

## OCPL Director's Report

January, 2023

**1. Programs and Services:** There was a full slate of holiday themed programming despite shorter hours for the various holidays. The Youth Services department did a number of popular programs (see their report), and there were several others done by Branch Services (see her report) and also the Cultural Outreach Committee. The library is also now a partner with Oconee County Emergency Management for a Community Resource Guide. Kerry Leeper Brock, the Community Resource Associate, has assisted with adding, updating, and cross-referencing that resource.

**2. Usage Statistics and Narratives:** Usage statistics for November and December as well as individual branch/department narratives are attached.

**3. Finance and Budget:** OCPL budget figures for FY23 to date are attached.

**4. Personnel and Training:** On a sad note, we lost former library courier Joe Lenderman on December 1, 2022. All of the library's full time and county part time positions are filled. Brittney Marcengill replaced Maddie Owens as county part time circulation assistant in Walhalla. We also have converted one of our Staffmark positions for circulation so that we can keep Amy Saylor, our bi-lingual assistant for Kerry, on past the end of the grant with the Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare.

**5. Building and Grounds:** The staff will be taking on some beautification efforts in the front of the Walhalla Library. The ADA-compliant ramp at the Seneca Branch still seems to be on track for completion. The library is also examining whether we can paint the interior of the Walhalla Main Library.

**6. Technology:** The library will be completing a new, refreshed web site presence in January. Big thanks to Cataloger Bethany Culp and YS librarian Darcy Arnall for their work in revamping the entire website for the OCPL.

**7. Friends of the Library:** Used book sales have continued each Thursday from 11:00 to 3:30 p.m. The Friends had excellent sales figures in November and December.

NOVEMBER: Basement Sales        \$1,042.50

Books on the Alley        \$1,577.32

Lobby                        \$298

Seneca                        \$60

**Total                        \$2,975.82**

DECEMBER: Basement Sales        \$2,739

Books on the Alley        \$2,024

Lobby                        \$394

Online	\$149
2nd Party	\$ 83
Seneca	\$ 21
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,411*</b>

\*The sales figures for December represent a *new record* in monthly sales for the Friends.

**8. Oconee County:** The county has allowed the library to access and assist with the new resource database, <https://oconee.myresourceguide.org/resources>. Kerry Leeper Brock is leading that effort.

**9. State Library:** The State Library is considering new counting and management software for Summer Reading, replacing ReadSquared with Beanstack. This will affect how the YS staff counts statistics and registers patrons for Summer Reading. We look forward to hearing more about it.

**10. Community Involvement:** In addition to Kerry Leeper Brock and her work with the resource guide, both she and the Director are involved with the Healthy Oconee Coalition. Kerry and several staff and Board members will also be taking "A Matter of Balance" training in January. The library will also be holding a blood drive in January at all library locations.

**11. Other:** We are working with the City of Seneca on a new park to be located behind the library at the corner of Third and Walnut Streets. YS staff will be involved in developing a story walk trail there.

**OCPL Bimonthly Report**  
**Library Usage Statistics**  
**Director: Blair Hinson**

	Nov 2021	Nov 2022	Change	Dec 2021	Dec 2022	Change
<b>Visits to Library</b>	9,791	10,609	8.4%	9,365	10,227	9.2%
Material Circulation - Adult	12,271	11,866	-3.3%	10,933	11,007	0.7%
Material Circulation - Youth	824	810	-1.7%	753	772	2.5%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	7,520	8,642	14.9%	6,067	7,553	24.5%
<b>Total Material Circulation</b>	20,615	21,318	3.4%	17,753	19,332	8.9%
<b>Internet Users</b>	674	701	4.0%	588	644	9.5%
Internet Hours of Use	324	346	6.8%	254	305	20.1%
<b>New Cards Issued</b>	102	137	34.3%	89	123	38.2%
Programs - Adult	8	10	25.0%	7	7	0.0%
Programs Attendance - Adult	79	61	-22.8%	69	89	29.0%
Programs - Youth 12-18	0	1		1	1	
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	0	3		25	15	-40.0%
Programs -Juvenile 6-11	6	9	50.0%	6	8	33.3%
Programs Att -Juv 6-11	74	106	43.2%	79	166	110.1%
Programs - Children 0-5						
Programs - Att - Children 0-5						
Outreach Activities	11	18	63.6%	12	16	33.3%
Outreach Act. Attendance	306	386	26.1%	219	244	11.4%
Public Training Sessions	0	4		0	5	
Public Training Participants	3	4	33.3%	3	4	33.3%
Public Training Hours	1	4		1	4	
Staff Training Sessions	0	2		0	3	
Staff Training Participants	0	4		0	4	
Staff Training Hours	0	4		0	3	
Number of New Volunteers	0	0		0	1	
Number of Vol Hours	42	36	-14.3%	31	27	-12.9%
Meeting Room Use	29	62	113.8%	25	56	124.0%
Meeting Room Attendance	468	549	17.3%	267	455	70.4%
Number of Web Site Hits	12,586	9,505	-24.5%	14,617	9,400	-35.7%
Wi-Fi Users	289	327	13.1%	345	338	-2.0%
Wi-Fi Sessions	2,456	2,175	-11.4%	2,652	2,549	-3.9%
E Book Downloads	3,107	3,062	-1.4%	2,968	3,223	8.6%
Flipster	171	76	-55.6%	148	68	-54.1%
Kanopy	1,951	1,701	-12.8%	1,245	1,165	-6.4%
Ancestry.com Hits	188	211	12.2%	363	107	-70.5%
Interlibrary Loans	7	52	642.9%	10	32	220.0%
<b>New Material Added</b>	729	995	36.5%	978	735	-24.8%

## OCPL Budget 2022-2023 1-5-23

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
<b>Local Budget</b>					
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,500	2,475	99%	25
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	154,965	75,290	49%	79,675
010-206-30041-00000	Telecommunications	1,000	380	38%	620
010-206-30056-00000	Data Processing	28,817	27,412	95%	1,405
010-206-30059-00000	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	8,500	3,439	40%	5,061
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750	489	65%	261
010-206-30084-00000	School, Training, Sem.	3,000	1,669	56%	1,331
010-206-30090-00000	Honorarium	900	900	100%	0
010-206-33022-00207	Bldg Maint - Walhalla	5,500	3,954	72%	1,546
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	3,500	2,586	74%	914
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	2,500	2,522	101%	-22
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,020	2,102	104%	-82
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	25,000	6,726	27%	18,274
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	16,000	5,691	36%	10,309
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	15,500	3,584	23%	11,916
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,700	558	33%	1,142
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	1,200	876	73%	324
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	1,200	413	34%	787
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,200	931	42%	1,269
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000	5,658	94%	342
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000	1,209	60%	791
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	500	23	5%	477
010-206-40034-00000	Food	500	28	6%	472
010-206-40045-00000	IT Equipment			#DIV/0!	0
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	85,000	40,784	48%	44,216
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	22,200	18,520	83%	3,680
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,300	7,488	66%	3,812
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500	633	42%	867
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	3,000	1,208	40%	1,792
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	2,000	1,454	73%	546
<b>TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS</b>		<b>415,752</b>	<b>224,003</b>	54%	<b>191,749</b>
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	63,104			63,104
013-080-00805-11001	Nettles Trust	68,328	568	1%	67,760
<b>TOTAL MISC. FUNDS</b>					<b>130,864</b>
<b>State Aid Budget</b>					
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	\$10,773.82	10,414.89	97%	358.93
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	\$500.00		0%	500.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	\$2,000.00		0%	2,000.00
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital (State)	10,542.21		0%	10,542.21
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	\$15,000.00	7,682.34	51%	7,317.66
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	\$8,500.00	3,204.98	38%	5,295.02
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	\$81,500.00	43,229.42	53%	38,270.58
240-206-40112-00255	Periodicals (State)	\$31,664.00	11,574.90	37%	20,089.10
240-206-40113-00255	AV (State)	\$16,600.00	1,843.74	11%	14,756.26
<b>Total State Aid Funds</b>		<b>\$177,080.03</b>	<b>77,950.27</b>	44%	<b>99,129.76</b>



**Budget Transer \$14,965 from 010-717-60767-00000 Contingency Fund for Thomas Hutton**

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| **Transferred \$600 to General Telecommunications/Cell service Kerry 010-709-30041-00000**

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## **Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, November/December 2022**

**Christie Johnson, Bookmobile Manager**

### **Operations**

In November, nineteen regularly scheduled stops were completed. Three volunteers worked with me, along with one Walhalla staff member, who filled in due to a volunteer issue.

In December, eighteen regular stops were completed. I had four volunteers, including one new volunteer, and three Walhalla staff members to assist. I greatly appreciate the Walhalla staff for stepping in when a volunteer is unavailable.

### **Outreach**

The Bookmobile participated in two Literacy Nights in November. Darcy and I went to Fair Oak Elementary. I saw 76 students and adults, while Darcy did several story time sessions inside the school. Darcy and I went to West Oak Middle, which was a first for us both, going to a higher level school than elementary for a literacy night. We had 21 children and adults.

In December, I participated in two literacy nights, Walhalla Elementary and Orchard Park Elementary. Darcy and I had 15 visits at Walhalla. At Orchard Park, DJ was set up inside with a table for the library, and I remained on the Bookmobile, where I saw 30 people.

The Bookmobile was featured in 5 area Christmas parades this year. Many thanks to Blair, Kayla, and DJ. Between us all, we participated in parades in Walhalla, Seneca, Westminster, Salem, and Fair Play.

I continue my regular outreach stops to three assisted living homes and two preschool/daycare locations, as well as the Oconee County Detention Center.

### **Statistics**

<b>Category</b>	<b>November 2022</b>	<b>December 2022</b>
<b>Stops</b>	22	18
<b>Hours Open</b>	24.5	21.75
<b>Total Attendance</b>	267	193
<b>Outreach Stops</b>	11	10
<b>Outreach Visitors</b>	194	130
<b>New Cards</b>	0	2
<b>Volunteers/Hours</b>	3/32	4/25

## Branch Services Narrative

Nov-Dec 2022

Sue Andrus

### Adult Programming

The second "Saturday Crafterday" on November 19 hosted four attendees, who were all very happy with their new builds in Fiberboard Estates. I modified the standard ranch house pattern and made a model of the Walhalla Library!



I hosted a holiday gift wrapping drop-in called "Wrapper's Delight" on Saturday, December 17, but no one came! My intention was to provide space, support, and assistance to those needing a place to wrap presents in privacy. The Walhalla Library meeting room has several large tables that are ideal for this purpose, and the library has scissors, markers, tape, and a coffee pot. I will host this again next year, but will make changes to the publicity, marketing, and timing in hopes of having a successful event.

### Staffing Information


The library system has completed the first full year of the EPMS evaluation system. All full time employees have gone through the goal setting and evaluation cycle, so now the process begins again. We feel that this method, using measurable, well-defined goals, yields a reliable description of an employee's strengths and weaknesses.


## Publicity


The submission for the December newsletter for Oconee County employees showcased the various collections available from the library system.


**What's available for FREE at your library?**  
OCONEELIBRARY.ORG


- 1  
It's not just "a bunch of old books", but we do have 126,735 books



- 2  
There are about 3500 audiobooks in the library system


- 3  
Like a larger font? We have 4,000 large print books


- 4  
The SC Room has 2,000 books about local history


- 5  
There are more than 12,000 DVDs to pick from!



 Oconee County Public Library  
Public Library of Oconee County



### **Programming, Operations, etc...**

- ❖ The Salem Library hosted story time for 40 attendees in November and 4 attendees in December.
- ❖ The first Sensory Playtime program was held on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Four were in attendance. This may become a regular quarterly program.
- ❖ Salem's cash on hand was increased from \$25 to \$50.
- ❖ Abigail planned her first craft program on November 4<sup>th</sup>. It was well received and attended. There is a similar program in the works for February.
- ❖ In November, we reached out to the Clemson Extension office for spring programming. Our former contact has moved to another department but Kadalynn Jones, Rural Health and Nutrition Extension Agent, has offered to hold a program in February for American Heart Month.
- ❖ In December, Salem Library received 12 coat donations for Fox Carolina's Collection Drive.
- ❖ On December 4<sup>th</sup>, the Bookmobile participated in the Salem Christmas Parade.
- ❖ On December 5<sup>th</sup>, a reading of How the Grinch Stole Christmas and ornament program was attended by 11 children and adults.
- ❖ On December 14<sup>th</sup>, a Christmas pajama story was held. 7 were in attendance.

### **Building Management**

- ❖ Both staff members of the Salem Library received new desks. Maintenance assembled both desks on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Towards the end of November, the library and designated library area of the town hall lobby were both decorated in celebration of Christmas. The town hall decorated the front of the library side of the building as well.
- ❖ A minor plumbing issue was promptly resolved by maintenance on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Resource Allocation**

- ❖ 30 take and make kits for children were distributed in November. For December, 30 kits for children and 20 kits for adults were distributed.
- ❖ Take and make kits were planned/ordered for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- ❖ New desks for both staff members were purchased using the Nettles fund.
- ❖ A Cricut Joy and a set of new colorful bookends were purchased and received using the 2022-2023 FOTL Wish List money.

Stats	Nov	Dec
Visits	1777	1619
New Cards	8	10
ILLs	0	0

**Ann Rogers Memorial Room**  
November/December 2022  
Quientell Walker, Local History Associate

Narrative

**Microfilm Machine Software Repair:**

In June we experienced an issue with the ScanPro 3500. In short, it was not an issue with the machine; instead there was a problem with the software. This problem made the software crash, and rendered the machine difficult to use. I did contact our vendor and was provided with instructions on how to resolve this issue. This information was given to the County IT Department, and they performed the repairs. However, there were some items that were not processed due to County restrictions. I informed our vendor of this, and at the time we decided to wait for future updates. The machine still experienced the software crash, and only provided approximately 10 minutes of use at a time.

I contacted our vendor in November, and they sent new instructions on how to resolve the software issue. These instructions came from the manufacturer, and we were assured that this should fix the software issue. Also they offered to speak with the County IT Department to provide assistance in the repair. I sent these instructions to the IT Department, and this time the repair fully resolved the software issue.

**Volunteers:**

I have been contacted by two patrons interested in volunteering with the Rogers Room. The first patron is a local genealogist, and is interested in assisting patrons with genealogy. The second patron plans to enter library school, and appears to have an interest in Special Collections. In our discussion I mentioned an upcoming digitization project, and she expressed interest in helping with this. She has completed the Volunteer Application and Orientation. It is my hope that we will be able to utilize these volunteers.

**Rogers Room Training Manual and Staff Training:**

I have created a Staff Training Manual for the Rogers Room. The Walhalla Staff requested training on how to use the microfilm machines; however, I noticed several recurring questions from staff and patrons. These frequent recurrences led me to develop a manual that would cover these and other items of interest. Some of the topics covered are: information about the decennial censuses, an overview of Ancestry Library Edition, and an abbreviation key for the Rogers Newspaper Index. In person training sessions began with members of the Circulation Staff on December 14<sup>th</sup>. At this time, 4 staff members have been provided an overview of the training manual and instruction on how to use the microfilm machines. After training all of the Circulation Staff I will begin training the other departments at the Walhalla Library.

### **Digitization Project 2023:**

I have spent time developing several key points to ensure a successful digitization project. The first step was to access and prioritize items in the OCPL Archive. Some items are: OCPL Scrapbooks, OCPL Photo Slides, OCPL Annual Reports, and the Margaret Mills Seaborn Research Papers. I intend to begin scanning the OCPL Scrapbooks, for they cover the early beginnings of the system to the 1980s. Second, I have been working on documentation standards to ensure that scans are produced in a consistent manner as well as provide a roadmap for future staff on what was done. This form of documentation was done for the Oconee County School Directories that were scanned in 2020. Lastly, I have attempted to contact representatives with the South Carolina Digital Library. At this time, I have not received a reply. However, I am still going to ensure that our metadata meets the Digital Library standards. Currently, I am reviewing the standards, and creating a spreadsheet to enable consistent metadata entries.

### **Rogers Room Statistics:**

Statistics Recorded	Nov. 2022	Dec. 2022
Walk-In	6	4
Phone Call	0	2
Email/Online	4	1
Books	2	4
Microfilm	9	1
Map	4	0
ScanPro 3000 Scan Count	16	4
ScanPro 3000 Printer Count	8	8
ScanPro 3500 Scan Count	5	29
ScanPro 3500 Printer Count	16	36
Questions Completed	5	4
Outstanding Questions	3	3

**Facilities:**

We hope to get the area between the parking lot and the building, next to the loading dock, landscaped in the coming months. There are pipes there so we will have to determine the best way to do this.

The front of the building has been surveyed for a new ramp but no other work has been done yet.

*From the last report:*

Timing to be determined: We would like to invite Jason, the maintenance director, out to examine what they might be able to do to fix and improve certain aspects of the building, such as the weeds growing inside that we have to pull (they have tried to work on this before so there may not be a solution), redoing the caulking in the bathrooms, and other improvements.

**Operations:**

Bingo continues to be our biggest draw. We will have to host it out in the library from now on, as there were nearly 40 people at the December event. Darcy has begun having two storytimes to accommodate the large number of attendees. She has had a couple extra programs here which we are grateful for and have been well attended.

Jonathan conducted a painting class for adults and there were 10 people in attendance. Everyone enjoyed it so we may do another one in the spring.

We continue to weed books systematically in line with industry best practices. The shelves are straight and the staff is working hard to keep them maintained.

The NAACP volunteers helping people with housing assistance have ended their scheduled 3 months of using the meeting room as it was the end of their grant. I am very grateful they were able to do this as we had many people receive their assistance in applying for funds.

Groups using the meeting room include two HOA boards, Oconee Writers Association, NAACP volunteers, Mentor Oconee, America’s Boating Club, Baby Read, and others. The study rooms remain popular.

**Staffing:** One part-time staff member left to take a better paying job. We have filled that position. We will have our last open part-time position filled in January. Hopefully we will not have any turnover for some time.

Statistics	November 2022	December 2022
Visits to library	3766	3743
New Cards Issued	66	54
ILL	27	16

**Walhalla Library**

**November - December 2022**

**Tucker Brown, Circulation Manager**

**Staff Development/New Hires:**

November saw two new hires for the Walhalla Branch as well as a lateral move for one of our circulation assistants. With the opening created by Madalyn Owens taking a full time position with the library in October, one of our temporary staff, Brittney Marcengill, has accepted the county part-time circulation assistant job. Along with this change, two additional circulation assistants were hired to bring the circulation staff to full. During this time frame, Quientell Walker took the time to give some hands on training to the circulation staff on the Rogers Room at Walhalla, allowing our front staff to work with the microfilm readers and gain a deeper understanding of how the room is set up to better help patrons with their research.

**Meeting Room:**

November – Clear Water HOA, The Oaks HOA, Oconee Homeschool Group

December – Guardian ad Litem, Cultural Outreach Committee, SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare, Oconee Homeschool Group

**Study Room:**

November – 21 uses

December – 13 uses

**Facilities:**

In the middle of November, the Walhalla lobby and public restrooms became uncomfortably cool. Facilities came to diagnose the issue and discovered that the outdoor unit that controls that area of the library had a bad valve in the compressor and would have to be replaced. At the end of November, facilities had to return due to an issue with the public restrooms backing up and necessitating them being unavailable to patrons. Facilities was able to fix the problem and fish multiple plastic shopping bags from the clogged line by midmorning the next day.

**Statistics:**

<b>Category</b>	<b>November 2022</b>	<b>December 2022</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	3199	3257
<b>New Cards Issued</b>	42	39
<b>ILL</b>	21	14
<b>Hours Open</b>	183	183

## Westminster Report for November and December 2022

### Community, Staff, and Programming

- Quientell came and presented the staff with an update on the services he is providing through the SC Room that are available to library users.
- We had 25 attend our Black Panther Movies Celebration program. Everyone had a great time discussing the movies with trivia and painting their own Black Panther tote bags.
- We had 26 entries in a raffle to give away a reusable mustache themed book/tote bag. This tied in with the staff's creative mustache-themed display for the month of November-We Mustache You to Check Out These Books!
- There were 6 (out of 15 registrants) attendees at our monthly craft program in November where they made winter-themed shadow boxes.
- We had 26 attend our Christmas Bingo night which was a lot of fun with hot chocolate, cupcakes, and free prizes.
- There were two who came to the Chapstick gift box craft in December.
- Our community resource associate, Kerry, hosted a program on December 13. Despite advertising in the calendar, on Facebook, with flyers, and on a sandwich board no one showed up.
- Two families (9 attendees total) enjoyed a fun time of singing and dancing along during a Disney Sing Along Christmas movie in December.
- There were well over 50 coats donated for Fox Carolina's Collection Drive held at the library in December.
- Staff did an exceptional job of decorating the library for the holidays. A special window display was created for the winter months and allowed the library to participate in the city's Grinch-themed window decorating contest.
- All library staff had a wonderful time participating in the city's Christmas parade by riding in a Grinch-decorated truck driven ahead of the Bookmobile.

### Building Management

- When staff returned to work after the Veteran's Day three-day weekend they discovered a dead bird inside the library. There was evidence the bird had been in there a while. It either flew in the automatic doors or somehow came through the attic and ceiling where a tile had been missing. The tile was replaced and no other incidents have occurred since then.

### Resource Allocation

- Some Friends Wish list money was used to purchase a magnetic and chalk sandwich board. We had one before that was used but it had gotten destroyed by the wind. It's a great way to highlight upcoming programs or services because people can see it on their way into the library.
- Over 50 different types of seeds (quantities vary) have been donated to the library from library users. We are excited to be able to start the 2023 planting season with such a good amount.

BBW Seed Library (Library Locations Only)	Packs Given out
Inaugural Year 2021	755
Second Year 2022	2,644

# PHOTOS



WINDOW DISPLAY



COAT DRIVE



BLACK PANTHER PROGRAM



CRAFT



**Youth Services Department  
November - December 2022  
Darcy Arnall, Youth Services Librarian**

### **Collection Development & Maintenance**

YS collection development is on budget thus far for the year. In December, I contacted the Georgia Department of Natural Resources about circulating passes to Georgia State Parks. Since we are so close to the state line, we thought that our patrons might enjoy having free access to Georgia parks, but we wanted to check with the state to make sure that they were okay with out-of-state libraries circulating their passes. GA DNR gave us the go-ahead so we will be purchasing those passes and adding them to the collection sometime in the next few weeks.

### **Programs**

November and December were busy months, and we organized some very fun and successful programs. Starting in November, we made our big change at Seneca by adding an additional storytime on Thursday mornings. Unsurprisingly, the 11:00 storytime is our more popular session, but the two groups are definitely helping to avoid overcrowding the meeting room. We did 14 storytimes at Seneca in November and December and averaged about 18 people at each session. Our new Shake, Rattle, and Roll program has continued to be well-attended, and in January, we are planning to start doing it twice each month, once at Walhalla and once at Seneca.

For the past few years, escape rooms have been some of our most popular teen programs. We did a pirate escape room in July, which was lots of fun, and in December, we decided that we wanted to try another one. We bought a Home-Along-themed escape game online and set it up in the library after hours. Sign-ups for that event were completely full, and everyone attended and had a great time. As a prize, every student also went home with a free book. Our other big Christmas event was an evening storytime on December 20<sup>th</sup>. We called it Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, and we did a hybrid storytime + music and movement program with some crafts at the end. It was a very fun, high-energy evening, and we had 37 people in attendance.

We have not done passive programs in a while, but this year, Bethany suggested that we do Santa Letters at Walhalla. We set up a mailbox near the front desk, and we printed out some postcards that kids could fill out and send to "Santa". We asked that every letter include the child's name and mailing address so that we could send a response. We received 97 letters, and DJ and I worked together to answer every card that had sufficient contact information. That program even made it to the front page of the Seneca Journal (see attached photos)!

Between November and December, Youth Services planned and presented a total of 57 programs, which were attended by 1,187 people. Program-specific statistics and some of our favorite pictures from the month are attached at the end of this report.

### **Outreach**

In these two months, DJ and I did outreach storytimes for 6 different preschools and saw 286 people. We also went to four different literacy nights at Fair-Oak Elementary, West Oak Middle School, Walhalla Elementary, and Orchard Park Elementary. At Fair-Oak, their literacy coach asked me to do storytime in addition to bringing the Bookmobile, so I set up in a classroom for pop-up storytimes

and saw about 20 people. At some of these literacy nights, we haven't seen large numbers of people, but I think that as we attend more events consistently, we can build up participation.

## Collaboration

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, I attended the First Steps Annual Meeting and presented some information about our Summer Reading Program and how First Steps collaborated with us in 2022.

## Marketing

When we can find time, Bethany, Blair, and I have been working hard to get the new website ready for launch. Our goal is to have it ready in January, and we think that we are mostly on track to make that happen. We have had to learn a lot of new skills and procedures to put this site together, but we are very proud of what we have accomplished so far. The screenshot below is a snippet of what the new Youth Services page is going to look like.



In November, Amy translated our library outreach brochures into Spanish for me so we now have our most important informational handouts available in two languages. These handouts will be especially useful as we continue to go to schools and other community events in the coming months.

## Continuing Education

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, DJ and I went to the Easley Library for a storytime training event sponsored by the State Library. This was the first youth-services-specific event that we have been able to attend since COVID, and it was really nice to be able to interact and swap ideas with other youth services staff from around the Upstate.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, DJ and I participated in a webinar to learn about the virtual reading challenge manager, Beanstack. As far as we know, the State Library is considering purchasing this software for all South Carolina libraries, but that contract has not been finalized yet. The software looks extremely well-designed and user-friendly, and we are very much hoping that the State Library will get rid of READsquared and use this solution instead.

## Planning Ahead

Because we have a large homeschool community in Oconee County, I have received several requests from our patrons to offer programs for homeschoolers. We have kicked the idea around for a while, and we now think that we are ready to add that to our slate. Starting in January, we will host monthly Homeschool Hangouts at the Walhalla Library. These programs will be open to all ages, and we will change up the activity offered every month. As with our Explorers Club, I want to have

the option to incorporate lots of different subjects and educational opportunities. Because I know that the best advertising medium for homeschoolers is word-of-mouth, I contacted several of the co-ops and accountability groups in Oconee County to ask if they would be willing to help me promote this new program to their families. A few of the contacts seemed receptive so I am hoping that this will be a strong kick-off to homeschool-specific programming at OCPL.

Even though Summer Reading 2023 seems very far away, we have already started some planning for next year. CSLP has released this year's artwork, and we are not thrilled with it. So we have decided that, while we will use the slogans and the overall theme from CSLP, we are going to make our own marketing materials. To a certain degree, we have already been making some things in-house in previous years, so this project isn't as daunting as it could be, but it will still be a major undertaking. We have already started gathering ideas and inspiration for how we want to design the artwork, and Bethany has been incredibly helpful in that project. DJ and I have also contacted our chosen performers for next summer, and we are close to finalizing contracts for both groups. We are planning to book Pork Chop Productions and the Critter Keeper for shows at the Walhalla Performing Arts Center.

## Program Attendance

	Sept.	Oct.
Storytimes	254	276
LEGO Club	30	10
Explorers Club	27	37
Midweek Makers	15	8
Shake, Rattle, & Roll	16	25
Sensory Playtime	27	n/a

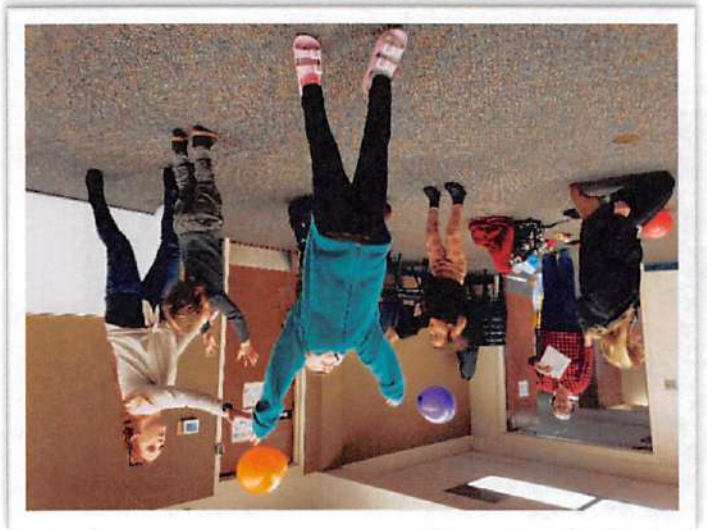
## Program Pictures



1: Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, stories



2: Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, dancing



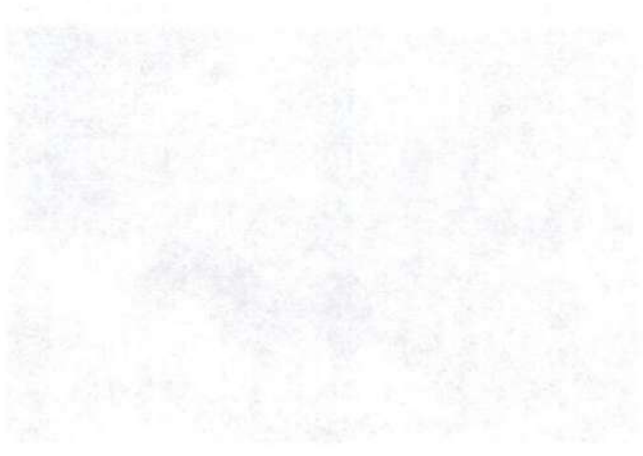
5: Storytime, balloons



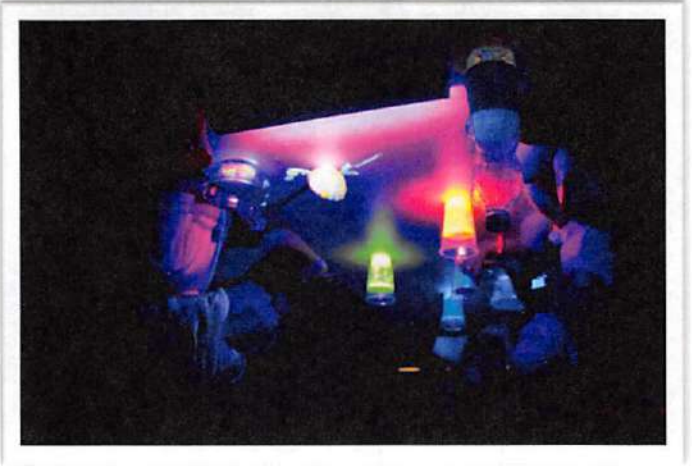
4: Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, (unplanned) costume twins!



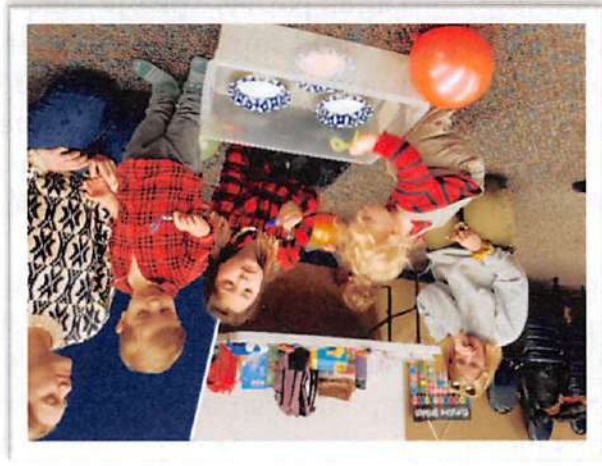
3: Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, making ornaments



7: Explorers Club, making Glow-in-the-Dark lava lamps



6: Storytime, bubbles



# 'It's really sweet'



A mailbox is set up at the entrance of the Oconee County Public Library's main branch in Walhalla, ready for children to submit their letters to Santa.

## Oconee library helping deliver Santa's letters to kids

BY LAUREN PIERCE  
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — This year's holidays have been extra sweet for some local children, with a jolly surprise from Santa Claus himself.

The Oconee County Public Library in Walhalla is collecting children's letters to Santa this month for its North Pole Express. Letters can be delivered to the North Pole mailbox through Dec. 18 inside the main library branch, located at 501 W. South Broad St.

Kids can bring their own letter or fill out a provided postcard at the library with a return address on each letter, so Santa Claus can write a personalized letter back.

Assistant youth services librarian Di Wharton said she's watched as a few kids have dropped their letters off.

"They're so excited about it," she said. "It was fun to see how excited they got to put the letters inside the mailbox. It's really sweet."



Children who mail their letters at the library in Walhalla by Dec. 18 can expect to receive a letter back from Santa Claus before Christmas, according to Oconee County Public Library assistant youth services librarian Di Wharton.

Wharton added some of the letters so far have been funny to read — especially the spelling.

"You can tell it's very phonetic,

that the child did it all by their self. But that's what we wanted," she

SEE LETTERS, PAGE A5

7: Explorers Club, making Glow-in-the-Dark lava lamps

## Request Amendment to OCPL Reconsideration Policy

### Current policy:

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself and for his/her children, he/she cannot limit access to the materials by others.

Children are not limited to using juvenile materials, although juvenile collections are grouped to facilitate access.

The responsibility of the Library is to serve all the community, not to promote or censor any particular political, moral, philosophical, or religious conviction or opinion. The criteria for Materials Selection ( #2 above) will be followed in considering materials for reconsideration.

Citizen requests for reconsideration shall be made in writing on forms provided by the library. The Library Director will give a written response. Appeals are directed to the Board for final decision.

### Proposed Change:

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself and for his/her children, he/she cannot limit access to the materials by others.

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Citizen requests for reconsideration shall be made in writing on forms provided by the library.

**Complainants must be a resident of Oconee County. Complaints must originate with an Oconee resident, and not be a proxy request from an individual or group outside of Oconee County. The Library Director will give a written response within 5 business days. Appeals are directed to the Board for final decision, and must be made within 14 days of the date of the Director's response.**