

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



VAN BUREN DISTRICT

ANTWERP/MATTAWAN - BANGOR
BLOOMINGDALE - COVERT
GOBLES - LAWRENCE
WEBSTER/DECATUR



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Throughout my career, I've noticed a great many people who are attracted to public libraries are what I refer to as "sanctuary seekers." These are people who are looking for a place that makes them feel welcome, safe, and undisturbed. Public libraries have traditionally been viewed as quiet places, and often they can be, but

anyone who has ever attended a preschool story time or summer reading event for older children will tell you that's frequently not the case. Be that as it may, the perception of public libraries as a quiet place often attracts people who are searching for refuge from any number of things: the business of their daily lives, a chaotic home, or perhaps problems they would prefer to forget, if only for a little while. Many people who work in public libraries are attracted to this type of work for the very same reasons; they're looking for an occupation that is calm and perhaps less demanding. Indeed, many people do find peace and serenity at the library.

However, once many arrive at the public library, they discover something very different. They discover connection. This has been my experience of public libraries. I first chose public library work because I was looking for an alternative to jobs I found unattractive. Like many "library people", by nature I'm an introvert and I was hoping to make some extra money in high school by doing something other than working in fast food or a supermarket. I was looking for something that wasn't primarily social. What I found was something completely unexpected. When people think of the public library, they often forget the word "public." Public libraries are places that welcome everyone, regardless of their socio-economic status, race, gender, or sexuality. As long as individuals are willing to abide by the library's policies, they are welcome. Working at my local public library, I encountered people of every background and type, and this caused a previously unknown piece of myself to come alive. I may have initially chosen public library work because I was attempting to avoid others, but I chose to stay in public library work for exactly the opposite reason, to connect with others.

Public libraries have embraced the role of fostering connection among the communities they serve. For example, all seven branches of the Van Buren District Library sponsor numerous offerings to connect their

communities to the world around them, and to each other: Transparent Language learning platform, Princeton Online Tutoring from Tutor.com, Ancestry.com, 24-hour outdoor Wi-Fi Internet access, Michigan Legal Help, mobile Internet hotspots for loan, and many dozens of events, classes, and programs. However, over the years I've noticed one VBDL location stands out in terms of connecting the community it serves, and that is VBDL's Lawrence Branch Library.

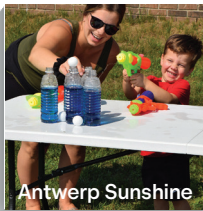
VBDL's Lawrence Branch is truly the hub of its community. Lawrence's manager, Anne Cox, seemingly knows absolutely everyone in town, and everyone in town seemingly knows her. In any given month Lawrence Branch Library sponsors dozens of events, classes, and programs. In January 2024 alone the Lawrence Branch sponsored 37. While there's no yoga studio in Lawrence, the Lawrence Branch Library doubles as one, with twice-weekly classes. The Lawrence Branch Library sponsors an annual concert which routinely draws over 300 people. The Lawrence Branch Library also collaborates with the Village and Township of Lawrence for events such as the annual Ox Roast and holiday festivities. Of course, if one wants a quiet place to spend some quality time alone with a book, one may do that in one of the Lawrence Branch's comfy chairs. However once one enters the Lawrence Branch Library, they may find themselves chatting with a neighbor they haven't seen in a while, using its Wi-Fi or public access computers to connect with friends or to look for a job, or drawn into one of the Lawrence Branch's many events.

The paradox of public libraries is they are often viewed as places of quiet solitude, when in reality they are gateways to a larger world. That portal may be through the learning or empathy which comes from reading a book, or it may be from connecting with others in a much more tangible way, such as participating in a class or learning a foreign language using the library's Transparent Language platform. If you want to spend some quality alone time, Van Buren District Library has you covered. However, if you would like to connect with your community, or even the larger world, Van Buren District Library can show you the way.

Best,
Dan T Hutchins
Executive Director



Lawrence



Antwerp Sunshine



Gobles



Covert



Bangor



VBDL Staff



Lawrence



Lawrence



Webster Memorial



Lawrence



Webster Memorial



Webster Memorial



Bloomington



Covert

VBDL & ITS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Van Buren District Library is all about connection, from linking patrons with books and resources to creating opportunities for coming together through library events. Libraries play a crucial role in creating vibrant communities by establishing these relationships, as well as developing partnerships with local businesses and organizations. In 2023, Van Buren District Library continued to create connections with local organizations to better serve the residents of Van Buren County.

One of VBDL's goals has been increasing access to the internet and technology, and to achieve this goal, the library has strengthened its partnerships with Bloomingdale Communications and Midwest Energy and Communications. Van Buren District Library initially partnered with Bloomingdale Communications in 2018, with Bloomingdale Communications donating \$3,000 toward the Library District's purchase of Princeton Online Tutoring, also known as Tutor.com. Tutor.com is an innovative platform allowing students and adults access to credentialed tutors with expertise in dozens of academic topics. Tutor.com also offers test preparation resources, in addition to live job search assistance and résumé writing help.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bloomingdale Communications aided the Library District with outfitting its branches with outdoor broadband WiFi access points, loaning the Library District the necessary equipment for installation. The addition of the WiFi access points would allow patrons 24/7 access to this necessary utility from the comfort of their vehicles. After the WiFi access points were installed, public use of the Library District's broadband Internet connection more than tripled.

The Van Buren District Library conducted beginner computer classes using laptops generously donated by Bloomingdale Communications in October 2023. These laptops facilitated programs at the Webster Memorial Branch and the Lawrence Branch, focusing on basic computer skills and introducing Canva, an online graphic design tool. These classes aim to equip Van Buren County residents, especially the 13% without internet access at home, with modern technological skills. Additionally, Bloomingdale Communications supplied a tablet for library public relations and marketing purposes, enabling the library to connect and engage with the community on social media.



In addition, VBDL forged connections with the Van Buren County Courts. On December 1, 2023, VBDL and several other libraries in Van Buren County became designated Michigan Legal Self-Help site navigators. As navigators, all VBDL branches have received training to help show patrons how to use the resources and information available on the Michigan Legal Self-Help website.

Other organizations that the Van Buren District connects with include Help Me Grow Van Buren, making it easier for families with young children to find resources and materials to ensure their children grow to be healthy and ready to succeed in school. The library also created a relationship with the Van Buren Cass Health Department to participate in special story times to instill healthy habits in children and their families. In September 2023, the library partnered with The Great Start Collaborative, Bronson Hospital in South Haven, Van Buren Community Mental Health, and the Family Coalition (Great Start Collaborative) to create a transportable Story Stroll that was installed outside the Lawrence Branch to encourage reading in the great outdoors and is available for use in the county.

As an integral part of the Van Buren County community, VBDL takes pride in its partnerships with local businesses and organizations, and the ones mentioned here give only glimpses of the connections libraries make in their communities. By developing these partnerships with organizations and businesses that serve and create jobs in Van Buren County, we work together to benefit the whole county and its communities. Looking back at 2023, VBDL has worked hard to bring the community together, and the library is excited to continue creating these connections in the future.







2023 LIBRARY DONORS

Allan B. Copley Charitable Foundation
Bloomingdale Communications
Lucinda Boven
Decatur Study Club
Barbara Farris

Friends of the Antwerp Sunshine
Library
Friends of the Lawrence Library
Friends of the Van Buren District
Library

Renate Hiestand
Dawn Lind
Audrey Pride
Jan Roeder
Yeo & Yeo Foundation

2023 VBDL BY-THE-NUMBERS

 EVENTS & CLASSES	EVENTS & CLASSES 1,946	SUMMER READING PROGRAM ATTENDANCE 2,726	SUMMER READING TAKE & MAKE KITS DISTRIBUTED 640
	ATTENDANCE 40,431		
 PEOPLE	SERVICE POPULATION 44,230	TOTAL ACTIVE, REGISTERED CARDHOLDERS 15,439	NEW CARDHOLDERS IN 2023 1,626
	NUMBER OF VISITORS 131,762		PUBLIC MEETING ROOM USES 536
 ITEMS	ITEMS LOANED TO BORROWERS 273,305	ITEMS LOANED TO OTHER MICHIGAN LIBRARIES 11,943	ITEMS BORROWED FROM OTHER MICHIGAN LIBRARIES FOR VBDL PATRONS 15,977
 COMPUTERS	NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMPUTER USES 11,551	EBOOKS, FILMS, TELEVISION, AND MUSIC STREAMED OR DOWNLOADED 41,489	ONLINE RESOURCE USES (TUTOR.COM, TRANSPARENT LANGUAGES, ANCESTRY.COM, FOLD3, OTHERS) 3,778
	NUMBER OF WIFI USES 47,695	WIFI HOTSPOT LOANS 3,839	
 COLLECTION SIZE BY FORMAT	TOTAL COLLECTION SIZE 157,069	DIGITAL (EBOOKS, E-AUDIO- BOOKS, STREAMING FILMS, ETC.) 40,181 OR 25.5%	MAGAZINES 2,427 OR 1.5%
	BOOKS 99,533 OR 63%	DVDS 11,793 OR 7.5%	WIFI HOTSPOTS: 200 OR LESS THAN 1%
 CIRCULATION BY COLLECTION	CHILDREN'S BOOKS 132,805 OR 48.5%	SPECIAL COLLECTIONS 16,033 OR 5.8%	
	ADULT BOOKS 73,616 OR 26.9%	CHILDREN'S DVDS & AUDIOBOOKS 10,132 OR 3.7%	
	ADULT DVDS & AUDIOBOOKS 36,880 OR 13.4%	WIFI HOTSPOTS 3,839 OR 1.4%	
	DIGITAL BOOKS, AUDIOBOOKS, FILMS, ETC. 45,267 OR 16.5%		

Comparative Branch Circulation - Total Circulation = 273,305 items

WEBSTER - 86,828 OR 31.7%
ANTWERP - 71,382 OR 26.1%
LAWRENCE - 37,416 OR 13.6%

BANGOR - 33,929 OR 12.4%
DIGITAL ITEMS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH
A SPECIFIC BRANCH - 25,954 OR 9.4%

GOBLES - 18,934 OR 6.9%
BLOOMINGDALE - 15,089 OR 5.5%
COVERT - 9,727 OR 3.5%

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	INDIVIDUAL LIBRARY MAJOR FUNDS		TOTAL-MODIFIED ACCRUAL BASIS	GASB NO. 34 ADJUSTMENTS	LIBRARY AS A WHOLE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES-FULL ACCRUAL BASIS
	GENERAL FUND	ENDOWMENT FUND			
REVENUES:					
TAXES	\$1,994,594	-	\$1,994,594	-	\$1,994,594
STATE SOURCES	44,315	-	44,315	-	44,315
PENAL FINES	178,853	-	178,853	-	178,853
FEES AND BOOK FINES	26,104	-	26,104	-	26,104
INVESTMENT INCOME	78,370		78,370	-	78,370
LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER	217,290	11,902	229,192	-	229,192
TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,539,526	\$11,902	\$2,551,428	-	\$2,551,428

2023 VBDL VOLUNTEERS

Janet Abshagen
Lisa Adams
Tyler Augst
Ember Beeman
Elaine Bloom
Sherryl Bosker
Lucinda Boven
Sal & Denise Campagna
Beth Clawson
Kristen Colgren
Crista Cornejo
Joan Cox
Katie Dragan
Ginny Drogula
Karol Buckner & Emmie
Wendy Estrada
Cheryl Evick
Chloe Fingas
Mike & Gail Galbreath
Bette Glindmeyer
Julie & Joe Glista
Bob Griffin
Anne Hawkinson
Theresa & Jeff Heaton

Kathleen Hutchins
Chris Imler
Carol Iverson
Karen Jensen
Niki Juriga
Steve Kaszar
Eleanor Kemp
Terra Klein
Pam Knight
Char & Paul Kolon
Matt Kusmack
Lawrence High School
Royalty Court
Tami Young & Lebowski
Diane Lewis
Geri Lima
Linda Marshall
Katelin Makay
Savannah McKinney
Dawn Mergener
Hailee Mount
Natalie Pausch
Joy Porter
Anna Pride



Clara Pride
Linda Read
Mary Redmon
Jan Roeder
Jim & Vera Sebree
Edward Sichterman
Kelsey Smith
Nathan Stratton
Bonita Suter
Marlene Suter
Betty Usrey
Kellie Vandermeer
Van Buren Intermediate School
District Cosmetology Program
Students
Mary Webster

STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE/STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

EXPENDITURES/ EXPENSES:	GENERAL FUND	ENDOWMENT FUND	TOTAL-MODIFIED ACCRUAL BASIS	GASB NO. 34 ADJUSTMENTS	LIBRARY AS A WHOLE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES- FULL ACCRUAL BASIS
SALARIES	\$1,230,082	-	\$1,230,082	\$2,348	\$1,230,082
PAYROLL TAXES	92,966	-	92,966	-	92,966
INSURANCE (HEALTH, LIFE, DISABILITY, W/C)	74,015	-	74,015	-	74,015
PENSION	41,910	-	41,910	984,243	1,026,153
OFFICE AND LIBRARY SUPPLIES	8,846	-	8,846	-	8,846
POSTAGE, PRINTING, COPYING	24,917	-	24,917	-	24,917
GAS AND OIL	3,976	-	3,976	-	3,976
JANITOR SUPPLIES	5,853	-	5,853	-	5,853
PROFESSIONAL FEES	69,930	-	69,930	-	69,930
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	29,777	-	29,777	-	29,777
UTILITIES	68,752	-	68,752	-	68,752
TELEPHONE	21,761	-	21,761	-	21,761
TRAVEL	7,939	-	7,939	-	7,939
PROMOTIONAL AND READING PROGRAMS	38,756	-	38,756	-	38,756
GENERAL AND VEHICLE INSURANCE	6,337	-	6,337	-	6,337
MAINTENANCE	59,963	-	59,963	-	59,963
CONTINUING EDUCATION	9,936	-	9,936	-	9,936
CAPITAL OUTLAY	59,273	-	59,273	(16,800)	42,473
AUDIOVISUAL, BOOKS, AND PERIODICALS	250,409	-	250,409	(176,060)	74,349
INTERNET FEES	35,290	-	35,290	-	35,290
MISCELLANEOUS	80	-	80	-	80
DEPRECIATION	-	-	-	227,287	227,287
TOTAL EXPENDITURES/ EXPENSES	\$2,140,768	-	\$2,140,768	\$1,021,018	\$3,161,786
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCES/NET POSITION	\$398,758	\$11,902	\$410,660	\$(1,021,018)	\$(610,358)
FUND BALANCE/NET POSITION-BEGINNING OF YEAR	2,138,106	209,070	2,347,176	1,981,244	4,328,420
FUND BALANCE/NET POSITION- END OF YEAR	\$2,536,864	\$220,972	\$2,757,836	\$960,226	\$3,718,062



VAN BUREN DISTRICT LIBRARY

LIBRARY LOCATIONS & HOURS

WEBSTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY DECATUR

District Administrative Offices
200 North Phelps Street, Decatur, MI 49045
Phone: 269.423.4771 | Fax: 269.423.8373
www.facebook.com/VBDLWebsterMemorial
Monday - Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.*
Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Webster Memorial Library closes at 7:00 p.m.,
Monday - Thursday, between Memorial Day
and Labor Day.*

ANTWERP SUNSHINE LIBRARY MATTAWAN

24823 Front Avenue, Mattawan, MI 49071
Phone: 269.668.2534 | Fax: 269.668.5332
www.facebook.com/VBDLAntwerp
Monday - Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday & Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BANGOR BRANCH LIBRARY

420 Division Street, Bangor, MI 49013
Phone: 269.427.8810 | Fax: 269.427.0588
www.facebook.com/bangorbranch
Monday-Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday-Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

BLOOMINGDALE BRANCH LIBRARY

109 East Kalamazoo, Bloomingdale, MI 49026
Phone: 269.521.7601 | Fax: 269.521.7614
www.facebook.com/VBDLBloomingdale
Monday-Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday-Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Denise Campagna - Lawrence Twp.
Bruce Cutting - Antwerp Twp.
Pam Dickerson - Village of Bloomingdale
Sandy Hanson - Van Buren County,
Board Secretary/Treasurer
Catherine Hulin - City of Gobles
Betty Markel - City of Bangor, Board Chair
Wayne Rendell - Covert Twp., Board Vice-Chair
David Vliek - Decatur Twp.

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and Television Series from the Libby or Hoopla apps.*

*It's easy to access downloadable content
from your phone, tablet, or eReader.*

www.vbdl.org

COVERT BRANCH LIBRARY

33680 M-140 Hwy, Covert, MI 49043
Phone: 269.764.1298 | Fax: 269.764.0433
www.facebook.com/covertbranch
Monday-Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GOBLES BRANCH LIBRARY

105 East Main Street, Gobles, MI 49055
Phone: 269.628.4537 | Fax: 269.628.0362
www.facebook.com/GoblesBranchVBDL
Monday-Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday-Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

LAWRENCE BRANCH LIBRARY

212 North Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064
Phone: 269.674.3200 | Fax: 269.674.3704
www.facebook.com/lawrencecommunitybranch
Monday-Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thursday-Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.