

YOUR STORY starts here



The library's mission is to educate, empower, inspire, and entertain our diverse community.



Cathy Russ
Cathleen Russ

Letter from the Director

There is never a dull moment at the West Bloomfield Township Public Library! Over the last 18 months, we have been working hard to bring you innovative library spaces, programs, services, and collections, driven by the feedback we received from the Community Needs Assessment. This multi-pronged survey, which included focus groups, online and print surveys, and informal feedback, let us know what you wanted to see from your library in a post-pandemic world. Your library is a dynamic entity and should be responsive to the changing needs of our residents, service area, and community. It is a pleasure for us to connect with you and make your ideas, hopes, and dreams for your library a reality.

The Library Board of Trustees, Administration, and Staff care deeply about the community we serve and do our utmost to maximize your tax dollars to provide a high standard of excellence. Please know how very much we appreciate your support and continued patronage of your West Bloomfield Township Public Library.

Retirement



Judith A. Holtz served on the library board for 34 years beginning in 1988. Holtz retired on October 11, 2023.

Student Success Starts Here

95% of residents believe it is important or very important for the library to support students' educational success.¹

The library coordinated with local schools on kindergarten field trips to encourage new students to use the West Bloomfield Library. Staff facilitated 8 tours for a total of 358 students, leading a storytime and introducing the students to library spaces and collections, including a behind-the-scenes tour!

Library cardholders can now access ABCMouse, a website curriculum designed to help young children (ages 2-8+) lay a foundation for future academic success. The database has quickly become a favorite, ranking among the library's top 5 most used databases of 2023.

The library has returned to visiting the West Bloomfield Middle School during lunch—this time, with technology in tow! Young Adult Services Coordinator Steve Ketcham appears in the iCenter each Tuesday during the school year to represent the West Bloomfield Library to students and introduce new technologies like virtual reality headsets.



"It amazes me what the WB library provides for the community given that it is all free. The diversity of opportunities is fantastic for drawing the interest of both my kids; the multitude of materials to explore has been wonderful no matter the age and development of my kids; and the staff has always been kind."

—Michelle Vanston, West Bloomfield Resident

Lifelong Learning Starts Here

90% of residents believe it is important or very important for the library to support lifelong learning for adults and seniors.¹

The library brings new materials and engaging programs to multiple senior living facilities each month. The library visited an average of 14 residences a month, checking out 8,540 library materials to residents during this period. In addition to longstanding book clubs, library staff facilitated new programs, including Murdle (murder mystery puzzles) and Speed Dating with Books (a way for readers to connect with new books).

The library updated outreach offerings to include home delivery for residents who are unable to visit the library, allowing limited mobility patrons to check out more materials at a given time. Interest in the service has expanded fivefold since switching from a mailing service, with the service available upon request to qualifying patrons who apply online or speak with the Adult Information Desk.



"Thank you for the evidenced stellar outreach you do for seniors—and for the love your team brings everyone."

—Donald Hinkson, West Bloomfield Resident

New collections were established to support patrons' health and well-being. Health and Wellness Kits connect patrons to themed activities and media. Therapy cards help patrons take better care of their mental health. Puzzles keep patrons mentally active.

A Seed Library was launched, located on the Westacres Branch Terrace. Over 1,100 seed packets were picked up from the library in its inaugural season (March – October). The library also participated in the One Seed, One State program.

The library acquired several new eResources for adults. *The Wall Street Journal* has quickly become one of the library's most used eResources, and Mango Languages has eclipsed the library's former language learning resource in popularity.

¹Community Needs Assessment. (2023).

Children's Literacy Starts Here

94% of residents believe it is important or very important for the library to promote children's literacy.¹

A Storybook Trail has been created near the Main Library in partnership with West Bloomfield Parks. The path starts outside the Storytime Terrace and ends at the Sledding Hill.

The library's Early Childhood Specialist Emily Vickers led professional development presentations on library resources and early literacy techniques. The presentations helped 125 local early childhood staff members learn more about library resources and approaches to improve early childhood literacy.

The library's collection of literacy kits for children has expanded. New multilingual language learning kits, speech and language development kits, grammar kits, and additional STEAM and Tender Topics kits support families through themed activities and media.



"Love everything about our library. I came here as a child, and now I'm bringing my kids--and they love it too!"

—Renee Khmoro, West Bloomfield Resident

Community Connections Start Here

82% of residents believe it is important or very important for the library to connect people to community resources.¹

The library opened a Reflection Room—a space to support mindfulness and relaxation. The new room offers library visitors a designated area to take a break from their studies and meditate, pray, practice yoga, read quietly, or generally decompress. *Funded by a generous bequest from the Ruth S. Elbling Trust.*

The library hosted its first-ever Human Library event, encouraging visitors to borrow a person instead of a book for a 30-minute conversation about their life experiences. In total, 70 visitors connected with 13 trained human “books,” with 79% of participants reporting that the experience changed their view about a topic they'd discussed. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

The library strengthened its relationship with community partners and created a Community Resource Guide, which connects families to local organizations for support. The library partnered with over 10 community organizations for events and services across the community.

The library conducted a Community Needs Assessment to better understand the community's changing needs. Resulting data has helped the library identify areas for improvement, which will guide the strategic plan.



"The Human Library is a wonderful experience for getting an insight into people who experience different things than you do, to show that everyone has their own hardships, experiences and perspectives, as well as positive outcomes. Everyone has something they can bring to the table, no matter what they've been through."

—Jody Kaplan, West Bloomfield Resident

The Westacres Branch expanded program offerings to provide more opportunities for residents of all ages to learn and connect. Before the pandemic, the branch only organized events for ages 0-5. Due to survey results, Westacres staff expanded age offerings, growing from 129 events in 2019 to 205 events in 2023 (a 59% increase).

A new website was launched alongside a new library catalog and calendar. The new website replaces the former site built over 15 years ago, in 2007. The new website boasts improved accessibility, modernized design, and a mobile-adaptable interface.

GIFTS FROM THE Friends of the Library

The Friends of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library raise funds through memberships, Friendship purchases, and other campaigns to enhance library services and fund special events. During this period, Friends funding helped:

Fuel childhood learning and literacy through play with new activity tables, discovery tablets, readalong books, Summer Reading rewards, and speech therapy classes

Encourage a community of readers through visits from popular authors and book group kits

Improve digital equity with a collection of wireless hotspots available for circulation

Foster STEAM in the community through solar eclipse glasses and a Cricut machine

Support diversity and understanding with the Human Library and the library's first statues representing children of color.



A Community of Readers



Circulation & Increased Membership

The library's circulation per capita is **20.1**. That's the equivalent of every person in the library's service area checking out 20.1 titles over one year. Library card signup increased by **38%** from the previous fiscal year.



Availability of Library Collections

The library's collections include **186,837 physical items** and **1,429,411 eLibrary items** (cloudLibrary, OverDrive, hoopla, Kanopy, Udemy, Creativebug, etc.).



Popularity of Physical & Digital Resources

88% of materials checked out were physical; **12%** were digital, holding steady around last year's numbers even as publishers increase the costs of digital materials for libraries.



Program Attendance

The library held **1,111 programs** for a total attendance of **48,866**, representing a **37% increase** in attendance from the previous fiscal year.



Library Visits

The library logged **632,910 visits** in the previous fiscal year. That's the equivalent of every person in the library's service area visiting the library about **9 times over one year**.

Cathy Russ, Library Director
Jeff Crocker, Assistant Library Director

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HOURS OF SERVICE:
Monday – Thursday: 9 AM – 9 PM
Friday & Saturday: 9 AM – 6 PM
Sunday (Main): Noon – 6 PM
Sunday (Main, Summer): Noon – 5 PM
Sunday (Westacres): Noon – 5 PM

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