



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

SAULT STE. MARIE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# Year in Review:

## A Message from the Board Chair



**Wayne Greco - Board Chair**

As we reflect on 2024, I am proud to share the significant achievements and progress made at the SSM Public Library - a reflection of our shared vision, tireless efforts, and dedication to service excellence. First and foremost, I extend our sincere gratitude to the Mayor and City Council for their continued support and trust in our leadership of this vital community asset. Their partnership and belief in the importance of accessible, innovative library services empower us to move forward with confidence and purpose. I also want to recognize the invaluable contributions of my fellow members of the Board of Directors. Their service, insight, and leadership have guided us in representing the community's interests while striving to enhance and sustain excellence in library services. Together, we have worked to foster an environment where ideas flourish and community connections are strengthened. A heartfelt thank-you goes to the many dedicated volunteers whose enthusiasm and generous commitment of time enhance the work of our professional staff. Their efforts remind us that a strong community is built on collaboration and shared purpose. Finally, I would like to commend the outstanding work of our library staff. Their unwavering dedication and innovation ensure we deliver superior service, meeting the diverse needs of our patrons. This year's collective accomplishments are a testament to the power of teamwork and shared determination. Indeed, as the saying goes, many hands make light work. The commitment and spirit of service consistently demonstrated by all who contribute to the library's success allow us to provide exceptional resources and experiences to the citizens of Sault Ste. Marie. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support as we advance our mission to inspire, educate, and connect our community.

Warm regards,

**Wayne Greco** - Chair, Board of Directors

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

Paolo Bruni

Hannah Caicco

Lisa Dobrovnik

Wayne Greco (Chair)

Erin Ferlaino

Jami van Haften

Kevin Harrison

Steve Murray

Mike Olejnik (Vice Chair)

Matthew MacDonald  
(CEO/Secretary-Treasurer)



# Staff Changes



## *Happy Retirement* Sharon Wigney

After 41 years of dedicated full-time service, Sharon Wigney, Manager of Public Services, retired in November of 2024. Sharon had been an integral part of our library's journey, contributing her knowledge, expertise, and passion to every project and every interaction. Her innovative ideas and unwavering dedication have helped shape the library into the vibrant, welcoming space it is today. When working with the public, her commitment to fostering a love of reading and lifelong learning touched countless lives and has significantly enriched our community.

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## *Welcome!* Michael Lysyj

In 2024, we welcomed Michael Lysyj back to the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library as the new Manager of Technology and Collections. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature (Honours) from Algoma University, and a Master of Library and Information Degree from the University of Western Ontario.

Michael began his career in the field of Librarianship at the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library in 2021 as a Part Time Reference Technician. He then spent a year and a half at the Algoma University Wishart Library as temporary Academic Librarian, before returning to the Sault Public Library in his current role in April 2024. Michael is a life-long library lover who is happy to once again be part of the wonderful team at the Public Library.



## *Welcome!* Kaitlyn Watson

At 15, Kaitlyn began her library career as a student page at the Churchill Branch Library. Her lifelong love of books and her passion for helping others have always been central to her work. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2009, she returned to Sault Ste. Marie and rejoined the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library as a part-time Reference Technician. Over the years, Kaitlyn gained valuable experience in various roles, eventually being promoted to Senior Reference Technician in 2018. In November 2024, she was appointed Acting Manager of Public Services.



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



**ONE STOP  
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES . . .**

The Library proudly launched its 5 year strategic plan in 2024. The plan includes a refreshed mission and vision to better reflect our commitment to the community and is designed to guide the Library's development to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of our diverse community. This strategic direction will help us build a more vibrant, inclusive, and accessible future for the Library and the people we serve.

## Our Mission

The Sault Ste. Marie Public Library provides opportunities to discover, learn, and grow. We serve as a community partner offering spaces, resources and connections which contribute to quality of life.

**5 Priorities  
17 Goals  
73 Objectives  
268  
Action Items**

**23**

**Action Items  
Completed in  
2024!**

## Our Vision

A diverse and welcoming community hub, the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library fuels innovation, demonstrates leadership, and promotes literacy aligned with our growing community. We strive to deliver library service for all, driven by knowledge sharing, partnerships and new opportunities.

# Strategic Plan

## Our Priorities

Community  
Engagement

Inclusion,  
Diversity,  
Equity and  
Accessibility

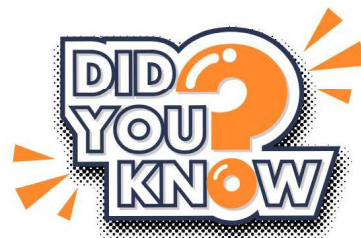


Marketing  
and  
Communications

Heritage  
And Culture



Service  
Excellence



As part of the strategic plan, the Library is working towards decolonizing library collections and catalogue records.

Progress Made:  
**40%**  
of action items!



To read the full strategic plan please visit our  
website at [ssmpl.ca](http://ssmpl.ca)

# Our Year at a Glance

## Public Services

Library  
Card  
Holders  
**26,974**



New  
Borrowers  
Added  
**2,568**

Items  
Borrowed  
**231,676**

Visits  
Centennial  
**170,348**  
North Branch  
**26,885**

**34**  
Average  
Visits Per  
Hour

Room  
Rentals  
**667**

Library Users  
14,000 Adults  
6,500 Senior  
1,900 Aged 13-19  
3,600 Aged 0-12  
400 'Other'

**On average, each library user borrowed more than 8 books in 2024**

Total  
Questions  
asked  
**41,922**

Interlibrary  
Loan items  
loaned to  
other libraries  
**963**



Interlibrary  
Loan items  
borrowed for  
our patrons  
**1,270**

## Social Media



@SSMPL  
4.8K  
Followers



1.7K  
Followers



Sault Ste. Marie  
Public Library  
112  
Subscribers



375  
Followers

# Our Year at a Glance

## Electronic Resources

Audiobooks Borrowed  
**31,540**



Overdrive /Libby eBooks Borrowed  
**59,670**

Overdrive/ Libby Magazines Borrowed  
**20,356**

Hoopla Audiobooks Borrowed  
**3,692**

Hoopla eBooks & Comics Borrowed  
**2,309**



Hoopla Media  
**1,130**  
(including movies, music and television programs)

**Total Overdrive/Libby and Hoopla Circulation 118,967**

Public Computer Bookings  
**8,380**

Wi-Fi Sessions  
**34,600**



Library Online Catalogue Page Views  
**1,825,328**

Library Website Page Views  
**183,068**



Social Media Impressions  
**362,566**

Database Searches  
**15,345**

# Spotlight on Adult Programming

In-Library Programs Facilitated  
**325**

Total Participants  
**9,717**



## Authorpalooza

At the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library, we're proud to celebrate our local authors! Our annual Authorpalooza event provides attendees with a unique opportunity to connect with local authors and publishing professionals. Authorpalooza 2024, held during Public Library Week on October 24th, was a huge success. This year, 11 talented local authors and book professionals engaged with over **80 enthusiastic patrons**.

Outreach Programs Facilitated  
**11**  
Participants  
**460**



## Booking Tasting



Hosted at the North Branch, the Library's fantastic bartender, Katie, organized a concoction of cocktails and mocktails for this special book tasting event. With 5 genres displayed, attendees enjoyed 'tasting' the genre with a variety of books displayed, paired with an appetizer and drink. This event was sold out with **70 attendees**.



## Adult Book Club

Adult book clubs are hosted at the James L. McIntyre Centennial Library year-round, with sessions held from February to May and September to December. Each session includes two General Fiction book clubs and one Mystery book club. In 2024, library staff hosted **24** successful book club meetings, attracting a total of **816 engaged participants**.

# Spotlight on Senior Programming

## Boomers and Beyond: Lights! Cameras! Hollywood Magic!

The Sault Ste. Marie Public Library proudly celebrates Seniors' Month every June with its highly anticipated *Boomers and Beyond* event. This year, the event was a resounding success, as we transported attendees back to the glamorous 'Old Hollywood' era, celebrating its iconic fashions, films, and pop culture. We partnered with a vibrant group of local organizations in the arts, culture, and recreation community to make the event even more special.

A highlight of the afternoon was the screening of the 1935 classic film *Top Hat*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

The event drew **82 participants**.



## VON Seniors Group Exercise - SMART Program

Throughout the year, the Library offers the VON Smart Exercise Program for community members aged 55+ and adults with disabilities, helping them enhance strength, balance, and mobility through low-impact exercises. A local fitness instructor facilitates two weekly sessions at the James L. McIntyre Centennial Library.

In 2024 we hosted **49 sessions** of the Smart program, with a total of **463 attendees**.



## Seniors Active Living Fair

In November, three library staff attended the Seniors Active Living Fair at the YMCA. The fair, themed "Empower Your Life: Wellness and Beyond," aimed to help seniors improve their health, well-being, and lifestyle through discussions, screenings, assistive technology demos, and more. The Sault Ste. Marie Public Library staff were visited by **60 attendees**.

# Spotlight on Teen Programming

Digital Creator Studio



In 2024, we welcomed Ivan, our new Digital Creator Coordinator, thanks to funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. With Ivan onboard as a full-time, dedicated teen programmer, we were able to partner with Digital Creator North, whose offices are based in North Bay, to bring innovative tech programs to youth in Sault Ste. Marie. This collaboration allowed us to offer a diverse range of engaging opportunities, resulting in 112 programs held from May to December 31, 2024. This program fostered social connections but also helped to enhance their technological skills.



**112**  
Programs



**189**  
Attendees

These programs provided teens with a hands-on approach to emerging technologies, empowering them to explore new career opportunities, discover their passions, and unleash their creativity. By participating in activities such as video editing, 3D modeling, figure drawing, video game creation, 3D printing, Scratch coding, and movie nights, teens gained valuable experience that could shape their future aspirations. Our continued focus on youth engagement and skills development ensures that participants not only grow as individuals but also strengthen their connection to the rapidly evolving world of technology.

# Spotlight on Children's Programming

**Total Number of Programs**  
(In-House, Passive, Contests )  
**415**

**Total Attendance**  
**14,806**



## Indigenous Storytime with Diedre

The North Branch hosted Diedra for a traditional storytime. We had two sessions in which **92 people** enjoyed the stories, crafts, and activities that were held.

**In-Library Programs**  
**392**  
**Attendance**  
**13,784**



## March Break 2024 Dino Days

During March Break, the Library offered a variety of programs for children and their families. This year's theme, Dino Days, brought much excitement to the week. From March 11th to 17th, a total of **501 children** participated in the activities.



**Outreach Programs**  
**23**  
**Attendance**  
**1,022**



## Charlie and the Chocolate Factory



Back for more, the West End Theatre partnered to bring the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory to the Library with a special storytime and craft. Hosted at the James L. McIntyre Library, the event supported the theatre production with **48 attendees!**



## Santa Storytime with the Lion's Club



The Lion's Club partnered with the Library to host a very special holiday storytime at the North Branch. The storytime welcomed **80 people** to enjoy in the celebrations with treats and crafts to end with.



## Station Mall Storytimes and Craft Stations

Library staff visited Station Mall throughout the year to offer story times for the community. We brought crafts and stories to engage with hundreds of children at the mall.

# Volunteers



Over  
\$40K in  
Sales!



50+  
Volunteers  
Worked  
6,500 +  
hours

The Friends of the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library had another fantastic year. With **\$40,000 in sales**, representing at least **50,000 books** sold, and thousands more books given away over the year, the Friends have put books in many hands. The generous book lovers of Sault Ste. Marie make this all possible with their book donations, which include hundreds of like-new books that go straight into the stacks.

This is one way that the Friends support the library. The other main contribution made is to the social well-being of our community.

A visit to the Friends Bookstore will put a smile on your face. Browsers are encouraged! You might even find a treasure on the "free cart". The Friends have kept the prices low and the friendly and helpful volunteers love to chat about books, contributing to a positive experience.



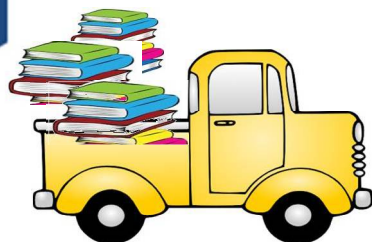
Last year over **50 volunteers** worked **6,500 hours** in the bookstore and behind the scenes. The Friends also participated in Seedy Saturday, the Quilt Show, Rotaryfest, Salty Marie, and the Library Christmas Open House. You will see books from the Friends all over town, including the new sales table at the North Branch Library, the Sault Area Hospital, the Neighbourhood Resource Centre, and more.

Every year the Friends of the Library exceed their mandate to support and promote the Library. This year the Friends were recognized for their work by the Retired Teachers of Ontario in the form of a \$4,000 grant. The Friends are putting this very generous gift towards expanding community outreach, especially for seniors.

The Friends thank the Retired Teachers of Ontario and the supportive Library staff.

2 VLS  
Volunteers  
79 deliveries  
(patron drop-offs)  
24 hours

Couriers and Visiting Library Service  
Delivery



4  
Couriers  
208 Hours



Ruth O. - Library courier

# Archives

The Library offers programming to teach the community about local history and archives, fostering a deeper connection to our heritage, preserving important stories, and empowering individuals to engage with their shared past.

## Oral History

Shirley Horn partnered with Elizabeth Webkamigad to offer a program aimed at sharing the experience of a survivor of the Shingwauk Residential School. The event provided an opportunity for attendees to engage in a conversation about the residential school experience. A total of **9 people attended** the program.



**Public Tours of the Archive**  
**19 Attendees**



### Preserving Photographs and Papers

This program, held at the North Branch, was designed to help individuals preserve family archival materials, including proper storage practices and simple cleaning techniques.

**29 attendees**

### Archive Chat - Roberta Bondar

Attendees learned about Canada's first female astronaut while viewing artifacts that she donated to the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library.

**14 attendees.**



### Archive Chat - Edwin Durham

This presentation highlighted the Edwin Durham collection. Edwin Durham was a WWI veteran and prisoner of war.

**8 people attended** this presentation.



### Archive Show & Tell

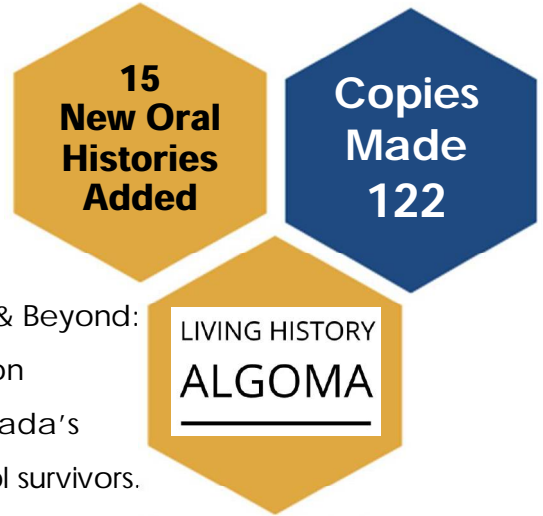
People were invited to share interesting family photos, treasures and history while learning about the people in our community.

# Archives

## ORAL HISTORIES

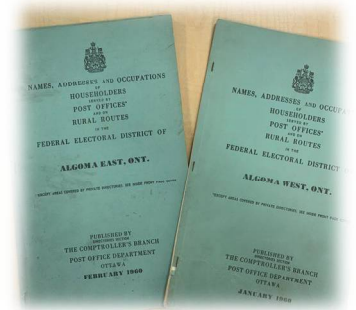
The Living History Algoma, contributed **15 new oral histories**. 14 of the Oral Histories are part of the Shingwauk & Beyond: Survivor and Intergenerational Memory Collection. This collection features Indigenous individuals who experienced firsthand Canada's Residential School system and the children of Residential School survivors.

The individuals in this collection are Robin Alvares, Tracie Louttit, George Diamond, Victoria and Elaine Sands, Samuel Achneepineskum, Jack White, Donald Sands Jr., John Henry Saylor, Nellie Mitchell (nee Ojeebah), Danielle Boissoneau, Donald Alexander Jackson, Gladys Williams, Gloria Harris, and Susan Jones. There was one additional general oral history from Kenneth John Bertram Woods.



## Archive Donations

In 2024, **6 collections** were donated to the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library Archives. These collections are Algoma Passenger Train, historical photographs and newspapers from Don Barill, images from Sault Ste. Marie houses and buildings from Wilhelm Eisenbichler, Municipal Handbooks, 1960's Directories of Algoma East and West, Great Lakes Power Invoices, and the local history book "Steel at the Sault."



## Archive Digitization

In 2024, scanning continued on the Sault Star negatives collection with **549 negatives being scanned**. In addition, the archives are continuing to digitize the VHS collection in which **83 VHS tapes** were digitized.

# In the Community

## CULTURE DAYS



Approx. 1,500 Participants

The Library had approximately **1,500 participants** and over **25 partners** join us in Clergue Park for the festival which celebrated the diverse culture our community has to offer. With dancing, demonstrations, arts and crafts, obstacle courses, and more, the event welcomed everyone of all ages to participate and celebrate our city's different cultures.



Over 25 Partners

**Sault Ste. Marie Ranked #4 for Top Participating Small Municipalities in Canada!**

### Brazilian Festival



The Library partnered with Northern Ontario Latin Hispanic Association to celebrate Latin Heritage Month with a Brazilian Festival at the Downtown Plaza. The event featured traditional music, dancing, and activities. Over **1,000 people** came and enjoyed the festivities, and embraced the Brazilian Culture.



### Naughty Spelling Bee



For Valentine's Day, we teamed up with the Sault Ste. Marie Museum to host a spicy spelling bee. This sold-out event welcomed **57 attendees**, who worked in teams to spell historical words that, while innocent at the time, now have a more scandalous connotation in the modern era.



57 People Attended



### Trivia with Science North



178 People Attended

The Library partnered with Science North and the Tap Room to hold two adult trivia nights. With **178 attendees** between the two events, people enjoyed a comedic show with a tough trivia relating to science and the holidays.

### Membership Drive

September 2024, the Library went out into the community for their Annual Membership Drive. Drive locations included: Garden River Back to School Blitz, Sault College, Algoma University, Bushplane Days at the Canadian Heritage Bushplane Museum, Clergue Park for Cultural Family Fun Day and the Indigenous Friendship Centre.

412 New Members

# In the Community

## Giving Back



St. John Ambulance

### Volunteer Reception

Every October, we honour the incredible volunteers and donors who make the library a success. This year's Volunteer of the Year award went to Zumi! Zumi attends the North Branch monthly to bring comfort and joy to everyone who participates. In 2024, with eight visits, Zumi provided comfort to **87 library patrons**. A big thank you to Zumi's handler, Joey, for making these visits possible!



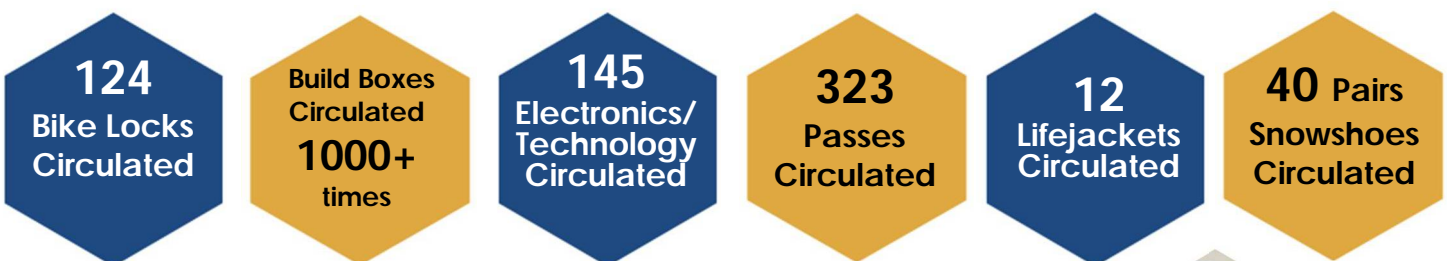
## Presentations

We had the privilege of conducting an information session for 30 staff at the Indigenous Friendship Centre. The Manager of Community Engagement addressed the many benefits that come with holding a Sault Ste. Marie Public Library card, which is available to all Indigenous-identifying members in Ontario, free of charge.

Additionally, the Manager of Community Engagement represented the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library at the Chatham-Kent Public Library with a workshop on De-escalation. The workshop was attended by 60 library employees. This free presentation provided an opportunity for the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library to support another library in Ontario, by sharing our knowledge and best practices.

# Collections

## Object Library Check-outs



### Lifejackets

Partnering with the City of Sault Ste. Marie John Rhodes Community Centre, lifejackets were added to the Object Library collection. The Library is working to increase the safety of our community members. Lifejackets are now available from May – September at both Library locations.



# Top Trends 2024

This is a list of the Top Circulating materials for 2024 at the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library.

## JUVENILE

### Picture Books

1. Lions - Valerie Bodden / When Dinosaurs Came with Everything - Elise Broach (tied)
2. The Color Monster: a Story about Emotions - Anna Llenas
3. Begin Again - Oliver Jeffers

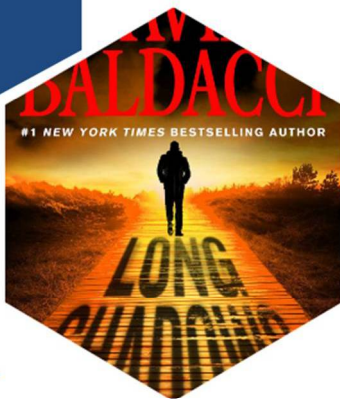


### Easy Reader

1. The Cloud Castle - Thea Stilton
2. The Absent Author - Ron Roy
3. Pug's Snow Day/Pug Blasts Off - Kyla May

### Juvenile Fiction

1. Diary of a Wimpy Kid : The Ugly Truth - Jeff Kinney
2. Diary of a Wimpy Kid : Diaper Overload - Jeff Kinney
3. Tom Gates is Absolutely Fantastic (at some things) - Liz Pichon



## YOUNG ADULT Fiction

1. Elric of Melnibone - Michael Moorcock
2. Stormbringer - Michael Moorcock
3. Tower of Dawn - Sarah J. Maas

## ADULT

### Fiction

1. Long Shadows - David Baldacci / Desert Star - Michael Connelly (tied)
2. The Exchange - John Grisham
3. The Judge's List - John Grisham

### Non-Fiction

1. Ireland: in Word and Image - Jay Ben Adlersberg
2. Limitless: Upgrade your Brain - Jim Kwik
3. Behind the Seams: My Life in Rhinestones - Dolly Parton

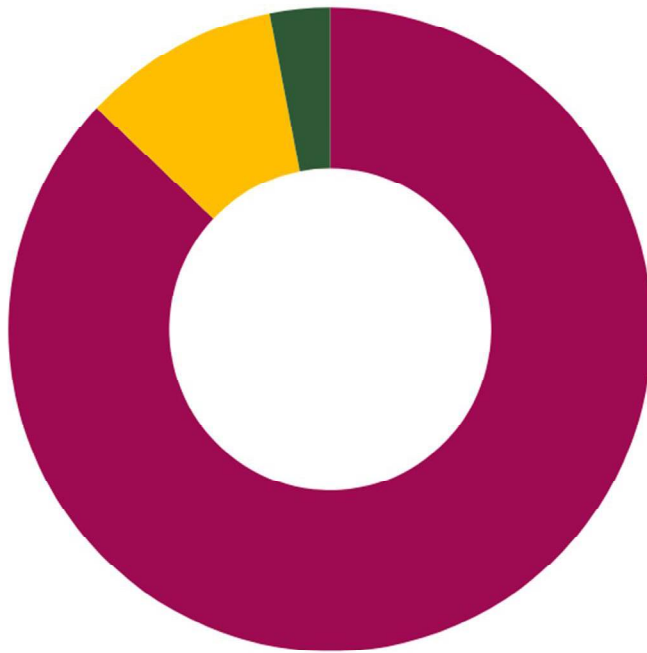
### DVDS

1. Star Wars. Return of the Jedi
2. Star Wars. A New Hope
3. Scarlet Nexus s.1 pt.2



# Financial Management

## Revenues



**Municipal Grants**

**\$3,186,803**



**Provincial Grants**

**\$434,150**

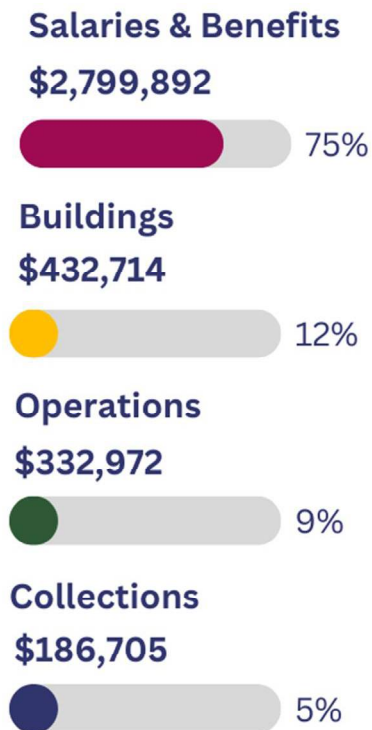


**Donations & Self Generated**

**\$132,350**



## Expenses



**Salaries & Benefits**

**\$2,799,892**



**Buildings**

**\$432,714**



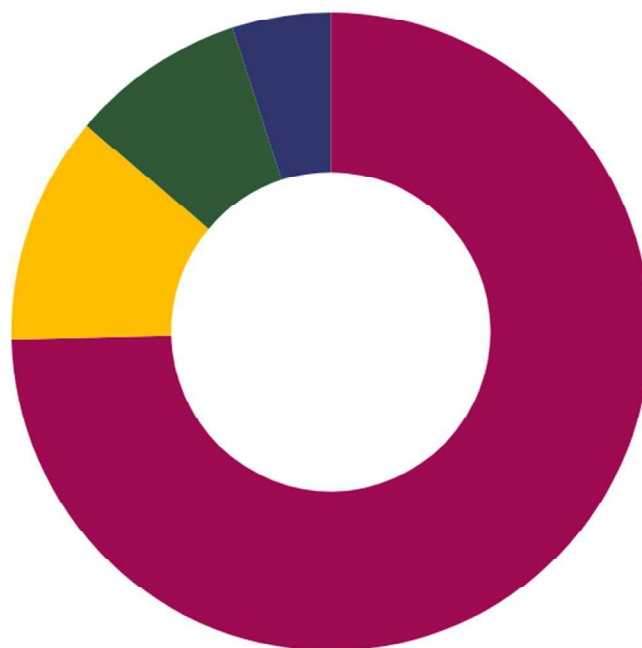
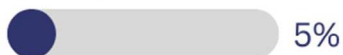
**Operations**

**\$332,972**



**Collections**

**\$186,705**



# How Sponsorships Are Being Used

## Zonta Club - Dove Real Beauty and Toddler Time

The **Dove Real Beauty** workshop is a fun, educational and interactive program for young girls aged 6-12 and their adult female mentors. This workshop encourages girls and women everywhere to embrace a more positive image of themselves, both inside and out.



**3  
Sessions  
158  
Toddlers and  
173  
Caregivers**

**Toddler Time** is a fun, 45-minute program designed for toddlers and their caregivers. This program encourages and supports learning through stories, songs, art, and play.



## Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore - Lego My Library



**35  
Programs  
363  
Participants**

This program features a different LEGO building challenge each week, as well as time for free building.



## NOHLA - Spanish/Portuguese Programming

Thanks to our partnership with Northern Ontario Latin-Hispanic Association, we were able to host their organization and facilitate language classes to **206 attendees**.

**27  
Sessions  
206  
Attendees**



**24 weeks  
250 Babies  
and 287  
Caregivers**

## Kiwanis Club of Sault Ste. Marie Baby Time



Designed for the youngest library users and their parents or caregivers, Baby Time is a great way to introduce young children to the library, to begin a love of books and to help children develop into lifelong learners. This 30 minute program is for babies aged 0 to 12 months.

# Thank You to our generous 2024 Donors

## PLATINUM \$50,000

### GOLD \$5,000-\$49,999

FMI Elliott Foundation

### SILVER \$2,500-\$4,999

Friends of the Library

### BRONZE \$1,000-\$2,499

In Memory of Doug MacDougall  
Howard Bennett  
Dr. Roberta Bondar  
Robert Cohen  
Clyde and Gunta Healey  
Len Scramstad  
Rene & Peter Steuer  
Sharon Routhier

### COPPER \$500-\$999

In Memory of Allan Hackett  
In Memory of Wilhelm Eisenbichler  
Frances Ryan  
Station Mall  
Kiwanis Club of Lakeshore  
Zonta Club

A special thank you to those who donated less than \$500.00  
(Friends/Paper Donors)



JAMES L. MCINTYRE CENTENNIAL LIBRARY  
50 East Street  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 3C3

Administration: 705.759.5242  
Reference: 705.759.5236  
Circulation: 705.759.5271  
Children's: 705.759.5241

NORTH BRANCH  
232C Northern Avenue  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 4H6

Main Desk: 705.759.5248  
Archives: 705.759.5447