

# ST. MARYS PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

2019

It has been an exciting year for the St. Marys Public Library. We have undergone many changes to enhance and further the services that the community has come to enjoy and rely upon. If you have not visited our library in a while, you may be surprised to see big changes to our service counter, the public computers and technologies, the programs offered, and changes within our collections. Of course, many of our services have remained unchanged, and you still have access to a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction reading materials. New services were added to our online collections and databases and we have cultivated new partnerships that have offered great opportunities and benefits to the community. The Library Board has worked hard to provide exceptional Library service and through staff they have ensured that the St. Marys Public Library continues to break down barriers to access, improve upon technological and infrastructure services, and advocate for the community through engagement with the Ministry and local MPP. As we continue forward, we are continuing to find new ways to transform our library to better improve patron experience.



# ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE ST. MARYS PUBLIC LIBRARY

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS, DRIVING INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMING THE LIBRARY

This year the St. Marys Public Library worked hard to develop new strategies that ensure equitable access to resources in the Library and services within the community. Through the joint partnership with the Pyramid Recreation Centre, we were able to further build upon the Aquatics Pass initiative, implementing three additional passes to our collection and increasing the opportunity for community members to use the Quarry and Aquatics facilities in St. Marys. With a total circulation of 137, the Public Library was able to offer barrier-free access to these facilities.

We were also pleased to introduce Parks Passes to local Parks in the Upper Thames area, as well as day passes to Ontario Provincial Parks—all free to the borrower. Our circulation for these items was significant, with 160 circulations (107 Upper Thames Passes, 53 Ontario Parks Passes) and a total savings to the community of \$21,060 (\$13,375; \$7,685).

The Library also introduced programming that promoted inclusivity in the community, including an LGBTQ+ program aimed at educating the community and celebrating inclusion. These initiatives are in alignment with the Library Board's Mission, Vision, and Values to provide equitable and barrier-free access to resources for patrons and community members alike.



The Library was fortunate to undergo some big renovation projects this year that further promoted inclusion and the breakdown of barriers to access. Through two grant programs, the Library was able to redesign the walkway leading to the Queen Street entrance to provide safer and easier access to the facility and design and install a new circulation desk. The circulation desk, a major renovation for 2019, focused on reducing unused space, while at the same time providing easier use of and access to one of our main services, the material circulation. The Library has also been fortunate to add to its collection a S.A.D lamp, or Seasonal Affective Disorder lamp, which mitigates the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder by mimicking natural light and enhancing the users' overall mood.

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## EXPANDING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGIES

In 2018, the Library purchased the final items for its MakerSpace, which includes a heat press, vinyl cutter laminator and more. In early 2019, the St. Marys Public Library opened up the MakerSpace to the community, providing opportunities for members to make reservations and come learn how to use this new technology and create unique projects. At the same time, the Library purchased new robot technologies for patron use, which have become popular at our children's programming. Our robots offer the opportunity to incorporate the Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics (STEAM) model of learning, enabling children and youth an opportunity to experience these technologies while applying their use in everyday life.



To better accommodate all users of the Library, we have enhanced and upgraded our WiFi access points, providing more reliable internet access to mobile hotspots both inside and outside the Library. There was an upgrade to our Public Access Computers, providing community members with the same user interface in a more compact and efficient presentation and ultimately reimagining access to our computer and internet technologies. Users will notice upgraded hardware, including new and bigger monitors, keyboards and

mice. While there are still some issues post-launch, this system has been successfully integrated into the library and improvements will continue. We were also able to introduce two accessible workstations with accessible keyboards in an attempt to further provide equitable access within the library. Databases were purchased, with an emphasis on children's resources, research materials and resume building. Language-based learning databases also provides users with an opportunity to explore other cultures and their languages, and even provide opportunities that assist with learning to speak other languages. The one new and free resource that the Library offered in early fall is the video streaming options through Kanopy--an award-winning video streaming service providing access to more than 30,000 independent and documentary films. This service allows patrons to have 10 video plays per month at no charge; all you need is your library card!

Staff also are being trained on the new resource CollectionHQ, a software solution that compiles data from our collection and provides resource analysis to ensure our collection meets the needs and wants of our community members. This will enhance our purchasing powers across our Perth County Information Network and ensure the highest quality and calibre materials are readily available within our St. Marys Public Library collection.

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## BETTER SERVING THE COMMUNITY

To better serve the community, the Library has been focused on improving upon services offered. One such service is programming. Throughout the 2019 year, the Library has held a variety of programming targeted to different age groups, in order to meet the needs of and requests from the community. We are on track to host over 470 programs with just over 9,500 attendees, effectively doubling the number of attendees over 2018\*\*. This is in part due to the creative and innovative programs staff were able to develop, coupled with the input from the public on topics that interest them. Furthermore, staff led an outreach campaign in partnership with teachers from the local schools to bring them to the Library for reading and programming opportunities. This was identified as a gap in service, which staff were able to address and improve upon in 2019.



2019 brought changes to the children's program *Tales for Tots*, which transitioned to a rhythm and rhyme Storytime. Also introduced this year was LGBTQ+ programming and the redesign and integration of technologies into our programs. Staff worked hard to refine the programming process, and have assisted in the development of the Programming and Marketing Plan strategy, approved and endorsed by the Library Board this year.

To ensure library services in St. Marys are equal to, or better than services in libraries across



Ontario, the St. Marys Public Library attained re-accreditation in September, 2019. This is another way in which the Library has proven its ability to better serve the community. The accreditation process required Staff and the Board to develop, approve, and implement a variety of planning documents, performance measurement indicators and analysis of its governing documents. These provide the Board with clear guidelines and best practices for library service, and is a recognized achievement within the Ontario public library community. As a result, the Library has

developed, adopted, and implemented plans that will enhance services, push forward the Board's strategies and elevate library services in a meaningful and impactful way.

Finally, Staff conducted a technology audit of the Library's technology infrastructure and developed a 5-year plan in order to better assess and analyze the current technology the Library

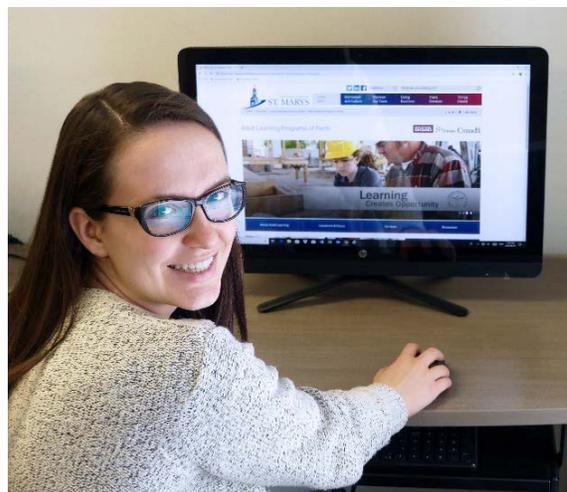
possesses and plan accordingly for the future. From this technology audit, staff were able to identify a number of technologies that required an upgrade and implement changes as necessary.

\*\*statistics were projected based on the year-to-date statistics average from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

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## ADULT LEARNING

The Adult Learning Programs of Perth, a department overseen by the Library Board, saw some changes in its structure and community outreach. Focusing on attracting new learners and further the Program's objectives within the St. Marys and Perth communities, staff have begun to immerse themselves into the community, exploring new partnerships and cooperative opportunities to ensure the service is reaching its intended audiences. This was furthered by a marketing and outreach campaign that began in late October. Keep your eyes out for staff in Library, at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and other various locations on a weekly basis throughout the year providing community members with information, updates and program opportunities for expanding and enhancing learning opportunities for members within the St. Marys and area location.



Technological upgrades are underway, to provide greater administrative support from the Library and the Town of St. Marys IT department, with an anticipated implementation date of early 2020. As of November, Adult Learning has fulfilled 64% of its overall mandate of successful learners and is on track to exceed the Ministry expectation. Watch for continued networking/collaborative partnerships with other Municipal and community partners and new classroom instruction going into 2020.

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## ADVOCACY AND FUTURE STRATEGIES

Unfortunately, it doesn't come as a surprise that this year was a challenging year for libraries across the province. In April of this year, the Southern Ontario Library Service announced a 50% reduction in provincial funds. This translated to cuts to provincial libraries, dismantling the InterLibrary Loan service that connects every library in the province and expands public access to information and resources. While St. Marys and Perth County were very lucky in the sharing model that Perth County Information Network set up—already sharing and transporting resources across the county in a quick and effective manner, the infrastructure that made the resource sharing possible, was removed. In a collaborative and creative way, staff from across each of the five libraries were able to maintain the rotation of materials, while designing and

laying the groundwork for a long-term solution to these cuts It is anticipated that 2020 will see a model, similar to the one provided by SOLS, implemented in Perth County that will reinstatethe seamless rotation of resources. The Library Board also met with the local MPP and the Ministry Assistant to the Minister of Heritage, Tourism, Culture and Sport in order to shed light on the funding cuts to SOLS and the impact on our rural Library. The Board voiced concerns and worked to tell the story of the St. Marys Public Library, its successes, and its impact on the community. The information was brought back to the Ministry in hopes of greater support and consultation between the Library Board and the Minister moving forward.

Finally, the Library Board has been planning for the future and examining the current and future needs of the Library and its community. In May 2019, the Library Board met with the Town of St. Marys Council to outline library space concerns in hopes of developing a plan to move forward. This dialogue has provided insights into the two governing body perspectives and has set the framework for future meetings and planning sessions to keep the Library infrastructure improvements moving forward. An ADHOC committee comprised of Library Board members, Town Councillors and relevant Staff was formed in November to continue dialogue, pursue potential options and plan for the future.