

2023 Annual Report

Land Acknowledgement

Halton Hills Public Library is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as well as the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat. We are within the bounds of Treaty 19, also known as the Ajetance Treaty, agreed upon by the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British Crown in 1818.

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HHPL Welcomes New Library Board

Halton Hills Public Library is pleased to introduce its newly appointed Library Board for the 2023-2026 term. The Board consists of returning members, Betsy Cosper (Board Chair), Matt Kindbom (Vice Chair), Keith Medenblik, and Tamara Smith, as well as new members, Councillor Alex Hilson, Councillor Bob Inglis, Christina da Rocha-Feeley, Erica Daly, Jane Marshall, Alice Strachan, and Lisa Teggart.

As a governance board, they are responsible for setting the direction of the library and ensuring it achieves its goals. They make decisions and find new opportunities to respond to the community’s ever evolving needs.

The Board is appointed by Town of Halton Hills Council and consists of nine community volunteers and two Councillors. Learn more at: www.hhpl.ca/LibraryBoard.

A Message From the Chair and Chief Librarian & CEO

At Halton Hills Public Library, our mission is to empower our community and build connections in a supportive environment. Keeping this mission in mind throughout 2023, we had a remarkable year, focused on reconnection and growth. This Annual Report highlights our key milestones and progress for each goal of our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

To achieve our goals, we made the library more welcoming to youth by expanding our fines free initiative and providing opportunities for teens to develop their leadership skills. We offered new adult learning opportunities through the Halton Hills Lecture Series. We built new community partnerships that led to the launch of Tales on the Trail at the Terracotta Conservation Area, installation of the Library Lockers at the Gellert Community Centre, services for new parents through the Infant Food Bank partnership, and more French language programming with On y va and Coin Franco. We championed literacy and lifelong learning through initiatives like Reading Buddies, which mentors young readers, and the new Dementia Friendly collection, which helps support people with dementia and their caregivers. We added a new 3D printer in the Acton Branch, making creative technology available to people of all ages.

The achievements don’t stop there. By year-end, residents borrowed over half a million items, staff led more than 1,200 programs, and 75 community partners offered services at our branches.

None of what we accomplished would have been possible without community support. Thank you to everyone who visited in 2023 – you make the library a thriving community hub where everyone feels welcomed. We appreciate the support of our partners, volunteers, and donors who play crucial roles in building community connections. We are also sincerely grateful for our dedicated staff team. Halton Hills Public Library wouldn’t be the same without your commitment to enriching lives in our community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 Welcoming and Inclusive

Growing together with Halton Hills

youth and young adults

In 2023, we reduced barriers for young adults and promoted inclusivity by extending a fine-free policy to patrons aged 18-24. Our Exam Cram initiative extended library hours until 10 p.m. during high school exam periods, offering a total of 21 extra hours of study time. Students also received kits with study essentials and stress-relief items, and therapy dogs from St. John Ambulance provided comfort.

The Teen Advisory Council (TAC) at the Georgetown Branch received so much interest that their membership doubled. TAC members at both branches learned leadership skills by organizing youth programs such as a Super Smash Bros. Tournament and Halton Hills FanFest, as well as supporting community events. New programs like the Anime Club and the Rainbow Film Series, along with a teen-focused Instagram, kept youth voices central to library services.

More Key Accomplishments

- Attended the first Halton PrideFest and Halton Pride Parade. We joined other Halton Region libraries to show that the library is a safe space for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- Developed programming for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Program participants learned about Indigenous history and reflected on the ongoing impacts of colonialism.
- Launched the Sensory Collection. These tools help reduce anxiety, stimulate learning, and provide comfort during library visits.
- Launched the Rainbow Resources Guide. This booklet helps patrons understand 2SLGBTQIA+ terminology and find community resources. It also allows patrons to discover books about the 2SLGBTQIA+ experience.
- Renovated the children's gaming area at the Georgetown Branch. We added new furnishings to create a more welcoming space for families. This project was generously supported by donations given in honour of a former library staff member.
- Introduced new equity, diversity, and inclusion training for our team. This training helps staff better understand how to create a safe and welcoming space for all.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 Community Connection

New community partnerships

2023 was an important year for strengthening our partnerships with organizations within our community and bringing needed services, learning opportunities and enjoyment to Halton Hills residents.

Together with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority and Orangeville Public Library, we launched Tales on the Trails, at Terra Cotta and Island Lake Conservation Areas. This permanent Storywalk™ features a new picture book each month, divided into pages along the trail. Families can enjoy reading a library book while exploring nature and being active together.

We also strengthened our support for our Francophone community by expanding our French-language programming through partnerships with two organizations, On y va and Coin Franco. The goal of these two new programming streams have helped residents, regardless of the official Canadian language they speak, find library programming close to home.

Another important initiative supported new parents through a partnership with the Infant Food Bank. This partnership added essentials such as diapers, formula, and baby food available through the library's existing food distribution program.

More Key Accomplishments

- Delivered 4,613 items to 85 Home Library Service patrons (an average of 54 items per person). This service helps older adults to enjoy library collections from home and supports individuals with limited mobility, ensuring access for everyone.
- Distributed 6,866 seed packages through our Seed Library, with 41% of seeds coming from community donations. This collection supports community education about growing food, planting native species, and harvesting seeds.
- Distributed 4,446 lbs of food, valuing \$15,870, to those in need through our partnership with Food for Life. Additional support was offered thanks to our partnerships with the Georgetown Bread Basket and Acton FoodShare.
- Launched Library Lockers at the Gellert Community Centre, providing more convenient access to library collections for Georgetown South residents. Shortlisted for the Angus Mowat Award of Excellence (Ontario Public Library Service) for our dedication to serving the local Francophone community.

Local History Virtual Exhibits

The Georgetown Boys: 100th anniversary of their arrival at Cedarvale Farm

Dominion Seed House Garden: 20th anniversary of the park honouring a former local business

View our virtual exhibits when you visit

www.hhpl.ca/VirtualExhibits

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 Enriching Lives

Building literacy in the community

In 2023, we championed diversity and literacy through impactful programs that inspired learning and dialogue. For our One Book, One Halton Hills community read, we featured *Willie: The Game-Changing Story of the NHL's First Black Player* by Willie O'Ree, a book that explores the importance of perseverance and courage in the face of adversity. Special guests led meaningful discussions on racism and safety in sports, engaging the community in important conversations.

Our commitment to early literacy continued throughout 2023 with 7,030 children attending 422 programs at both branches. A highlight was the launch of our Reading Buddies program, supported by the New Horizons for Seniors Grant. In this program, seniors volunteered to mentor young readers, and help them to improve their literacy skills, while exploring the library and having fun.

The Summer Reading Challenge, alongside Caitie in Concert and Fay & Fluffy's inclusive storytelling, provided enriching experiences for children and their families. These programs reflected our commitment to inclusivity, creating meaningful connections and ensuring that everyone in our community feels welcomed and supported.

More Key Accomplishments

- Launched the Dementia-Friendly Collection. These books, puzzles, and games support social engagement between people with dementia and their caregivers, family, and friends.
- Provided over 157 hours of one-one technology support for residents. Our Book a Librarian service helps people build digital literacy through personalized appointments. More than 240 appointments were held at the library and local senior centres.
- Expanded the INC. Project to include an illustrated works category. This annual creative writing contest for children in grades 4-12 celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2023. Awards were given to nine young creatives. An anthology of their work is available in the library's collection.
- Exhibited 67 pieces of artwork by young artists during Art at the Library. Local talent gained exhibition experience through this collaboration with the Helson Gallery during Culture Days.
- Launched four new digital services. Our collection offers residents the latest apps for language learning, arts and craft tutorials, and video streaming.
- Installed a 3D printer at the Acton Branch, expanding access to leading-edge technology in the community.

Your Favourites

The community's love for bestsellers was evident in 2023. Here are the most borrowed and loved titles from our collections.

Adult Fiction

None of This is True, by Lisa Jewell

It Starts with Us, by Colleen Hoover

The Boys From Biloxi, by John Grisham

Adult Non-Fiction

- Spare, by Prince Harry
- Willie, by Willie O'Ree
- Atomic Habits, by James Clear

YA Fiction

- The Summer I Turned Pretty, by Jenny Han
- The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes, by Suzanne Collins
- The Final Gambit, by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

Children's Fiction

- Diary of a Wimpy Kid series, by Jeff Kinney
- Big Nate series, by Lincoln Peirce
- Dog Man series, by Dav Pilkey

Busiest days at the library

- School Breaks
- PA Days
- Highschool Exams

- Fanfest
- Cooling Centre

Most checked out items:

- Study rooms
- Game controllers
- Headphones
- Laptops
- Skate & Swim pass
- Park passes
- WiFi to Go

Most popular seeds

1. Peppers
2. Carrots
3. Tomatoes

Most popular tabletop game

Georgetown-opoly

Most popular video game

Super Mario 3D all-stars

Most popular animal

Kyle the Snake

Most popular guest

Catie in Concert

Most popular film - (OnScreen at the JET)

The Miracle Club

Most popular lecture

Relocation of Mississauga of the Credit First Nation in 1847 with Darin Wybenga

Most popular language to learn (Transparent Language)

American Sign Language

Year at a Glance

218,493 Branch visits

521,273 Website visits

18,366 Active cardholders

3,174 New library cards issued

72 Total number of item formats available to borrow

Number of study room bookings / hours **7,460** bookings at an average of **12,682** hours

Total number of rental hours for rooms **1,323** bookings at **4,179** hours

1,231 Total of programs

24,562 Total program attendees

501,620 Items borrowed

75 Number of community organizations

5,290 hours of movies / TV shows streamed

Annual Financial Reports can be found by visiting the Town of Halton Hills financial information page:
<https://www.haltonhills.ca/financials/>

Thank you to our supporters!

The impact of our partners, volunteers, and donors is felt throughout the library. You empower each other and build community every day by:

- Offering your organization's services to the residents of Halton Hills
- Delivering books to individuals signed up for our Home Library Service
- Mentoring young readers through Reading Buddies
- Donating and packaging seeds for our Seed Library
- Supporting library events and programs
- Keeping our spaces inviting
- Providing financial support for enhanced programs that feature special guests

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to Halton Hills Public Library. We are fortunate to have an exceptional group of supporters that help us fulfill our mission and vision.

Our mission

To empower our community through ideas, creativity, and connection in a welcoming, safe and supportive environment.

Our vision

To enrich the lives of everyone in our community.

Our values

- Building Community
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Innovation
- Intellectual Freedom
- Service Excellence
- Learning, Literacy and Discovery