

Best Sellers

Our favorite stories about your Library's impact • WINTER 2021

Transformation is Underway! Construction moving along at Kearsley Street

It's been almost a year since we celebrated our last day of service at Kearsley Street. And what a year it has been!

"The inside of the building is completely unrecognizable," says Library Director Kay Schwartz. "Clark Construction has removed all the walls, flooring, lighting and HVAC equipment. You really get a sense for how big this building is when you see just the shell!"

Taking out all the old made room for the new. "The window openings are ready for their new energy-efficient windows," Kay notes. "Newly reinforced floors will support our open concept layout. As the new structure takes shape, I can start to visualize how our plan will come to life."

The transformed Library will provide more space for community priorities:

■ **Doubling** the size of our **Children's Learning Place** to incorporate a classroom/program room, expand creative play space, and serve many more families.

■ Adding **two-thirds more space to Local History/ Genealogy**, in addition to a storage vault, to safeguard our award-winning collection and support strong local interest.

■ **Doubling** our **digital learning space** and adding three tech-rich classrooms where we can introduce career-inspiring technologies to both youth and adults.

■ Growing from three to a total of **19 meeting spaces** of various sizes, filling an unmet need for available space.

■ Making an **additional 16,000 square feet** available to the public without changing the footprint of the building.

Our renovated building will provide the attractive, flexible and adaptable space we need to engage more people in childhood literacy, digital learning, and community.

WHAT'S THE SCHEDULE?

We originally planned to start construction in April, but COVID delays moved that out to June. "Barring any more unforeseen problems — like a



● *The Great Reading Room looks nothing like its former self!*

world pandemic — we should be able to stay on schedule," Kay says. "Clark Construction is doing a fabulous job of sourcing what they need, but the construction supply chain changes constantly. And of course, we are hoping that the vaccine will prevent any more complete shutdowns."

The Library staff will begin packing up at Courtland Center in November 2021 if all goes as planned. We hope to celebrate a grand opening with our community in early spring of 2022!

SEE FOR YOURSELF!

The construction site is not open to the public, but the latest construction updates are available online at YourNewFPL.org. You can also sign up to receive more regular updates via e-news.

If you would like to learn more about this project, please contact Ashoka Rao at 810.249.2040 or arao@fpl.info.

“If Kids Do Nothing But Read During COVID, They Will Be OK!”

Dr. Kienan Murphy is a retired pediatrician, and Elizabeth recently retired as COO of the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce. These committed Genesee County residents will quickly tell you that Flint Public Library has always been important to them.

“We are both from New York originally,” Elizabeth notes. “We moved to Flint over 40 years ago and lived first in the Cultural Center neighborhood. We were constantly at the Library with our kids!”

The Murphys are very specific about why the Library matters. “You can’t do anything these days without a computer and Internet,” observes Elizabeth. “Many people don’t have those resources at home. The Library is one of the last places you can access them for free.” And as for reading? Elizabeth is pretty clear that reading trumps a lot of other academic skills. “Kids impacted by polio said they developed their love of reading when they couldn’t do anything else. I think if kids do nothing but read during their COVID remote learning, they will get through!”



● Elizabeth and Kienan Murphy are committed to FPL!

“We’re very proud of how many generous people gather around the Cultural Center institutions so they continue to thrive. A transformed Library will be another strong anchor for the Cultural Center, and a central part of a healthy community.” – Elizabeth Murphy

The Murphys no longer live in the City of Flint, but they are still committed donors to Flint Public Library. “This is a tax-supported organization, and taxable property has not rebounded well in Flint,” Dr. Murphy says. “The Library millage is pretty small. The only way to allow more flexibility for operations is through private giving. We hope our support will inspire others to do the same. After all, we made wonderful careers in Flint. We want others to enjoy

the city and all the benefits that we experienced.”

Elizabeth adds, “We’re very proud of how many generous people gather around the Cultural Center institutions so they continue to thrive. We credit the Library for embarking on a renovation project rather than building something new. A transformed Library will be another strong anchor for the Cultural Center, and a central part of a healthy community.”

Your gift of any amount to Library Operations is deeply appreciated. Give safely and securely online at fpl.info/donate or send your gift to 1026 E. Kearsley St., Flint MI 48503. We appreciate our donors so much!

Digital Use is Rising

And we're doing everything we can to make **resources available!**

Flint Public Library has offered downloadable e-books, audio books, music and magazines for years. But there's nothing like a stay-at-home order to help more people experiment with and enjoy those resources!

At the end of 2019, we had more than 13,800 e-books and audio books in our collection. We had a core of people who used them regularly, but we couldn't seem to get that number to climb. And we get it. Many people (even some of us who work here!) prefer to hold a book in their hands rather than download one to a device.

However, when a pandemic shuts down life as we know it, many changes occur! Here are some interesting statistics.

■ **Checkouts.** In January of 2020, there were 1,781 digital checkouts per month. By December, that number had increased to over 2,000 per month.



Our librarians can help you embark upon your digital journey! You can get an instant E-Card if you live in Genesee County. Just visit fpl.info and choose "Get a Card" under the "About Us" menu. If you need a little assistance learning to download, call 810.249.2569 to schedule a free "Book an Expert."

■ **Format.** At the beginning of 2020, just over 53% of our digital checkouts were audio books. As of January 2021, e-books had jumped ahead, accounting for 52% of total digital check-outs.

■ **Audience.** We have significantly more children and young adults joining the digital reading revolution. By September of last year, this readership accounted for 30% more of our digital checkouts.

■ **E-Cards.** We introduced E-Cards in fall of 2018 but they really didn't take off.

However, after a year of COVID, we are up to more than 1,400 E-Card users!

We're also seeing similar trends in our virtual events. It's no secret that when given a choice, most people would prefer to come in person to a concert, or bring their children to the Library for story time. But when that choice goes away, other options become a lot more attractive.

For example, we started our virtual story time in the fall with only one or two kids attending. Now we're up to 30 or more at a time!

"The Library has invested steadily in digital resources and online capabilities," notes Kay Schwartz, Library Director. "We had the platform. We had the tools. We had even created the methodology for issuing E-Cards without a visit to the Library itself. All of that investment has paid off throughout the past year, allowing us to serve patrons in new ways."

All of this comes at a cost. "We shuffled our budget dollars around last year," notes Leslie Acevedo, Director of Library Operations. "We increased our digital book budget by about 40% because there was so much need, both for schools as well as individual patrons."

We're excited about the transformation to our Library building. Ultimately, we know that the "place" of the Library matters. But for right now, we are so thankful to the donors and the taxpayers who have allowed us to invest in resources that make Library services accessible even in these uncertain times.

OUR MISSION IS TO BE FLINT'S GO-TO PLACE TO LEARN FOR LIFE.

This was a year of stunning change for the Library as well as for the world.

We spent the first half of this fiscal year preparing for a milestone vote. On November 5, 2019, Flint voters approved a 12-year, \$12.6 million bond to transform the Library building. This tremendous show of support triggered the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ruth Mott Foundation and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to come forward with more than \$16 million in support.

With those grants in hand, and the public affirmation of a bond, we set to work. Our last day of service at Kearsley Street was February 29, 2020, and on March 2 we started packing.

Then, of course, the world turned upside down thanks to COVID. For us, this timing was both good and bad. It was good from the standpoint that we had planned to be closed to the public anyway as we packed up to move to our temporary location. It was bad because we were not able to be in the building to do the packing! We finally handed off the keys to Clark Construction on June 12, 2020 to begin the renovation. Our staff moved into a temporary location at Courtland Center, where we will operate until the building renovation is completed in 2022. What a way to end this roller coaster of a fiscal year!

We, along with many other organizations, had to reinvent our service delivery mid-year to align with the realities of the

pandemic. Fortunately, we had a robust website platform through which we could deliver:

- Downloadable resources such as e-books, audio books, music, magazines and more.
- Instant access to online Library resources with E-Cards. We expanded the availability of this service from Flint to all of Genesee County in an effort to reach more people with vital resources.
- Virtual story time, family concerts and programs, adult book clubs and more.

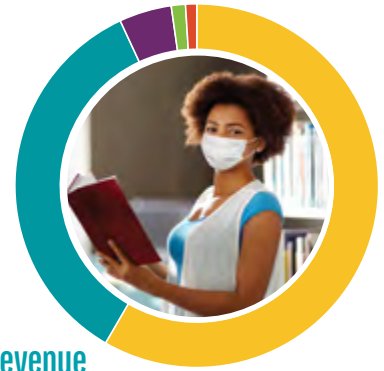
Although the delivery methods may have changed, our priorities remained the same:

EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY: helping parents and caregivers prepare children to read, and exposing kids to STEM programming.

DIGITAL LEARNING: filling the technology education gap by exposing students to aspects of computer science, and making technology accessible to the public.

COMMUNITY HUB: we want to provide abundant and welcoming space where people can gather for learning, dialogue or entertainment.

We sincerely and gratefully thank the residents of Flint who continue to demonstrate their appreciation for and support of Flint Public Library. We will continue to adapt in this coming year as we work towards opening a fully renovated Library.

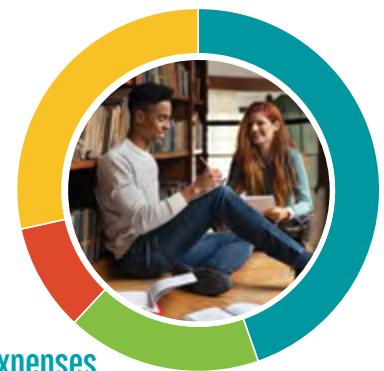


Revenue

Property Taxes*	\$3,021,325
Grants, Memorials and Gifts	1,797,474
State Aid and Fines	241,485
Interest Income	65,272
Other	51,155

Total Revenue \$5,176,711

*The Library is funded by a permanent 2 mill property tax. An additional 2.0 mill was approved by voters for 2012-2021, and renewed for 2022-2031.



Expenses

Personnel	\$2,205,358
Operations	856,250
Maintenance	472,965
Grants Expended	1,406,072

Total Expenses \$4,940,645



NOTE: Revenue in excess of expenses is assigned for use in FY 21 as follows:

Grant purposes	\$62,703
Operations	173,363

Total assigned for use in FY 21 \$236,066

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

January–December 2020

SPECIAL GIFTS & GRANTS

A. G. Bishop Charitable Trust
 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
 Community Foundation of Greater Flint
 Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce
 Flint Genealogical Society
 Flint Kids Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint
 Friends of the Flint Public Library
 Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative
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MEMBERS OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING CIRCLE

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Flint Public Library Transformed Donors Through January 2021

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is to be Flint's go-to place
to learn for life.

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WINTER 2021

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Free Performances Wherever You Are!

How many times have we heard the phrase, "Due to COVID..." and then been disappointed by whatever change has occurred? The Library and our community felt that loss keenly when we had to cancel Blues on the Library Lawn last summer. But the good news is that we're switching gears and finding new ways to engage our neighbors in performances.

"Live music is electric," notes Leslie Acevedo, Director of Library Operations. "The Blues always brought people together. They were singing, dancing, and totally immersed in the event. We didn't want to lose that."

So this year, the Library is using the funds graciously given by the AG Bishop Trust to present two kinds of virtual performances. Some will be live; others will be prerecorded. All are offered at no charge.

■ The **Family Concerts** engage young kids as well as adults in music, movement and general silliness! They're offered at 2:00pm on Saturdays.

■ The **Adult Concerts** feature many musical genres, including blues, jazz, folk and more. They're timed for after-dinner relaxation at 7:00pm on Saturdays.

"Americans are workaholics," Leslie reminds us. "We need to learn to slow down and enjoy the music. We hope these concerts provide joy, relaxation, and a way for families to come together in a challenging time."

All of these performances are free.
You can find the concerts and the
Zoom links at fpl.info under "Join In."