

YOUR STORY



starts here

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

Community Commons Room



Cathy Russ

Cathleen Russ

Letter from the Director

2024 was an eventful year at the West Bloomfield Township Public Library. We continued to implement the recommendations of the Community Needs Assessment by opening two new spaces (the Reflection Room and the Community Commons) and expanded several collections (kits, puzzles, Playaways and eBooks), as well as increased the levels of programming for all ages. One of the highlights of 2024 was the passage of the millage. Thank you, West Bloomfield! 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.

I 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 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!

Retirement



Ken Macon served on the library board for 16 years beginning in 2008. Macon retired in November 2024.

The Library Supports Student Success

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

Elementary students benefited from twice as many language and comprehension programs compared to the prior year, building essential skills aligned with school success. This included offering more sessions of hit programs like Read to a Dog and Summer Speech. A new program, Rockin' Readers, was also launched in collaboration with local teachers. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

Over 1,500 elementary students benefited from accessing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs at the library. STEAM programs more than tripled from the previous calendar year, helping students develop foundational skills for growing 21st century careers.

In response to survey findings, the library expanded programs for teen and homeschool student support. This included monthly Homeschool Hangout sessions and Westacres programs like College Admissions 101.

Library members can now access Adventure Academy, an educational massively multiplayer online game designed for school-aged children. Children can build academic skills through enjoyable quests in an interactive virtual world.



"My family has thoroughly enjoyed all the incredible kids' programming this summer. I think we went to at least 2 programs a week. The time, planning, and talent (both brought in and existing amongst the dedicated library staff) was outstanding. Thank you for all you've done to make this summer not only fun but also impactful."

—Shannon Feliciano, West Bloomfield Resident

The Library Promotes Children's Literacy

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

Children can now check out pre-loaded audiobooks from both branches. A new collection of 150 Playaways help kids of all abilities build listening skills, expand vocabulary, and increase comprehension and critical thinking. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

The library launched Brilliant Baby Kits, a new service for parents and caregivers of infants. Brilliant Baby Kits were designed with materials in mind for new parents of babies 0-6 months. Since the service launched, 43 kits were requested through the website, wplib.org/new-parents. Each kit includes a board book, shaker toy, nursery rhyme booklet, recommended reading list, gift certificate for Friendship children's merchandise and books, and items from Great Start Collaborative, including a baby toothbrush, spoon, and early learning activities. Kits introduce families to the excellent resources their library has to offer. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*



"We are loving the new audiobook collection for upper elementary kiddos. My 4th grader can get lost for hours in them and it's such a great alternative for our reluctant reader. Perfect for on the go, car rides, and free choice at school." —Marni Katz, West Bloomfield Resident

A permanent Storybook Trail was completed in August 2024 in collaboration with West Bloomfield Parks. The trail behind the Main Library features a walkable picture book activity, which is swapped out monthly from March through November. Families are encouraged to start at the trailhead near the Youth Terrace and engage with the displayed story and related prompts as they walk the 0.4 mile trail.

¹Community Needs Assessment. (2023).

The Library Fosters Lifelong Learning and Well-being

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

The Computer Lab was transformed into the Community Commons, a dynamic space for lifelong learning. Since opening in the latter half of 2024, the room has hosted 124 events for teens and adults, drawing over 1000 participants. When not in use for library programs, the room is available as an open study space. *Sponsored by donations made in memory of Dr. Alex Maximovich, as well as a generous bequest from the Ruth S. Elbling Trust.*



“I think the new space is going to be very helpful for all ages, and I look forward to participating and benefiting from some of the classes that will be offered.”
—Jane Maximovich, West Bloomfield Resident

The library became a hub for technology and maker skills. Through new technology classes in the Community Commons, 248 teens and adults improved skills ranging from computer basics to AI and laser cutting to 3D printing. Another 310 participants improved arts and crafts skills in the new room. The Tech Tutoring service also saw an increase in use, with computer assistants providing 506 sessions in 2024.

Nontraditional collections continued to grow in 2024. The library added Citizen Science Kits and Board Games to its collections. Due to popularity, the existing Puzzle collection increased to over 160 boxes.

The library brought craft classes to senior living residences. The acquisition of Cricut equipment enabled outreach staff to take craft programs offsite, making coasters and mugs with over 40 West Bloomfield seniors in 2024.

The library added two new eResources: *The New York Times* all access and Fiero Code. Library members can now access NYT games, news, and more, as well as learn to code through curriculums for ages 8+. *Fiero Code is sponsored by the Friends of the Library.*

The Library Deepens Community Connections

82% of residents believe it is important or very important for the library to connect people to community resources¹

The library’s strong connection with the community was reaffirmed through the passing of the library’s millage proposal in November 2024. This critical funding, passed with 64% of voter support, allows the library to replace aging building components as both branches near 25 years old. The funding will also support updated IT infrastructure, improved programming areas, expanded digital collections, and continued excellence in program, service, and collections offerings over the next 10 years.



“The library [...] has made me feel so entirely unified with my community in a way that I have not felt in a very long time, and has also instilled a sense of faith in me in the belief of the existence of authentic, pure goodness in the world.” —Cole Cassar, West Bloomfield Resident

The library expanded outreach to contract communities through a new partnership with Keego Harbor Parks and Recreation. The library led a monthly summer storytime at Fran Leaf Park, drawing an average of 52 visitors each time.

The library gave out over 10,400 eclipse glasses ahead of the April 8 solar eclipse. *Sponsored by the Friends of the Library and SEAL (Solar Eclipse Activities for Libraries).*

GIFTS FROM THE

Friends of the Library



The Friends of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library raise funds through memberships, Friendship purchases, book sales, and other campaigns to enhance library services and fund special events. In 2024, Friends funding helped:

Celebrate cultural connections through the 25th anniversary of the Sister Library relationship with Awaji City, welcoming the visiting delegation.

Encourage a love of reading through Summer and Winter Reading rewards and the 40th anniversary of BOOKTalks book discussion.

Inspire readers with visits from renowned authors like Bonnie Jo Campbell and Melanie Benjamin.

Promote empathy and understanding with the Human Library program.

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

Board of Trustees

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



The nation's highest honor for libraries.



A Community of Readers

Circulation 4X Average American Library

The library's circulation per capita is **22**. That's the equivalent of every person in the library's service area checking out 22 titles over one year. The West Bloomfield Library circulates **4X as many materials** as the average American library.



Significant Savings for Residents

The average West Bloomfield household **saved \$362** over the last fiscal year by borrowing library materials rather than purchasing them.



Popularity of Physical & Digital Resources

87% of materials checked out were physical; **13%** were digital, holding steady even as publishers increase the costs of digital materials for libraries.



Expansion of Programs and Outreach

At the community's request, library staff expanded event offerings and community outreach beyond pre-pandemic numbers in the last fiscal year, with **71% more events** offered.



Increase in Library Visits

The library logged **738,835 visits** in the 2023-24 fiscal year, representing **17% growth** from the previous fiscal year. That's the equivalent of every person in the library's service area visiting the library about 10 times over one year.

MAIN LIBRARY

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

WESTACRES BRANCH

7321 Commerce Road
 (248) 363-4022
 Email: wacref@wblib.org

wblib.org

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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