

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Community Human Services

Library Services

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Tania L. Sharpe
CEO/Chief Librarian

Date: August 9, 2022

Subject: Chatham-Kent Public Library Annual Report 2021

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL) produces an Annual Report each year to keep the Board and the community informed about the Library's activities around budget, usage, and partnerships.

The Ontario Public Libraries Act speaks to the requirement for an Annual Report to be published each year. An added benefit is that the Annual Report keeps the community informed about library services, and helps staff and the communities they serve celebrate successes from the previous year.

Comments

From January until the end of June 2021, all CKPL locations returned to curbside service while COVID-19 numbers escalated in Chatham-Kent and surrounding communities. Services such as Ask CKPL and virtual reference services were promoted and utilized throughout the year. The community and library staff were thankful to re-open with reduced hours throughout the summer to provide Summer Reading Club, for children, teens, and adults. Fall of 2021 saw the resumption of full operating hours and CKPL no longer limited the amount of time patrons could stay in the library.

Highlights

In March of 2021, just in time for March break, CKPL was able to offer fines free borrowing for all children's material, reducing barriers to service for families and children across Chatham-Kent.

CKPL expanded partnerships with several other municipal departments to further their reach to outlying Chatham-Kent communities. CKPL's courier infrastructure and branch locations served as a base for the distribution of Camp in a Box for Recreation Services. The CK Museum and CKPL partnered for Family Day to provide a joint program "Read, Clay and Play. Not to be left out, the CK Art Gallery and CKPL jointly offered landscape/collage kits (February), a pottery kit (March), and a watercolour kit (April).

To support the local COVID-19 vaccine rollout, CKPL partnered with CK Public Health to provide 8 pop-up vaccine clinics in Blenheim, Bothwell, Merlin, Thamesville, and Wallaceburg branches, bringing the vaccine to 386 people. CKPL also helped patrons stay safe and engaged in the community by printing over 1,500 vaccine passports from September to December 2021.

When Wheatley experienced a devastating explosion, CKPL offered its local branch as a command centre for emergency personnel. Within six weeks, library staff worked with Employment and Social Services to set up a temporary community hub of services, including library service, lending 1,528 items from October to December 2021.

During this time the Library Board developed a new Strategic Plan which will guide staff over the next four years in continuing to meet the needs of the community. Four short, but impactful, directions were set:

- CKPL will engage and inspire
- CKPL will offer access
- CKPL will connect with the community
- CKPL will demonstrate social value

Numbers

2021 continued to present challenges in providing library service to the community, however things did improve over the previous year.

The 2021 Key Performance Metrics for CKPL are:

	2021	2020
Physical Items Borrowed	553,255	343,351
Electronic Items Downloaded	241,941	266,372
Total Circulation	795,196	609,723
Visits through the door	84,930	93,812
Questions answered	49,046	46,830
Holds	175,964	123,294
New Cards	2,188	1,942
Programs Offered	597	378
Program Attendance	38,151	28,313
Outreach Offered	160	188
Outreach Attendance	3,628	3,820

Conclusion

Prioritizing staff and customer safety was at the forefront of all operating models offered throughout 2021. Whether service was curbside or a hybrid of open and curbside, staff worked diligently to meet the information and recreation needs of the community. CKPL staff adapted as the world changed to ensure that the Library was a reliable resource in their community.

As CKPL moves forward in 2022, staff are excited to provide full operational hours throughout Chatham-Kent and resume in-person programming while maintaining a number of popular virtual programs.

Consultation

The CKPL Annual Report 2021 was presented, discussed, and accepted during the June 2022 meeting of the Chatham-Kent Public Library Board.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

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Attachment: None