ANNUAL REPORT
2017 – 2018 Highlights
from the Library Board of Trustees
The West Bloomfield Township Public Library is a place where everyone in our community can explore, discover, learn and grow.

This fiscal year, Library service priorities included:

• Initiatives and activities that lay a foundation for early literacy and a lifetime of reading success and enjoyment
• Family engagement experiences and resources that lead to success from cradle to career, with particular support for K-12 students and their parents
• Resources and opportunities for lifelong, self-directed learning
• Partnering with the community to address interests and needs
• An inviting, comfortable environment where everyone feels welcomed
Early Literacy and Family Engagement

A new activity area in the Main Library Youth Services room focuses on learning experiences for children in grades K - 5 that help develop science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) skills. Activities encourage independent learning as well as collaboration and family engagement.

Activities in the STEAM area include a microscope with slides, hands-on insect and geology specimen centers, magnets and a variety of math manipulatives. Activities are self-paced, open-ended and rotate monthly.

An interactive tabletop tablet was installed in the Youth Services room at the Westacres Branch. It allows multiple children to play learning games simultaneously, supporting both parallel and cooperative play. A STEAM cart was also added with activities that rotate monthly and encourage children to work independently, collaboratively or with a caregiver.

The Library’s early childhood specialists updated and expanded the Nursery Rhymes, Songs and Fingerplays booklet. Along with more rhymes and newly added illustrations, the resource suggests ways that parents can use rhymes and songs to develop their child’s language and literacy skills.

Listening to nursery rhymes and songs is an early literacy experience that helps children understand how language works.

A monthly early literacy calendar was developed for parents of children from birth to five years old. The calendar suggests one simple literacy activity per day to encourage family engagement and lay a foundation for children’s reading and learning success. The activities are based on practices emphasized in the Public Library Association’s Every Child Ready to Read® initiative. The calendars are distributed during in-house Library programs and to parents through area preschools, child care facilities and pediatric offices.

“Our two-year-old son LOVES the library. The other night we told him that we were going to get ice cream and then go to the library. He yelled, “No ice cream. Go to the library!”, the whole time we were in the car. We are so grateful for the West Bloomfield Library.”
—Andrea Altoman, West Bloomfield mom

Youth staff created a handout for each early literacy program that includes a synopsis of the program, list of books read, songs sung and concepts introduced as well as tips for parents. The handouts are distributed at the end of each program and encourage parents and other caregivers to continue engaging their child in learning experience at home.

A new book format with a built-in speaker and a headphone jack was added to the read-along collection. Children in Pre-K to 2nd grade can listen to a recording of a book and follow along with the text independently or share the reading experience with an adult. Both fiction and nonfiction books are part of the collection.

Jude, age 6, tries out a book from the new VOX Books read-along collection.
A “Little Library” with collections of children’s books was installed at each of three housing complexes to meet the needs of families that may not be able to visit the Library often or have access to a variety of quality books. The Library restocks each “Little Library” regularly and also provides program brochures and Grow Up Reading™ materials for parents and children.

Programs and Resources that support a Lifetime of Learning

To provide better access to resources and opportunities for lifelong and self-directed learning, Library staff created the online Learning Resource Center. The page is organized to make it easier for users to learn about and choose any of the dozens of digital learning resources available from the Library.

The Library offered interactive experiences that were educational and entertaining to K-12 students during West Bloomfield School District’s early release days. Programming featured STEAM activity stations, science experiments from the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, math and music activities, computer coding and robots.

The Library initiated an annual celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, with displays, programs and activities for all ages to celebrate the life, work and vision of Dr. King.

Almost two dozen technology tools and manipulatives were added to the tech collection to provide hands-on learning opportunities during youth and family programs. The collection includes Ozobot Bit Coding Robot, Gyrobots Science Kits, STEM Code & Go Robot Mouse Activity Set, and the Remote Control Machines Science Lab Kit.

With the “Code & Go” activity, children use coding, prediction and problem-solving skills to program the mouse to move through a maze.

Programs to teach computer coding were expanded. The Coding Club for Teens offers structured lessons in Scratch, Qbasic, HTML and Javascript led by local students. The Family Coding Club encourages parents and children to come to the Library and learn coding fundamentals together in a supportive environment.

The Library hosted visits from three authors with a large attendance at each program. An overflow audience heard New York Times bestselling author Daniel Silva speak at the Jewish Community Center and many stayed after the program while Mr. Silva signed copies of his books. NPR contributor and American library icon Nancy Pearl appeared at the Library during National Book Group Month to talk about some of her favorite book group picks. She also discussed her first novel, GEORGE & LIZZIE, and each audience member received a copy. The Library also hosted the 2018 Everyone’s Reading author, Paula McLain who talked about writing her New York Times bestseller, The Paris Wife.

Library Director Clara N. Bohrer welcomed Daniel Silva to West Bloomfield, which was one of only seven stops on his 2017 book tour.
The Library is the school district’s biggest community partner in our mutual effort to improve literacy and to create lifelong readers. The Library and school district partner in five district-wide reading programs for students in grades K-12, contributing to thousands of extra hours of reading done by our students. Librarians come to schools to introduce students to books and resources for learning and enjoyment. When we have special events – like reading nights, technology exploration and book clubs – librarians come to schools to assist.

“The Library also provides meaningful events for students when school is not in session, like after-school activities and summer reading. This is a tremendous benefit not only to the students, but to their parents as well.”
—Carrie Bulbuk, Information and Technology Specialist at Abbott and Orchard Lake Middle Schools

The Library loaned activity kits that help develop science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills to the West Bloomfield Schools District’s after-school programs. The kits provided independent learning and enrichment experiences to children in the latchkey programs at three elementary schools.

Directors of English as a Second Language programs at Walled Lake Consolidated Schools and the West Bloomfield School District were invited to the Library to learn more about the resources and services available to ESL students, including literacy and citizenship collections. The Library also invited ESL classes to come for an orientation about available resources.

An ESL class from West Bloomfield Schools visited the Library to learn about online resources to practice English language skills.

To raise awareness about the importance of reading to children from birth, the Library partnered with five pediatric practices in West Bloomfield to make parents aware of the Library’s early literacy resources and services and help children Grow Up Reading™. The Library provided doctors’ offices with deposit collections of board books, picture books and easy readers for their waiting and exam rooms. The Library also provided materials for parents, including the Nursery Rhymes, Songs and Fingerplays booklet, Grow Up Reading™ Growth Chart, 60 Books for Babies guide and the Early Literacy at Home calendar.
Enhanced Customer Service & Conveniences

A new service makes it easier to download eBooks and eAudiobooks from the Library. Readers use a simple online form to request the books they want. When the titles are available, readers bring their laptop, tablet, eReader or smartphone to the Library and staff load the requested eBooks or eAudiobooks onto the device.

Options for printing and photocopying materials were upgraded. Users can print from Library computers or their laptop while at the Library. They can use an app on a smartphone or tablet to send print jobs to the Library from home or anywhere with an internet connection. Print jobs can be retrieved from any of the photocopy machines at the Library. They can be seen, printed and deleted only by the user who sent the job. Multiple payment options were added, including cash, debit card, credit card, Apple Pay, Android Pay, Samsung Pay and Google Pay.

The Young Adult Room at the Main Library was reconfigured. This created space to almost double seating, both casual and study, increase the number computer workstations, and add more magazines and new books. Furniture was arranged to create more spaces that support group study and collaboration, as well as to provide areas for independent study and self-directed learning.

A new text service provides up-to-date information about Library services and programs. Users can subscribe to any of five text messaging lists for updates about adult or youth programs, titles of new adult and youth DVDs, tips for busy parents who want to help their children Grow Up Reading™ and news about special Library events or announcements.

Users at Library computers can now request help from Library staff without leaving their computer workstation. Users click a desktop icon that alerts staff that assistance is needed. The request for help is sent to staff computers and wireless phones, and a staff member responds.
New and Expanded Technology & Resources

All public computer workstations at the Main Library and Westacres Branch were updated to the most recent version of Windows 10. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher) was updated to Office 2016, and Adobe Suite was updated to Adobe Creative Cloud. All updates provide the latest features and functionality.

The initial screen on computers that display the Library catalog was redesigned. The page displays a dynamic bookshelf with books, audiobooks, music CDs or DVDs that are currently on shelves and available to check out immediately. Users can select a genre from the drop box menu that directs them to a discovery platform displaying all of the titles in that genre. In addition, the screen shows Library hours and programs for the day, and it links to the Library's homepage, teen website (WB-Hub), youth website (WB-Buzz) and Grow Up Reading™ website.

The Caregiver Collection at the Main Library was expanded to include a collection of “Memory-Friendly Reads” for those experiencing some form of memory loss. Bookmarks with recommendations for “Gentle Reads” and “Easy Reads” were created.

The Test Prep collections at the Main Library and the Westacres Branch were significantly enhanced because of increased demand. Multiple copies of the most up-to-date guides were added, including general SAT and ACT study guides and subject specific guides for SAT, AP, graduate and professional tests.

Gifts from the Friends of the Library

The Friends of the West Bloomfield Township Public Library raise money through memberships, operation of the Friendshop used bookstore and other activities in order to enhance Library services and fund special events. This year, Friends’ funding supported:

- Materials to supplement Library collections
- The popular Youth Services “Character Month” storytimes at the Main Library and Westacres Branch with visits by well-known characters from children’s literature
- A reception for a delegation of youth from Awaji City, Japan, the home of our Sister Library
- Purchase of eco-friendly book bags that are an alternative to traditional plastic bags. The bags can be reused over many visits to the Library and recycled for other purposes.
- Support for the Summer Reading and Summer Challenge programs
- An event for West Bloomfield book clubs to celebrate National Book Group Month

The Friends also continued to organize and fund popular Library programs like Music@Main, What’s Cooking and BOOKTalks.

NPR book commentator Nancy Pearl met with West Bloomfield readers during the Library’s Reception for Book Clubs, an annual event supported by the Friends of the Library.

“The Library has helped me prepare for important tests and exams, with its great range of exam preparation materials and group study rooms. The Library also provides resources for homework help and online tutoring. The Library’s Coding Club is phenomenal… it helped me learn about coding, which is a skill I can use in the future. I am very grateful for all the opportunities the Library has provided me.”

—Jason Israilov, West Bloomfield High School student
Noteworthy Numbers

The Library's collections include 236,781 items. In addition, through the Library's online subscription services (Freegal, Gale Courses, hoopla and lynda courses) users have access to 15,266,806 songs, 6,913 self-directed learning courses, 255,319 eBooks, 53,674 eAudiobooks and 36,791 streaming video titles.

Overall, 67% of the materials checked out are in a print format and 33% are media. On average, 728 items are checked out every hour the Library is open.

WBTPL’s circulation per capita is 39. According to the most current Library of Michigan statistical review, WBTPL is the third highest circulating library in the state after Ann Arbor District and Kent County District libraries.

On average, every item in Library collections circulated 11.8 times.

A total of 66,789 unique users connected their laptop to the Library’s network when visiting the Library for a total of 154,454 connections.

The Library held 1,433 programs (in-house and outreach) for a total attendance of 66,547.

On average, staff answer 82 inquiries each hour the Library is open.

“The Library offers great printing services. You can print from your laptop at the Library, and you can send printing from a smartphone or tablet at home and pick it up at the Library. There are also flexible payment options like credit or debit cards and Android or Apple Pay. It’s all very convenient.”

—Terry Roby, West Bloomfield resident

“People are very appreciative of the Library’s services for English language learners. People who come to the Let’s Talk discussion group want the chance to practice their language skills but they also like connecting with others who are learning English. They build a sense of community and learn from each other. As a facilitator, it’s very rewarding to see.”

—Susan Ferkaney, West Bloomfield resident