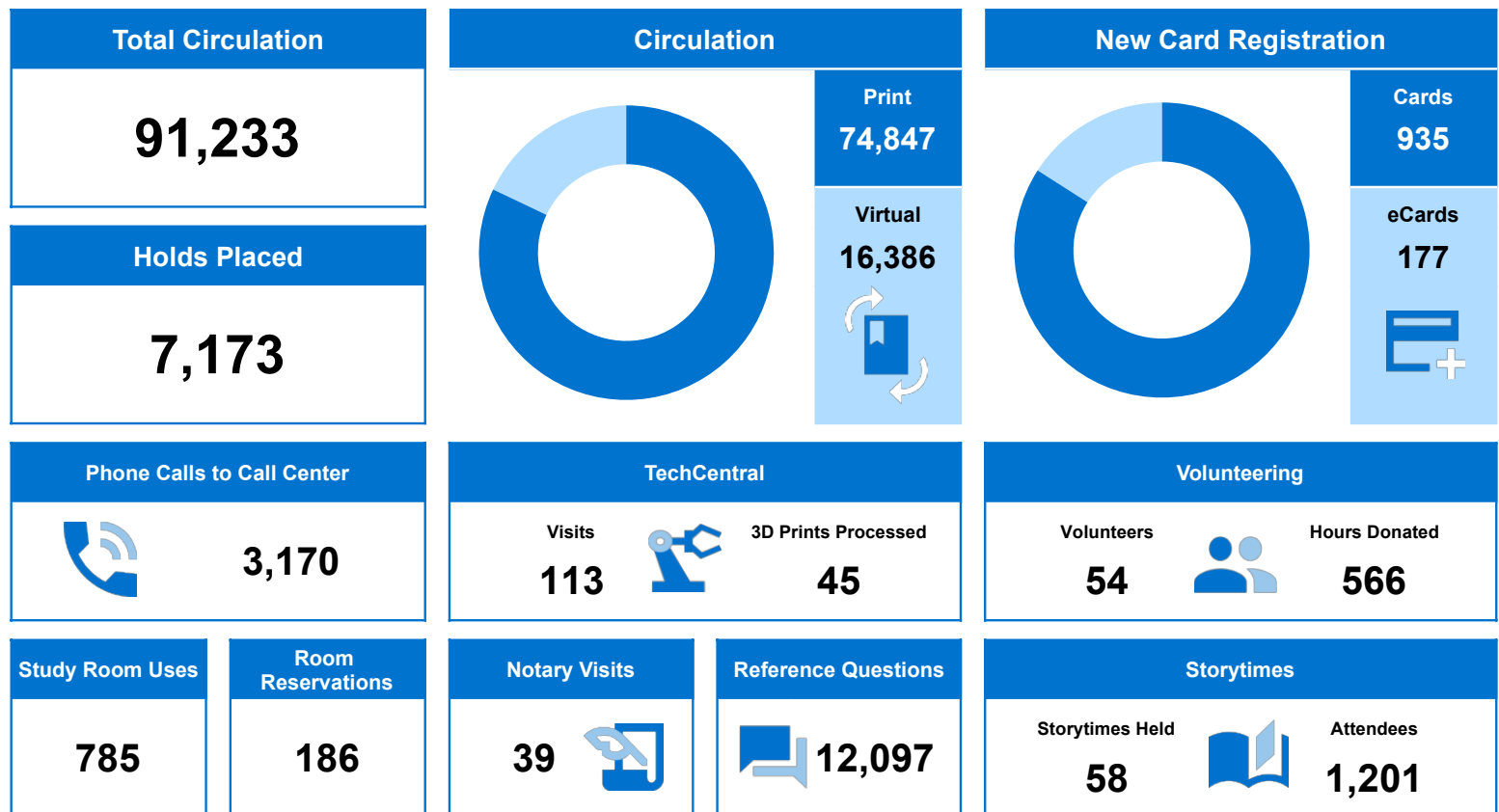


Monthly Report July 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	18,011	15,592	69,841	61 Events & Activities, 1,514 Participants
St. Cloud	25,413	10,527	20,758	85 Events & Activities, 1,963 Participants
Poinciana	11,005	8,710	33,910	57 Events & Activities, 852 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	6,048	5,998	21,082	56 Events & Activities, 991 Participants
West Osceola	14,235	8,150	27,138	58 Events & Activities, 846 Participants
Kenansville	135	55	3,052	N/A

System Stats at a Glance



Launch of new learning resources

With funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act, the Library has developed two new collections of learning resources to “Slow the Slide” of learning losses brought on by the pandemic. Dozens of STEAM kits are now available to bring science and arts learning home in a fun and interactive way, such as exploring the impact of earthquakes or playing math games, paired with a topical book that families can read together. The Launchpad collection features tablets preloaded with games and learning challenges. Kids preschool to 8th grade are the focus for these new collections available at all branch libraries, in addition to the AWE Learning Workstations which debuted earlier this year. More STEAM kits will be added soon, featuring musical instruments like Ukuleles, and LEGO Educational kits that teach coding and complex problem-solving.

International Festival comes to Poinciana

Culture abounded at the Poinciana Library as they celebrated arts, history, food and dance from around the world at their International Festival. Featured countries were Ireland, Puerto Rico, India, China, Spain, Germany and more! Tables for each country provided cultural and geographic highlights along with the opportunity to sample crafts and foods important to those countries. Dance performances took center stage in the open space as dancers in traditional costumes performed Irish dances, Hula, Samba and more. Over 80 people attended this afternoon event.

County Commissioner teams up for Back Pack event

Sponsored by County Commissioner Cheryl Grieb, the annual back to school event is always a great way to reach kids just starting Kindergarten all the way up to high school. 400 backpacks provided by the Commissioner were distributed, along with Library information and school supplies. Attendees then had the chance to sample some of our new resources such as STEAM kits and Launchpads, in addition to fun STEAM games and activities, before checking out books to take home. Library staff created a Beanstack challenge to encourage use of the reading app and the winner of the challenge took home a \$50 gift card to a local pizza restaurant. The event was very successful with 719 people attending, 255 books checked out and 25 new patrons registered.

Summer Learning wraps up

Another great summer of learning came to a close for both kids and adults. This year's theme of camping really jumpstarted creativity and the after-hours adult wrap up at the St. Cloud Library brought all the best of summer together with 130 people enjoying crafts and playing board games. West Osceola hosted the youth wrap up especially for families.

Canta y Encata dazzles

When a famous musical group from Colombia says they'll be in your area asking to stop by for a free performance, the answer is a definite yes when you find out it's Canta y Encata, a wonderful troupe of young performers who delighted BVL Library patrons last year in a surprise visit and dropped by the Library again this year. Special visitor Mirabel from Disney's Encanto also made a surprise visit as a compliment to this amazing morning along with a face painter. 169 people attended this special event.

Other July happenings:

BioDrops: Biomateriales Liquidos: In a partnership with UCF, tweens at the BVL Library attended a week-long summer camp to learn about the science of phase separation.

Rental Assistance Navigation Event: This recurring partner event connects residents with much need information to improve access to housing and living expenses, this time at the Hart Memorial Library.

NOAH Conference Outreach: Youth Staff presented story times and activities at this national conference for the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation.

Painting with Flowers: Creativity was in full bloom at the Poinciana Library as 29 people learned how to use flowers as stencils.

Paint Night: Both St. Cloud and Poinciana Libraries hosted Paint Night enticing patrons to follow along as a gifted artist provides step by step instruction.

Nature Walk: Lake Lizzie South Loop: 21 people enjoyed an early morning hike through native wilderness to spy animals and plants important to the Florida ecosystem and history.

Osceola Hob Nob: Staff tabled at this event to educate and inform about Library services to Osceola and Orange political candidates.

Vex IQ Robotics: This multi-week series in TechCentral for teens over 12 teaches the basics of coding for these special robots.



Left:
Canta y
Encata
made a
surprise
visit to the
BVL
Library.

Below:
Painting
with
flowers
produced
unique
artwork at
the
Poinciana
Library.





Above and Below: The Poinciana Library's International Festival featured crafts, food, dance, customs and history of countries from around the world, including India and Ireland.





Above:
Commissioner
Grieb hands
out 400
backpacks to
students who
then enjoyed
games and
activities with
Library staff.

Right: Kids flex
their coding
skills to
program Vex
IQ robots
inside
TechCentral.

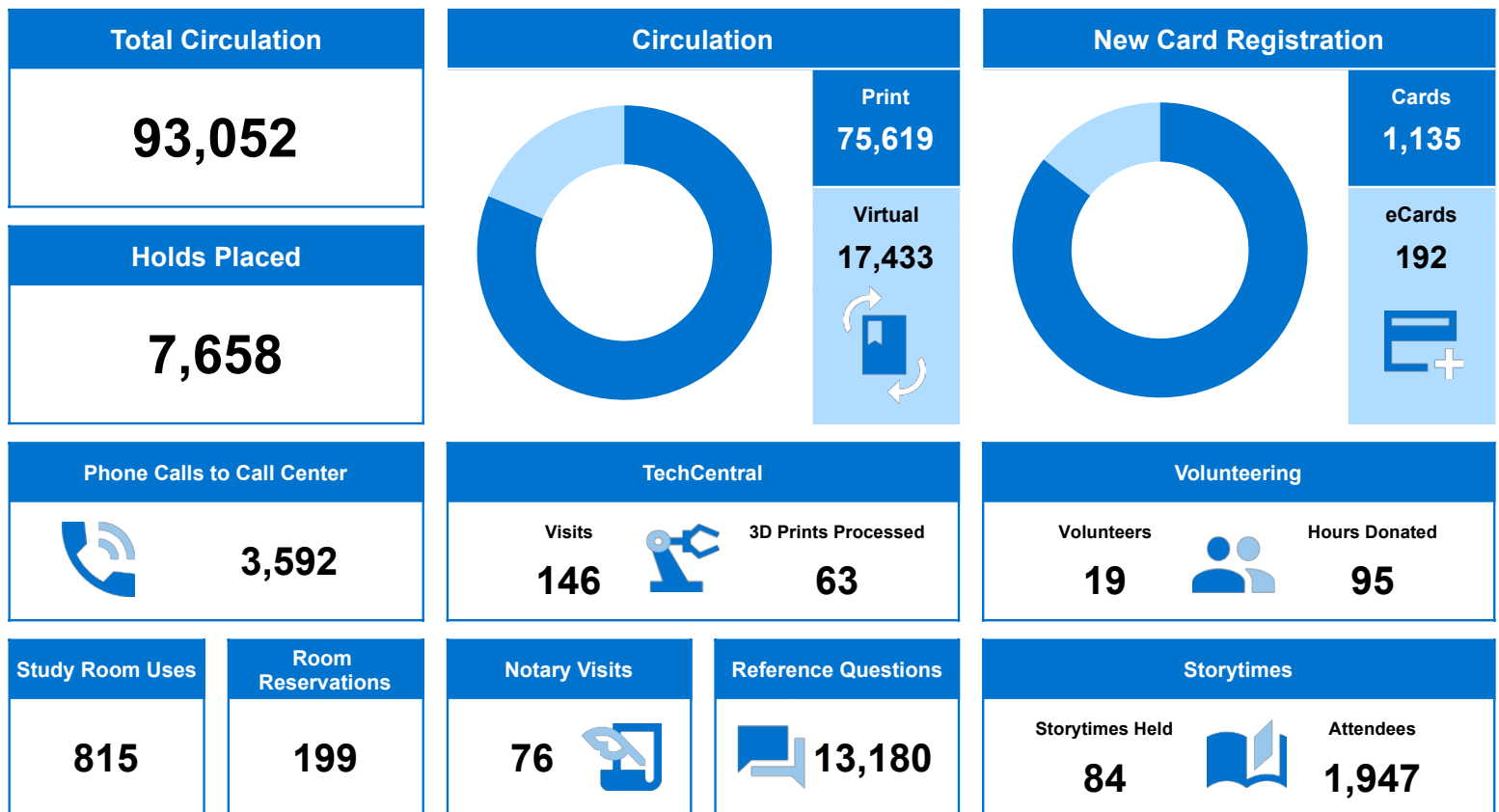


Monthly Report August 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	18,037	16,576	72,511	55 Events & Activities, 2,429 Participants
St. Cloud	26,009	10,864	21,325	58 Events & Activities, 1,091 Participants
Poinciana	10,609	9,362	35,377	48 Events & Activities, 988 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	6,332	6,116	22,104	49 Events & Activities, 724 Participants
West Osceola	14,984	11,521	28,382	51 Events & Activities, 892 Participants
Kenansville	198	83	3,144	N/A

System Stats at a Glance



National TV show films at Hart Memorial Library

The Hart Memorial Library was selected as a location for filming a Travel Channel TV series. The *Dead Files* pairs a NYC detective with a medium as they explore haunted locations in search of solving the unsolved and explaining the unexplained! The crew filmed in the Ray Shanks Memorial Law Library and in a staff area meeting room overlooking the Monument of the States, before moving on to another location in Kissimmee at historic Steffee Landing. Air time for this episode has not yet been scheduled.

Little Free Library debuts at water park

Through a partnership with a local water park, the Library is able to deliver “beach reads” to vacationers and locals alike. Island H2O Water Park in Kissimmee debuted a Little Free Library in the wave pool area so when parents and little ones are taking a break from the fun in the sun and water, they can relax with a good book provided by the Osceola Library System. Island H2O General Manager Jim Kunau noted, “We are constantly striving to improve the visitor experience,” and Library lovers know that a good book makes every experience better!

Central Florida Kids and Family Expo outreach success

Following the wrap up of Summer Learning, the Osceola Library System participated in the Central Florida Kids and Family Expo held at the Orange County Convention Center. The regional event is open to the public and staff are able to chat with parents and kids about library services and sign up new library patrons. It’s also an invaluable opportunity to connect with vendors in the kid entertainment and education industries and this has led to Summer Learning performers and securing giveaways and prizes. This year was by far the most successful! The Library sent 3 staff on each day of the two-day event. On Saturday, the first day, staff chatted with 1,118 people who stopped by the Library table. On Sunday, an impressive 602 people also visited the Library's table. Featured at the table were flyers for TechCentral, STEAM Kits and Launchpads, and Career Online High School information, and visitors were able to play our table-top Plinko game to win fun prizes.

Commissioner Grieb donates music stands to TechCentral

Commissioner Cheryl Grieb has been a supporter of all the creative arts and technology TechCentral offers, but as a musician herself, she was very impressed with the recording studio and the Beginning Guitar classes taught by the Makerspace Technicians. After attending the guitar class series, Commissioner Grieb generously donated 12 music stands plus a cart in order to make the learning experience better for future students. The Library is very grateful for not only the funds to support these classes but the time Commissioner Grieb takes to be a vocal and visible Library enthusiast.

Other August happenings

Osceola Friends of the Library book sale: The three day “Back to School” book sale was a big hit, moving out of storage hundreds of boxes of donations and discarded books and netting the Friends a healthy nest egg to enable them to continue their support of Library programming and collections.

English for Families at Poinciana: This Florida Humanities Council grant funded program seeks to gather families together to improve English language skills. The program was previously held at the Buenaventura Lakes Library.

St. Cloud Friend is CommUNITY Champion: Barbara Shuman, president of the St. Cloud Friends of the Library, was profiled by WESH TV as a CommUNITY Champion for her tireless commitment to education, the Teen Ambassador program and the St. Cloud Library.



Left: A production team takes over the Monument Room at the Hart Memorial Library to film scenes from the Travel Channel's investigation series, Dead Files, which pairs a cop and a psychic to solve crime and murder cases across the country.

Bottom: Beginning Guitar students enjoy the use of new guitar stands gifted by County Commissioner and musician, Cheryl Grieb.



Right: Island H2O partnered with the Library to build a Little Free Library so guests could enjoy a good story while lounging after a day in the sun. The Library will supply books and Island H2O is offering discounts to card holders through November.

Bottom: The Osceola Friends of the Library held a successful back to school book sale at the Hart Memorial Library. The 3-day event netted nearly \$2000 to support Library programs and services, and was the first book sale at this branch library since before the COVID pandemic started.





Above: St. Cloud Friends of the Library president Barbara Shuman was celebrated as a CommUNITY Champion by WESH TV.

Below: Visitors to the Central Florida Kids and Family Expo learned all about Library services and programs at this 2 day outreach event.

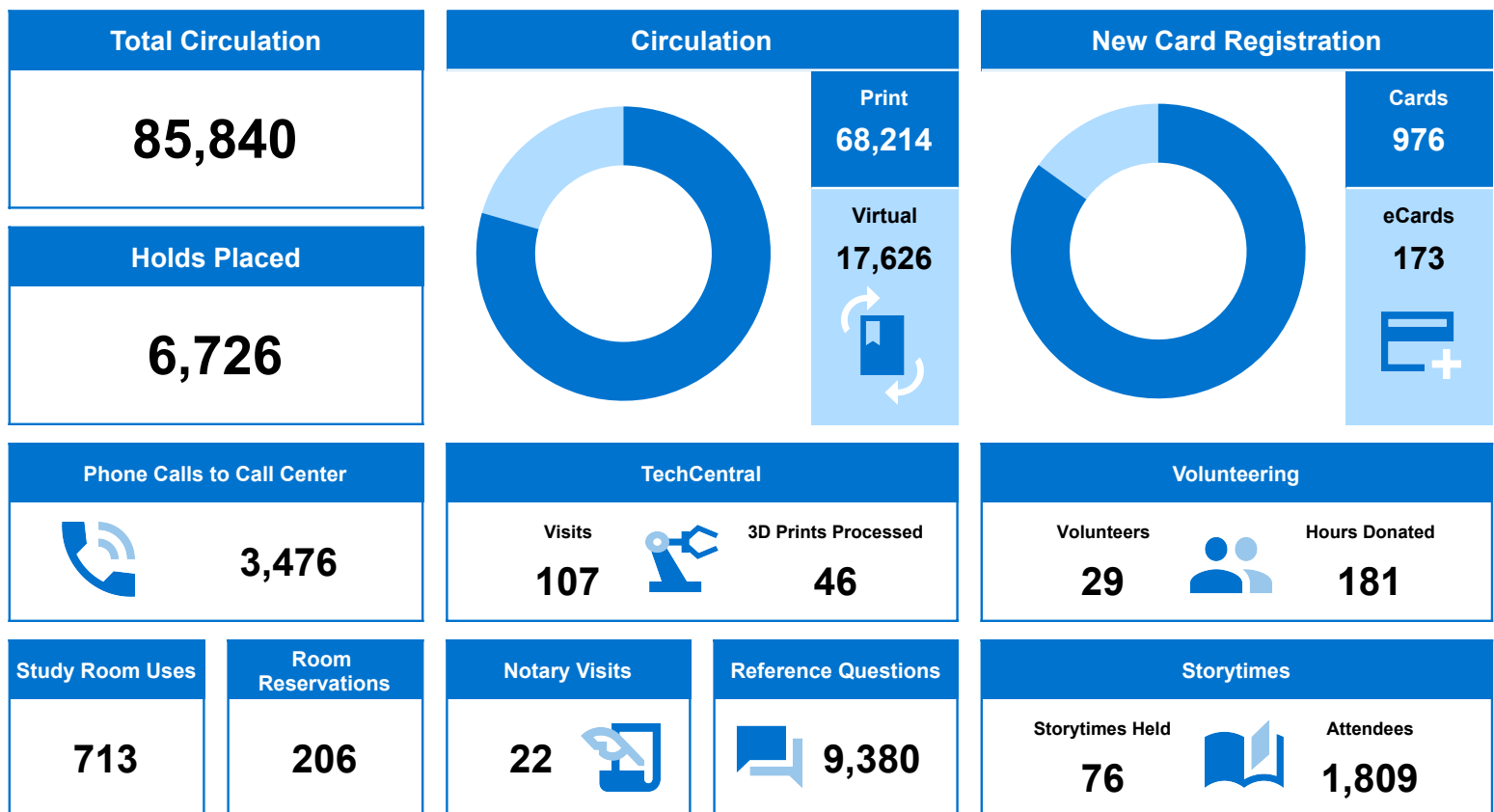


Monthly Report September 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	16,912	13,091	74,021	67 Events & Activities, 1,179 Participants
St. Cloud	23,228	9,170	21,192	70 Events & Activities, 1,544 Participants
Poinciana	9,679	8,132	29,960	54 Events & Activities, 824 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	5,781	4,888	20,292	50 Events & Activities, 539 Participants
West Osceola	12,432	7,826	24,453	60 Events & Activities, 1,011 Participants
Kenansville	182	82	3,162	N/A

System Stats at a Glance



Show Your Card, Osceola!

September is Library Card Sign Up Month, a special month designated by the American Library Association to help promote the benefits of “the most important card in your wallet.” The Osceola Library System celebrates with the Show Your Card, Osceola! program that marries increased library use with local economic development, a key goal of our Strategic Plan. Library staff ask local businesses to provide a discount or free service when presented with an Osceola Library card. In exchange, businesses receive marketing materials, free online and in-library promotion and the opportunity to gain new customers through library exposure.

Businesses that participated range from realtors to restaurants, theme parks to music lessons. The Library created a webpage where patrons could check which businesses were participating and the page was updated throughout the month. Newsletters advertising the program went out throughout the month along with posts on social media. Posters were created for and distributed to each business to promote at their establishment. In total, 30 business participated and Library card sign ups increased 8% over last September.

Hurricane Ian and CIC Activation

Hurricane Ian set its sights on Central Florida in the last week of September and Library staff were activated by Osceola County Emergency Management staff the Citizens' Information Center, the call center that provides up to date information for citizens in times of natural disaster or local emergencies such as the COVID pandemic. Library staff are trained to direct citizens to resources in the County such as shelter, water, food and medical assistance before, during and after the emergency. As Hurricane Ian bore down on the County, Library staff were in the Emergency Management compound overnight to provide assistance, staying safe from the storm outside. In total, 10 Library staff in the CIC were activated for two weeks and provided a total of 507 hours of continual service to the County.

Hispanic Heritage Month Begins

September 15 kicks off Hispanic Heritage Month and the Osceola Library System provides a ton of great programs to celebrate. In the first two weeks, patrons of all ages could choose from arts and crafts, dancing, games, storytimes, STEAM activities and social events all geared toward celebrating vibrant and diverse Hispanic culture and history. Highlights included the Herencia en Colores event at the Hart Memorial Library highlighting local Hispanic painters and their creative journeys and inspirations where 40 people attended. Maker's Café programs at Poinciana and St. Cloud Libraries drew inspiration from important cultural elements of Hispanic culture where they created personalized dominoes and crafted Taino petroglyph rocks.

September is Bee-Licious!

Osceola County Cooperative Extension presented a fun and informative program in honor of National Honey Month. 22 people at the Bee-Licious Honey program had the opportunity to learn about the significance of honey bees and their important role as pollinators to the lifecycle of crops and the environment in general, plus sample “bee-licious” Florida honey.

Other September Happenings:

BVL Library Friends Book Sale: Book sales to benefit the Friends of the Libraries are returning and September’s was hosted by the BVL Friends of the Library. The Book Sales bring in lots of new library patrons and the Friends were able to sell approximately 40 boxes of books at their two day sale.

Banned Books Week: Challenges to contemporary favorites or enduring classics is the focus of this week each September as the Library educates and informs on the issue of censorship and tolerance with activities and creative displays.

Fandom Kissimmee: Library staff hosted an outreach table where had fun dressing up and playing games with participants, while educating about Library services and events while TechCentral staff taught a workshop on creating comics at this annual City of Kissimmee event celebrating superheroes, science fiction, anime and everything in between.

Library for All: Inclusive adult programming returned with the Library for All weekly program where adults of all developmental and physical levels can participate in fun activities and informative sessions on topics such as technology and voting.

American Sign Language for Beginners: The St. Cloud Library hosted this popular program where participants learn the basic skills to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people through instruction, role playing and games.

International Dot Day: This program takes its inspiration from the children’s book *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds in which a girl discovers her artistic talent. When a teacher read this book to his class, it was the spark for the global celebration of International Dot Day as a day to encourage children to uncover their creativity we all have inside and share it with the world.

Teddy Bear Clinic: Sponsored by Nemours Children’s Health, this West Osceola program helped kids get rid of their fear of going to the doctor by practicing on stuffed animals.

Constitution Week: The Osceola Friends of the Library provided pocketed 250 Constitutions to take home during Constitution Week. Library staff created inviting displays and the Constitutions were snatched up in record time.



Left and Below: Nemours Children's Health opened their Teddy Bear Clinic to help children alleviate fears about doctor visits.



Below and Right: St. Cloud Library patrons attended the Maker's Café program on crafting Taino petroglyph rocks in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.





Left and Below: Library staff were on hand at Fandom Kissimmee to rescue any non-library card holders from their book-less fate or teach them how to create their own comic book!



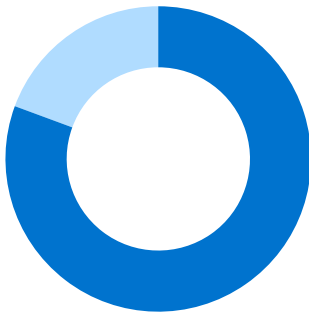

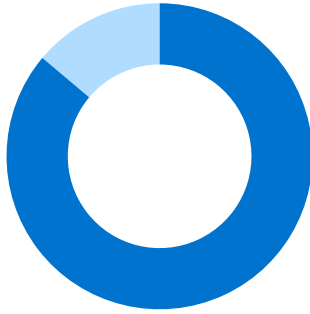







Left: The Osceola Friends of the Library provided 250 pocket Constitutions for patrons to take home in celebration of Constitution Week.

Monthly Report October 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	18,753	21,390	85,200	60 Events & Activities, 914 Participants
St. Cloud	24,999	10,215	22,348	60 Events & Activities, 1,156 Participants
Poinciana	10,209	9,753	34,038	57 Events & Activities, 1,008 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	5,803	5,766	22,510	48 Events & Activities, 733 Participants
West Osceola	14,313	13,179	32,313	60 Events & Activities, 1,362 Participants
Kenansville	157	75	2,929	N/A

System Stats at a Glance

Total Circulation 92,096	Circulation  <div> Print 74,234 </div> <div> Virtual 17,862  </div>	New Card Registration  <div> Cards 1,023 </div> <div> eCards 165  </div>
Holds Placed 6,791	Phone Calls to Call Center  4,161	TechCentral <div> Visits 107  </div> <div> 3D Prints Processed 52 </div>
Study Room Uses 770	Room Reservations 181	Volunteering <div> Volunteers 65  </div> <div> Hours Donated 579 </div>
Notary Visits 36 	Reference Questions  10,727	Storytimes <div> Storytimes Held 73  </div> <div> Attendees 1,714 </div>

FEMA establishes DRC after Ian

The Osceola Library System is hosting the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the Hart Memorial Library as they provide assistance to the community in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. The Hart Memorial Library serves as a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in times of disaster or emergency. FEMA, along with the Small Business Administration and several local and state agencies that administer relief or aid for citizens in need, has set up in two large meeting rooms and should be in place for the next two months. Mobile Registration Intake Centers (MRIC) are due to open at the BVL, St. Cloud and Poinciana Libraries in the coming month to help provide greater local access to agencies to distribute aid.

Narcoossee Express Locker opens

The Osceola Library System launched new service in the Narcoossee area with the installation of an Express Locker for holds pick up and materials return. The Locker is located at the Narcoossee Community Center, a County park facility in the growing suburbs between St. Cloud and Orange County. Commissioner Ricky Booth was on hand for the ribbon cutting that also featured storytime, a face painter and interactive STEAM games. The Express Locker is funded by a Library Services and Technology Act grant and a second locker is due to launch in Reunion on the west side of the County. That locker is located outside a new fire station situated on one of the busiest roads in Osceola County near Champions Gate and Poinciana.

Spooky events draw big crowds

People of all ages were looking for a frightfully fun time and found it at the Library! In partnership with the Osceola Historical Society, the Kissimmee Ghost Tour took 42 patrons on a stroll through downtown after dark to hear spine-chilling local lore. Another after-hours family event, Hart Memorial's Spooky Spooktacular was themed to Heroes and Villains and 201 kids and grownups enjoyed tricks, treats and other ghoulish delights. West Osceola's after-hours Spooky Spooktacular was a big hit with its theme of "It's Just a Bunch of Hocus Pocus" featuring a visit from the Sanderson Sisters. 167 people attended. Spooky Spooktaculars were held at all locations in addition to Not-So-Spooky Storytimes for the little ones and a Murder Mystery Mayhem themed to Horror at Homecoming for teens at the Hart Memorial Library.

New Hotspot for outdoor WiFi debuts

The BVL Library debuted a new service with the grand opening of the Hotspot, an outdoor pavilion with strong WiFi accessible around the clock. Championed by Osceola County Commissioner Viviana Janer, the Hotspot features countertops with electrical outlets and USB ports, a large fan for cooling on those hot summer evenings and stools and benches for collaboration and individual study. The space is ADA accessible and has become a popular hangout for local youth.

Other October highlights:

Hurricane Ian CIC staffing: Library staff were called to serve in the Citizens Information Center in the lead up to, during and aftermath of Hurricane Ian. In total, Library staff contributed 507 hours of service.

Friends' book sale in West Osceola: Book sales returned to the West Osceola Library after years of hiatus. The Friends of the Library earned an impressive \$400 during the one-day sale with plans for the book sale to return in the New Year.

Charging Station donations: The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center donated charging stations to all the libraries in an effort to ensure that local recovery efforts for disaster-affected citizens included the ability to keep important communication devices charged up.

New recording studio window: TechCentral's evolution continued with the addition of a window joining the Recording Studio and a recording space next door. Now technician and artist can view each other while creating great art.

Museum Art Kits roll out: The Rolling Museum of Art kits arrived at the Hart Memorial, Poinciana and West Osceola libraries. The Fall 2022 kits feature a project for the whole family to enjoy and YouTube videos for demonstration.

Hispanic Heritage Music and Art Festival: Poinciana Library hosted talented musicians and artists as they shared their craft in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.



Above and Left: The Hotspot debuted at the BVL Library. Commissioner Janer and Library and County staff celebrate the opening of the outdoor workspace featuring WiFi and café seating.

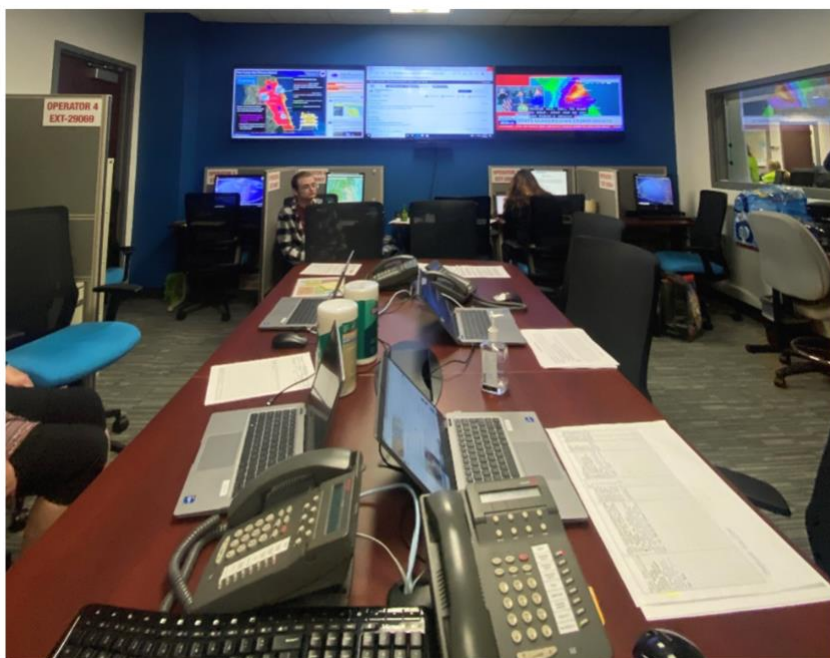
Right: The Express Locker service launched at the Narcoossee Community Center with Library and County staff, featuring Commissioner Ricky Booth, on hand to celebrate with a ribbon cutting and storytime.





Left: Kids enjoy a dance party at Hart Memorial's Halloween event while **(Below)** the Sanderson Sisters cook up a frightfully good time at the West Osceola after-hours event.





Left: A behind the scenes look at the Citizens' Information Center where Library staff spent over 500 hours during Hurricane Ian answering questions about County services before, during and after the storm.



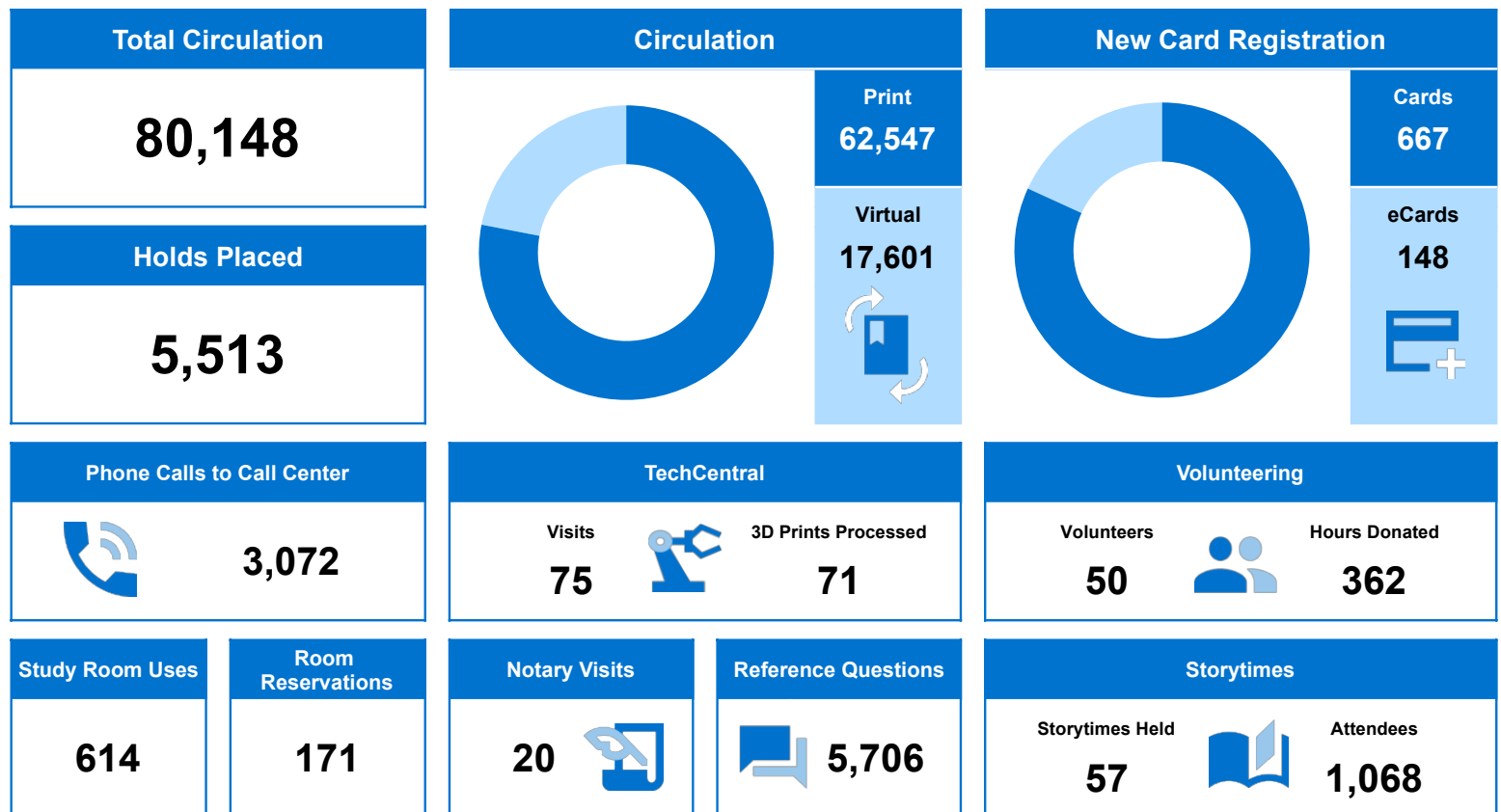
Above and Left: The Poinciana Library brought together artists and authors over music and snacks to highlight the culture and traditions of Hispanic arts and music. This library-wide event featured performances, author signings and artist showcases.

Monthly Report November 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	15,552	15,552	82,495	47 Events & Activities, 649 Participants
St. Cloud	20,774	8,336	17,753	52 Events & Activities, 1,075 Participants
Poinciana	8,160	7,594	28,074	39 Events & Activities, 758 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	5,111	4,876	19,727	46 Events & Activities, 728 Participants
West Osceola	12,764	11,891	25,905	51 Events & Activities, 1,367 Participants
Kenansville	131	62	1,800	N/A

System Stats at a Glance



Reunion Express Locker opens at Fire Station #73

The Osceola Library System launched the second Express Locker with a locker located outside the Reunion Fire Station in the southwest part of the County. The locker launch was in conjunction with an open house at Fire Station #73 where patrons enjoyed free food and fire safety demos and the opportunity to test out the new locker and get a library card. Commissioner Choudhry was on hand for the big reveal of the lockers the crowd and Positively Osceola featured the locker launch in their social media.

As a lead up to the launch, Library staff have provided storytimes and technology tutoring for several months. Storytimes at the Reunion Locker had its highest attendance yet in November. There have been 17 checkouts, 22 holds and 32 returns since the launch on November 19. The Reunion locker is the second locker installed this year. The Express Lockers are funded by an LSTA grant through the Florida Division of Library and Information Services.

Select libraries serve as voting places

Early voting began October 21 and ended on November 6, with the general election held on November 8. The Supervisor of Elections has chosen Library locations as convenient community hubs for voting, a partnership that has extended over many years. The West Osceola Library supports early voting in its multipurpose room and the BVL, St. Cloud and Poinciana Libraries are polling places for Election Day. 4700 used the West Osceola Library for early voting and 1,355 people chose to vote at the libraries on Election Day.

FLOW Bus brings essential services to Poinciana

Finding time to visit government offices to wait in line for critical documents can be burdensome for working families. That's why the Library partnered with the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles department to bring the Florida Licensing On Wheels (FLOW) Bus to the Poinciana Library. The FLOW team helped 25 citizens with things such as driver's license renewal and vehicle registration while parked in the Library's parking lot.

Volunteer Fair provides important connections

Connecting with the community was never so easy! The West Osceola Library hosted several local organizations looking for a few good people to help make a difference in the community. Representatives from Help Now Osceola, Osceola Friends of the Library, Florida Native Plant Society and more were available to chat with adults about donating their time to a great cause. 22 people made connections and more volunteer fairs are planned in the next year with the Library.

Other November highlights:

Closing for Hurricane Nicole: All Osceola Libraries closed for a ½ day on Wednesday, November 9, and all day on Thursday, November 10 only one month after Hurricane Ian set its sights on Central Florida.

MRIC units at branch libraries: State emergency management personnel installed mobile registration intake centers at the BVL, Poinciana and St. Cloud Libraries to facilitate more service point for those affected by Hurricane Ian.

94 Years of Magic: West Osceola is located on the border of the most magical place on earth so they naturally celebrated Mickey's birthday with 25 of his best friends at this fun family program.

Florida Author Fest: 147 people attended the St. Cloud Library's Florida Author Fest that featured writers from all genres available for chatting about, signing and selling their collections.

Accidental Art: This fun program challenged participants to create some "happy accidents" or their own masterpiece, inspired by TV artist Bob Ross. 40 people participated and the results were featured in a Tiny Art show at the St. Cloud and West Osceola Libraries.



Above: Local authors Megan Grooms and Linda Zern set up tables at the St. Cloud Library for the Florida Author Fest.



Left and Above:
Commissioner Choudhry and friends helped launch the Express Locker at the Reunion Fire Station.



Above and Right: West Osceola's Volunteer Fair connected community organizations with people wanting to donate their time to a good cause.

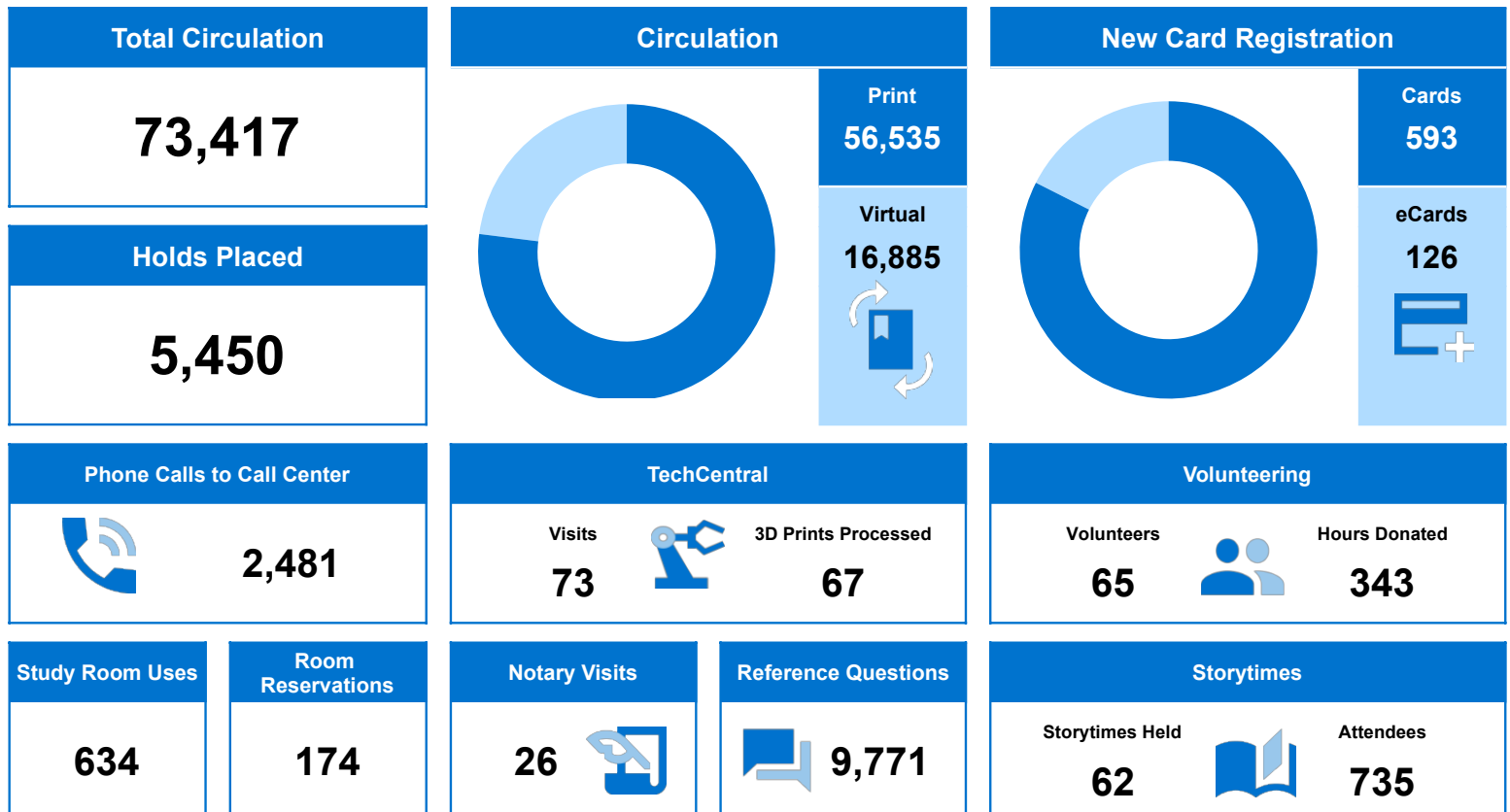


Monthly Report December 2022

Fiscal Year Oct. 2022 - Sept. 2023

Location	Print Circulation	Visitors	Computer Sessions (including WiFi)	Programming
Hart Memorial	14,185	15,469	88,392	48 Events & Activities, 806 Participants
St. Cloud	18,171	7,735	19,107	62 Events & Activities, 990 Participants
Poinciana	7,833	7,676	29,045	36 Events & Activities, 594 Participants
Buenaventura Lakes	4,719	4,325	19,292	44 Events & Activities, 493 Participants
West Osceola	11,269	8,751	22,908	51 Events & Activities, 834 Participants
Kenansville	198	91	3,033	N/A
Narccossee	120	16	N/A	N/A
Reunion	54	14	N/A	N/A

System Stats at a Glance



Letters to Santa

The Osceola Library System played Santa's helper again this year when each branch library hosted a Letters to Santa program. Activity packs were available for pick up that contained a postcard for the child and a reply form for the parent or caregiver to complete with the child's wishes and requests from Santa. The forms were returned to a special mailbox in each library's Children's area. Youth staff gathered the forms and postcards, and crafted a thoughtful reply from a certain jolly old soul. The letters were sealed up then stamped and postmarked from Christmas, Florida (Santa's winter home). 167 letters were sent out to happy kids.

Kissimmee Festival of Lights

The Library was on hand with holiday cheer at the annual Kissimmee Festival of Lights event held on the Veterans Lawn at the Lakefront Park. Mrs. Claus paid a visit, bringing her cozy fireplace and elf helpers. She posed for photos with visitors at the Library's Pop-up Photo Stop, while revelers enjoyed music, dancing and holiday lights. Zone Manager and Downtown Kissimmee Council vice chairperson Candice Shields emceed the parade as it snaked through historic downtown Kissimmee.

Gingerbread House Decorating Contest

Friendly competition and artistic expression were on display when the Library hosted a Gingerbread House Decorating Contest at the Poinciana and Hart Memorial Libraries. All the tasty supplies needed to create an edible holiday cottage were provided to participants and once the creations were complete, photos of the houses were posted on social media so the public could vote on their favorite creation. 35 people attended these programs, from little kids to grownups, building their perfect sweet home.

Central Florida Business Networking Group

The Library hosts a weekly networking group designed to foster communication, share information and provide mentoring for the local business community. Attendees hear from the Library about resources available for economic development and then learn about marketing, customer retention and other strategies from peer businesspeople. The meetings are open to anyone wanting to grow and learn, and supports the Library's goal of fostering economic resiliency for Osceola citizens.

Other December highlights:

Holidays Around the World: The West Osceola and Poinciana Libraries showcased winter-time cultural celebrations through the sharing of food, crafts and performances.

Junior Escape Room: Jack Frost: School-age kids and their families were invited to solve puzzles set up by the Guardians – Tooth Fairy, Mother Nature, Chris Kringle, Easter Bunny and Sandman – as they tried to save Jack Frost from the villainous Pitch Black.

Nature Walk: Three Lakes WMA – Sunset Ranch Trail Hike: The Library journeyed outside in oak hammocks and wetlands for this Walking Library program presented by the Pine Lily Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.

Murder Mystery Mayhem Presents: Ho Ho Homicide: This Christmas-themed murder mystery party invited teens to wade through treachery, deception, betrayal and *gasp* MURDER to solve the mystery.



Above: Trekkers gather for a brisk walk led by Library staff and volunteers from the Pine Lily Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society in this Walking Library program.

Vote For Your Favorite!

Osceola Library system

1



2



3



4



5



This page: Participants young and young at heart dove in with sticky fingers while others planned their moves strategically. But fun was had by all in the Gingerbread House Decorating Contests.



Above: Mrs. Claus greeted all the good children and adults of Osceola County at the Kissimmee Festival of Lights Pop-Up Photo Shop.



Left: Holiday traditions from countries around the world were on display at the West Osceola (pictured) and Poinciana Libraries.