

## OCPL Director's Report

March 2026

**1. Programs and Services:** Attendance at programs in January and February was very good. The two weather events in January did not really affect too many library programs. The Little Walhalla Book club, led by a volunteer and held at Alexander's Coffee House on Main Street in Walhalla, has been very successful. There were also numerous Winter-themed crafts, I Read to Dogs, and Novel Study (a new program for the Youth Services department). The library also held a blue jean collection drive in February to support the shower outreach at Our Daily Bread. We collected a total of 155 jeans/pants/shorts and about 22 miscellaneous items, so it was a very successful drive! The branches have also conducted numerous programs. See the branch managers' reports for more on those.

**2. Usage Statistics and Narratives:** Usage statistics for January and February 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:** Patsy Smith, a circulation assistant in Westminster, resigned for family reasons. She had been with the library since 2011, and we will really miss her. We are working on a new system of training and evaluation starting with the new calendar year. We hope to introduce this to employees by our spring In-Service on April 3. We adapted this system from Richland Library.

**5. Building and Grounds:** Facilities Maintenance has done some grounds work for us with the approaching of spring. We have also submitted maintenance request tickets for our side entrance in Walhalla and the HVAC issues. The Seneca Branch has requested that the fascia and exterior trim be painted.

**6. Technology:** We have purchased our new smartboards. We are also working with our County IT department on the Library Technology Plan that is submitted to the State Library every two years.

**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, as did the lobby sales in Walhalla and Seneca. The Friends have received several large donations recently, and have processed them fairly quickly.

Book Sales collected January & February 2026:

Basement \$4,561.05

Booth \$5,329.46

Lobby \$ 451.00

Pop-up sales \$ 81.00

Online Sales \$ 588.37

Seneca \$ 54.00

Total Book Sales Revenue \$11,064.88

**8. Oconee County:** We presented our FY27 budget request to County Council. It included a request to add the Library Resource Associate position to the county payroll. It also included a request to increase the "professional" line item so that we might be able to raise part time pay. The County is also asking each department to develop a standard operating procedures manual for continuity of operations. We will be working on this through the spring.

**9. State Library:** The directors from across the state, collectively known as APLA, the Association of Public Library Administrators, met at Hickory Knob State Park in McCormick at the beginning of March for a Directors' Summit. The state House of Representatives has passed their budget for FY27, which includes funding to move smaller counties to a minimum \$200,000 per year in State Aid. Now it heads to Senate.

**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. Emily Johnson will be joining a local Rotary group. Brittany Castro is enrolled in the 2026 class of Leadership Oconee.

**11. Other:** We are trying harder to recognize milestones for our staff. Both Jonathan Hunter (Seneca) and Leah Price (Westminster) have been with the library for 20 years.

	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Change	Feb 2025	Feb 2026	Change
Visits to Library	11,415	11,391	-0.2%	10,997	11,175	1.6%
Material Circulation - LOT		75			86	
Material Circulation - Adult	12,027	12,701	5.6%	11,260	10,603	-5.8%
Material Circulation - Youth	791	806	1.9%	1,307	776	-40.6%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	8,141	8,152	0.1%	7,523	7,110	-5.5%
Total Material Circulation	20,959	21,659	3.3%	20,090	18,489	-8.0%
Internet Uses	659	752	14.1%	609	750	23.2%
Internet Hours of Use	309	373	20.7%	286	352	23.1%
New Cards Issued	125	162	29.6%	130	130	0.0%
Programs - Adult	10	8	-20.0%	13	9	-30.8%
Programs Attendance - Adult	36	55	52.8%	62	44	-29.0%
Programs - Youth 12-18	0	2		0	2	
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	0	12		0	10	
Programs -Juvenile 6-11	3	4	33.3%	3	5	66.7%
Programs Att -Juv 6-11	11	17	54.5%	11	19	72.7%
Programs - Children 0-5	2	13	550.0%	3	15	400.0%
Programs - Att - Children 0-5	9	153	1600.0%	22	240	990.9%
Programs - All Ages	4	3	-25.0%	4	3	-25.0%
Programs Att - All Ages	41	40	-2.4%	34	41	20.6%
Programs Att - Passive	27	279	933.3%	142	1,326	833.8%
Outreach Activities	0	3		3	4	33.3%
Outreach Act. Attendance	0	143		355	206	-42.0%
Public Training Sessions	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Participants	5	4	-20.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Hours	0	0		0	0	
Staff Training Sessions	5	1	-80.0%	0	2	
Staff Training Participants	24	2	-91.7%	0	1	
Staff Training Hours	85	46	-45.6%	0	2	
Number of New Volunteers	2	1	-50.0%	1	1	0.0%
Number of Vol Hours	35	40	13.5%	65	50	-22.5%
Meeting Room Use	45	84	86.7%	52	81	55.8%
Meeting Room Attendance	255	350	37.3%	297	482	62.3%
Specialized 1:1 Sessions	0	0		0	0	
Number of Web Site Hits	11,542	12,867	11.5%	9,510	10,655	12.0%
Wi-Fi Users	198	178	-10.1%	191	183	-4.2%
Wi-Fi Sessions	874	801	-8.4%	852	817	-4.1%
Hoopla Checkouts	672	2,166	222.3%	821	1,489	81.4%
CloudLibrary Downloads	3,995	3,830	-4.1%	3,633	3,314	-8.8%
Ancestry.com Hits	307	51	-83.4%	170	73	-57.1%
Interlibrary Loans	41	27	-34.1%	29	45	55.2%
New Material Added	732	792	8.2%	830	659	-20.6%

## OCPL BUDGET 2025-2026- 3-9-26

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
<b>Local Budget</b>					
010-206-30018-00000	Travel	1500	726.46	48%	774
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,745	2,600	95%	145
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	150,000	91,360	61%	58,640
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	6,964	82%	1,536
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750	467	62%	283
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	8,021	115%	-1,021
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	4,000	1,945	49%	2,055
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	3,000	2,222	74%	778
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,000	1,748	87%	252
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	18,000	9,596	53%	8,404
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	12,000	7,673	64%	4,327
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	9,000	5,399	60%	3,601
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,700	1,292	76%	408
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	2,000	1,312	66%	688
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	2,250	583	26%	1,667
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,800	2,729	97%	71
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000	5,995	100%	5
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000	1,634	82%	366
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	250	211	84%	39
010-206-40034-00000	Food	500		0%	500
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	87,000	70,936	82%	16,064
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	23,000	16,889	73%	6,111
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,500	7,442	65%	4,058
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500	484	32%	1,016
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	3,000	1,507	50%	1,493
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	2,500	1,195	48%	1,305
<b>TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS</b>		<b>404,644</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>116,724</b>
<b>MISC. FUNDS</b>					
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	86,583			86,583
013-080-00835-92056	Nettles Trust	60,827		0%	60,827
<b>TOTAL MISC. FUNDS</b>					<b>147,410</b>
<b>State Aid Budget - \$216814.35</b>					
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	\$16,133.69	12,627.42	78%	3,506.27
240-206-30059-00255	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	\$3,000.00		0%	3,000.00
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	\$900.00	900.00	100%	0.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	\$6,000.00	5,712.48	95%	287.52
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital Equip (State)	8,863.35	5,008.93	57%	3,854.42
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	\$19,885.00	15,014.65	76%	4,870.35
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	\$11,576.31	11,576.31	100%	0.00
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	\$101,500.00	72,935.10	72%	28,564.90
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	5,605.50	34%	10,994.50
<b>Total State Aid Funds</b>		<b>\$216,814.35</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>58,113.97</b>

## Programs

We hosted several outside speakers for programs in January and February. First, **Dr. Anne Grant**, AI Literacy Coordinator at Clemson University, visited the Seneca Library to present on how to use AI in everyday life. Dr. Grant is a fantastic speaker. The presentation did have a research angle, but I think the eleven patrons who attended found it very informative. The **Department of Consumer Affairs** visited the Walhalla Library in January to give a presentation on how seniors can avoid scams. Unfortunately, no one came out for this program. A couple of people had registered, but were dealing with the aftermath of the ice storm. Finally, we held a Law Talk at Westminster Library. Law Talks are coordinated through the SC Bar Association. A local attorney from **Hubbard & Gottschall Law** presented on the topic of Wills, Estates, and Probate. A handful of people had registered, but only one attended.

I had two adult painting programs in February for Valentine's Day. The first was held in Westminster. Six people registered, but only three attended. The second was a morning program in Walhalla. I rarely do morning programs for adults, but I wanted to mix things up. Registration filled fast, but out of the ten people registered, only two patrons attended. Even with the low turnout, we had a great time.

Chess club resumed in January after skipping December. For this year, I moved the chess club from the second Wednesday of the month to the third due to personal scheduling conflicts. Only four people attended in January. I was afraid that, with December's meeting being canceled and then the schedule changing, the club might be doomed to a slow death. However, that turned out not to be the case. In February, 16 people attended chess club, which is the highest attendance since the club began in August 2024. Our monthly book club at **Mountain Mocha** remains steady. There is a core group of about eight that attends each month. In February, we hosted local author **Carolyn Newton** during our book club. She talked about her new release, *Songs of the Dead Road*, and answered the group's questions about her writing and research. I also held our quarterly puzzle swap in January. I normally hold the swaps on Saturday, but switched to Thursday, January 29, to coincide with National Puzzle Day. I had a modest eight attendees. One person brought over twenty puzzles, but only wanted to take five with her.

Our English as a Second Language (ESL) program resumed in February. It was originally scheduled to resume in late January, but was delayed due to the ice storm. The class is taught by a volunteer who is a certified ESL instructor and meets every Monday afternoon. The class is currently averaging four students per week. Our other volunteer-led program, "The Little Walhalla Book Club," began in January and has taken off. It jumped from three people in attendance in January to twelve in February. The book club meets at **Alexander's Coffee Shop** on the first Wednesday of each month.

In January, we launched the Spice of the Month Take-and-Make kits at Walhalla. The purpose is to allow patrons to expand their cultural and culinary knowledge. Each month we'll showcase a new spice, herb, or blend from various corners of the globe – some very familiar, some more exotic. Each kit includes a spice sample, a recipe, and a bit about the spice's origins, history, and traditional uses. Patrons get to try a (new) spice without having to purchase a whole container for themselves. We gave away 42 ginger kits in January and 45 Ancho Chile Powder kits in February.

## Adult Winter Reading

Our first annual Adult Winter Reading Challenge kicked off on December 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a bingo-style challenge built to encourage adults to explore genres outside of their comfort zone. Adults had to read four genres in a row to earn an OCPL soup mug. The challenge was originally scheduled to end January 31<sup>st</sup>. With the weather disruptions in January, we decided to extend the challenge to the end of February. The extension did little to increase the number of completions. A total of 80 patrons completed the challenge. That was lower than I had hoped, but still an excellent showing for our first winter reading event. It was a learning experience, and next year will be even better.

## Professional Development

I completed a variety of professional development webinars in January and February. The webinars covered the topics of artificial intelligence, staff evaluations and training, and serving patrons with dementia.

## Planning

In terms of planning, a lot is happening as we gear up for our busiest season. I'm planning our staff in-service day, which will take place on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Cultural Outreach Committee and others (including myself) have begun planning our annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, which will be held on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Planning for adult summer reading is nearly complete. I am just waiting to hear back from a guest presenter to finalize one more program. It's going to be an incredibly busy (and fun!) summer for the library.

## **Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, January & February 2026**

### **Angie Clark-Bookmobile Manager**

#### **Operations**

During the month of January, 20 regularly scheduled stops were completed. Four volunteers assisted.

During the month of February, 21 regularly scheduled stops were completed. Six volunteers assisted. On February 27, myself and 1 volunteer assisted in reworking the bookmobile. We moved most of all the books around to better provide for the patrons. I was able to add an extra shelf of large print books so now I have 4, make more room for juvenile by removing a cart and putting in 3 stationary shelves. All adult items are on one side, except for board books and easy books, which are still near the bottom for easy access for the little ones. All juvenile, teen and dvd's are on the other side. Much better flow for everyone. All signage was replaced. 2 missing items were located that had fallen behind a shelf.

#### **Special Outreach**

**January:** No special outreach

**February: Golden Corner Preschool: Family Art and Reading night**

56 patrons came onboard. Susan Dillard from our Seneca branch assisted. We did checkouts and had bookmarks and coloring sheets available.

#### **Statistics**

<b>Category</b>	<b>January 2026</b>	<b>February 2026</b>
<b>Stops</b>	20	21
<b>Hours Open</b>	17	18
<b>Total Attendance</b>	514	480
<b>Volunteers/Hours</b>	4/29hrs	6/26hrs
<b>Outreach Stops</b>	0	1
<b>Outreach Visitors</b>	0	56
<b>Outreach Hours</b>	0	1
<b>New Cards</b>	0	0
<b>Programs-Passive</b>	0	0

## Library Resource Report January-February 2026

### Awareness/Promotion

Due to the outbreak of measles in the Upstate of South Carolina in the past few months, an exhibit on Measles was the feature in January. Books related to this topic were available to check out and handouts were available for patrons to take with them.

As part of American Heart Month in February, and because of the connection between heart health and diabetes, there was a "Take Diabetes to Heart" display at the Walhalla library that included literature on both general heart health and diabetes. The Clemson Extension program "Keys to Diabetes and Better Health" was held at the Walhalla branch during February, as well.

We try to make sure that Library Resource event flyers are posted at the Oconee County Administrative offices on Pine Street, as well as at each of the four OCPL branches. The flyers are also routinely emailed to local non-profit and social service agencies, as well as other community leaders. In addition, we try to make sure that Library Resource events are submitted to the Seneca Journal Community Calendar each month, as well listing them in the OCPL (print) calendar and on the OCPL website and social media sites. Library Resource event flyers are sometimes featured on the Healthy Oconee Coalition Instagram page and are frequently submitted to the Oconee Observer, the newsletter for Oconee County employees, for additional promotion. Occasionally, some of the Library Resource events/programs may be 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>
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	1/7/26	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	17
• Yoga	1/8/26	Walhalla OCPL	10
• Anxiety: What Works and What Doesn't	1/16/26	Seneca OCPL	8
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	1/21/26	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	13
• Salem Lions Club Free Vision Screening	1/22/26	Walhalla OCPL	26
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	2/4/26	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	13
• Keys to Diabetes & Better Health	2/11/26	Walhalla OCPL	4
• Yoga	2/12/26	Walhalla OCPL	12
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	2/18/26	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	16
• Loteria/Mexican Bingo	2/26/26	Walhalla OCPL	17
• Mobile Clean of Heart Showers	2/28/26	Our Daily Bread (Seneca)	16
• A blue jean drive was held at all 4 OCPL branch locations during the entire month of February, with a total of 160 pairs of jeans collected. These jeans will be distributed to unhoused people in our community via the Mobile Clean of Heart Shower program.			

### **Assistance to Individuals/Families**

The Community Resource Associate and Community Resource Assistant/Spanish Interpreter assisted 26 individuals/families in January and February.

### **Other Community Resource Activities/Collaborations/Continuing Education**

The Library Resource Associate (Kerry) and/or Community Resource Assistant (Amy) attended/participated in the following in January and February:

- Attended "Antidepressant Use in Pediatrics," via Zoom, Making the CASE, Medical University of South Carolina, January 13, 2026 (1 hour)-Kerry
- Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare, Libraries and Healthcare Learning Collaborative, via Zoom, January 22, 2026-Kerry
- Chamber of Commerce Community Breakfast (Law Enforcement), February 6, 2026-Amy
- Attended "WAVES: Working Alongside Voices of Experience," via Zoom, Making the CASE, Medical University of South Carolina, February 10, 2026 (1 hour)-Kerry

Salem Library  
January/February 2026  
Kayla Rucker  
Branch Manager

## Programming, Operations, Staff Development, etc....

The new year has arrived and it has been evident that reading more is a top resolution of the Salem community. We've seen many new faces already in the first few months. Despite holidays and inclement weather closures, our programs and services continue to thrive during these winter months. We have also completed most of the preparation for our busiest time of the year (Summer Reading). Our patrons continue to express their gratitude for our services.

- ☞ Our programs for all ages continue to be well-attended. Unfortunately, a few of our winter programs were cancelled due to inclement weather.
- ☞ Family BINGO remains our most popular program with the Salem community. There were 20 in attendance on January 21<sup>st</sup>.
- ☞ Runner-up for most attended in January was our bimonthly Coffee and Crafts program. For this session, attendees created snowflake mason jar vases.
- ☞ As mentioned above, two of our winter programs were cancelled during the inclement weather outage in Salem. We were able to assemble "take and make" kits to pick up later for the Snowflake Diamond Art Coaster event. Most of these kits were picked up by the registered attendees.
- ☞ Our most attended program in the month of February was our bimonthly rock painting. There were 10 in attendance. For this session of rock painting, each attendee made kindness rocks to leave around the library for Random Acts of Kindness month.
- ☞ Page Turners, Salem's monthly book club, continues to grow. We welcomed a new member in February. There were 5 in attendance. In January, our selection was The Mighty Red by Louise Erdrich and 3 members were in attendance. February's selection was Good Dirt by Charmaine Wilkerson.
- ☞ Anna Holbrooks, Salem's new Circulation Assistant, hosted her first program on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Each attendee made felt envelopes for Valentine's Day. There were 3 in attendance.
- ☞ Our take and make kits continue to be a popular service. In January and February, 12 winter/holiday-themed kits were distributed to kids in the community.

- 📖 In February, Anna started hosting story time every other week of the month. She has already established a regular family and we hope to see more growth in the coming months.
- 📖 Interlibrary loan utilization has grown greatly during the month of February. We had 10 ILL requests fulfilled, which is a record for the Salem branch. We hope that patrons continue to frequent this service more.
- 📖 The Salem branch has planned another Tiny Art Show for the spring season. 30 paint sets, including palettes, mini canvases, and paint, have been assembled and are ready to distribute at the beginning of March. We've had many patrons ask about the kits and are expecting a huge success.
- 📖 The Cliffs Residents Outreach finalized a grant for the Salem branch for Summer Reading 2026. This grant will allow the Salem staff to plan specialized programs and distribute program-themed books to each child in attendance. We are thankful to continue our partnership with their organization to better serve the children in the community.

## Building Maintenance

- 📖 The Salem Town Hall building went without power after the ice storm on January 25<sup>th</sup> for two work days. The Salem staff went to other branches to work on January 27<sup>th</sup> and January 28<sup>th</sup>. Power was restored the morning of January 29<sup>th</sup> and staff returned to the building to resume operations.

Stats	Jan	Feb
Visits	1303	1400
New Cards	10	4
ILLs	1	10

# COFFEE AND CRAFTS: SNOWFLAKE MASON JAR VASES

Salem Library  
January 14<sup>th</sup> 2026





Family BINGO  
Salem Library  
Jan 2026



Rock Painting: Random  
Acts of Kindness  
Salem Library  
Feb 2026



**Facilities:**

- **From previous report:** 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 thought they might get started in the spring, but they have to hire an asphalt expert from the outside.
- **From previous reports:** Maintenance has not come look at the vents/ducts. We will have to re-ask Jason.
- **As of March 3:** Jim is asking Jason to see if the following can be done:
  - Previous report: 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. They have a new member of the landscaping crew. I believe they will have more time after the weather warms up.
- We replaced our meeting room chairs and computer chairs, as the old ones were 15 years old and worn out. We will keep the best of the old ones to use for Bingo and other activities since they have a rolling stand they can be stacked on.
- We replaced the couch in the children’s area as it was worn out and stained.
- The deadbolt fell out of the outside sliding door. Allgood Locksmith replaced it the same day.
- Our server’s battery backup unit died. We bought a new one to replace it and IT installed it.

**Operations:** Everything is operating normally. Due to lack of space and amount of workflow, we cannot weed as quickly as we need to, so it would be great if we could acquire boxes faster. The staff is keeping up with shelf reading very well. Bingo and painting/drawing remain our biggest programs.

**Staffing:** In January we hired a new part-time employee.

**Attendance for programs run by Seneca staff:**

Notable Statistics	Jan 2026	Feb 2026
Visits to library	4,475	4,308
New Cards Issued	84	75

Bingo – Jan: 15; Feb: 15

Adult Painting – canceled due to staff illness

Wall Street Journal Uses: 22

(number of times patrons have signed out the papers at the desk)

**Walhalla Library**

**January – February 2026**

**Abigail White, Circulation Manager**

**Staff Development:**

- Dianne Lyles was hired as Walhalla’s newest part-time circulation assistant. Her first day was January 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Meeting Room:**

- January – Part-time circulation assistant interviews, Baby Read, Friends of the Library board meeting, Biblical citizenship, Timber Bay HOA, Barefoot Academy, proctored exam space, sensory friendly gathering, Oak Stone HOA.
- February – Proctored exam space, sensory friendly gathering, constitution class, flourishing homeschool group, Guardian Ad Litem.

**Study Room:**

- January – 41 uses
- February – 43 uses

**Facilities:**

- The library was closed the entire day of Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup> due to inclement weather.
- Staff reported to work on Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 due to a three-hour scheduled delay before closing early at 5.
- The library was closed the entire day of Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> due to inclement weather.

**Statistics:**

<b>Category</b>	<b>January 2026</b>	<b>February 2026</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	3628	3529
<b>New Cards Issued</b>	55	32
<b>ILL</b>	14	19
<b>Hours Open</b>	183	168

### Programs

- We held an indoor snowball fight in January with nine attendees who had fun running around the library throwing and dodging snowballs.
- A paper snowflake contest was held in January, but unfortunately, we had only one entry. We have held several successful ones in the past. We made sure to give the kid a lot of kudos for participating and gave them a prize.
- The January scavenger hunt had kids searching the library to find the eight parts of a snowman. They then built their snowman by gluing him together. We had 49 snowmen made.
- While several children had registered, none showed for the kid's resist art snowman craft planned in January.
- February means Mardi Gras! The scavenger hunt for this month included King Cakes hidden around the library with two having a baby hiding behind them. Kids had to tell us which cakes were hiding the baby to win a beaded necklace. We had 50 participants.
- February also celebrated the Lunar New Year. We had a wishing wall where people could write down their new year's wishes and hang it up. We had several horse themed crafts out in the kids area including coloring sheets, paper chains, mazes, and a horse sticker sheet. We had about 25 participate.
- The blue jean collection drive to benefit users of the Clean of Heart Showers was a great success. The West-Oak Beta Club even made it part of their community service and collected many pairs.

### Staffing

Our longtime staff member, Patsy Smith, had to leave her job in early February due to family health issues. Patsy served the community many years in her first career with Clemson Extension. After retirement, she wanted something to do so she applied for a part-time, 2-day a week job. She stayed with that job for 15 years! We are so thankful for the years she gave and we already miss her.

Patsy was one of the last original part-time county employees left from before they decided to make all parttime through a third party. Thankfully, that position will continue to be grandfathered in so that it is a county position, and not Staffmark. We learned because it is a county job and the county has a new minimum pay, this position will pay \$4 more than our Staffmark starting pay. While this is great, it does a disservice to those Staffmark employees who have been here a while and still do not make this much.

The job was posted for two weeks and ended at the end of February. Leah and Tiffany will start in March interviewing people so that the position is hopefully filled by the end of March.

### Facilities

Several months ago, we noticed one of the parking lot lights was out. Facilities came and replaced the bulb and all seemed fine. Then none of the lights were working. In February they were finally able to come and inspect the original light pole that originally had the dead bulb. Upon inspection of the inside of the light pole, they found two dead squirrels that chewed up a lot of the wires before they expired. This caused a break in the lights so that is why none of the lights were working. They eventually were able to bypass the pole so all of the parking lot lights are working except for that one. It needs to be completely rewired from the top to the bottom because of all the damage.

## **Community**

### **BBW Seed Library**

In January, 76 Supply donated over \$950 worth of seed packets and a nice display for us to use. We are very grateful for them thinking of us. Those supplies, plus seeds leftover from last year, and new donations this year gave a great start to our 2026 seed library. We have 6,818 seed packs ready to go and will continue to make more as supplies run low. We did have to purchase some seeds, but it was still not as many as we have had to in the previous years. This is great because it shows the actual giving and taking of seeds which is part of having a community seed library.

We sent 530 seed packs to the Oconee History Museum for the second permanent location. We have several pop-up seed libraries planned at the other branches for March, April, and May. We launched the spring collection at the beginning of February and gave out 1,035 packs of seeds. The display we were given has really been nice to patron browsing.

Unfortunately, our first attempt at hosting seed swap had to be canceled due to icy weather. We may try to host another in the fall.

### **Period Project**

The free period products continue to be utilized by the community. We received more kits from The Period Project. We are still using donations from the community for our single items. Over 200 items were given out in January and February.

### **Bread**

The free bread we receive every Wednesday from the Golden Corner Food Pantry continues to have a big impact on our users. So many are surprised and happy to see that we have these available. One small loaf of bread can make a big difference if someone is dealing with food insecurities.

### **Tax Forms**

The IRS finally sent out both the forms and booklets for the 2025 tax season. These are popular in that we are the last place someone can find physical copies. The state ceased to send out paper forms many years ago so we often have to help users with finding those forms they need.

**Youth Services Department**  
**January – February 2026**  
**Emily Johnson, Youth Services Librarian**

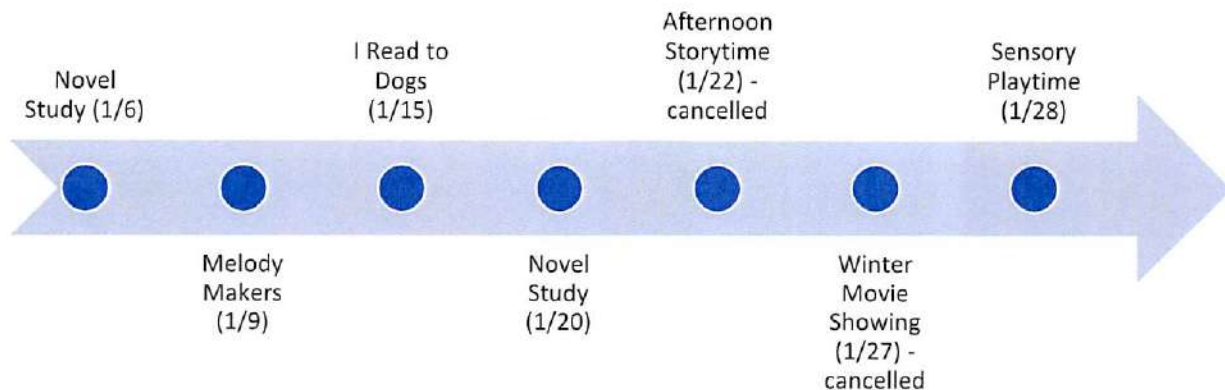
**Programs**

Storytime

As mentioned in my last bimonthly report, we dropped storytimes down to three a week for January and February. Walhalla meets on Mondays, Westminster on Wednesdays, and Seneca on Thursdays. Each storytime meets at 10:30 AM at each branch’s respective meeting room. As I’m sure you’ll see in the Salem branch’s bimonthly report, Anna Holbrooks conducted storytime at Salem every second and fourth Tuesday at 10:30 AM. I sent her the storytime books, outlines, and manipulatives via courier the Friday before so she could prepare.

Walhalla’s average attendance for January was 18, and its average attendance for February was 18.75. We have seen a lot of new faces at storytime in Walhalla recently, and they’ve become regulars. We love this! Seneca’s average attendance for January was 13.75, and its average attendance for February was 22.25. Attendance at Seneca has boomed recently, perhaps because of the cancellation of Pickens County’s youth programs. I have spoken with several of our new attendees, and they usually go to Pickens County libraries for storytime. Several others are attending now because they have been recommended by friends. Westminster’s average attendance for January was 7, and its average attendance for February was 12.5. We recently had a new family with several children start coming regularly to Westminster storytime. Our themes for January were penguins, space, snow, and superheroes. Our themes for February were acceptance, books, counting, and love. The children especially enjoyed the “counting” books.

Timeline - January



Novel Study (1/6 and 1/20)

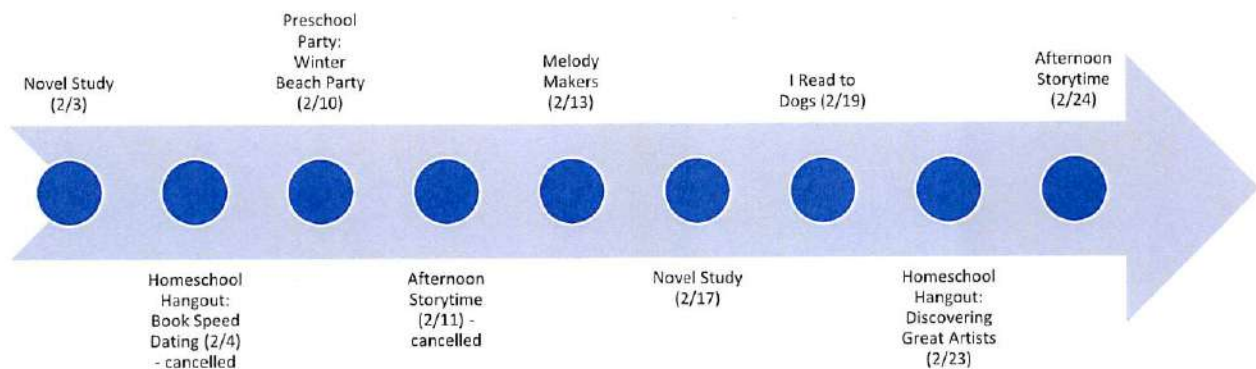
This month, we had our inaugural novel study program. This program was designed for grades 6-8, but older students are allowed to attend. Hopefully, this is a program that will continue for years to come, and we will be able to expand to different ages. In this program, which is run

similarly to a classroom-like experience, homeschoolers come together and discuss a novel they've been reading. For this series of novel study, the novel we are studying is *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. On January 6, the program was held in Seneca. The attendees and I went through the unit pacing guide and anticipation guide that I made for the program series and the novel. On January 20, the attendees came in having read the first two chapters of the novel and having written two discussion questions per chapter. First, we discussed plot structure and the way an author develops plot. Then, we went over the discussion questions the attendees and I wrote. In February, we will be looking at theme and chapters 3-6.

### I Read to Dogs

Amy Saylor and a friend of hers brought their therapy dogs to the Seneca branch and we held "I Read to Dogs," where attendees ages 6-11 can read books of their choosing to the dogs. The attendees got to learn about animal safety as they pet the dogs and talked to their owners. We will be repeating this program in February, hopefully with more therapy dogs.

### Timeline - February



### Novel Study (2/3 and 2/17)

This month, we continued our novel study program. We have four students who consistently attend.

### Homeschool Hangout: Book Speed Dating

This program was designed to be like a “book tasting,” where attendees read snippets of books and decide if they would want to “go on a second date,” or continue reading the book. It was based on something I had done when I taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts. Unfortunately, no one signed up, so this program was cancelled.

#### Preschool Party: Winter Beach Party

This program, our first preschool party, was a big hit! We set up the water table and a bucket of kinetic sand, had a fishing game, a craft, and snacks. Clean-up took a while, but it was worth the smiles on the kids’ faces.

#### Afternoon Storytime (2/11 and 2/24)

No one signed up for the first iteration of Afternoon Storytime this month, so it was cancelled. We had three attendees for the second one, and we read about arctic animals, sang, danced, and made fluffy polar bears for our craft.

#### Homeschool Hangout: Discovering Great Artists

We had a great time learning about Joshua Johnson, one of the first documented African American portrait artists, and learning to paint like him. Attendees focused on adding regal props and using dark colors to add shadow.

#### **Collection Development and Maintenance**

During January and February, I finished weeding the Easys, Easy Readers, and Juvenile Biographies.

#### **Community Outreach/Collaboration**

Building off of what I started in July and August, we held storytimes for three preschools in November: 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. I also visited Golden Corner Preschool’s Family Literacy and Art Night on February 24 to promote the library and give a short storytime. In January, we held storytime for 97 attendees as part of our outreach program; in February, we held storytime for 150 attendees.

#### **Planning Ahead**

In the past two months, I have added the programs for April to Skedda and the website calendar, as well as created everything needed on Canva.

DJ and I also continued our planning for the Summer Reading Program 2026. We have officially turned in the LSTA grant to Blair for submission as of 3/6, written the script for the SRP 26 video, contacted all the partners for the Kick-Off and the Bash, written a funding proposal for the

Friends of the Library, and more. We also worked with Bethany Culp to design the graphics, marketing, and t-shirts for SRP 26. All our programs are planned, and flyers have been made for them all.