

Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 23 / 24

Mission

The Osceola Library System's mission is to connect people to ideas and information, celebrate our community's vibrant and diverse culture and provide opportunities for life-long learning and personal growth.

Values

- Delivering exceptional service
- A welcoming environment for all
- Literacy and learning in all forms
- Innovative and enriching services and programs
- Creating useful and pleasing spaces
- Open access to information and ideas

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Letter from the Director

In October 2023, the Osceola Library turned over a new leaf and became a fine-free Library System. This was a return to our roots after over a decade of charging late fines. The conversations leading up to the decision, and those that followed as part of our strategic planning process, were invigorating and a welcome chance to share with the community and its leaders the importance of reducing barriers to the vital resources the Library provides.

Libraries are essential to a thriving community infrastructure. Beyond offering books, eResources, and enrichment programs, we serve as a hub for connection and information—supporting government, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals in their meetings, technology needs, and times of crisis. Libraries truly achieve great things: raising property values and test scores, combating loneliness through being a welcoming and bustling space, bridging the digital divide with critical and convenient access to technology and training, and igniting a love of learning and reading to last a lifetime.

A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff who create, innovate, and give their all each day, and to our community for its unwavering support. We look forward to another year of growth and success.



Amy Jones

Library Director



Osceola By The Numbers



680,753
VISITORS



13,512 **2,994**
FULL-SERVICE ECARDS
CARDS ISSUED ISSUED



134,161
REFERENCE QUESTIONS
ANSWERED



695
VOLUNTEERS



4,546
VOLUNTEER HOURS
DONATED



42,129
PHONE CALLS



24,520
TECHNOLOGY
HELP SESSIONS



17,579
MEETING & STUDY
ROOM USES



> 2,000,000
WIFI & COMPUTER
SESSIONS



3,739
PROGRAMS & EVENTS
88,975
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



242,675 DIGITAL
+ 807,886 PHYSICAL
= 1,050,561
TOTAL CHECKOUTS

Strategic Plan Goals

Check out how the Library is meeting goals and objectives outlined in [Osceola Library System Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#).

Economic Resilience

Fine Free

The Library returned to its roots as a Fine Free library system. Over 9,000 lost items valued at nearly \$200,000 were returned in the first year. 2,805 patrons whose cards had been blocked by overdue fines have renewed their cards and checked out over 100,000 items.



Career Online High School Graduation

This enduring program continues to transform lives through the awarding of Florida-accredited high school diplomas to adults who have completed all the necessary coursework to graduate and begin the next chapter of their lives. Twenty scholarships to the Career Online High School program were granted and eight students have successfully persevered and achieved

their goals this year, celebrating with a Library graduation party. Through life challenges such as domestic violence, pregnancy at a young age, and language barriers, these students now have the tools they need to realize their full personal and professional potential.

Volunteer Fairs

The Library creates connections between people wanting to share their time and energy and deserving organizations that fill important needs and provide vital assistance for living and thriving. The West Osceola Library provided 156 people with opportunities through organizations such as the AARP, Adult Literacy League and Give Kids the World Village.



Virtual Innovation

Princh for mobile printing

The switch to Princh has provided a much faster, reliable way for patrons to send documents to print over the wireless network. Using their tablets, phones, or laptops, patrons can retrieve their documents from public printers in seconds with this system upgrade.



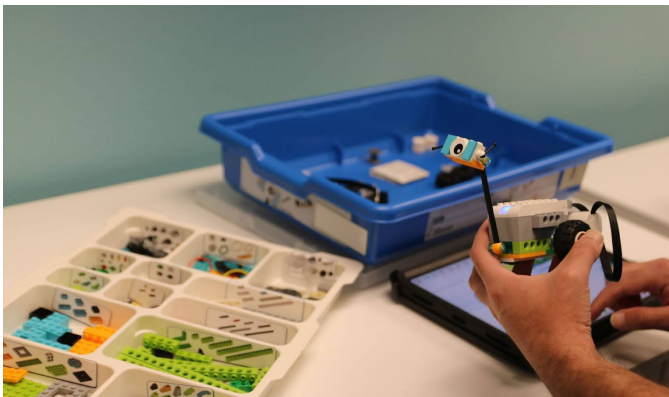
MessageBee for texts and phone calls

When the phone is our most important communication tool, it's essential the Library has a reliable and easy-to-use system of sending texts and phone notices for holds and renewals. With MessageBee, patrons can be sure to get their notices on time, control the notice language, and opt out of any notifications, and Library staff gain a user-friendly and consistent way to reach our patrons.



Robotics & Memory Lab launches

TechCentral has expanded with two new areas. The Robotics Lab is a school-age collaborative workspace for instructor-led classes and open lab hours featuring LEGO Mindstorm, Arduino, VEX robots and more. The Memory Lab, funded in part by the Osceola Friends of the Library, features a do-it-yourself suite of preservation technology designed to help capture and convert old photos, home videos, audio recordings and more for generations to come.



Community Visibility

Ready To Learn partnership with WUCF

The Library played a key role in WUCF's initiative to expand PBS KIDS' early learning resources to Central Florida communities. As part of the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn program, the Library helped create "Learning Neighborhood" programs that foster a culture of learning at home, in neighborhoods, and local spaces. The collaboration focused mostly on the Hart Memorial Library and brought highly visible workshops, events, and educational programs to local families, supporting early literacy, critical thinking, and school readiness and featuring favorite PBS characters. This ongoing partnership continues to break down barriers to caregiver participation, promoting intergenerational learning and ensuring that Library resources reach even more families across the region.



Celebrating the Eclipse

By April 8, the day of the solar eclipse, the Library had distributed over 700 eclipse glasses which accounted for most of the nearly 5,500 phone calls received in April! The Library hosted two events: Eclipse 101 at the St. Cloud Library, featuring a presenter from the Central Florida Astronomical Society, and the Here Comes the Sun: Eclipse Viewing Party at the West Osceola Library. WESH-2 news visited the party, interviewing kids and parents as they created an eclipse viewer and discussed how important it is that libraries teach about science and current events.



Cultural Connector

Celebrating Eid a-Fitr!

The West Osceola Library's Eid program, celebrating the end of Ramadan, was a big success with 51 attendees. More importantly, it sparked excitement for future events that celebrate Muslim culture. Patrons expressed appreciation for the representation, cultural education and sense of community, with many noting they'd never seen such programming before. Activities like henna art, a storytime, and traditional treats were well-received, and families valued the chance for their children to create connections with their Muslim culture and other families in the community.



Crochet, Sewing & Crafty Crew

The Library is getting everyone in the crocheting zone! With regular classes like BVL Library's Off the Hook introducing kids and teens to the joys of crochet with fun projects like plushies and jewelry, and Crochet 101 at the West Osceola Library where adults can make beautiful patterns and friends, the Library encourages connections, skill-building and meaningful hobbies while learning in a safe, supportive environment. Sewing classes at the BVL Library and in TechCentral teach adults basic techniques that turn into fun projects but also create the foundation for potential employment opportunities. Crafty Crew brings people together to learn and share over crafting, helping to curb isolation and create community bonds.



Literacy and Cultural programming:

Here's a sample of the classes and events the Library offers focusing on boosting Literacy and creating Cultural Connections.

Adults

International Festival

Art Under the Umbrella/Arte Bajo la Sombrilla

Crafters Fair - Poinciana, West Osceola, St. Cloud

US Citizen Workshops

Expanded English as a Second Language classes

Inclusive Activities for Adults

Guided painting programs at all libraries

Hello Project/Projecto Hello

Beginning & conversational Spanish language learning



Kids & Teens

Anime After Hours

Sensory Playdate & Autism awareness programming

Over the Rainbow storytime

Creativity Corner featuring multicultural artists

GLOW Read a Book

Family Literacy Night

Teen Ambassador teen service program

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

Who Was? history for kids

Lucky Scramble Book Release Party



Collection Highlights

A variety of materials were added to the collection to offer patrons fun and interesting ways to increase learning opportunities and expand Library use.

- **Wonderbooks:**
A new starter collection was created with a print book/pre-loaded audiobook player combo perfect for beginning readers, with new titles arriving quarterly.
- **Blood Pressure Kits:** Through a grant from the American Heart Association, this circulating collection of self-monitoring blood pressure kits is available at all libraries.
- **Foreign Language Collection in cloudLibrary:** Titles in French, Creole and Spanish have been added to cloudLibrary with plans for more titles in other languages.
- **FINRA collections:**
Books about investing, financial planning and budgeting were added to the collection as part of a grant to support communities affected by natural disaster.
- **hoopla discoverable in the catalog:**
To make finding the vast hoopla collection easier to find and access, records for items can be searched and discovered in the card catalog with a link out to hoopla for access.
- **Osceola Regional Behavioral Health as institutional partner:**
This became a new stop on our courier route for Assisted Living Facilities to help connect more people to important library resources.
- **Adding to Launchpad collection:**
A dedicated budget was implemented for increasing this popular collection with quarterly additions.
- **Foreign Language Courtesy Collection:** Responding to the increased multicultural make-up of our county, donations are sourced to create a courtesy collection of many languages.
- **Sheet Music added to TechCollection:**
With a focus on music production and creation, a new sheet music collection broadens the creative opportunities for TechCentral users.
- **DAR-funded American History Collection:** Through a generous donation, the Library built collections focusing on American history in digital formats.
- **Enhanced Florida Collection:**
Friends continuing support helps grow this local collection focusing on the history and environment of Florida, plus fiction inspired by the Sunshine State.

Community Relationships

These community groups and individuals provide valuable content, time or funding to support Library services and programming.

American Heart Association

AmeriLife

AvMed

Backlot Apartments

Cameron Preserve

Central Florida Astronomical Society

City of Kissimmee

City of St. Cloud

Club Pilates Celebration

Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida

Crayola Experience

Daughters of the American Revolution – Joshua Stevens Chapter, Abraham Salle Chapter

Early Learning Coalition

Embrace Celebration

Fun Spot

Gatorland

Intercession City Heritage Foundation

Jeremiah's Italian Ice

Kissimmee Main Street

Kissimmee Utility Authority

Linda Hiller, Artist

NALEO Educational Fund

Osceola County Clerk of the Court

Osceola County Property Appraiser

Osceola History

Pirates Cove

Pizza Hut

Portillo's Restaurant

Primary Care Access Network

School District of Osceola County

Professor Adam Simon, UCF

St. Cloud Main Street

Supervisor Of Elections Office

T.R.A.C.K. Center

Tertulia Cuatro Gatos

The National Entrepreneur Center's BizLink Orange

Truist Financial

UCF CARD-PALS

University of Puerto Rico

Wild Florida

WUCF

Grants Received

Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County

Early LearnHub, educational play space centered around STEAM learning, at the Hart Memorial Library - Valued at \$80,000

KUA

International Festival - \$1,000

ALA & FINRA

Thinking Money for Kids, financial literacy kits containing program curriculum and Launchpad tablets - Valued at \$2,000

DAR, Joshua Stevens Chapter

eBook collection - \$1,078

Awards & Recognitions Received

Candice Shields

Assistant Director

Selected Vice Chair of Downtown Kissimmee Council, Osceola Chamber of Commerce

Crystal Hamrick

Youth Services Librarian

Storytime Adventures presentation, Florida Library Association Annual Conference

Youth Services Team

Diversity in Storytimes presentation, Florida Library Association Annual Conference

Michelle Mosely

Adult Services Programming Coordinator

Florida Library Association Library Innovation Award



Stories of Impact

Enjoy these stories that highlight the ways we've assisted our patrons this year!

“At the start of the summer a teacher with Osceola County Public Schools approached us with a request to print out the back piece of a calculator in bulk for them. They had about 40 calculators lying around with no backs that they wanted to be able to use for students by the start of the school year. After testing to ensure the piece worked properly, we proceeded to print out enough copies to cover all of their needs and they were grateful for our efforts.”

Jon, TechCentral Makerspace Technician,
Hart Memorial Library



“While chatting about our Book Club selection, *The Little Board Game Cafe*, which talks about bringing people together from the community to play board games, our patron Lorraine noted how all the adult programs at the St. Cloud Branch helped to do that too. She could not say enough about the variety of programs, and how there seemed to be something for everyone.”

Teresa, Library Associate, St. Cloud Library

“A Book A Librarian patron who has been coming daily for resume and job application help cancelled his appointment today because he had a job interview! He came to the library before his interview to thank us for all of our help.”

Catherine, Branch Manager,
West Osceola Library



"This weekend, I graduated from the University of South Florida with my Masters in Library and Information Science! ... I couldn't think of anywhere else to take graduation photos than the place that started it all!

I just wanted to take a moment to share my story and to say thank you. What you do at the library is so important and changes lives. As a former school teacher, I know it's hard to imagine the impact you'll have in someone's life through the small interactions you've had with them, so I wanted to come back 20+ years later to let you know that what you do matters and has changed my life for the better. Your staff and programming instilled a love and joy of reading that I hope to pass on to the next generation of readers. Your staff provided me with the space to explore books and opened up new worlds of possibility for me. I am so extremely grateful to the Osceola Library System for building me into the person I am today."

Yasmeen Anis, *Facebook message May 2024*



"A regular stopped by the desk to thank us for helping him with the computers last night. He said that he didn't know that the computers were open to those without library cards and could be used without reservations. He said that an associate had explained the guest passes to him and that there was no reservation system for the computers. He told me that he was so grateful to have learned this and so excited that he could use the computers now!"

Abigail, *Library Associate, West Osceola Library*



Library Locations



Hart Memorial Central Library

211 East Dakin Avenue
Kissimmee, FL 34741



Veterans Memorial Library St. Cloud Branch

810 13th Street
St. Cloud, FL 34769



Poinciana Branch Library

101 North Doverplum Avenue
Kissimmee, FL 34758



Buenaventura Lakes Branch Library

405 Buenaventura Blvd
Kissimmee, FL 34743



West Osceola Branch Library

305 Campus Street
Kissimmee, FL 34747



Kenansville Branch Library

1154 South Canoe Creek Road
Kenansville, FL 34739



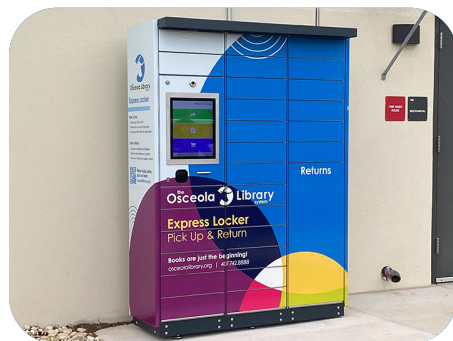
TechCentral

211 East Dakin Avenue
Kissimmee, FL 34741



Narcoossee Express Locker

5354 Rambling Road
St. Cloud, FL 34771



Reunion Express Locker

7855 Osceola Polk Line Road
Reunion, FL 34747