

OCPL Director's Report

November 2025

1. Programs and Services: Attendance at programs in September and October was very good. In addition to the regular movie nights, craft programs, and Story Times, there were also more programs for homeschool students, such as the Discovering Great Artists series. There were also several Book Clubs, such as Book Buzz and the Zoom Book Club series. (The branches have also conducted numerous programs. See the branch managers' reports for more on those.

2. Usage Statistics and Narratives: Usage statistics for September and October as well as individual branch/department narratives are attached.

3. Finance and Budget: OCPL budget figures for FY25/26 to date are attached.

4. Personnel and Training: Alan Sayre with the Sheriff's Department spoke at our October 13 Staff In-Service Training. Specifically, he trained staff on situational awareness and de-escalation, which will be useful in dealing with some of our patrons, but also in their everyday lives. Kerry Leeper Brock also gave staff members a useful overview of her job and what she does for the library. Tucker Brown, our Walhalla circulation manager, left on October 10 to work in acquisitions at Clemson University. We interviewed five candidates, and the new circulation manager will be a hire from within. Abigail White, who worked as a circulation assistant at Salem, is the new circulation manager. In addition to having worked previously at the Walhalla location as a part time assistant, Abi has been with the library since 2019, and has an associate's degree in business administration with an emphasis on management. We will be interviewing for a fulltime circulation assistant for Salem in November.

5. Building and Grounds: We have been in contact with a person who might be able to help us with the landscaping at several of the branches. We know that the City of Seneca approved the design for the parking area at the Seneca Library. The next step is getting on the schedule for County Roads and Bridges (who is currently without an asphalt crew leader) to complete the work. With some upheaval in the county leadership, it will probably be spring 2026 before we can have that completed.

6. Technology: We will need to replace the two Ricoh Smartboards we use at the Seneca and Walhalla locations. They will not update to Windows 11, so they will slowly start to degrade as Windows 10 will no longer update after October 14.

7. Friends of the Library: Used book sales have continued each Thursday from 10:00 to 3:30 p.m. Their Books on the Alley location in M. Tannery and Sons on Ram Cat Alley also does very well. The Friends have received several large donations recently, and have also been short several of their regular volunteers.

Sales figures for combined September and October are as follows:

Basement \$6,201.39

Booth \$4,362.18

Lobby \$ 682.00

2nd Party \$ 211.00

Online Sales \$ 311.59

Seneca \$ 120.00

Total Book Sales Revenue \$11,888.16

8. Oconee County: We are working with county grants writer Brittney Martin to identify possible grants to continue to fund a social worker/resource associate at the library. We will also be working with county administration to ask for funding for this critical part time position in the FY27 budget. This might become more difficult with the recent upheaval in county leadership.

9. State Library: The directors from across the state, collectively known as APLA, the Association of Public Library Administrators, will be working with the State Library on the FY27 state budget request for State Aid. There are hopes to have the legislature pass a resolution in support of libraries. The strategy this year is to advocate for a \$50,000 per annum increase in the minimum grant for smaller counties. That will increase their State Aid from \$150,000 a year to \$200,000 per year.

10. Community Involvement: Kerry Leeper Brock and Amy Saylor are continuing to help with the Clean of Heart Mobile showers every other Wednesday at Our Daily Bread in Seneca. We also are picking up loaves of bread from Golden Corner Food Pantry to distribute at the branches for free each week. This is surplus that they would otherwise have to throw away. The SC Office of Resilience again has hosted group and individual assistance sessions at the Walhalla Library for people to apply for assistance or manage their cases in relation to Hurricane Helene. The Bookmobile participated in a Fall Festival at 76 Supply.

11. Other: We commend the staff for their flexibility and their ability to give each other some needed grace. Several of our staff suffered losses in their family, others have experienced illness. Others have stepped up as need to cover. We also had a very successful Volunteer Appreciation Jane Austen Tea in October.

	Sept 2024	Sept 2025	Change	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	Change
Visits to Library	11,899	12,091	1.6%	13,533	12,387	-8.5%
Material Circulation - LOT	127	105	-17.3%	118	116	-1.7%
Material Circulation - Adult	12,257	11,565	-5.6%	13,299	11,585	-12.9%
Material Circulation - Youth	775	943	21.7%	875	687	-21.5%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	8,675	8,901	2.6%	9,642	8,530	-11.5%
Total Material Circulation	21,834	21,514	-1.5%	23,934	20,918	-12.6%
Internet Uses	667	717	7.5%	781	825	5.6%
Internet Hours of Use	177	362	104.5%	375	437	16.5%
New Cards Issued	167	160	-4.2%	190	137	-27.9%
Programs - Adult	9	7	-22.2%	15	10	-33.3%
Programs Attendance - Adult	13	24	84.6%	55	46	-16.4%
Programs - Youth 12-18	0	2		0	3	
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	0	24		0	0	
Programs - Juvenile 6-11	5	4	-20.0%	6	4	-33.3%
Programs Att - Juv 6-11	32	75	134.4%	30	50	66.7%
Programs - Children 0-5	2	18	800.0%	2	20	900.0%
Programs - Att - Children 0-5	10	222	2120.0%	7	213	2942.9%
Programs - All Ages	4	2	-50.0%	14	5	-64.3%
Programs Att - All Ages	29	8	-72.4%	111	61	-45.0%
Programs Att - Passive	178	857	381.5%	117	506	332.5%
Outreach Activities	3	5	66.7%	1	6	500.0%
Outreach Act. Attendance	451	904	100.4%	250	582	132.8%
Public Training Sessions	0	0		4	0	-100.0%
Public Training Participants	0	0		4	0	-100.0%
Public Training Hours	0	0		4	0	-100.0%
Staff Training Sessions	3	6	100.0%	7	5	-28.6%
Staff Training Participants	6	1	-83.3%	29	27	-6.9%
Staff Training Hours	14	36	157.1%	207	118	-42.9%
Number of New Volunteers	0	0		0	0	
Number of Vol Hours	38	47	23.5%	39	39	0.0%
Meeting Room Use	58	44	-24.1%	64	100	56.3%
Meeting Room Attendance	207	128	-38.2%	407	165	-59.5%
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	0	0		1	0	-100.0%
Number of Web Site Hits	10,432	10,802	3.5%	10,168	11,319	11.3%
Wi-Fi Users	289	310	7.3%	273	285	4.4%
Wi-Fi Sessions	1,993	2,005	0.6%	1,886	1,971	4.5%
Hoopla Checkouts		1,774			1,717	
CloudLibrary Downloads	3,872	3,759	-2.9%	3,786	3,960	4.6%
Ancestry.com Hits	168	237	41.1%	50	380	660.0%
Interlibrary Loans	32	56	75.0%	51	9	-82.4%
New Material Added	894	721	-19.4%	1,128	701	-37.9%

OCPL BUDGET 2025-2026- 11-10-25

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
Local Budget					
010-206-30018-00000	Travel	1500	687.26	46%	813
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,745	2,600	95%	145
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	150,000	48,217	32%	101,783
010-206-30041-00000	Telecommunications	0		0%	0
010-206-30056-00000	Data Processing	31,749	28,591	90%	3,158
010-206-30059-00000	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	8,500	3,531	42%	4,969
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750	145	19%	605
010-206-30084-00000	School, Training, Sem.	2,500	2,499	100%	1
010-206-30090-00000	Honorarium	900	900	100%	0
010-206-33022-00207	Bldg Maint - Walhalla	7,000	7,207	103%	-207
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	4,000	1,696	42%	2,304
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	3,000	1,696	57%	1,304
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,000	1,748	87%	252
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	18,000	5,144	29%	12,856
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	12,000	2,994	25%	9,006
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	9,000	2,707	30%	6,293
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,700	646	38%	1,054
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	2,000	533	27%	1,467
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	2,250	293	13%	1,957
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,800	2,729	97%	71
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000	5,971	100%	29
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000	915	46%	1,085
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	250	128	51%	122
010-206-40034-00000	Food	500		0%	500
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	87,000	53,464	61%	33,536
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	23,000	16,735	73%	6,265
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,500	3,946	34%	7,554
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500	426	28%	1,074
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	3,000	895	30%	2,105
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	2,500	689	28%	1,811
TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS		404,644		0%	201,912
MISC. FUNDS					
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	67,088			67,088
013-080-00835-92056	Nettles Trust	60,827		0%	60,827
TOTAL MISC. FUNDS					127,915
State Aid Budget - \$216814.35					
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	\$22,710.00	5,603.26	25%	17,106.74
240-206-30059-00255	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	\$3,000.00		0%	3,000.00
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	\$900.00	250.00	28%	650.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	\$6,000.00	2,412.48	40%	3,587.52
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital Equip (State)	8,863.35	2,472.71	28%	6,390.64
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	\$19,885.00	4,431.52	22%	15,453.48
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	\$5,000.00	3,413.32	68%	1,586.68
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	\$101,500.00	26,231.64	26%	75,268.36
240-206-40112-00255	Periodicals (State)	\$32,356.00	29,319.99	91%	3,036.01
240-206-40113-00255	AV (State)	\$16,600.00	2,011.98	12%	14,588.02
Total State Aid Funds		\$216,814.35		0%	140,667.45

Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, September & October 2025

Angie Clark-Bookmobile Manager

Operations

During the month of September, 25 regularly scheduled stops were completed. Seven volunteers assisted. I visited a new stop, The Starlight Program at the D.A.R in Salem. I did card signups only. 9 new cards were set up. The ladies were very excited about the bookmobile starting in October.

During the month of October, 21 regular stops were completed. Five volunteers assisted. I had my first visit at the D.A.R in Salem. We had 13 in attendance, 1 new card and 111 items were checkout during my 1-hour visit. I also gave out bookmobile tote bags, bookmarks, OCPL swag and 9 Take & Make crafts were taken. You could feel the wonder and excitement from the ladies and kids as they all visited the bookmobile for the very first time. This is what I love about my job!

Special Outreach

September: Hispanic Heritage Festival:

We gave out a free book to anyone 18 years and younger. We also had bookmarks, pens and stickers.

October: 76 Supply Anniversary Celebration- Westminster

We gave out free books to anyone 18 and younger. I had OCPL swag, bookmarks and 4 different Take & Make crafts. 35 crafts were taken.

West Oak Middle School- Family Fun Night:

The bookmobile was open for checkouts. I had bookmarks and pencils available.

Statistics

Category	September 2025	October 2025
Stops	25	21
Hours Open	20.5	17
Total Attendance	535	393
Volunteers/Hours	7/44.25hrs	5/35.5hrs
Outreach Stops	1	2
Outreach Visitors	150	134
Outreach Hours	7	5.5
New Cards	9	1
Programs-Passive	0	44

Library Resource Report September-October 2025

Awareness/Promotion

An exhibit on "Healthy Aging" and "Yoga" was on display at the Walhalla OCPL branch in the month of September celebrating both "Healthy Aging Month" and "National Yoga Month," with particular materials geared towards Yoga for older adults. During the month of October, a display for Blindness Awareness Month was exhibited in Walhalla. Both displays had appropriate books that could be checked out, as well as handouts (English and Spanish) for patrons to take with them. Flyers for related programs were also on display each month: Yoga/Chair Yoga event flyers for September and a Vision Screening event flyer for October.

Chair yoga programs were offered at Salem, Seneca and Westminster, in September, in addition to the monthly regular yoga class at Walhalla. A free vision screening was provided at the Seneca branch by the Salem Lions Club at the end of October.

All Library Resource events are submitted to the Seneca Journal Community Calendar, as well as being listed in the OCPL (print) calendar and on the OCPL website and social media sites. Also, Library Resource event flyers are frequently featured on the Healthy Oconee Coalition Instagram page and are submitted to the Oconee Observer, the newsletter for Oconee County employees, for additional promotion. In addition, some of the Library Resource events/programs are typically submitted and sometimes featured in the "County Connector," the Oconee Chamber of Commerce's newsletter.

<u>Program/event name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u># of participants</u>
• Chair Yoga	9/3/25	Seneca OCPL	5
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	9/10/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	14
• Yoga	9/11/25	Walhalla OCPL	5
• Chair Yoga	9/17/25	Westminster	1
• Chair Yoga	9/18/25	Salem	1
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	9/24/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	12
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	9/27/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	10
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	10/8/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	15
• Yoga	10/9/25	Walhalla OCPL	6
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	10/22/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	15
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	10/25/25	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	12
• Free Vision Screening	10/30/25	Seneca OCPL	65

Assistance to Individuals/Families

The Community Resource Associate and Community Resource Assistant/Spanish Interpreter assisted 28 individuals/families in September and 29 individuals/families in October.

Other Community Resource Activities/Collaborations

The Library Resource Associate (Kerry) and/or Community Resource Assistant (Amy) attended/participated in/provided the following in September and October:

- Attended Community Impact Network meeting, September 4, 2025 (Amy)
- Attended Oconee Service Association at Blue Ridge Electric Community Room, September 9, 2025 (Kerry)
- Represented OCPL at the City of Walhalla "Festival of the Americas," September 13, 2025 (Amy and Kerry)
- Taught 3 Chair Yoga classes in addition to regular monthly Yoga Class, September 3, 17, 18 2025 (Amy)
- Represented OCPL at "Walk for Change: Domestic Violence Awareness Walk" at High Falls County Park, October 4, 2025 (Kerry)
- Attended and presented re. Library Resource program at OCPL Staff Inservice, October 13, 2025 (Kerry)
- Attended Oconee County Service Association at TCTC Oconee Campus, October 14, 2025 (Kerry)
- Assisted in planning and hosting OCPL Volunteer "Afternoon Tea," October 15, 2025 (Kerry)
- Attended OCPL Volunteer "Afternoon Tea," October 15, 2025 (Amy)
- Coordinated supply pick-up for Mobile Clean of Heart shower program from Catholic Charities, October 17, 2025 (Kerry)
- Assisted in planning and hosting "A Current View: Changes to Healthcare Programs and Non-Profit Agencies", October 27, 2025 (Kerry)

Continuing Education

- Being a Hero to Ourselves: The Power of Self Care for the Grief Professional, September 11, 2025 (Kerry)
- CPR, September 30, 2025 (Amy)
- First Annual Library Social Work Conference, Columbia, SC, October 1-2, 2025 (Kerry and Amy)
- Affordable Housing as a Social Justice Intervention for Social Workers, October 23, 2025 (Kerry)

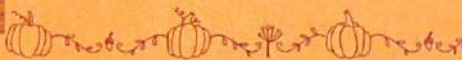
Programming, Operations, Staff Development, etc...

- ☞ Salem's programming has remained well-attended during the months of September and October.
- ☞ Our most attended program continues to be our seasonal BINGO for families. Our fall BINGO session (held in October) brought in 23 attendees of all ages.
- ☞ Coffee and Crafts (held in September) was our second most popular program within the last few months. Attendees made their own ghost/pumpkin art using spackle and paint.
- ☞ We held our first ever passive tiny art show during September/October. The art show had an autumn theme. All participants were able to stop by the library and pick up a kit with a 3" canvas, paint, and brushes. Kits were available for pick up through September for all ages. We had 29 kits available and all were taken. Out of those 29 kits, 24 were returned and displayed during the month of October to be voted on by age group. An award ceremony will be held on November 10th.
- ☞ I attended the Association of Rural & Small Libraries conference September 17-20 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I had the opportunity to network with other small library professionals and build upon my own professional development by attending a wide range of workshops.
- ☞ Abigail attended volunteer committee meetings in the months of September and October. She assisted with the volunteer tea on October 15th.
- ☞ On October 27th, it was announced that Abigail was selected for the Circulation Manager position at Walhalla. While we search for her replacement, she will be in Salem as coverage is needed.
- ☞ On October 31st, the Salem staff participated in the Town of Salem's Fall Festival. We handed out bookmarks, candy, and other promotional materials to over 200 children.
- ☞ Our take and make crafts are still popular among those that are unable to attend our programs. We gave out 36 kits during the months of September and October.

Building Management

- 🛠 In late September, county maintenance rewired our lights above the circulation desk and entrance and installed LEDs.

Stats	Sep	Oct
Visits	1533	1670
New Cards	6	7
ILLs	4	1



Salem Tiny Art Show:
All Things Autumn



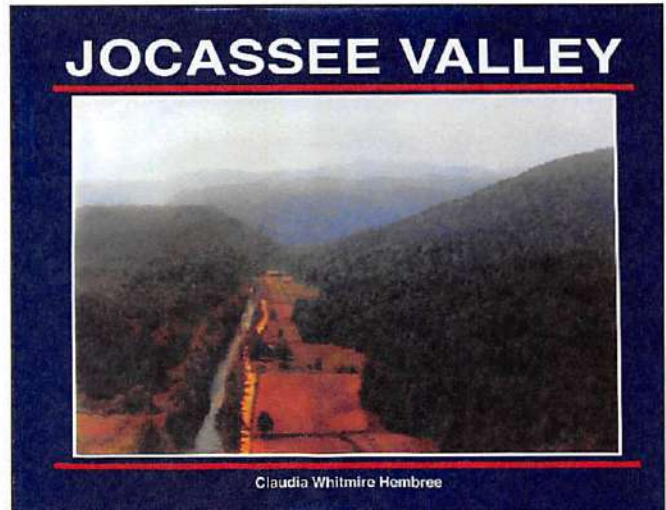
COFFEE AND CRAFTS: GHOST/PUMPKIN SPACKLE ART



Narrative

Jocassee Valley Digitization Project:

I have finished and submitted "Jocassee Valley" by Mrs. Claudia Hembree to the University of South Carolina. My initial assumption was that this project would take two to three months to complete; however, after speaking with USC I discovered that the metadata would be less labor intensive, thus I revised the completion time to two months. After taking time to develop a full project plan, I finally determined that it would take one month to complete everything. Moreover, to secure a fully successful completion I divided the process into three phases.



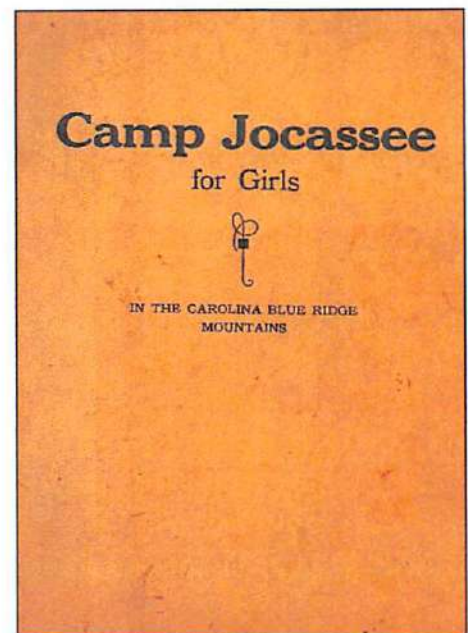
Phase I: Work on the first scans by working on up to two chapters a week. After completing the scans flag those that need to be rescanned during Phase II.

Phase II: Rescan flagged scans and edit the scans.

Phase III: Work on metadata and submit all material to USC.

The scans began on September 4th, and it was determined that I could scan more than two chapters a week. This aided in speeding up the scanning process; however, quality control was not scarified. Instead, I was able to add in further checks to ensure that every page was scanned of the book. I especially want to thank Christopher Witherington, Circulation Assistant, in reviewing all the scans to ensure that no pages were missed. All Phases were completed by October 2nd, and all materials were sent to USC.

Lastly, due to the speed of completion I was also able to submit two items that were scanned in 2020 by Abigail White. Before working at Salem, she was a Circulation Assistant at Walhalla. She completed digitizing two catalogs of "Camp





Camp Jocassee
FOR GIRLS

Jocassee for Girls.” I was able to complete the metadata, and sent these catalogs to USC as well. These catalogs donated by Mrs. Hembree in 2020, and after digitization were donated to the Oconee History Museum for preservation.

I did inform Mrs. Hembree of my progress, and she was thrilled to hear this update! At this time, USC has these books within its digital Oconee County Public Library Collection. There were a few adjustments made on their end, but nothing that compromised the books being uploaded. The last part is for everything to be submitted to the South Carolina Digital Library.

I did not think I would complete this project so quickly, and it has given me the necessary nudge to start working through my short list of items to digitize. Future updates will be provided soon.

Rogers Room Statistics:

Statistics Recorded	September 2024	September 2025	October 2024	October 2025
Walk-In	5	1	4	2
Phone Call	5	0	0	0
Mail	0	0	0	0
Email/Online	2	1	1	1
Books	18	2	7	3
Microfilm	5	4	3	10
Map	4	4	0	0
SC Room Presentations	0	0	0	0
SC Room Presentation Attendance	0	0	0	0
Questions Completed	17	5	6	1
Outstanding Questions	0	0	0	11
Volunteer Hours	47.40	27	64	33.5
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	-	-	1	-

Seneca Branch Narrative, Sept/Oct 2025

Emily Whitmire Sluder, Branch Manager

Facilities:

- We have to coordinate with Roads and Bridges about a tree to come down and removing the sign with the old logo. Hopefully they will have time for this whenever they begin work on the new road. We think they may get started in the spring, but they have to hire an asphalt expert from the outside.
- Maintenance has not come look at the vents/ducts. We will have to re-ask Jason.
- I have communicated with Emily J. about purchasing a new couch for the children's area in November as it is damaged. We will also purchase a chair to replace the broken armchair in the Teen area.
- I am going to ask Maintenance to pressure wash the walkways, the windows, and the white fascia at the top of the building. They did not have enough staff the last time I asked as the landscaping crew changed.
- Emily and Jonathan have begun cleaning out the maintenance/storage room and janitorial supply areas as it has not been done in some time. We are in the beginning stages of creating a schedule so that we can more regularly check for cobwebs, damaged ceiling tiles, etc.
- Carolina Burglar and Fire replaced one of our motion sensors and checked the others.

Operations: Everything is operating normally. Due to lack of space and workflow we cannot weed as quickly as we need to. The staff is keeping up with shelf reading very well. Bingo and painting/drawing remain our biggest programs. We expect attendance to be slower toward the end of the year.

Staffing: Emily and Blair went to the SCLA conference in Columbia in October. We will be getting a second volunteer with library experience in November. We have enough staff and volunteers at this time, and I do not expect any turnover in the near future.

Attendance for programs run by Seneca staff:

Bingo – Sept: 15 , Oct: 10

Notable Statistics	Sept 2025	Oct 2025
Visits to library	4547	4656
New Cards Issued	90	61

Sci-fi trivia – 0; Apple Adult Craft – 5; Drop-in Apple Craft – 5
Sketch and Draw – 7

Programs

Adult programs were light in September. We held our two recurring programs, our all ages Chess Club and Book Buzz (book club at Mountain Mocha). Thank you to Tucker Brown (Circulation Manager) and Angie Clark (Bookmobile) for continuing those programs in my absence.

Chess Club and Book Buzz continued in October. Chess Club saw its largest group yet with 16. On October 15th, Walhalla Library hosted Kalee Lineberger from the South Carolina Jane Austen Society for a program on fashion in Jane Austen's time. The presentation included sample garments, many made by Kalee herself. Walhalla Library also hosted Clemson Extension and FoodShare for a food demonstration and diabetes seminar. Finally, adults made the trendy clay ghosts that have been popular on social media. It proved to be a popular program with registration filling over a week in advance.

Volunteer Dinner

In October, we hosted our annual volunteer appreciation function at the Walhalla Depot. This year's theme was a Jane Austen tea party to celebrate the author's 250th birthday. Thank you to Janice Lovinggood and staff from across all our branches for putting together a wonderful program. Kalee Lineberger of the South Carolina Jane Austen Society also gave a Regency fashion lesson at our volunteer event.

Staff In-Service

Our annual fall staff in-service was held in Walhalla on October 13. Jeanne Malmgren, a licensed professional counselor, spoke to staff on mindfulness techniques and walked us through some relaxation exercises. Alan Sayre with the Oconee County Sheriff's Office also presented at in-service on the importance of being aware of our surroundings. In the afternoon, everyone returned to their respective branches to work on projects.

Adult Winter Reading

I am excited to announce that this year OCPL will host its first Winter Reading Challenge. The winter challenge is similar to Summer Reading, but it is specifically for adults. This is a bingo-style challenge built to encourage adults to explore genres outside of their comfort zone. Participants can pick up a bingo card at any OCPL branch or use the Beanstack App to complete their card digitally. Adults must read four genres in a row to earn an OCPL soup mug.



September and October Westminster Narrative Report

- Our parttime assistant, Patsy Smith, celebrated her 14th work anniversary in September. She is a great asset to the library and we are so thankful she has stuck with us for all these years.
- For October we held our 2nd Annual Pumpkin Coloring Contest. We had 38 entries in our three age categories of elementary, teen and adult. We allowed the public to vote for their favorites in each age group. We had a total of 182 votes! Gabriella R. won for elementary. Lorelai won for teen. Terri won for adult. We have so much talent in our community and we love to show it off. Each first-place winner received a bag of goodies and all participants received a coloring book.
- For Library Card Signup Month, we gave away two rain barrels. We had 36 entries from those who chose to enter after qualifying by either updating their current card or obtaining a new card.
- Our September scavenger hunt coincided with the Apple Festival theme. Forty-six kids looked around the library to find the apple that had the bookworm hiding behind it. Facts and funny jokes were hidden behind the other.
- Our *Stitch* (2025) movie showing and Amy's Yoga program did not have anyone show up.
- Stickered Tumblers had a great turnout of 9. Teens, and even their moms, were able to decorate tumblers with an array of stickers.
- We had 5 out of 14 registrants show for our cemetarium program. Everyone had fun and thought it was whimsical. We had one person who brought a friend that had never made a terrarium before. She did not know the library offered such programs. I gave her information and she was excited about knowing we did programs like this all the time.
- We had a great Junior Beekeeping Adventure with Steve from Flip Flop Farm. It was a great and interactive presentation all about bees and the honey they make. Attendees even got to taste honey straight from a hive. We had 47 attend. Our part-time employee Cindi met Steve at the F.A.R.M Center's market and made this program possible.
- We held several programs for the public school's fall break. We showed the two different versions of *Haunted Mansion* and had 4 and 10 people attend.
- We continued the Haunted Mansion theme and hosted a ghost bingo scavenger hunt. We had 79 participants.
- Everyone had a ghostly good time at our Haunted Mansion Party. We read Haunted Mansion books, made haunted mansion suncatchers, and had some yummy cupcakes. We had 19 attendees with several dressing up in their Halloween costume.
- In celebration of the Bigfoot Festival heading to town we hosted a Bigfoot craft. We had 24 attend and gave out 22 additional kits as take and makes.
- Our October Maker Monday had us creating Haunted Book Nooks. Book nooks are small diorama-like creations that go between your books on your bookshelf. They are just a whimsical fun thing to do. We had nine attendees who all enjoyed making a haunted forest or a haunted room.
- Inservice—Staff enjoyed learning about mindfulness and ways to deescalate situations. It was nice to have lunch all together, something we do not get to do. The rest of the day was spent shifting and rearranging the teen and older teen collections now that those have been completed.
- Displays for September and October included books about cats and "Oh the horror!" books.
- New multipurpose chairs/tables were purchased for the children's area. We also put out a fox tent, pretend fire, and pretend s'mores for a fall feel. We also received new Disney puppets for the puppet theater.

Apple Festival

A week or so prior to the Apple Festival, staff saw a post on social media inviting Westminster businesses to decorate their windows or yards to celebrate the Apple Festival and its theme of "something to write home about." We had already planned a bookworm scavenger hunt, playing off worms and apples, so wanted to somehow connect the

two. The idea became that a bookworm driving a monster truck shaped like an apple would definitely be something to write home about. We were even able to base the apple truck off of Richard Scarry's Busy Town book. While none of the library staff here are very artistic, we were able to use Canva to create the scenes that were then projected and traced onto paper. These papers were then taped to the windows and were traced again using window markers (something staff have never used before). We ended up with a very cute scene of worms cheering on The Bookworm at the 2025 Apple Jam. Entries were posted on The Official South Carolina Apple Festival Facebook page with 24 hours of voting/likes. A big effort was attempted by staff to get all of their coworkers, friends, and family to vote. Alas, we fell behind to Pioneer Water who had a great outdoor display that included an apple tree. We did receive an apple-shaped 2nd place trophy along with some goodies. It was something fun the staff enjoyed participating in and was a great way to help our community in advertising the Apple Festival.

The Apple Festival was a great success! Cindi and Leah were there all day with DJ and Emily J. from Walhalla coming for about 2 hours in the morning. We had a pop-up BBW Seed Library that was very popular and would have been completely depleted if not for the weather (over 200 seed packs were taken). We had a treasure chest of goodies and several apple-themed crafts for the kids to do. We did hit a snag when it poured rain on us and all our supplies. We were able to huddle together the crafts we had left and hand those out.

Seed library

On September 15, I met with a group of community members to discuss the possibility of getting the Westminster Community Garden started back. The previous garden was part of a Re-fresh Garden underneath the umbrella of the Oconee Cultivation Project which had received grants for the garden. We would basically be starting from scratch. I attended to offer seeds from the BBW Seed Library and to help in any way I can. It has long been a dream of mine to use the extra bit of land we have to start a garden, but I do not have any sort of green thumb. One of the issues they have is that the location of the current garden is hidden so many do not know about it. I mentioned the possibility of using that bit of land since it is on the front street, next to the park and the ice-cream shop. They were excited and mentioned using it for an herb and pollinator garden in raised beds or terraced since it has the ditch/slant. Blair will be talking with Ms. Brock to see if this is at all possible before we start getting into the details of it.

In September we gave out 118 packs of seeds in the library, 248 at the festival and sent OHM 280 seed packs. We gave out 70 seed packs in October. We received several donations of seeds from the local community.

Greer and Hugh Shafer donated \$500 to the BBW Seed Library. Mrs. Watkins was her mother. This is the second year she has donated a significant amount of money to the library. These funds help us purchase seed packaging supplies and seeds to help fill in where needed.

Period project

The Period Project is still going strong. Westminster gave out 213 items in September and October. As a system, we gave out over 450 items during those months. Since we started doing this service five months ago, we have given out over 1,500 items at no cost to the library. We received 377 donated items in September.

Volunteer Luncheon

I was happy to be able to be back on the volunteer appreciation committee this year. Our volunteers do so much for our system and it is nice to be able to show them some appreciation. It is also nice to interact with other library staff. The Jane Austen Tea was a great success and a real example of people working together.



Youth Services Department
September – October 2025
Emily Johnson, Youth Services Librarian

Programs

Storytime

Starting in September, we began holding storytime at all four branches again. This was well received by the patrons, who were very excited to attend other branches' storytimes again. At Walhalla in September, we averaged 21 attendees a week; at Seneca, 19.5; at Westminster, 6.75, and at Salem, 2.5. Our September themes for storytime were bees/honey, kindness, cooking, ocean, and bravery. While all the themes went well, bravery was an especially big hit, mostly because the books were very interactive.

Attendance for storytime dropped off a little in October everywhere but Westminster, with Walhalla averaging 15 attendees a week, Seneca 16.5, Westminster 10.25, and Salem 2.25. Still, the program was well-received, and attendance was fairly regular. Our October themes for storytime were libraries, sickness, worry, and opposites. The attendees especially enjoyed the libraries theme.

Afternoon Storytime

We held two afternoon storytimes in September and one in October, each one gaining a little more traction than the last. The first in September was in Salem and focused on farms and farming, and while quite a few people were registered, only two attendees (not registered) showed up. I put on the program for those two, and we had a great time. I repeated this program at the end of September in Seneca, to a larger crowd of 11. Everyone who attended registered.

In October, afternoon storytime was held at the end of the month. Only two registered attendees showed up, but I opened the doors to a few families who were playing in the children's area, and we had a great time singing and reading and dancing together.

Homeschool Hangout: Discovering Great Artists

In September, I started a program that will continue every other month—Homeschool Hangout: Discovering Great Artists. This program is based on a book I read by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Kim Solga, wherein the authors create fun, child-friendly ways to explore famous artists' art styles. This month, we focused on the Limbourg Brothers and Gothic/manuscript art. The attendees made their own "Book of Days" (except as a Book of Seasons), drawing in miniature and "binding" their pages together. There was great response to this program, and it was requested to continue. While we took a break from it in October, it will begin again in November.

Homeschool Hangout: Writers' Workshop

In October, I tried to implement a writers' workshop program for writing spooky stories, using *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. Unfortunately, no one came to either program (one at Salem at the beginning of the month and one at Seneca at the end of the month). For November, we are trying Discovering Great Artists again and will regroup and discuss whether a writers' workshop is the best approach for this demographic.

Melody Makers

Perhaps my favorite program is one I began implementing in September which continues every month at different branches: Melody Makers. Based on a program my mom and her best friend used to run at their local library, Melody Makers is a way for children to celebrate music, rhythm, and sound. We read a music-related book at the beginning of the program, then we sing and dance. At the end, children are given the opportunity to strum a guitar, pick an autoharp, or play with child-sized musical instruments, depending on the week. This was a great hit, with relatively high attendance both times: 14 and 18. We will continue this program throughout the rest of the year.

Craft Night

This pumpkin-themed craft night was so fun and involved two different crafts: one where attendees could choose to "carve" or color Styrofoam pumpkins and one where attendees made their own pumpkin patch scene with paper. Attendees seemed to have a good time, and many asked when the next craft night would be. I was able to point them toward November, when we will host another craft program.

LEGO Club

For LEGO Club in September at Westminster, the attendees were encouraged to make something space-themed: could be a rocket, an alien, a planet, or something else entirely! I was out due to illness for this program, but Leah Price, the Westminster branch manager, ran it for me. There was great turnout for this program, as well: We had 17 attendees.

Book Chat

Unfortunately, no one showed up to this program, which was designed to give attendees time to read silently and then discuss their reads together. This was planned to take place at the Park Place Drive-In in Westminster beside the Westminster branch of the library.

Sensory Playtime

Unfortunately, no one showed up to this program, either. This program was planned to be an exploration of the senses for children ages 0-5. We had dried black beans with Halloween toys in a bin, kinetic sand and sandcastle materials in a bin, a water table filled with dishes and scoops, a baby pool filled with colorful shredded paper and scoops, and more. Next time, we will require

registration for such an event so that we know whether to set up for it or not. I will be trying this program again, as it has been a big hit in the past with other YSLs.

Collection Development and Maintenance

During September and October, I had little time to spend on collection development and maintenance—at least not as much time as I had in August when I was only hosting one storytime a week. However, I still managed to begin weeding the easy section at Walhalla, and I kept up with requests for new or replacement books from branch managers and patrons. I also had time to find a few books in monthly catalogues that I thought would be beneficial to the library, and I added these to Ingram carts as well.

Community Outreach/Collaboration

Building off of what I started in July and August, we held storytimes for three preschools in September: Trinity Baptist Preschool, The Learning Center at Open Door Baptist, and Golden Corner Preschool. DJ Wharton led The Learning Center's storytime, while I led the other two. We had great turnout for these programs, especially the Trinity Baptist Preschool storytime, which was held for their 2s, 3s, and 4s classes. (The Learning Center, in contrast, only sends their 4s class.) In total, we held storytime for 154 attendees in September. In October, Trinity Baptist had to cancel their storytime slot for the month, but we still held storytimes for Golden Corner and The Learning Center, with 39 total participants for the month.

Like mentioned in the previous month's narrative, in August, I met with Bethany Henry's Early Childhood 2 Honors class. They visited Walhalla on September 29th and assisted with storytime. This was a great success—the attendees loved having the volunteers, and the volunteers could not stop talking about how much fun they'd had. Mrs. Henry and I will be planning this again for her next Early Childhood 2 Honors class, which should be next year.

In October, I was supposed to go with Angie Clark, our Outreach Manager, to West Oak Middle School for a Family Fun Fest night. Unfortunately, I had caught something at work and was incapacitated due to a fever.

I planned in October for a program to take place at the Park Place Drive-In in Westminster (next to the Westminster branch). Unfortunately, no one showed up for this program. However, in November a program will take place at the W.P. Anderson Park in Westminster (next to the Westminster branch). Quite a few people are registered for this event, which Liz Johnson from the Parks Department is helping with. I look forward to writing about this event in the next bimonthly narrative.

Also in October, I visited Little Cane Creek Farms on the 24th and held storytime and talked about the library in front of 129 attendees, made up of kindergarten and first grade classes, self-

contained high school classes, and homeschoolers. This event was so much fun, and we even gained a few storytime attendees in the following weeks because of it.

Planning Ahead

In the past two months, I have planned the storytime themes and outlines, complete with books and songs, through April of 2026.

Also during this time, I planned the programs for January, February, March, and April on paper. I have decided on a regular pattern for programming and have sent that to Brittany Castro to avoid scheduling conflicts. I added the programs for January and February to Skedda. I created everything needed on Canva and added everything to the website calendar for January except for the events that will hopefully be held at the Salem Community Center. Unfortunately, Salem Town Hall does not open their 2026 calendar until January 1, 2026. Thus, I have an email scheduled to go to the town administrator at 12:00 AM January 1, 2026 that requests the Community Center for the two dates I need it in January. Hopefully by being proactive in this way, I will be able to book the center. Additionally, the events documents that Bethany requests each month are made for January and February.

I am also working on a future recurring video program I would like to begin in January—First Chapter Friday, where I read the first chapter of a juvenile/teen book out loud. These videos would be available on the website. I have written the script for the introductory video and have recorded about 15 weeks of books so far.

DJ and I have also begun planning for the Summer Reading Program 2026. We spend several long days making a detailed, chronological list of what needs done each month of the year for future SRPs. We are following that list now as we begin to think about and plan SRP '26. We have begun reaching out to several partners and many places that could run programs.

Displays

We had ordered a new shelf for the teen books so that we could have a “new” shelf and also a display shelf. The shelf did not arrive until the very end of September, so we were unable to have a teen display for September. In September, the juvenile display was for Roald Dahl Day, September 13th. In October, we had the new teen shelf, so we set up banned books displays for the juvenile section and the teen section.

DJ finished coming up with her idea for the children’s area, which she wanted to be interactive. I loved this idea, and we ran with it. We have a “gallery” wall of children’s coloring and artwork on display now. For September, we had children color or draw their favorite animals. For October, they colored and designed cute monsters.



Library Strategic Plan 2026-2028

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Executive Summary

The library last completed a Strategic Plan in 2023. Much has been accomplished since that time in terms of the Library of Things and other library services, as well as the addition of some new and updated spaces inside of the libraries. There remains work to be done especially in the areas of seeking out and utilizing volunteers, communication between the main library and branch locations, and taking advantage of new technologies and services.

The new plan will focus the library on how to best use our people and our other resources to continue to serve our community. While we will continue to focus a great deal on outreach, we also understand that our existing spaces need our care and attention so that we can offer more to our users.

We also know that our community has valuable human and material resources that need to be connected to people in our community who need them. Our focus will be on how to recruit and best utilize volunteers, how to improve our communication and training so that our staff is best equipped and highly motivated to serve our community, and to find new and innovative ways to provide programs and experiences for our users.

Mission

The Oconee County Public Library provides resources and experiences to satisfy curiosity, connect people with their community, and encourage lifelong discovery.

Vision

The library is a hub for the community, with resources people need and want, programs and services that help people satisfy curiosity or try something new, and staff that is trained and prepared to help people reach their goals.

Operations

- Goal 1: Update and improve volunteer recruitment, training, and evaluation.
 - Objective 1: Modernize the volunteer program by developing an online application system.
 - Objective 2: Formalize the volunteer program by creating “job descriptions” and recruiting for specific tasks.
 - Objective 3: Develop an assessment tool to allow volunteers to see their worth.
- Goal 2: Redesign the Bookmobile service model to serve individuals who cannot visit a branch during normal operating hours, rather than just serving isolated areas.
 - Objective 1: Seek out new areas like shopping centers, medical offices, or apartment complexes where population density is higher.
 - Objective 2: Work with non-traditional community partners such as food banks and others to incorporate literacy with other services (utilizing Library Resource Associate).
- Goal 3: Improve staff training and evaluation.
 - Objective 1: Incorporate regular cross-training between branches so that staff are comfortable covering other locations during staff shortages.
 - Objective 2: Formalize training and evaluation with the introduction of Work Plans.
 - Objective 3: Create formal opportunities for more frequent meetings between managers and staff.

Community Involvement

- Goal 1: Participate in more community and school events as staffing and resources allow.
 - Objective 1: Seek opportunities to expand library services beyond the physical buildings through more community partnerships.
 - Objective 2: Encourage managers and senior staff to participate in civic and community organizations where time permits.
 - Objective 3: Support staff members through paying for memberships, conferences, or other opportunities to increase community engagement.
- Goal 2: Seek local partners for language services, especially when bilingual staff are not available.
 - Objective 1: Cultivate and support our volunteer network to supplement paid staff.
 - Objective 2: Find incentives to encourage staff to receive additional training in Spanish language and cultural sensitivity.
- Goal 3: Explore databases related to skills development for patrons and staff.
 - Objective 1: Find new tools to allow staff to assist patrons to learn critical digital literacy skills.
 - Objective 2: Expand our tech help to more branches and more hours available.
- Goal 4: Provide resources for parents to guide their children in using library resources.
 - Objective 1: Provide curated lists of resources from a variety of sources to help parents choose appropriate materials for their children.
 - Objective 2: Maintain and update the list or database as new materials/trends etc., emerge.

Programming

- Goal 1: Offer more programming related to technology and workforce development.
 - Objective 1: Seek out local expertise (Clemson University, Tri-County Technical College, Hamilton Career Center) to offer programming about digital literacy, AI, etc.
 - Objective 2: Partner with the Department of Employment and Workforce, SC Works, and others to offer resume classes, interviewing skills, soft skills in the workplace, etc.
- Goal 2: Continue offering programs in Spanish at multiple branches as staffing and resources allow.
 - Objective 1: Seek out volunteers to supplement staff involvement.
 - Objective 2: Seek out community partners to offer relevant classes or programs, particularly ESL/ESOL and pathways to citizenship.
- Goal 3: Seek partnerships with local businesses and organizations to expand programming.
 - Objective 1: Expand existing parameters to include local food and beverage industry, local merchants, and others.
 - Objective 2: Leverage existing partnerships with Extension Service, Healthy Oconee Coalition, and others to offer more healthy food demonstrations and health related programs.
- Goal 4: Expand program offerings for homeschool families.
- Goal 5: Offer more programming or classes in civics, voting, and community involvement.

Libraries

- Goal 1: Reconsider the layout and functionality of existing library spaces.
 - Objective 1: Reexamine children's areas at Walhalla and Seneca locations.
 - Objective 2: Explore possible areas for additional quiet spaces.
- Goal 2: Expand or enhance technological services.
 - Objective 1: Examine new printing solutions to replace coin op towers with an emphasis on air printing.
 - Objective 2: Expand tech offerings like 3D printing, laser engraving, and 3D scanning.
 - Objective 3: Explore possible space for portable/one-off maker space.
- Goal 3: Evaluate and adjust library collections to maintain relevancy and ease of accessibility.
- Goal 4: Optimize use, visibility, and aesthetics of outdoor spaces.
 - Objective 1: Engage community partners to maintain existing landscape features.
 - Objective 2: Explore use of outdoor spaces for a community garden or other such enhancement.



2026 Library Board Meeting Calendar

Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC

Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC

Tuesday, July 28, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC

Tuesday, November 24, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street,
Walhalla, SC