phone:** 519-565-2886  
**Email:**  
BayfieldLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Blyth Branch

**Address:** 392 Queen St., Blyth  
**Phone:** 519-523-4400  
**Email:**  
BlythLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Brussels Branch

**Address:** 402 Turnberry St.,  
Brussels  
**Phone:** 519-887-6448  
**Email:**  
BrusselsLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Clinton Branch

**Address:** 27 Albert St. S., Clinton  
**Phone:** 519-482-3673  
**Email:**  
ClintonLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Exeter Branch

**Address:** 330 Main St. S., Exeter  
**Phone:** 519-235-1890  
**Email:**  
ExeterLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Goderich Branch

**Address:** 52 Montreal St., Goderich  
**Phone:** 519-524-9261  
**Email:**  
GoderichLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Hensall Branch

**Address:** 108 King St., Hensall  
**Phone:** 519-262-2445  
**Email:**  
HensallLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Howick Branch

**Address:** 45088 Harriston Rd., RR 1  
Gorrie  
**Phone:** 519-335-6899  
**Email:**  
HowickLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Kirkton Branch

**Address:** 70497 Perth Road 164,  
RR 1 Kirkton  
**Phone:** 519-229-8854  
**Email:**  
KirktonLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Seaforth Branch

**Address:** 108 Main St. S., Seaforth  
**Phone:** 519-527-1430  
**Email:**  
SeaforthLibrary@HuronCounty.ca

## Zurich Branch

**Address:** 10 Goshen St. N., Zurich  
**Phone:** 519-236-4965  
**Email:**  
ZurichLibrary@HuronCounty.ca



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@HuronCountyLibrary