

here we
grow
again



from the director

Growing Together

2016 was a year of exciting changes and growth.

Library staff have been busy this year promoting literacy to all ages through amazing storytimes and informative tech programs, providing digital resources that allow card holders to access the library 24/7, and turning the library into a destination for learning, gathering and fun.

If you have been to the library recently, you will have noticed how much we have grown, most noticeably with the addition of 1000 square feet in the newly renovated Garage. The library

board of directors and staff recognized the need for a larger community and programming room and made it happen. This flexible space has hosted everything from book sales to gingerbread house workshops.

The library makes it possible for everyone in the community to imagine more for their lives. Most people know the library as a valuable resource for books and reading, but more and more, those in the community are discovering new and exciting things within our doors.

We could not have accomplished so much without our library board of trustees, staff, volunteers, users and supporters. 2016 was a great year, but we still have room to **grow**.

Thank you for your support. I will see you at the library!

AMANDA KIRBY
LIBRARY DIRECTOR

**Bad libraries build
collections, good
libraries build
services, great
libraries build
communities.**

Here at the library, we are always looking for new ways to reach out into the community. You can find us visiting local preschools and senior centers, checking out books at various school and community events, and hosting great programs at your neighborhood parks.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR 2016

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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The Western Allegheny Community Library is full of words---I can't even imagine the actual number of words that must be in the place! With over 38,000 items in circulation and each one chock full of words.....but the only word that I can use to describe the progress that has been made at our library is **ASTONISHING**.

We have gone from a 3900 square foot facility just 3 short years ago to a 14,500 square foot facility that is full of discovering, educating, communicating, socializing, gathering.....the list goes on and on. We are a place for our patrons to gather, to learn, to grow, to inspire.

Our progress is astonishing. The only word to describe it. Our new garage opened in 2016. Our backyard will open in 2017. Thanks to our community for all of the support. Our trustees are proud to have seen it all happen. We will need a bigger word than astonishing in 2017. I can't wait to see what's next

Incoming President, Pam Perry

**The mission of the
Western Allegheny
Community Library
is to inspire, engage
and educate the
community through
high quality, fun,
creative and
informative
programming and
services.**

ADULT SERVICES

Adult programming and services had a major overhaul this year. Library staff focused on bringing in more engaging and relevant programs to the community. We conducted surveys of our patrons to find out what type of things they would like to see. As a result, the library has hosted everything from community cooking classes to Pinterest craft nights.

This past summer the library partnered with Keelboat Farms on several programs. The library was a pick-up location for their popular CSA program, the farm provided fresh produce for our summer Farm to Table community cooking events and they also lent their expertise to our own community garden boxes where we grew and harvested our own vegetables.

Once again the library provide the popular VITA (volunteer income tax assistance) program to our community. This free tax program assisted over 200 people from January through April. The library gave back to the community in other ways too. Adult Programmer Sue Peindl organized a Project Linus program where volunteers made and donated XXX blankets to Children's Hospital. The success of that program led to other service projects such as donations to the local food pantry and a crafting program called Caps for Caring.

The library also found a following with our adult BYOB Game Nights. These monthly board game nights bring in game lovers from around the county. This program has grown in popularity, with other local libraries partnering with Western Allegheny to host joint game nights. The library even started its own board game lending program and now has over 70 games in the collection.



TECHNOLOGY REPORT

This past year saw a large increase in adult programming, 43% of which was technology-based. These programs included individual tutoring sessions with our Technical Services Librarian, Heather Blake. Individual appointments seem to be among the most useful of technology programming, as they can be tailored to the learner's skill set and technology needs, whether its updating software on a laptop, accessing ebooks through Overdrive, or learning Microsoft Office for a new job. The demand for job-based technology assistance led to the planning of career-focused technology programming in 2017, including a series on Microsoft Office for job seekers and résumé assistance.

New "Tech Takeout" kits were added to the collection this year, with the goal of giving experience with various pieces of technology. In addition to the six adult Kindles, two additional Kids' Kindles were added with a library of children's and middle grade titles pre-loaded to the devices. A GoPro video camera kit was added, including a wide variety of accessories for making creative digital videos. New for 2017 are two WiFi Hotspots available for checkout; these provide unlimited internet access on-the-go, and are ideal for travel or for those who do not have internet at home. These gained immediate interest and are constantly being checked out and requested. The library hopes to add additional Hotspots in the future.

The library website was transferred to Wordpress and updated for a more modern, clean look. This new website is more navigable and mobile-friendly. The library also introduced a new mobile app available for smartphones. The app allows patrons to order materials, learn about events and access the library's growing eContent.

An additional iPad was mounted in the Children's room, making a total of two in Children's and one in the Teen Room. These are loaded with educational and entertaining apps, and have constant use in both departments. 2017 will see the deployment of new PCs and laptops throughout the library; these will feature updated software, including Windows 10 and Microsoft SharePoint. A collection of adult video games for PS4 and Xbox One was added, in addition to the games available in Children's and Young Adult. These games, along with WACL's growing set of board games, represent a niche collection which has high demand throughout the system. As always, the library is constantly searching for technology needs which it can fulfill for its users, and is eager to take any suggestions for new equipment and services it can provide.





YOUTH SERVICES

2016's biggest success was without a doubt the summer learning program. During the first 5 months of 2016, the youth services staff completely reworked the program to bring it into alignment with both the needs of area children and findings from relevant research. And while it definitely took on a drastically altered appearance and style, it was a huge success. We were able to offer meaningful, engaging learning experiences all summer long and encourage curiosity that went beyond solitary reading.

2016 was a canvas for our new staff to put its own stamp on the department while still upholding some of the library's most treasured traditions that got this department where it is today like the Gingerbread House Workshop, Readers' Theatre and Truck Touch. We added programs like Geek Club, D&D, Drawing Club and Family Maker Days. Both our Baby Circle Time and Toddler

Storytimes have grown. Midyear, we also decided to rearrange the physical collection in the children's room and we've received much positive feedback from parents on the ease of locating and browsing books.

Early in the year, we decided to change our storytime room into the 'Living Room' and it has been one of our most popular changes yet. After attending a recent workshop on the importance of play, Youth Services Department Head Kelley Beeson, learned our library is on the forefront of providing a free space for parents, caregivers and children to play. As the role of libraries shifts from book warehouses to informal learning spaces, we want to provide as many opportunities for engagement, learning and play and that is what has informed our programming, collection and space decisions in 2016 and it will continue to inform our decisions into 2017 and beyond.

YOUTH SERVICES



Outreach

Throughout our 2016-2017 Preschool Outreach program we reached about **500** children a month at eight local preschools and day cares. At these visits we read books, sing songs, and play games all focused on developing critical early literacy skills and acquainting children to the function of the library. At the end of each visit, children select a book to take home and share with their family. Each month we focus on a different early literacy skill (oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, background knowledge). Early exposure to books is one of the best ways to instill a love of learning in a child, and we are happy to work in tandem with our community's preschools and day cares to promote positive reading habits.

Teens

Our programming base is steadily growing into a wonderful group of teens from our area. We have seen a significant growth based on our "geeky" programs such as Dungeons and Dragon and Geek Club. We also have a number of regular teen volunteers coming in after school, and of course, avid readers coming in to check out new books.

Through a partnership with the West Allegheny School District, middle and high school students have the opportunity to be dropped off after school Monday - Thursday. Teens are welcome to hang out with friends, work on homework in one of our quiet study areas, play video or board games, volunteer or read! We have witnessed a steady increase in the number of students taking advantage of this service and hope to see more teens spending their after-school hours at the library.

Our partnership with the school district has grown to include a rotating satellite collection of new books available in the middle school library. Youth Services Librarian Carrie Lowery, also visits twice a month to get to know the teens, discuss books, promote upcoming library programs and provide a fun STEM activity.





rooted in the community

Until recently, the public library served its purpose to the community comfortably inside the four walls of its building. People needed books and the library had them. **But the times have changed.** People no longer need the library in the same way, the world has changed and so has the library.

Today, the library is not just a wealth of resources, but also an informal learning environment, a place for people to discover their passions and a setting for the community to gather. Now more than ever, the library is a leader in supporting community education. From playing a significant role in kindergarten readiness and early literacy, to supporting curriculum with STEM programming and home schooling resources, and offering adults the opportunity to develop their skills and continue their education, the library helps fill the gap and encourages life long learning.

The library has also moved beyond our walls. Our staff spends a significant amount of time out in the community. We understand that sometimes the best way to serve the public is to come to you. That is why you will see us at local preschools, day care centers, schools and community centers. We want our services to reach everyone, everywhere.

**"I come to the library
because I love the
wealth of information
and the programs for
all ages, especially
storytime!"**

*Cathy, a regular storytime attendee and grandmother of 4
month old Lucas.*

Our Accomplishments

2016 was an especially good year for the library; more people than ever came through our doors. We also had our one of our best fundraising years on record! Here are just some of the highlights.

- Youth Services Department Head, Kelley Beeson named to the American Library Association's Odyssey Award Committee
- Director Amanda Kirby co-chaired the Pennsylvania Library Association's Best Practices Committee
- Awarded \$5000 in prize money from the Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving
- Youth Services Librarian Carrie Lowery attended over 20 hours of training at the Pittsburgh Children's Museum to become a Maker Certified Librarian. In addition she received \$500 in grant money to purchase Maker materials for the library.
- Received over \$10,000 in matching funds from the Jack Buncher Foundation for Love Your Library Month
- Received the Pennsylvania "Block Party" grant for STEM programming.
- Received a grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation Wish Books to purchase STEM and Maker supplies.

68,682 people visited the library in 2016

52,434 adult books checked out

16,353 people attended a library program

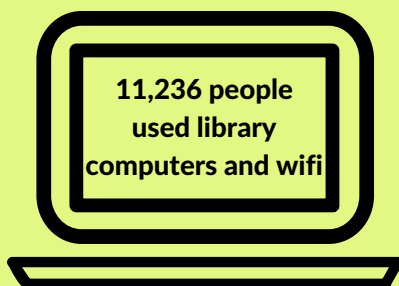
15,484 electronic materials downloaded"

8,070 people call our library their "home library"

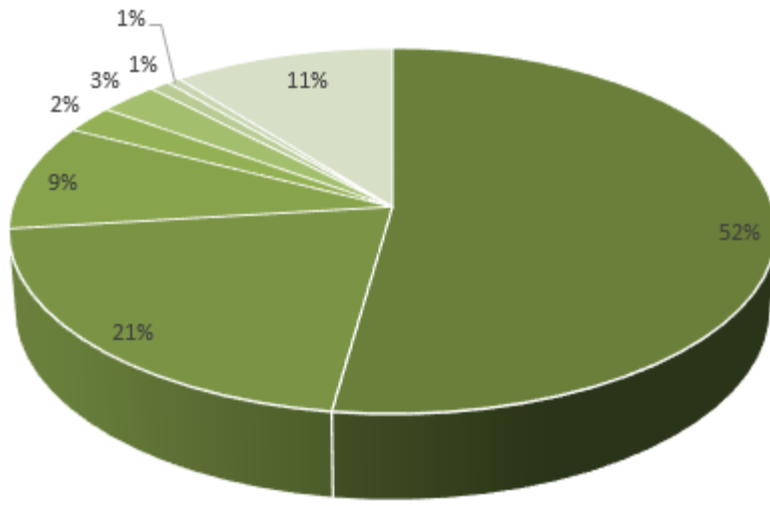
4,446 reference questions

641 library programs

273 inter library loan items filled



Thank You to Our Supporters



- Municipalities
- Allegheny Regional Asset District
- Basic State Aid
- Gambling Table Funds
- Fines
- Equipment Usage Fees
- Program Revenue
- Fund Raising

Western Allegheny Community library is extremely grateful to the many businesses, groups and individuals who support the library. Donations large and small ensure that the library will continue to grow and serve the community.

