

Fill your mind.

Try something new.

Change your perspective.

2015 Annual Report to the Community of Evanston

Evanston Public Library Transforms

2016 : THE POWER OF STORIES

A Year of Transformation

Libraries create opportunities for all of us to learn, experience, grow – and transform. Just as people change, the Evanston Public Library continually evolves to meet the community's needs and desires. In 2015, we, too, continued to transform. Here's how:



- **The Evanston Public Library became the 2nd public library** in the State of Illinois to receive the Sunshine Award for government transparency.
- **Our new Concierge Service**, staffed completely with talented and dedicated volunteers, helps us better greet and assist patrons at the Main Library.
- **Progress continued on filling service gaps to the west side**, as we work in partnership with the City of Evanston to build a new branch library as part of a renovated and expanded Robert Crown Community Center.
- **We completed our first year governed independently** by our appointed, volunteer, Board of Trustees, while continuing our partnership with the City of Evanston.
- **We conducted a broad survey of the Evanston community**, across all nine wards, collecting important data about library perception and usage from faithful patrons as well as those who rarely or never use the library.
- **Betsy Bird joined our staff**, leading efforts to improve our collections and bringing new programming ideas to the library.
- **Brian Wilson**, a longtime EPL Children's Librarian was elected to the prestigious 2017 Caldecott Medal Selection Committee.
- **We welcomed all residents to the First Annual Evanston Public Library Storytelling Festival**, celebrating the power of sharing stories from nationally recognized touring storytellers, Evanston students, and Chicago area favorites.

Within the pages of this report, you'll meet Evanston residents for whom the Library is a starting point for transformation. We hope that here at Evanston Public Library you can find the sparks you seek to keep growing, keep learning, and keep connecting.

Yours truly,

Karen Danczak Lyons
Director, Evanston Public Library

Michael Tannen
President, Library Board of Trustees

P.S. Please join us in 2016 as we explore The Power of Stories!



Books, Authors, and Events Cultivate Curious Minds

2,866 Programs Held in 2015. Countless New Perspectives.

The Big Read: Into the Beautiful North • The Ethics of Vaccination • 100th Anniversary of WWI • Food Matters Film Series • Mexican Film Festival • Diplomacy on the Front Lines in the Middle East • Talking Injustice at Home • Chinese New Year Celebration • The Celiac Project • Four Myths about the Middle East • Tour at Temperance • Local Art @ EPL • Book Reports for Grown-ups • Table Top Game Night • Graphic Novel Book Discussion Group • History Book Discussion Group • What to Feed a Picky Eater • Law @ The Library • How To Fund Your Small Business • How To Beat Age Discrimination on the Job • Illegal: Reflections of an Undocumented Immigrant • Navigating Real Life Diversity • The 37th Annual Jo-Anne Hirshfield Poetry Contest • Hamlet • Mission Impossible: Moby Dick. And more.

43,921 new items added to the collection.

Our collection is improving with more in-demand and trending materials. More diversity in children's books so that kids can see themselves. More digital materials like e-books and e-audiobooks. More large print and audiobook selections of African American authors. More Urban Fiction. More popular titles in Spanish and Chinese.

The Art of Storytelling

The 1st Annual Evanston Public Library Storytelling Festival brought six nationally renowned storytellers to Evanston for a full October weekend in downtown Evanston. Young people from our schools and local adults shared the stages at four different locations.



When kids stand in a very long line to meet an author visiting the Library, something's going right.



A full-house of enthusiastic book-loving kids packed the house for best-selling author Jon Scieszka.



Bright Futures Begin with Childhood Literacy

We know that the mastery of reading is a key predictor of future success in school and beyond.

The LEAP program (Literacy Education at Play) brought engaging literacy activities to 29 Head Start, State Pre-K and special education classrooms giving at-risk children and families vital tools for early learning.

Kindergarten Tours introduced more than 800 five-year-olds to the Library, provided a free book, and for some their first library card.



Multiple free storytime offerings each week for children ages 0-5, including in Spanish and Chinese, bring words alive, reinforcing the key components of early literacy and make learning fun.

Our **Summer Reading Program** and three brand new reading programs throughout the year devoted new attention to preschool learners and supported literacy development for more than 4000 children of all ages.

Popular **Family Nights @ The Library** expanded opportunities for working parents and their children to enjoy and use the Library together.

Free book giveaways at city summer camps and at food pantries and shelters help augment home libraries.



Connecting People with Vital Community Resources

Our role as information concierge and hub is expanding.

- **The New Health Info Desk** (NU Health Corps) brought consumer health information straight to the library lobby.
- **Veterans Resource Fair** connected vets and their families to deserved benefits.
- **Library service at the Hillside Food Pantry**, the ProduceMobile and to homeless youth makes vital connections to books and community resources.
- **Programs with Community Partners for Affordable Housing** expanded access to ownership and rental opportunities.
- **With Center for Economic Progress**, we offered free tax prep for income-eligible families: 502 federal and state tax returns filed, resulting in \$684,526 in refunds.



- **Partnerships with senior care services** including Meals at Home, Jacob Blake Manor, Primm Towers, the Mather and Three Crowns Pavilion, supplied books and programs to the elderly.
- **Affordable Care Navigators in the Library** helped 105 people enroll in Medicaid and the Health Insurance Marketplace.
- **Presence Behavioral Health social work interns** link patrons to vital mental health services.

Bridging the Technology and Digital Divide

A 2013 Pew Research Survey reported that just 70 percent of Americans have broadband access at home. Every day, all day, patrons use Library computers and internet to navigate life in an increasingly digital world.

In 2015, patrons logged more than 80,000 uses of our computers and more than 155,000 uses of our WiFi.

Bring Your Own Device classes trained digital immigrants to better use their iPads, iPhones, and Android devices. Technology moves fast; we help people keep up.

A new series of Basic Computer Classes, held in both English and Spanish, taught the fundamentals of today's technology: Using the Internet, Using Microsoft Word, and Using E-mail.

Regular computer classes held at Evanston's low-income senior housing facilities provided 200 hours of Basic Computer Instruction to 96 learners.

Safe and Collaborative Spaces Spur Informal Learning for Teens

Connected learning occurs naturally at the Teen Loft. We combine Maker projects, books, workshops and crafts with peers and mentors. After school, evenings and weekends, teens show up to work with their hands, share information, read, play games, practice self-expression, and make new friends.

FUSE and Teen DIY programs allow teens to experiment with technologies like 3D printing, coding, graphic design, gaming, and electronics.

Our collaboration with NU's Project Excite expanded to provide a free, daily, three-week camp focused on stop-motion animation and literacy activities.

New immigrants and English language learners in D65 come to the Library to discover helpful resources and the wider community.

EPL librarians work within Evanston schools sharing resources and co-teaching STEAM and Maker activities.



Evanston Public Library is filled with stories: the best ones are yours.

Early Learning Starts Here

Allison Amado and her three young children come to the Library every Thursday for the Young and Restless story time. Amado, who has two-year-old twin boys and an eight-month-old daughter, said that story time at the Library teaches her children about interacting with others as well as new words and songs. "The laughter and smiles from my children is the greatest," Amado said. "The Library is a wonderful place for children. It offers so much."

Have Chickens? Thank the Library.

The Evanston backyard chicken ordinance may not have passed without EPL. After the Evanston Food Policy Council screened a documentary, "Mad City Chickens" at the Library, a group formed then and there to give Evanston citizens the right to raise their own fowl. Said Debbie Hillman, the co-founder of the Evanston Food Policy Council, "The Library is as close to a public square as we have in 21st century America."

Teens Transform in a Safe Space

"We first came to the Library to use the computers and to play games. But we stayed because we made friends and felt free here. The adults here are patient and trust us." -Sam, Eli, Eric and Javan

"The Library makes me feel like I can do something to make an impact on the world. I can enter new worlds through books and let my imagination take full charge. I can go to the Teen Loft and talk and play games with other people that don't go to the same school." - Sari

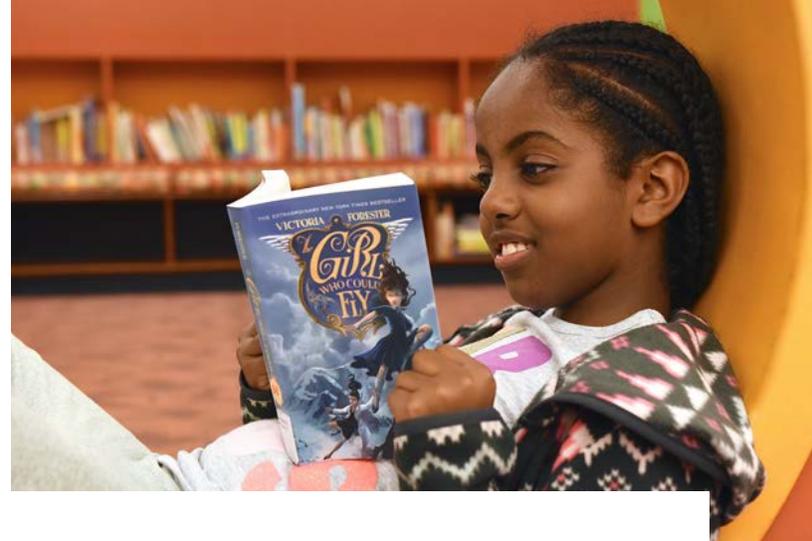
Learning for Life: Lilette Rohe

When ninety-four year old Evanston ballet teacher Lilette Rohe developed macular degeneration, she worried that her difficulty seeing would take away her favorite hobby: reading. Instead, her daughter introduced her to an alternative: books on CD. Now Rohe keeps a running list of books she wants to listen to, and a library volunteer delivers them to her house through the Books on Wheels program.

Opening Dialogue through Reading

Reverend Michael Nabors of Evanston's Second Baptist Church has started a men's book club with the theme: "Educate to Elevate." The group, meeting weekly at 6 am, has grown from two attendees to 15 regulars. The Library ensures they have the books they need. Nabors says: "The group started with all African-American men, but now we have men of all different races attending. The interracial identities of the group have made for such interesting discussions."





The Evanston Public Library Vision

The Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees envisions a community in which the Library engages all residents in reaching their aspirations.

The Library's staff, collections, programs, technology and leadership help ensure:

- That every Evanston resident has the opportunity to enjoy an intellectually and culturally rich life.
- That every child enters school with the requisite developmental skills and continues to develop critical thinking and literacy skills including reading and functional literacy.
- That every child experiences the pleasure of reading and the joy of learning.
- That our community celebrates, appreciates and supports its diversity.
- That those in need can find assistance and information with ease.
- That every resident experiences the pleasure of reading and the joy of lifelong learning.

The Evanston Public Library Mission

Evanston Public Library aims to be the heart of the community by promoting the development of independent, self-confident, and literate citizens by providing open access to cultural, intellectual, technological and, informational resources.

Evanstonians Love Their Library

Recent surveys confirm the Evanston Public Library is loved and needed. Cutting across age, religion, and socio-economic factors, this community makes good use of this library and places a high value on the many **FREE** programs, services and collections.

Evanston Public Library Loves You!

We asked you to consider partnering with us and YOU responded. In 2015, we received 65% more philanthropic dollars from 25% more donors than we did in 2014. **WE THANK YOU!**

What role will YOU play in our Library's future?

The Library's role in the community is growing. Despite underfunding, we continue to expand our offerings to meet the needs of our community. Please join us! Consider how **YOU** can play a meaningful role here today. Contact Wynn Shawver to discuss ways that you can prioritize the Evanston Public Library in your philanthropic strategy – now and in the future: (847) 448-8657 or wshawver@cityofevanston.org.

LIBRARY FUND 2015	
REVENUES	
Property Taxes	\$5,916,852
Fines and User Charges	\$319,088
Individual Contributions	\$187,017
Endowment Income from Accrued Interest	\$171,000
Grants/Restricted Contributions	\$145,096
State Funding	\$143,308
Other Sources	\$2,683
Total Revenues	\$6,885,044
EXPENDITURES	
Staff Costs	\$4,360,856
Library Collections	\$681,866
Services, Materials & Equipment	\$791,117
Transfers to City	\$327,268
Total Expenditures	\$6,161,107



2015 Board of Trustees

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For more information on our annual report, programs, and events, go to epl.org

Talk to us.

Main Library: 847-448-8600
North Branch: 847-866-0330
Chicago Ave./Main St. Branch: 847-905-0764

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