

## DIRECTOR'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Throughout the past year, Eden Library staff carried on with their tradition of offering the excellent customer service known throughout Erie County. Staff circulated books and other library materials, created displays, performed reader's advisory service, and made each and every library user's visit a special one.

In 2024, Eden Library welcomed **16,980** patrons through their doors (a 6.7 percent increase over 2023). Patrons checked out **44,581** items, used public computers **1,379** times and accessed the library's WiFi network **2,494** times. **1,417** people attended **141** in-house programs during the year, with offerings for all ages. Program attendance increased 4.9% over 2023; the number of program offerings increased 9.3%.

### **Community involvement/Partnerships/Outreach:**

Eden Library continued its partnership with Erie County Senior Services to present 13 programs in the popular University Express lecture series, aimed at citizens 55 and up. Eden's offerings included talks on yesteryear city restaurants, the fireboat *Edward M. Cotter*, Indian boarding schools, memory care, and even a holistic healing drum circle. Lectures drew 165 participants from across the county (an increase of 11.5 percent from 2023)...and several new library cardholders!

The library joined Eden Volunteer Fire Department Number One late in the year for two events aimed at raising awareness of both community institutions: a firefighter's equipment scavenger hunt at the library (with one lucky participant winning a ride to school on the fire truck) and a holiday letter to Santa promotion, where kids could compose a last-minute wish or two at the library and then "mail" the letter to the North Pole at the fire house.

During 2024 the library partnered with several area business and service providers offering community workshops and events. Representatives from Sheridan Benefits presented a program on Medicare basics, the newly formed Erie County EMS offered an information table, as did United Health Care, and Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts Troop 603 held a joint pack meeting/get-to-know-the-library night. Eden Parks and Recreation brought 16 students to the library in July, allowing them the chance to check out books and beat the summer heat. Collaborative Community Mission hosted two free early literacy classes for children during August, which drew seven participants. For the first time this year, the library partnered with F.A.R.E. (Food Allergy Research and Education) to offer non-candy treats at Halloween, as part of the nationwide Teal Pumpkin Project.

Library Director Donna-Jo Webster visited local schools four times during the year, twice at Eden Middle School for Reading Night (February) and a Mental Health Night (May), once at Eden Elementary School for Reading Night (also February) and once at Grover L. Priess Primary School's Reading Night promotion (October). She shared information about the library's services with a total of 202 students and their families (notably, 50 at the EMS Mental Health event and 79 at the GLP Reading Night event). Several attendees took applications for new library cards during the outreaches.

Throughout the year, the library distributed free tax forms and COVID-19 test kits. The library gave out several hundred pairs of eclipse glasses to the community prior to the total solar eclipse event on April 8.

**Donors/Contributors/Grants:**

The library received a memorial donation in 2024 in memory of former Library Board President Frances Palmerton, who passed in late 2022, in the amount of \$50.00. Additionally, the library benefitted from three non-memorial donations totaling \$2,200.00. A grant of more than \$9,000.00 from the Eden Community Foundation provided new landscaping for the library grounds, installed in July. The Board of Trustees again graciously sponsored an end-of-summer carnival in August, which drew 63 participants of all ages. Magician Dave Jeffers entertained with a magic show, outdoor carnival games, face painting, and, of course, snow cones, popcorn and cotton candy. Trustees offered freshly grilled hot dogs and bottled water to attendees as well. Eden Shur Fine Market graciously donated hot dogs and buns.

**Equipment and Facilities:**

Staff from the Town of Eden's Highway Department maintained snowplowing of Library parking lots in 2024. The library obtained new carpeting, installed in March, through a grant from Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's Facilities Improvement Initiative awarded in 2023. Turnbull's Nursery staff installed new landscaping in July, with funding from the Eden Community Foundation.

**Friends of Eden Library:**

Annual collection of membership dues continued to be the group's main fundraiser. Fundraising efforts allowed the group to sponsor several library events throughout the year, including a hands-on butter lamb make 'n take, a presentation about the historic Erie County Fair, an author talk, and a special evening storytime and costume parade for Halloween, with 67 attendees and several Friends board members dressed in costumes giving out treats. The Friends also sponsored the inaugural "Freddy Frog's Rockin' Ribbit Foam Party" in July that drew 68 attendees who enjoyed running, splashing and playing in mountains of bubbly foam on the library's front lawn. The Friends Board met in-person at the library in January, March, May, July, September and October.

**Library Personnel:**

After just under two years of service with Eden, Clerk Typist William Ruof resigned his position in September to take on the role of Senior Clerk Typist at East Aurora Library. Claire Blandino joined the Eden staff as Clerk Typist in October. Senior Clerk Helga Antonou, Clerk Typists Cindy Bancroft, Cheryl Colvin, and Caretaker/Custodian Tony Sacilowski all continued in their respective roles. All staff members completed annual compliance training in cyber security, avoiding sexual harassment and preventing workplace violence. Each of the clerks presented at least one program or series of library events. Clerk-led offerings included an origami class, board games, cookbook club, knitting group, and an afternoon tea with live musical entertainment.

**Volunteers:**

Eden Library utilized 12 volunteers who gave a combined 154 hours of service at booksales, basement book inventory cleanouts, carnivals, and others events during the year. Volunteer hours increased 19.6 percent over those in 2023.

**Yarn Club:**

After 17 years of continuing service to the Eden community and beyond, Eden's Yarn Club surpassed another milestone at the end of 2024. Club members created and donated more than 9,500 knitted or crocheted items to charities.

In conclusion, the Eden Library continues to serve as an important asset and community hub to the citizens of Eden and beyond, a vital resource to all. Patrons from across Erie County enjoy ongoing no-cost programs, knowledgeable speakers, free access to books, magazines, newspapers, music, digital content and the Internet. The library offers “one-stop shopping” for everything needed for lifelong learning and enjoyment: board games to cookbooks, home Internet to health care items. Eden Library provides a clean, comfortable and inviting space for people to interact with others, explore the world around them and participate in their community.

The library remains truly appreciative of its dedicated, hard-working staff, the guidance and leadership received from its Board of Trustees, and for its continued positive relationship with the Town of Eden. As the library concludes its 113<sup>th</sup> year of service, we recall our rich, shared past and eagerly look forward to the future.

Donna-Jo Webster, Library Director