

collegedalepubliclibrary.org



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2021

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Director's Letter

2021 was a year of learning to adapt to the “new normal” that included transitioning from online programming to in-person programming as well as adding more digital downloads to meet demand. The beginning of the pandemic and the Easter tornado changed our landscape (sometimes literally) in 2020, and the library changed with it.

In 2021 we sought out new ways to continue the innovations our patrons have come to rely on. Some of our new ways of doing things carry on, such as offering curbside pick-up for those whose health might be too fragile to risk coming inside. Other services, such as story times, have returned face-to-face inside the building. Seating was returned to the library over the course of a few months, along with the children’s educational computers, with some of the socially distanced computer stations remaining in place. Our new layout allows patrons to distance themselves or collaborate in groups, offering flexibility to the community.

The collection of books was unfortunately damaged by the tornado along with the building in 2020. We spent much of 2020 under construction as the building was repaired, but we were not able to build back the collection until this year. The Friends of Collegedale Public Library set a goal to raise \$10,000 for replacement books, and they reached it by December 2021. The Friends solicited donations throughout the area and secured grants from both the Weldon F. Osbourne Foundation and McKee Baking Company to meet the goal. The first half of the tornado replacement books arrived in February, and the last half will arrive early in 2022. We could not be more proud of the hard work and dedication of the Friends of Collegedale Public Library for meeting their goal and supporting the Library in a time of need.

We also started a new four-year strategic plan in 2021. We have many goals that we will continue



to reach for, but this year we have accomplished much, including expanding our reading incentive programs; adding Hoopla, a new digital service; rebranding the library and library website; and finding new avenues to promote library services to the community through outreach and social media. We are hoping to accomplish even more in 2022 with the start of our LEGO Robotics STEM programs for children and teens, partnership events with other community organizations, and more learning opportunities for adults. The Collegedale Public Library and Community Learning Center strives to do more to connect, communicate, entertain, and learn with the people of Collegedale and the surrounding area.

Natalie Wright | Library Director



Programs and Events

Library staff eased into the return of face-to-face programming in 2021. The Library offered multiple online storytimes each week, as well as Take-and-Make crafts for children. Programs transitioned to outdoor events in the Summer and then returned inside the building in the Fall.

Summer Reading Program

Tails & Tales Summer Reading Program

The Library celebrated summer by incentivizing reading through special outdoor storytimes which included fun activities like sidewalk chalk and even a water-play day with an inflatable elephant spraying everyone who wanted to get wet. The Library also had some in-person crafts that allowed children to get in touch with their inner animals making tail feathers and animal masks to wear. The summer ended with the annual End of Summer Reading Party which brought back some familiar favorites like the Noah's Ark Petting Zoo, Magician Robert Jones, and glitter tattoos. Even on the hottest day in July, over 100 people came out to the party to celebrate completing the Summer Reading Program.





Teen Programming

Teen programming was virtual for the first part of the year with Make-and-Take crafts, monthly origami projects, online gaming, and Adulting101 videos. Teen programming moved outside for the summer with nature walks along the Greenway and an ongoing program to create a Community Garden at the Commons. And while much fun was had digging in the dirt and folding biodegradable plant pots from old newspapers, ultimately the local deer population benefited most from the fruits of the teens' labors, which actually seemed fitting given the animal theme of the Summer Reading Program. Teen programming also moved back into the building in the fall with crafting events and Minecraft Club.



Adult Programming

Adult programming focused on Zoom book clubs and Take-and-Make crafts for the first half of the year, but also moved outside for the Summer Reading Program. The Library was an official location for World Wide Knit in Public Day on June 12th to show support for the local crafting community. The library brought back One-on-One computer tutorials, and implemented a new series of Microsoft Office classes. The only event that is still online is Common Thread Book Club, because it began online, and many of its participants love the online format for busy adults.



Programs for the Whole Family



The Library held its annual escape room event for the third time this year in October. This year the theme was Escape from Wonderland, and families worked together to solve the puzzles presented by beloved characters like Alice, the White Rabbit, and the Mad Hatter. Families pre-registered to avoid overcrowding, and the time slots filled within two days of the event announcement. 88 people attended the event and gave very positive feedback. Those who missed out on a spot also gave feedback which the Library received and is planning to expand the allowed attendance at the event in 2022.

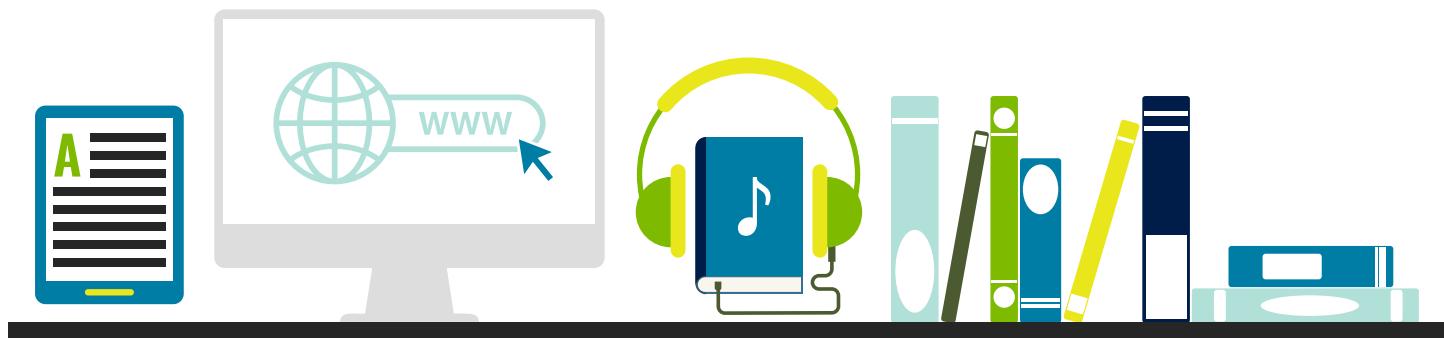


Services

During the pandemic, the Library saw an increase in digital checkouts of eBooks and audiobook downloads. However, so did the rest of the state of Tennessee, which sometimes made for very long wait times for books on Tennessee Reads. To offer an alternative, the Library launched a new digital download service, Hoopla, in July. Hoopla is a simultaneous use platform, allowing over a million titles to be borrowed without a wait list. Those titles also include TV shows, movies, and music in addition to the usual eBooks and eAudiobooks, expanding the types of digital downloads available to the community.

The Library added another digital service this year: the Beanstack app. Beanstack initially was used to make participating in the

Summer Reading Program easier with an app to log reading minutes. However, Beanstack can be used throughout the year allowing the library to offer year-round reading challenges for all ages. Each time a person completes a new reading challenge, they get a unique collectable button and a themed treat. For example, completers of the Chilly Weather Challenge in December got a packet of hot chocolate and a peppermint spoon in addition to their button. The Library's early literacy reading challenge, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, was also added to the app, making it a one-stop shop for all Library reading challenges. The Beanstack platform also allows for community goals where every participant's minutes combine to count toward the goal. A community goal of 40,000 minutes was set for September and October with an Ice Cream Sundae Party promised as the prize for meeting the goal. The community of readers met the challenge and ice cream sundaes were enjoyed in November.



Strategic Plan Goals



Goal: Connect

Collegedale Public Library and Community Learning Center is the partner of choice for service agencies and community leaders.

Community outreach was limited due to the pandemic, but the Library Director spoke at Greenbriar Cove in May to describe library services for seniors. The library participated in an outdoor Early Literacy Festival presented by the Hamilton County School System in November; library staff helped children make two different crafts (painted wands and animal ear headbands) while promoting library services to their parents. Staff also spoke to the Kiwanis Club at their December meeting to promote youth programs and the new Hoopla digital download service.

The Library participated in the Samaritan Center school supply drive in the fall, and also served as a donation location for Cash Express's local toy drive in December. The Library also hosted a question and answer sessions with Youth Villages, a local 501C3 organization, about how to become a foster parent.

Another connection was made when the City of Collegedale joined the Chamber of Commerce with the Library Director serving as the representative on the local Ooltewah-Collegedale Council Board. The Council Board promotes initiatives to support Ooltewah and Collegedale businesses and also raises money to support the local schools. The Director is making connections with local business owners in the area and seeking their opinions on how the Library can help to support local businesses.



Goal: Communicate

Collegedale Public Library and Community Learning Center provides clear messaging surrounding Library services.

The Library adopted a new logo to help with the Library's brand recognition. The Library's website went through a complete redesign of both the appearance and the menu to improve usability; the website takes its design colors from the new logo for consistent branding. The monthly newsletter also features the new logo and branding. The Library also developed a brochure to give to new cardholders to make them aware of the full range of library services available to them.

The Library has many social media accounts which it updates regularly including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This year, the Library joined Nextdoor through the City of Collegedale. This allows staff to promote programs and events to many different Collegedale households who may not be aware of the Library.

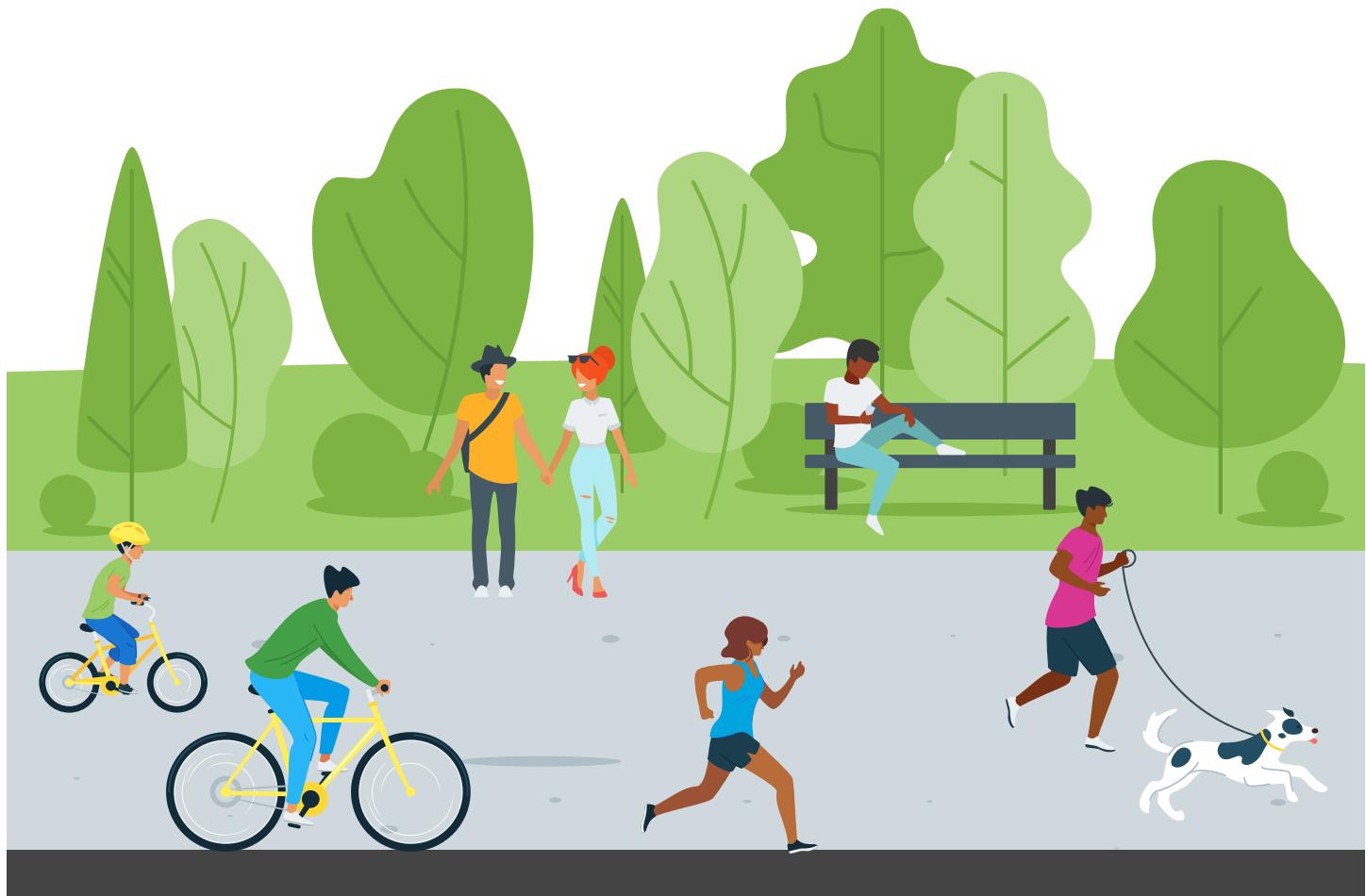


Goal: Enhance

Collegedale Public Library and Community Learning Center provides an experience that surprises and delights.

The Library had a table at this year's Independence Day Celebration where they offered two patriotic crafts: American flag beaded pins and fireworks headbands. Even with terrible thunderstorms, 109 people stopped by to try a craft. The Library also participated in the new Parks and Recreation Scarecrow contest. The Library's scarecrow was of beloved children's book character Pete the Cat in his jacket with four groovy buttons.

The Library was transformed into Wonderland for the month of October complete with oversized flowers, mushrooms, playing cards, pocket watches, and signs pointing out the way down the rabbit hole. Guests were greeted at the door with an enormous mural on our glass wall depicting the Red Queen's garden with smiling flowers and a peek at the White Rabbit's ears.



Goal: Educate

Collegedale Public Library and Community Learning Center is the center for lifelong learning in Collegedale.

The Library increased Summer Reading Program registration by 42% in 2021, and Summer Reading Program completers by 7%. The monthly Beanstack reading challenges are attracting new readers each month. New computer classes are available for adults, and One-on-One tutorials are always available for personal device assistance and individually tailored software assistance. The Library received a state grant this year, and with additional funding from the City of Collegedale, staff were able to purchase LEGO Robotics kits to expand the Library's STEM offerings. LEGO Robotics programs begin in 2022. The Library also expanded its Library of Things, adding new Early Literacy Kits focused on toddlers, simple STEM learning kits for preschoolers, and Organwise Guys dolls and materials to help teach children about their bodies and healthy eating.



STATISTICS

