

2020 Annual Report



*Y*ONKERS
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nancy L. Maron, President
Josephine Ilarraza, Vice President
Stephen Jannetti, Treasurer
Stephan Giuffrida, M.D., Trustee
Joseph J. Puglia, Trustee
Darryl J. Mack, Sr., Trustee
Michael Sabatino, Trustee
John Saraceno, Trustee

Jesse Montero, Library Director



BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From the start, we knew that 2020 would be a year of change.

Following the retirement of the outstanding Ed Falcone, incoming Director Jesse Montero was set to begin work at the end of March. With Acting Director Susan Thaler skillfully guiding the organization, we all imagined a moment of carefully planned transition and a chance to consider the future of YPL. And then the world shut down.

All carefully made plans went out the window... and YPL got to work. Acting Director Thaler marshalled the staff through strategy sessions; incoming Director Montero reported to work weeks early, to quickly get up to speed. And throughout it all, YPL staff demonstrated creativity, passion, and a flexibility that should make all Yonkersites proud.

As you will see in this report, the YPL virtually overnight was able to pivot to become an organization that delivered on its vision – to be the community's place for discovery, engagement, and personal growth – even when that "place" was a Zoom meeting or a livestream.

As in-person events begin again, we hope you will continue to enjoy all the library has to offer, whether at our buildings, at your school, in your home, or online. You can be sure that whatever form it takes, YPL will continue to change lives every day.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Nancy". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional yet personal style.

President, Board of Trustees
Yonkers Public Library

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the staff I am pleased to submit the 2020 Annual Report for Yonkers Public Library (YPL).



It's a cliché to call 2020 "unprecedented," but that's what it was: the disruption caused by COVID-19 was unparalleled in our collective memory. Although nothing can make up for the loss of life and health, the pandemic forced YPL to adapt and innovate in ways that kept it relevant to the city it serves.

In March 2020, YPL closed its buildings following the direction of Yonkers Public Schools and other local libraries. Almost immediately, the library began developing a remote Plan of Service. IT staff busily distributed phones and laptops and established call forwarding so that YPL patrons could easily contact library staff through phone and email. Within the first week of closure, YPL launched its first ever virtual programs through Zoom and Facebook Live. Librarians pivoted their collection budgets toward eBooks and other digital materials. All the while, staff prepared a plan for a safe reopening of libraries. This required rethinking everything from policies to floorplans. In July, YPL was the first large library in the county to welcome patrons back into the library, and gradually reintroduced public computer access and other services.

Throughout the year YPL remained responsive to changes in the pandemic, always seeking to offer the most access consistent with health and safety practices. Even as buildings reopened, virtual programming continued to evolve and reach new audiences. By year's end, YPL had offered over 1,000 virtual programs with a combined attendance of over 15,000.

2020 also marked my first year at YPL. As a newcomer to YPL and Yonkers, the courage, creativity and commitment to public service exhibited by the library staff amazed me. I was profoundly moved by the Yonkers community's kindness and love for its library. It was also my pleasure to overlap my tenure with Deputy Director Susan Thaler, who served as YPL Interim Director in early 2020 and retired in early 2021. I want to thank her for the advice and support she gave me, as well as her crucial leadership as Interim Director during the early months of 2020.


Library Director

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

ANNUAL
REPORT
2020



473,325

Total Items
Circulated

351,787

Physical
Checkouts

117,091

Digital
Checkouts



264,745
Library Visits

114,832

Customer
Questions

46,583
Computer Use

34,142
Wifi Sessions



2,411
Total
Programs

42,531
Total
Attendees

In-person Library Programs

900
programs

13,069
attendees

Virtual Library Programs

1,114
programs

17,796
attendees

Community Programs

397
Programs

11,666
Attendees

“The Before Times”

Prior to Mid-March 2020, Yonkers Public Library was enjoying a very successful start to 2020. Some of the highlights included:

- **RECEIVING** a prestigious Mellon Foundation Public Humanities Grant with Sarah Lawrence College.
- **KICKING** off its “AT&T Code Heroes” grant program, a STEAM education program designed to educate the community on the effects of cyberbullying through teaching tweens how to code.
- **ACCEPTING** a generous \$25,000 grant from Assemblyman Nader Sayegh for a space study on improvements to the Will Library.
- **PROMOTING** Aurora Cruz, manager of Riverfront Library Reference Department, to become the Branch Administrator at the Grinton I. Will Library.

The COVID-19 Pivot

Buildings Close, but the Library Remains

- On March 14, YPL closed its buildings and shifted to a remote service plan.
- Within a week of shutting down YPL offered its first ever virtual program.
- Virtual programs offered through Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube Live formed the centerpiece of a remote service plan. In 2020, YPL conducted more than 1,000 virtual programs with a combined attendance of over 15,000.

Safely Reopening our Buildings

- The library invested in MERV-13 air filters and electrostatic sprayers, installed Plexi-glass partitions, and reorganized the library floor plan to facilitate social distancing. New processes were developed for handling and quarantining materials safely.
- The entire YPL Code of Conduct was rewritten to ensure the safety of YPL staff and visitors.
- YPL instituted "contact free pickup" service in June 2020, shortly after New York State authorized it in their reopening plan. About a month later, YPL reopened its doors to limited browsing - the first large library in the region to do so.

Library Outreach Helps Yonkers 2020 Census Count

- The City of Yonkers engaged YPL for its Yonkers Counts census campaign.
- YPL staff performed extensive outreach and assisted in the counting of 337 households (with a combined 953 household members).
- It's estimated that by helping nearly 1,000 "hard to count" residents complete their census questionnaires, Yonkers will receive an additional \$2.3 million in federal funds each year over the next decade for everything from transportation to housing to educational assistance.

Yonkers News Archive Goes Digital

- YPL partnered with Newspapers.com, a subsidiary of Ancestry.com, to digitize its extensive local newspaper microfilm collection.
- Nearly 1,000 reels of microfilm, including the entire run of the *Yonkers Herald Statesman*, *Yonkers Herald*, *Yonkers Examiner*, and *Yonkers Statesman* to the company's digitization labs. A portal was developed so visitors can search, print and download over 1.2 million pages of digitized newsprint for free.

2020 Election Early Voting at YPL

- YPL hosted early voting at the Riverfront Library and the Grinton I. Will Library, the only two early voting sites in the entire city of Yonkers.
- Nearly 20,000 voters participated in early voting at both library locations



Yonkers Public Library

Crestwood Library

16 Thompson Street
Yonkers, NY 10707

Grinton I. Will Library

1500 Central Park Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10710

Riverfront Library

One Larkin Center
Yonkers, NY 10701

