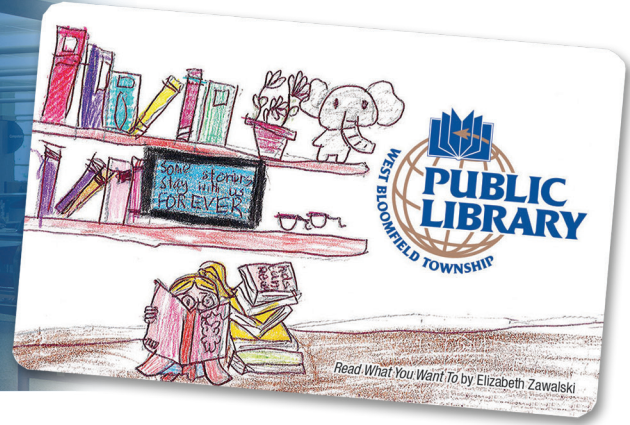


# A COMMUNITY OF READERS

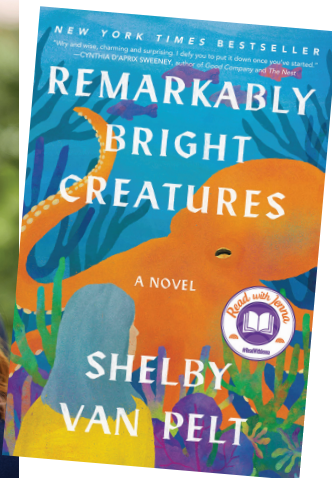


## Authors Inspire Readers at the Library Library to host variety of author events this season

The West Bloomfield Library is bringing stories to life with author events designed to spark conversation, celebrate creativity, and foster a lifelong love of reading.

From bestselling novels to award-winning children's books and local voices, these programs highlight the library's role as a center for learning and connection.

### Shelby Van Pelt: A Bestseller Comes to Town



*Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt is told from the perspective of a curmudgeonly octopus who forms a friendship with the woman who works the night shift at the aquarium. Together, they unravel the decades-old mystery of her missing son, transforming both their lives. **Van Pelt will visit the Berman Center on Wednesday, March 5 at 6:30 PM.**

Fans of *Remarkably Bright Creatures* won't want to miss an evening with *New York Times* bestselling author Shelby Van Pelt.

The debut novel, referred to by many as "that octopus book," has reappeared on the bestseller list multiple times since its release in 2022 and continues to rank among the library's top checkouts. It has been

picked up by Netflix as a film and remains a favorite among local book clubs.

Diane Henderson, the Friends of the Library's BOOKTalk chair, initially read the book at her sister's recommendation.

"As someone who tracks fiction pretty closely, I was surprised I hadn't heard of it," Henderson said. "Then I read it. I fell in love. Yes—with a novel where one of the primary characters is an octopus and the other is an older widow."

Van Pelt will visit the Berman Center for the Performing Arts in a joint partnership between the West Bloomfield Township Public Library and Bloomfield Township Public Library on Wednesday, March 5 at 6:30 PM.

"Having the opportunity to hear Van Pelt talk about her journey to this novel would be amazing," Henderson said. "It was an unexpected bestseller. I would love to hear her talk about her writing process and her responses to its reception."

The event will feature a conversation with Van Pelt and Executive Library Director Cathy Russ, followed by a book signing. Registration opens January 6. Advanced registration is required, as seating is limited. Books will be available for purchase, provided by Schuler Books.

### Local Author Fair: A Showcase of Talent

Back for its second year, the library's local author fair draws in readers of all ages. Authors at the fair represent a variety of genres—from nonfiction to fantasy—and come from different publishing backgrounds.

West Bloomfield resident Caroline Kerfoot participated in the library's first Local Author Fair in 2024. Kerfoot is the author-illustrator of *Adventures of Fox*, a series of children's rhyming picture books about kindness and friendship.

*continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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"The West Bloomfield Library Local Author Fair is so much fun to participate in," said Kerfoot. "Both to connect with the community and fellow local authors!"

Young adult and children's book author Jean Alicia Elster also had a table at last year's event.

"For me, the value in participating in the West Bloomfield Library's Local Author Fair was two-fold," Elster said. "I made

meaningful connections with many people from the library's wonderful community of readers and book lovers. And I enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with the local author community, chatting with old friends and making new friends."

This event will take place on Sunday, March 23 from 1-4 PM. No registration is required to attend as a reader. Those interested in applying for a table as an author can do so before February 14 on the library's website at [wblib.org/local-author](http://wblib.org/local-author)



Local author Kinyel Friday at the 2024 Local Author Fair

## Award-Winning Authors Visit Schools

Each year, the library supports young readers by partnering with local public schools for reading programs culminating in author visits. This spring, celebrated children's author/illustrator Jarrett Lerner will visit elementary schools in West Bloomfield School District. Lerner is the creator of *EngiNerds*, *Geeger the Robot*, *The Hunger Heroes*, *Nat the Cat*, *A Work in Progress*, and activity books *Give This Book a Title* and *Give This Book a Cover*.

Meanwhile, at West Bloomfield Middle School and Bloomfield Hills' Lone Pine Elementary, the months-long reading programs will welcome visits from award-winning author Sarah Weeks. Weeks has written over 60 books for young readers, including *Pie*, *Save Me a Seat*, and *So B. It*—now a feature-length film.

On Monday, March 17 at 7 PM, Weeks will also stop by the Main Library to talk about her stories and writing process, including answering questions from the crowd. Students in grades 3-8 are encouraged to register for this event at [wblib.org](http://wblib.org).

These upcoming author events support the library's mission by connecting authors and readers over the power of storytelling.

To learn about all the library's upcoming events, including special MLK Day and Black History Month programs, visit the calendar at [wblib.org](http://wblib.org) or browse the library's latest event guides at [calameo.com/wblib](http://calameo.com/wblib)



## THANK YOU! Library Millage Approved

Voters approved a millage replacement at a rate of 0.70. Thank you to the West Bloomfield community for supporting your library's continued excellence for another 10 years.

*Keep reading the library's website, newsletter, and social media pages to learn how funds are put to work for capital improvements, technology upgrades, and more.*

## Community Resource Fair

**Saturday, April 12 from 11 AM-1 PM**

Main Library

Looking for support or direction from local experts on topics like health, finances, childhood development, education, and more? Explore resources from the greater West Bloomfield area at your library. Representatives from local organizations will be on hand to answer questions, provide information, and share unique experiences with individuals and families. *For all ages.*

## Staff Spotlight



### Chris Upham Support Services Library Aide

**Responsibilities:** Process, catalog, and link new materials so staff and patrons can locate and reserve them; assist patrons at the circulation desks when needed.

**Favorite Movies:** Star Wars Trilogy

**Fun Fact:** I have a Star Wars Room (the original 3) at home.

*"I really enjoy seeing the new books arrive and getting them ready to put out for the public. It's satisfying to be able to help patrons receive the books so they can enjoy the newest offerings from their favorite authors."*

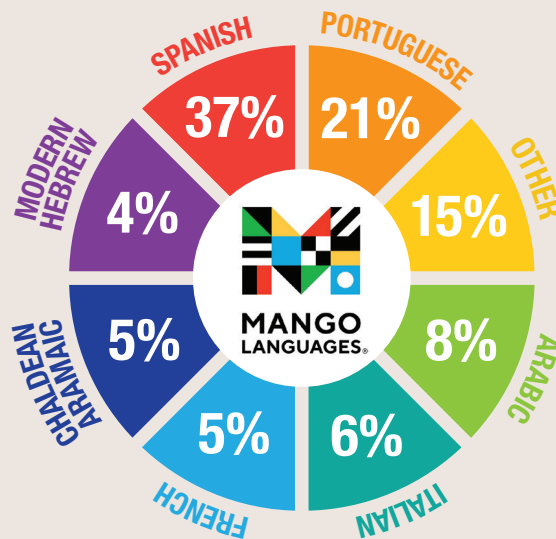
# Language Learning at Your Library

From English language tutoring to youth multilingual language kits, the library boasts a variety of Language Learning resources for all ages. **Learn more at [wblib.org/language-learning](http://wblib.org/language-learning).**

## 24.5%

of West Bloomfield residents speak a language other than English at home (US Census, 2022).

Over the last year, West Bloomfield Library members have used the Mango Languages website and app for **1,710 sessions across several languages:**



Other languages include Russian, Korean, Polish, Japanese, German, English, Chinese, Urdu, and more for a total of **over 70 available languages**.

**NEW! American Sign Language**  
If you're looking for a sign to learn sign language, this is it! West Bloomfield Library members can now learn ASL (👉👈👉) through the Mango Languages app.

The international language collection includes **1,389 books across 13 world languages**. Korean books were added in 2022 after Census data indicated Korean was a top 10 language in the community.



**3 CHECKOUTS / YEAR** per language learning book  
Last year, each book in the library's language learning/literacy collection was checked out 3 times on average. This collection includes books that teach English and other world languages.

**40 PARTICIPANTS / MONTH** in English conversation groups  
The library's English language conversation groups meet twice a week. Recently, attendance has averaged 40 participants per month.

## NEW! Let's Read: An English Language Book Club

Main Library Community Commons

English language learners are invited to join Let's Read, a book club designed for individuals who are learning English and looking to improve their language skills. Each month we'll discuss a popular book in a friendly, relaxed environment. You do not need to read the entire book to participate. **To request a copy of the book, please contact us at [events@wblib.org](mailto:events@wblib.org) or (248) 232-2290.**

**Remarkably Bright Creatures** by Shelby Van Pelt  
Tuesday, January 7 at 2 PM

**The Giver** by Lois Lowry  
Tuesday, February 4 at 2 PM

**The Thursday Murder Club** by Richard Osman  
Tuesday, March 4 at 2 PM

# Level Up Your Library Experiences

## Virtual Reality at the Library

The library is expanding Virtual Reality (VR) programming! A generous donation from the Friends of the Library's Giving Tuesday campaign has allowed more headsets to be added to the library's supply.

VR headsets allow users to immerse themselves in a variety of experiences, from music, art, and dance to puzzle games and cultural experiences. Users can explore outer space, dive into underwater habitats, visit cultural sites and historical wonders, and more.

Young Adult Services Coordinator Steve Ketcham brings headsets with him to weekly lunches at the West Bloomfield Middle School's iCenter to encourage students to be active on their lunch breaks.

**Want to try VR?** Ages 12+ are invited to drop by the Main Library Meeting Room during VR Adventures on Saturdays, February 8 and March 8 from 2:30-4 PM.

## Technology Petting Zoo

**Sunday, March 9 from 2-4 PM**

Main Library Community Commons

Try out the latest gadgets and devices before you buy them! At the technology petting zoo, visitors can interact with VR headsets, streaming sticks, security cameras, digital picture frames, smart home equipment, and more. Staff will be available to answer questions.

## Maker Events in the Community Commons

Since the Community Commons opened, the library has hosted numerous hands-on workshops where teens and adults can discover the magic of turning digital designs into physical objects using the library's laser cutter, 3D printer, sublimation printer, and Cricut. With different projects offered each month, participants have been able to bring a variety of creations to life. **Registration is required and space is limited.** To learn more, visit the event calendar at [wblib.org](http://wblib.org) or talk with library staff.



Participants have etched designs into notebooks with a laser cutter, crafted bookmarks on the 3D printer, and more.

## NEW! Self-Check

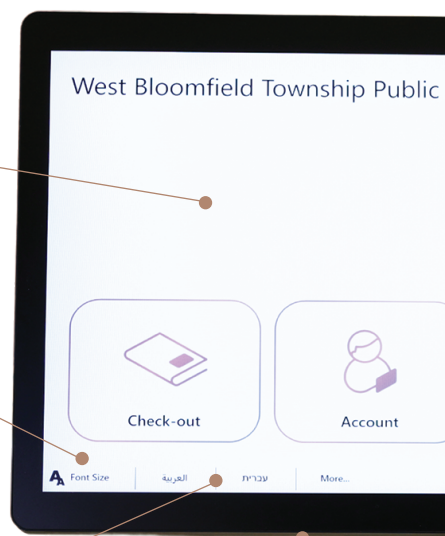
Have you seen the library's new self-check stations? You can find one at both branches, with plans to add more. The new stations boast a user-centered design with

**Simple Menu Options:**  
Check out materials, view your account, or renew materials from the main menu.

**Accessibility Options:**  
Text too small? Enlarge it with the tap of a button.

**Language Options:**  
Translate text into one of over 40 languages.

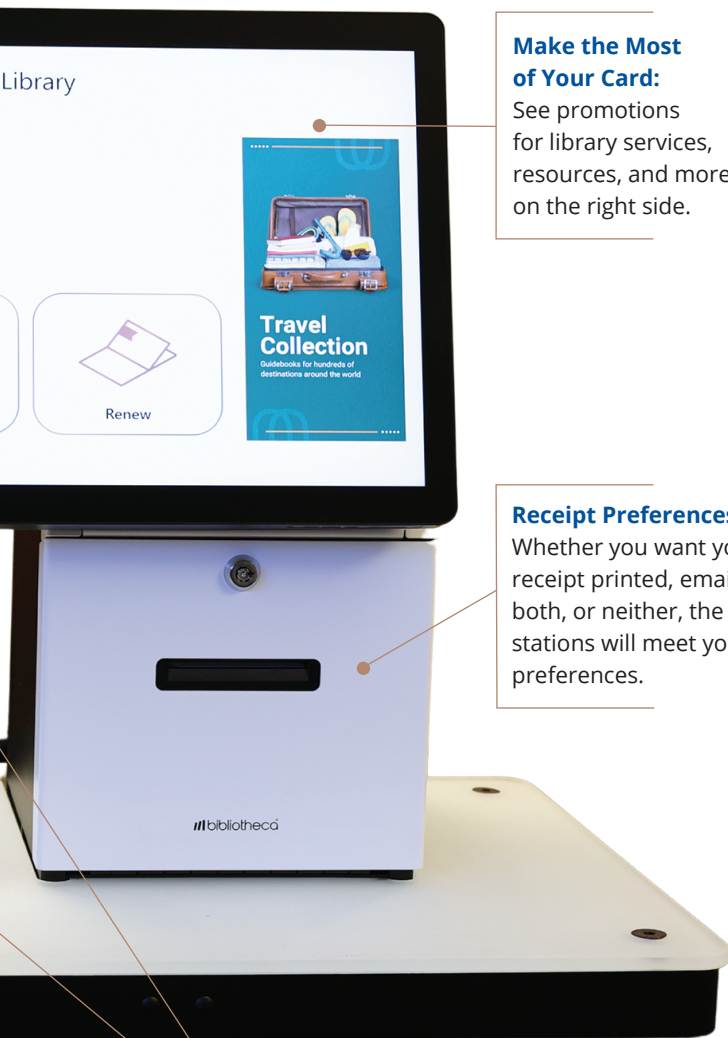
**Save Time:**  
Place a stack of library materials on the scanner bed, and it will check them out all at once!



# Games & Gadgets at Your Library

## Checkout Stations

New self-checkout stations?  
Replace all older stations in the coming months.  
Improved accessibility and sustainability features.



### Make the Most of Your Card:

See promotions for library services, resources, and more on the right side.

### Receipt Preferences:

Whether you want your receipt printed, emailed, both, or neither, the new stations will meet your preferences.

### 3 Ways to Access Your Account:

Scan your library card, scan your card from your phone, or enter your account number when prompted.



## Jigsaw Puzzle Tournament

Saturday, March 1  
from 1-4 PM

Main Library Meeting Room  
Put your team of 4 to the puzzling test in this jigsaw puzzle contest! Which team can complete their puzzle the fastest, or get the closest to finishing?

For ages 13 and up.

**Registration is required.**

## NEW! Board Game Collection

You can now select from among 30 board games to check out from your library and take home. The new collection features games for all ages and skill levels, from family classics to new strategy games and more.



Explore the new collection at both branches! Main Library: located in the fireplace adult periodicals area, next to puzzles and kits. Westacres Branch: located behind the public computers, next to the travel books.

**Did you know you can check out telescopes, jigsaw puzzles, and more with your library card?** Learn about the library's nontraditional collections at [wblib.org/kits-puzzles-more/](http://wblib.org/kits-puzzles-more/).

## Instagram Classes

Main Library Community Commons OR Online via Zoom

Join us for a series of workshops that will teach you how to become a photo and video editing expert using Instagram! For your convenience, each workshop will have an in-person and online option; both sessions are the same. You must bring your own smartphone or tablet and have a functional email address to participate. See the library's online event calendar or talk with staff for details about each class. *Basic tech skills are required. Registration is required.*

**Instagram 101:** Create a profile & upload photos

**Instagram 102:** Curate a bio and highlights section

**Instagram 103:** All about Reels

# Family News

## Coming Soon: Comfort Room

A new room will soon join the Main Library youth area, next to the family bathrooms. The Comfort Room will be available as a lactation and sensory space. Features include an acoustic wall, a sink, a rocking chair, and sensory toys. Renovations are in progress and expected to be completed by spring.



## A New Service for New Parents

### Brilliant Baby Kits Offer Families Support



Westacres Youth Programming Assistant Mary Northcott holds a Brilliant Baby Kit. Each kit includes a board book, shaker toy, baby toothbrush, spoon, and informational pamphlets for new parents to keep.

Parents are a child's first teacher, and the library is their first classroom. The West Bloomfield Library has launched a new service to support families with babies in the community. Aimed at enriching early literacy and creating bonding moments, the library's Brilliant Baby Kits provide families with tools, toys, and resources to lay a strong foundation for their newborn's development. *Kits are sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

**Does your family have a new baby (birth to 6 months)?** Register to request a kit. Kits are available to residents of West Bloomfield and contract communities with a current library card in our system. Visit [wblib.org/new-parents](http://wblib.org/new-parents) to learn more.

## Winter Reading Program

Now – Friday, February 21

Avoid the winter blues by cozying up with a good book! Enroll in the Winter Reading Program to earn incentives for time spent reading. Library members of all ages are invited to join. Readers under age 18 can earn up to 3 books to keep for time spent reading. Adult readers can earn a Friendship gift certificate for reading 25 hours during the program. All participants earn a prize for registering, too! **Sign up on the Beanstack app or at [westbloomlib.beanstack.org](http://westbloomlib.beanstack.org).**



## Educational Resources

If your child loves games like Roblox, but you're looking for more educational options that still deliver on fun, the library has you covered! Your library card is your key to accessing online game platforms designed to engage young minds, blending the excitement of gaming with educational content parents can feel good about. **To get started, visit [wblib.org/for-youth](http://wblib.org/for-youth) and scroll down to view eResources.**



Designed for children ages 2-8+, ABCmouse offers a variety of educational games, activities, books, and more covering essential subjects like reading, math, science, social studies, art, and music. With a colorful, game-like interface, kids earn rewards as they progress, keeping them motivated and engaged in learning.



Adventure Academy is an immersive educational game designed for kids ages 8-13. It covers a wide range of subjects, including language arts, math, social studies, science, and more. Kids can complete quests, learn through mini-games, and interact with others in a safe online environment, making learning both social and adventurous. Available at home or on the library's youth computers.



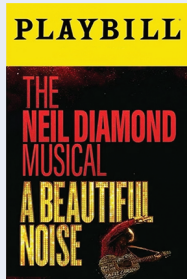
For those ages 8+ interested in coding and game design, Fiero Code is an excellent way to learn the basics of programming while having fun. This interactive platform teaches coding concepts through engaging challenges, allowing students to create their own games, animations, and websites. *Generously sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

# From Your Friends

## Talkin' Broadway

Main Library Meeting Room

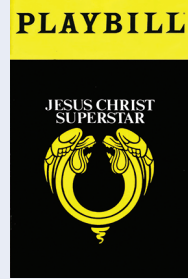
Enjoy an excerpt of a popular play or musical performed by local actors and singers, as well as a discussion with visiting Broadway veterans. Prepare for the evening by reading the script or viewing the movie—or just come to listen! *Generously organized and sponsored by the Friends of the Library and Michigan Stage.*



**A Beautiful Noise**  
Sunday, Jan. 19  
at 2 PM



**The Wiz**  
Sunday, Feb. 16  
at 2 PM



**Jesus Christ Superstar**  
Sunday, March 16  
at 2 PM

## Music @ Main

Main Library Meeting Room

*Generously organized and sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

**Sunday, January 26 at 2 PM** – Jan Krist  
**Sunday, February 2 at 2 PM** – Katie Geddes  
**Sunday, March 30 at 2 PM** – Blue Water Ramblers  
**Sunday, May 11 at 2 PM** – Joel Palmer



## Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale

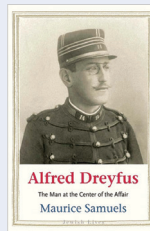
**Friday, April 4 from 7-9 PM**  
*Friends Member Preview Sale*

**Saturday, April 5 from 9 AM-5 PM**  
**Sunday, April 6 from 12 PM-3 PM**  
*\$5 Bag Day Sale*

## BOOKTalks

Main Library Community Commons

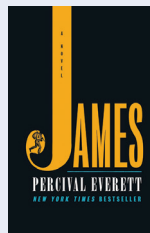
*Generously organized by the Friends of the Library.*



### **Alfred Dreyfus: The Man at the Center of the Affair**

by Maurice Samuels  
Facilitator: Ann Finn

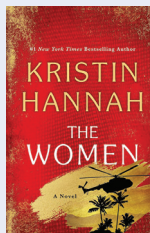
**Thursday, January 9 at 7 PM**  
**Friday, January 10 at 10 AM**



### **James**

by Percival Everett  
Facilitator: Diane Henderson

**Thursday, February 13 at 7 PM**  
**Friday, February 14 at 10 AM**



### **The Women**

by Kristin Hannah  
Facilitator: Cathy Russ

**Thursday, March 13 at 7 PM**  
**Friday, March 14 at 10 AM**



### **What You Are Looking For Is in the Library**

by Michiko Aoyama  
Facilitator: Naomi Frenkel

**Thursday, April 10 at 7 PM**  
**Friday, April 11 at 10 AM**



### **The Measure**

by Nikki Erlick  
Facilitator: Jaema Berman

**Thursday, May 8 at 7 PM**  
**Friday, May 9 at 10 AM**

## What's Cooking?

Main Library Meeting Room

What's Cooking? features local chefs and other food and beverage experts as they give demonstrations with samples. *Generously organized and sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

### **Melt 'n Dip**

**Wednesday, February 12**  
at 6 PM

### **Alchile Mexican Grill & Bar**

**Wednesday, March 12**  
at 6 PM



The nation's highest honor for libraries.

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West Bloomfield, MI 48323

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Permit 11



### Kits for Newborns

The library has launched a service to support new parents. *Learn more on page 4.*



## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Thank you, West Bloomfield! The library millage proposal passed. This millage represents 42% of the library's overall funding, so we are very grateful for your support. It is a relief to know that we can move forward over the next 10 years with stable funding, continuing the library's tradition of excellence and service. In the short term, we plan to implement the 24/7 holds pickup lockers in 2025 and update all the self-checkout stations with new, accessible stations. For the long term, we are planning for capital, IT, and infrastructure improvements to both buildings. Watch this space for more information!

I also want to congratulate Michael Dorfman, Karen Eickemeyer, Carol A. Kravetz, Rhonda Orr and Raman Singh on their re-election to the library board and welcome Jennifer Taylor Boykins to the board. I am looking forward to working with all of you. I would also like to thank Trustee Ken Macon, who retired from the library board at the end of his term in November, for his many years of dedicated service to the library on the library board as well as on the Friends of the Library's board. You will be missed, Ken!

The days may be shorter, but there is never a shortage of things to do at your library, especially this winter. I hope you have signed up for the Winter Reading Program—when the snow flies, there's no better way to beat the Winter Blues than to cozy up with a good book!

We are also excited about the upcoming visit from author Shelby Van Pelt, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Remarkably Bright Creatures*. You will never look at an octopus the same again.

Browse this issue to learn about more author visits and book discussion groups at your library, from the Friends' BOOKTalk series, which recently marked its 40 year anniversary, to the new Let's Read series for English language learners. Plus, read about our cutting-edge technology programs and new nontraditional collections. We hope to see you often.

With gratitude,

*Cathy Russ*

Executive Library Director

### MAIN LIBRARY

4600 Walnut Lake Road  
(248) 682-2120  
TDD: (248) 232-2292  
Email: [wbrf@wblib.org](mailto:wbrf@wblib.org)  
Text: (248) 648-3368

### WESTACRES BRANCH

7321 Commerce Road  
(248) 363-4022  
Email: [wacrref@wblib.org](mailto:wacrref@wblib.org)

### HOURS OF SERVICE

Monday – Thursday: 9 AM – 9 PM  
Friday & Saturday: 9 AM – 6 PM  
Sunday (Main): Noon – 6 PM  
Sunday (Westacres): Noon – 5 PM

[wblib.org](http://wblib.org)

### The library will be closed:

Sunday, April 20  
Friday, May 16  
Saturday, May 24  
Sunday, May 25  
Monday, May 26

Cathy Russ, Executive Library Director  
Jeff Crocker, Associate Library Director

### Board of Trustees

Jennifer Taylor Boykins  
Michael Dorfman  
Kari Eickemeyer  
Carol A. Kravetz  
Rhonda Orr  
Raman Singh



## From the Director's Shelf

