

JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS 2023  
Library Annual Report



# 2023 Annual Report

In 2023, my first full year as County Librarian, we prepared to say goodbye to Antioch Library and spent most of the year building its replacement, Merriam Plaza. The Antioch building was our first official Johnson County Library location and it's where I officed in my first professional job as a teen services librarian, offering a window into our system as it grew and evolved in a changing world.



As many in our community began saying fond farewells to the place where they embarked on a lifelong love of reading and libraries, my nostalgia was layered with excitement about moving forward and down the road to a place even more embedded in the community.

We are always looking for new ways to create connections, like taking our message mobile by wrapping our three courier trucks in the work of local artists, one of which is featured on the cover. Like our trucks we were on the move across Johnson County, connecting with the people and communities we serve. In the pages of this report, we share the impact our staff and our supporters are making each day:

- In April we removed barriers to access by going fine free;
- We made a record number of new Library cards;
- Door counts and circulation approached pre-pandemic numbers;
- Use of digital materials exploded, thanks in part to adding Libby in mid-2022;
- Oak Park Library received needed HVAC and electrical updates as well as ADA-compliant restroom and paving upgrades through our Comprehensive Library Master Plan for buildings; and
- Our community showed their dedication through significant growth in our Friends of Johnson County Library and volunteer rosters, and record-setting Library Lets Loose attendance.

Library staff also looked ahead, evaluating how our operations and plans were reshaped by the events of the past several years to deliver an updated 2024-2028 strategic plan.

I am deeply grateful for the work of our creative and resourceful staff, for the time and talents of our Board of Directors, to our Board of County Commissioners which values a thriving Library system and for the dedication of everyone who supports us.

It is a privilege to serve you and our communities each day while laying the groundwork for a strong future.

Tricia Suellentrop  
County Librarian

**On the cover:** Local artists designed new wraps for the Library's three courier trucks. The work of popular artist and muralist JT Daniels, who mentors local youth and encourages their artistic pursuits, is on front. All three are on back, including work by Kansas City Art Institute graduate Lauren Seider and Roeland Park resident Sol Anzorena.

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## Mission

Johnson County Library provides access to ideas, information, experiences and materials that support and enrich people's lives.

## Vision

Johnson County Library creates an environment for people to learn, to explore, to enjoy, to create, to connect.

## Values

- Customer needs come first.
- People are respected.
- Access to information is ensured.
- This is a learning organization.
- Freedom of information is protected.
- Privacy and confidentiality are rights.
- Basic services are provided without charge.
- Quality service is important.
- Integrity is a commitment.
- We are stewards of community resources.



Our 2019-23 Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with our Library Board, Johnson County residents, elected officials and policy makers. The five Key Performance Areas above provide focus and reflect both our mission – the essential work of serving our communities each day – and our vision, where we’re investing to propel our organization forward. This steers us toward meeting our commitments to you, and helps us bring our values to life.

Throughout this report you’ll find progress highlights for all five performance areas in 2023, and the supporters, partners and staff who helped make it possible.

# Board of Directors



## **DAVID SIMS**

OUTGOING CHAIR,  
CURRENT BOARD

Appointed by Becky Fast,  
District 1

*Term expires 2027*



## **BETHANY GRIFFITH**

INCOMING CHAIR

Appointed by John Toplikar,  
District 6

*Term expires 2024*



## **KELLY KILGORE**

Appointed by Jeff Myers,  
District 2

*Term expires 2025*



## **CHARLES McALLISTER**

Appointed by Michael Ashcraft,  
District 5

*Term expires 2027*



## **JEFFREY MENDOZA**

Appointed by Janeé Hanzlick,  
District 4

*Term expires 2026*



## **ANNA van OPHEM**

Appointed by Charlotte  
O'Hara, District 3

*Term expires 2025*



## **MITRA TEMPLIN**

Appointed by Ed Eilert,  
District 7

*Term expires 2024*



## **LIAISON, BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Janeé Hanzlick,  
District 4

## Administrative Team



**TRICIA SUELLENTROP**  
COUNTY LIBRARIAN



**ADAM WATHEN**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
FOR BRANCH SERVICES



**KINSLEY RIGGS**  
DEPUTY COUNTY LIBRARIAN



**JENNIFER MAHNKEN**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
FOR SYSTEMWIDE SERVICES



**PATTI KANGETHE**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



**DAVID VRATNY**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR



**BENETT SUNDS**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



**SHELLEY O'BRIEN**  
FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Community leaders and partners gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony in late November 2022 to prepare for construction of the new Merriam Plaza library in 2023.

Pictured left to right are: County Manager Penny Post oak Ferguson; County Librarian Tricia Suellentrop; Library Board members Jeffrey Mendoza, David Sims and Bethany Griffith; community members Cheterria Williams and Mary E. Webb; chairman of the Board of County Commissioners Ed Eilert; Merriam Mayor Bob Pape; 6<sup>th</sup> District Commissioner Shirley Allenbrand; 4<sup>th</sup> District Commissioner and Library liaison Janeé Hanzlick; 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commissioner Jeff Meyers and; 1<sup>st</sup> District Commissioner Becky Fast.



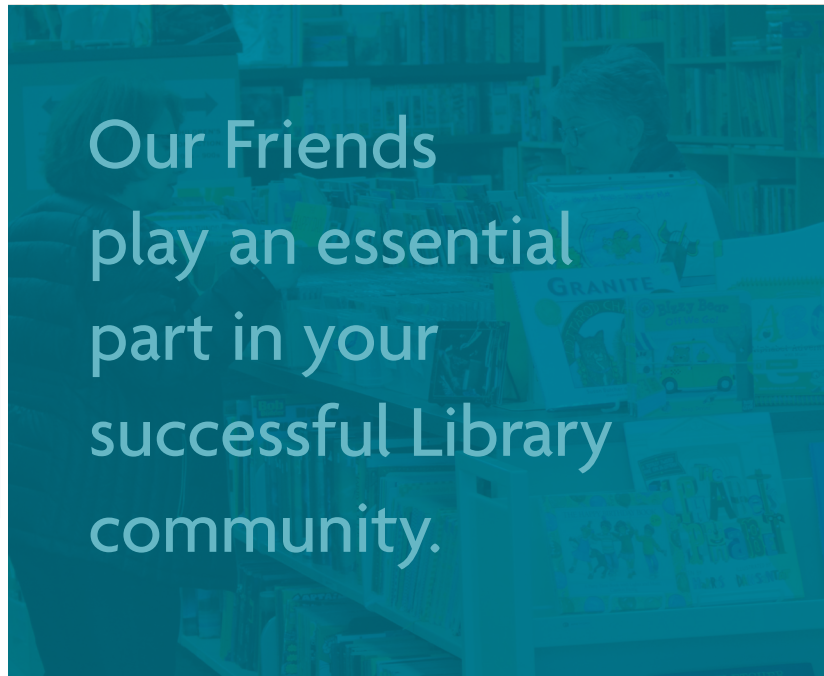
## Supporting Organizations

help



Volunteers like you help your Library with more than 40,000 hours each year.

join



Our Friends play an essential part in your successful Library community.

give

JOHNSON COUNTY  
LIBRARY **FOUNDATION**



A gift to the Foundation empowers your Library collections & programs.

Volunteering is a great way for community members to get involved. Volunteers help shelve holds, process donations, assist with genealogy research, set up programs, teach language learners, and serve in leadership roles. For every \$1 the Library invests in the volunteer program, the return on that investment is \$9.95. Johnson County Library is grateful for volunteers' support.

## \$1,361,581 SERVICE VALUE

- 908 active volunteers • 89 opportunities
- Equivalent to 20+ full-time employees •
- 122 volunteers gave 100+ hours of service
- 3 Lifetime Presidential Services Award winners
- 42,817 total hours of service in 2023

The Friends of Johnson County Library is a member-supported nonprofit organization promoting community awareness and participation in Library services. They serve as library advocates, promote literacy and lifelong learning. The Friends also make reading materials accessible to all through the sale of gently used, affordably priced books and audio-visual materials. In 2023, the Friends raised an additional \$17,000 to support the collection, Library programs, and county services.

## 19,240 VOLUNTEER HOURS

- 898 members • 340 volunteers • 4 staff • 600,000 Library and community book donations accepted
- 208,056 lbs. of books and 6,918 lbs. of cardboard recycled through community recyclers, charity partners, and online book vendors

The Johnson County Library Foundation helps your public library host an outstanding collection of resources, offer programs for patrons of all ages, and better serve the needs of everyone in our community. This is done by fundraising and managing donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations to support the Library above and beyond what public funding provides. Thus, ensuring the Library's long-term vitality.

## OVER \$300,000 IN GIVING

*to the Library from the Foundation in 2023*

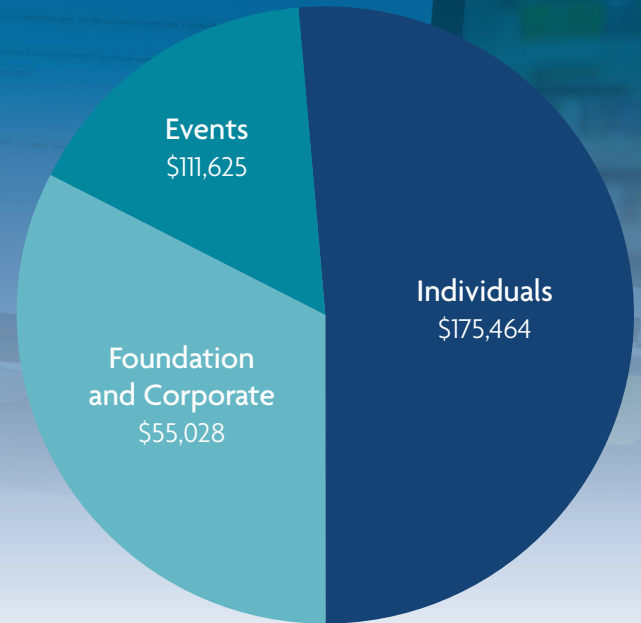
- \$126,194 donation to purchase physical books for the Library collection • \$122,581 donation to Race Project KC from the Kauffman Foundation • \$32,950 donation to the Library for Early Literacy and Teen Programs • \$8,720 Library programming • \$7,752 donation for the Berkley Writers Conference • \$5,126 donation for Incarcerated Services

# Library Foundation

The **Johnson County Library Foundation** helps your public library host an outstanding collection of resources, offer programs for patrons of all ages, and better serve the needs of everyone in our community.

We do this by fundraising and managing donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations to support the Library above and beyond what public funding provides. Thus, ensuring the library's long-term vitality.

## 2023 Donations



In addition, Johnson County Library has a three-year grant with the Kauffman Foundation. Those funds were received in 2021.

The entire audited financials can be found on the Johnson County Library Foundation website at [jocolibraryfoundation.org](http://jocolibraryfoundation.org)

## Thank you to all 2023 Donors!

### \$25,000 or more

Black & Veatch Foundation  
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation  
The Estate of Marjorie Sams

### \$10,000+

Carol & Fred Logan  
Regnier Family Foundations

### \$5,000+

Anne & Bill Blessing  
Louis & Elizabeth Nave Flarsheim Charitable Foundation  
Hope & Tyler Harms  
The Kirk Foundation  
Susanne Shutz  
Stinson, LLP  
Vickie & Dale Trott

### \$2,500+

Friends of the Johnson County Library  
Henderson Engineers, Inc.  
R.A. Long Foundation

Leigh Anne & Bill Neal  
Stepp & Rothwell, Inc.  
Village Presbyterian Church

### \$1,000+

Chris Anderson & Lyn Buckley  
Jon & Sarah Baum  
Emily D. Berkley  
Judy & Gerard Bukowski  
Randall & Penny Burdge  
John & Kay Callison  
Campbell Family Foundation  
Charles & Virginia Clark  
James & Carolyn Clemons  
Creative Planning, Inc.  
Randall & Helen Duncan  
Jon & Lisa Fewins Family Fund  
Janet Filkel  
Josephine Foote  
Paula Frankel  
Mark & Nancy Gilman  
Zack & Susan Hangauer  
Steve & Kristen Hansen  
Robyn & Kelly Hart

Johnson County Community College Foundation  
Kansas Gas Service  
Lisa Larson-Bunnell & Nicholas Bunnell  
Lathrop GPM — Ben Struby  
Chris & Bonnie Limbird  
Cindy Martin  
Royceann Mather & Andy Prosser  
Maureen McGinty  
Chris & Barbara Nichols  
Ada Niedenthal  
Shelley Rogers O'Brien  
PGAV Architects  
Betty Robinson  
Nathan & Rachelle Schmachtenberger  
Randell L. Sedlacek  
Shawnee Mission Post  
Chuck & Kay Sipple  
Burton & Barbara Smoliar  
Ben & Shannon Sunds  
Stann Tate & Ann Smith-Tate  
Walmart Foundation





## Library Lets Loose 2023

### A MAGICAL NIGHT FOR LIBRARY LOVERS

Library Lets Loose is the annual signature fundraiser for the Johnson County Library Foundation. This festive, lively after-hours celebration for Library Lovers was held in September 2023 at the Central Resource Library. Black & Veatch was the Presenting Sponsor.

With a theme of "Libraries are Magic" a record number of guests enjoyed signature drinks, delicious bites from local restaurants and caterers, a scavenger hunt to win prizes, and dancing with emcee DJ Stann.

What made it truly magical were our sponsors, guests, donors and all who support enhancing lifelong learning resources in our community!



## Brainfuse Helps Students Succeed

One of the many digital resources students can use from Johnson County Library is Brainfuse Help Now. This online digital platform, which requires a Library card to log in, provides K-12 students with one-on-one homework help from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily and on-demand videos to watch any time.

Writing an important paper? Submit it and get feedback and learning suggestions within one business day. Learning Spanish? Practice words and conversations with a tutor.

Adults can participate too with studying for high school GED equivalency exams, U.S. citizenship prep guides, resume writing, and classes on Microsoft products like Excel and PowerPoint.

All that's needed is a computer, a Library card/password, and an internet connection. It can be accessed from home, school, or one of our 14 branches.

The Johnson County Library Foundation has several



donors who designate donations to Brainfuse and other digital resources. This guarantees the program will continue to help students with a stable resource they can turn to for help through middle school, high school, and beyond.

# Supporting Organizations

## Business Partners

Andrews McMeel Universal  
A-Plus Career & Resume  
Bear Necessities Coffee Bar  
Dr. Andres Chiropractor  
Kaplan Test Prep  
KC Voices  
St. Luke's South Hospital  
Tabletop Game and Hobby  
The University of Kansas  
Health System  
Truman Medical Center  
We Start Now

## Education Partners

4-H Youth Development,  
K-State Research  
and Extension  
ACT School  
Barstow School  
Barton County Library  
Bishop Miega High School  
Blue Valley  
Parents as Teachers  
Blue Valley School District  
Blue Valley School District  
Parents as Teachers  
Brookridge Day School  
Christ Lutheran School  
Christ Preparatory Academy  
De Soto Parents as Teachers  
De Soto School District  
Gardner Edgerton  
Parents As Teachers  
Gardner Edgerton  
School District  
Goddard School  
Growing Futures Early  
Education Center  
Hiersteiner Child  
Development Center  
Highlawn Montessori School  
Holy Cross Catholic School  
Holy Spirit Catholic School  
Holy Trinity School  
Horizon Academy  
Ivy League  
John Paul II Catholic School  
Johnson County  
Community College  
Johnson County Community  
College Adult Education

Johnson County  
Montessori School  
Kansas City Academy  
Kansas City Christian School  
Kansas City Public Schools  
Kansas City Public Library  
Legacy Christian Church  
Preschool  
Literacy KC  
Maranatha Christian Academy  
Mid-Continent Public Library  
Midwest Parent Educators  
Mount Olive Lutheran School  
Nativity Parish School  
Nieman PTA  
Olathe Public Library  
Olathe School District  
Operation Breakthrough  
Pioneer Preschool  
Premier Learning Early  
Childhood Education  
Center  
Prince of Peace  
Catholic School  
Rockhurst University  
Sacred Heart School  
Shawnee Mission  
Parents As Teachers  
Shawnee Mission  
School District  
Sonshine Preschool  
Special Beginnings Early  
Learning Center  
Spring Hill School District  
St. Agnes Catholic School  
St. Teresa's Academy  
Lee's Summit School District  
University of Kansas  
University of Missouri -  
Kansas City  
Wyandotte School District

## Municipal and Government Partners

City of De Soto, Kansas  
City of Edgerton, Kansas  
City of Gardner, Kansas  
City of Leawood, Kansas  
City of Lenexa, Kansas  
City of Merriam, Kansas  
City of Olathe, Kansas  
City of Overland Park, Kansas  
City of Prairie Village, Kansas

City of Shawnee, Kansas  
City of Spring Hill, Kansas  
Johnson County Department  
of Corrections/Therapeutic  
Community/Juvenile  
Detention Center/Adult  
Residential Center/  
Sheriff's Office  
Johnson County Department  
of Aging and Human  
Services/Department  
of Development  
Services/Department of  
Emergency Management  
and Communications/  
Department of Health  
and Environment/  
Department of Mental  
Health/Department of  
Technology and Innovation/  
Election Office/Facilities  
Management/  
Human Resources  
Johnson County  
Extension Office -  
Kansas State University  
Johnson County Parks and  
Recreation/Johnson  
County Museum  
Kansas Department of Children  
and Families  
Neighborhood Programs –  
City of Overland Park  
The Family Conservancy

## Partner Organizations

AARP Kansas Tax-Aide  
African-American Artists  
Collective - Kansas City  
American Public Square  
at Jewell  
American Red Cross  
Amigos de las Americas  
BikeWalkKC  
Blue Valley Parks  
and Recreation  
Boy Scouts of America  
Catholic Charities  
Center of Grace  
Church of the Resurrection  
Overland Park  
Convent of Christ the King  
Daughters of the  
American Revolution  
De Soto Historical Society  
De Soto Rotary Club

KC Digital Drive  
Evangelistic Center Church  
First Baptist Church of Stilwell  
GWFC Athena Club  
of Gardner  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Greater Kansas City Hispanic  
Chamber of Commerce  
Hammerspace Workshop  
Housing and Credit  
Counseling Inc.  
Infant-Toddler Services  
InterUrban ArtHouse  
Jewish Community Center  
of Greater Kansas City  
Johnson County and Kansas  
City Metro Area Chambers  
of Commerce  
Johnson County  
Genealogical Society  
Johnson County Museum  
Kansas City Artists Coalition  
Kansas City  
Writers Workshop/  
KC Word Shop/  
Louder Than a Bomb  
Kansas Enrichment Network  
Kansas Legal Services  
KCSOURCELINK  
Merriam Community Center  
MoneySmart KC  
NCircle  
Nelson Atkins Museum of Art  
National Museum of  
Toys and Miniatures  
Overland Park  
Community Garden  
Pets for Life KC  
Redemptorist Social  
Services Center  
SafeHome  
Salem Lutheran Church –  
Food Pantry  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Society of Human Resource  
Managers – Johnson  
County  
Sons of the American  
Revolution  
Strawberry Week Society  
The Arts Asylum  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Women's Employment  
Network  
Workforce Partnership

The Library had **40,872**  
**open hours** in 2023



**259,296** people have  
a card at our Library

**1,788,430**  
people walked  
through  
our doors  
in 2023



Print materials  
totaled **860,218**



Physical videos  
totaled **118,949**



The  
collection  
contained  
**1,701,571**  
items



We lent our items to  
other libraries **161,251** times



And brought in **136,183**  
items upon patron request



**180,911** uses of  
public computers

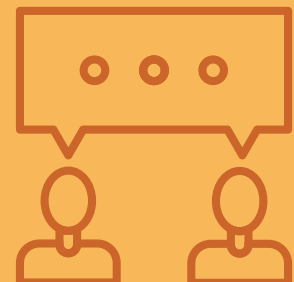


**781,069**  
WiFi sessions

**2,038** total  
programs offered



**88,415** people  
attended in total



## Our Branches

### FIRST LIBRARY BUILDING MARKS ITS LAST YEAR

It began in a basement.

In 1953, the “Merriam” Library was set up by volunteers in the basement of a residence on West 55th Terrace and was open just five hours a week. In 1955, one of the first official acts of the newly appointed County Librarian was a temporary move to a storefront at 5844 Merriam Drive, renamed “Headquarters.”

In November 1956, Headquarters moved to a rented space on the present Antioch Library site which was then purchased in 1961. It was expanded twice, renovated extensively, and served as system headquarters until the Central Resource Library opened in 1995.

As traffic and time passed by, the unassuming red brick building at the corner of Antioch Road and Shawnee Mission Parkway served generations of patrons, and served as a hub for the Library system as it grew and expanded.

In 2023, community and staff prepared to bid it a fond farewell in preparation for the opening of the new Merriam Plaza Library in January 2024. Staff holds many fond memories of Antioch, starting with the maze of corridors and offices created through its history of renovations.

“It was really nostalgic to walk through the different parts of the building and imagine what they used to be,” said Branch Manager Amy Barclay. The vacant upstairs office space was eerie, she said, and office lore had it that a shy, friendly ghost frequented the premises (and might stick around after everyone else moved on).

Through the years, County Librarian Tricia Suellentrop encountered staff and patrons who recalled the great reading nooks there and even an old clawfoot bathtub used for a reading spot. Assistant Branch Manager Sheida Bates said many patrons reminisced about attending storytimes throughout the years.

**“Everybody just loved this branch,”  
Bates said, “and the people who  
grew up coming to the branch  
were bringing their kids here.”**

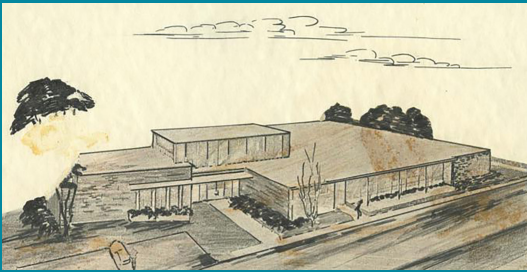
To capture the memories, Antioch staff encouraged patrons to record them on comment cards and a few hundred were digitally scanned.

One story that staff loved came from a man who met his future wife at Antioch, Bates said.

Connecting past and future, patrons got a chance to put their stamp on Merriam Plaza when the builder provided sheets of drywall for them to sign. The drywall was then installed in meeting room of the new Library, with signatures on the back.

On January 28, 2024, Antioch was closed for good to prepare for the opening of the new Merriam Plaza Library.

“It’s always sad to say goodbye,” Barclay said, “but it’s exciting to have something new that will meet many more needs for the community.”





## NEW BRANCH TAKES SHAPE IN HEART OF COMMUNITY

In late November 2022, community leaders, Johnson County commissioners, members of the Library Board of Directors and Administration teams donned hard hats and shovels hit the dirt during the groundbreaking ceremony for the Library's new Merriam Plaza branch.

Merriam leaders first pitched the many benefits of a shared campus to Library officials in 2017, beginning a partnership to create a distinctive jewel and destination in the heart of the community.

Located on a campus with the Merriam Community Center in the 6000 block of Slater Street, the Library and community center face each other across a courtyard. The two facilities share a parking structure and a welcoming outdoor gathering space.

The 15,000 square foot energy-efficient building was designed by Dake Wells Architects, with many patron suggestions in mind, and construction was managed by Titan Built.

The construction phase was completed by Titan in November 2023, on time and on budget, ahead of a March 2024 opening. It cost approximately \$13.7 million, funded through the Comprehensive Library Master Plan. Merriam residents did not see a city tax increase to pay for the project.

The Library also commemorated another kind of groundbreaking at the branch, paying homage to a local family involved in an important but little-known chapter in American racial justice history with the Webb Family Meeting Room and mural.

Long-time Merriam residents Alfonso and Mary Webb's successful 1949 lawsuit to desegregate Merriam schools laid the legal foundation for the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case five years later. Six of their 10 children are still living and graciously offered their time and energy to the project.

## Merriam Plaza features

- Convenient drive-thru
- Cozy and colorful children's reading area
- Vibrant public art
- Large meeting room with updated technology to host Storytime and other events
- Two well-equipped study rooms
- Spacious windows allowing in lots of natural light
- Attractive green roof that preserves its lifespan while nurturing pollinators and native vegetation

# Our Branches

## ANTIOCH LIBRARY

32,000 sq. ft., with 15,000 sq. ft. dedicated for public service  
8700 Shawnee Mission Parkway, Merriam, KS 66202

The history of Johnson County Library began in Merriam in 1953. Established by volunteers, it was initially housed in a residence and open for limited hours. The Library moved to its present site in 1956 – then a rented space. Besides offering public service, it was “headquarters,” housing library administration, business office, and technical services.

The building and its site were purchased in 1961; with expansions in 1970 and 1983. The headquarters functions moved to the current Central Resource Library location in 1995 and Antioch Library underwent a renovation and became a branch in 1996. In addition to serving generations of Library patrons, Antioch also housed classes for Johnson County Community College’s adult education program until it moved to a separate space. Staff spent months preparing for its closing in January 2024, before the opening of the new Merriam Plaza Library.



## BLUE VALLEY LIBRARY

24,000 sq. ft.  
9000 W 151st Street, Overland Park, KS 66221

The first library in the Stanley area opened in mid-1953 as a self-service library of 200 books at Boehm’s Grocery. Bookmobile service began in June 1956 and served the area until the Blue Valley Library opened its doors. As the population grew, planning began in 1979 for “community libraries” in Stanley, De Soto, Gardner and Spring Hill. The new Blue Valley Library opened with approximately 13,000 books in July 1982. Its first full year of operation (1983) saw a circulation of 23,360. From its first year to the end of 1999, the branch’s holdings had increased three-fold to 39,368, and its circulation had grown ten-fold to 240,633.

The city of Overland Park donated property for the current location in 1997 and the new library opened in 2000.



## CEDAR ROE LIBRARY

16,000 sq. ft.  
5120 Cedar Street, Roeland Park, KS 66205

Cedar Roe Library is a well-loved neighborhood branch in Roeland Park. The compact building – 17,157 square feet – was dedicated in 1969. The name “Cedar Roe” was the winner in a naming contest, a combination that incorporated its Cedar Street address and its Roeland Park neighborhood.

Since the mid-1990s it has received updating and refurbishing, including modern lighting and wiring for today’s technology and spaces rearranged to improve the functionality of the branch. With the interplay of wood and brick on the interior, Cedar Roe remains one of the most attractive and interesting of the Johnson County Library public facilities.





## CENTRAL RESOURCE LIBRARY

90,000 sq. ft.

9875 W 87th Street, Overland Park, KS 66212

Central is one of Johnson County's busiest branches, with more than 250,000 visits during the year. It supports a diverse mix of customers including teens and children who love its welcoming spaces plus a wide array of individuals and community groups which rely on its computers, internet access and meeting rooms.

Since opening in August 1995, the Central Resource Library has continued to be re-envisioned by Library staff. It's seen the creation of an art gallery, a teen services space, and added more than 100 public use PCs. In 2008 the large meeting room was named the Carmack Room in honor of the Johnson County Library's fourth County Librarian Mona Carmack. The building, which is home to many departments and considered the operational hub of the Library system, reopened in February 2022 after a significant renovation to both patron and staff spaces.



## CORINTH LIBRARY

20,400 sq. ft.

8100 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS 66208

One of the first Johnson County Library branches to open was in Prairie Village. Volunteers in 1953 opened a branch in donated space in Prairie Village Shopping Center in the basement of a shop with donated books, shelving and other furnishings. By 1956 funding was available and a professional librarian was hired. Voters in 1967 approved a bond issue as the population continued to grow rapidly, to expand Corinth to its current size.

In 1988, it underwent an interior renovation and in February 2019 a new book slot, conveyor and scanner were added to streamline returns. Corinth remains one of the busiest libraries in the Kansas City metro area, attracting users from many parts of the region. The structure is near the end of its life and through the Comprehensive Library Master Plan, building replacement options are being explored at the current site and other locations.



## DE SOTO LIBRARY

3,800 sq. ft.

33145 W. 83rd Street, De Soto, KS 66018

The first Johnson County Library presence in De Soto was set up by volunteers who, in the absence of funding for its first two years, struggled to bring library service to all portions of Johnson County. It closed by June 1956 when regular bookmobile service began but the community felt it needed a more permanent library presence in De Soto as time passed and the community grew.

The original De Soto Library opened its doors in October 1967. A new building was constructed on the same site and opened in 1982. Since then, spaces have been rearranged and decluttered for better service. In 2022, Johnson County Library conducted a conceptual design study for the De Soto, Edgerton, and Spring Hill branches with opportunities for public input. Renovation at De Soto and Spring Hill was affirmed by the Library Board and Board of County Commissioners in 2023 with design slated to begin in 2024.

## Our Branches

### EDGERTON LIBRARY

2,100 sq. ft.

319 E. Nelson, Edgerton, KS 66021

After the Johnson County Library bookmobile ceased operation in the early 1980s, library service was needed in the city of Edgerton. For many years two carts of books for self-checkout stood in the Edgerton City Hall.

In 1999, a former bank building in the downtown area was acquired by the city. The Edgerton Library Task Force set about raising funds for providing a setting for modern library services. In 2000, the Edgerton Library opened its doors, offering circulating library materials, public-use PCs, a meeting room, and programming. In its first full year in operation, 22,711 items were checked out and the branch received 19,150 visitors.



### GARDNER LIBRARY

12,300 sq. ft.

137 E. Shawnee Street, Gardner, KS 66030

From 1953 to 1960 Gardner was served first for a short time by a small self-service collection, and then by bookmobile. The first Gardner Library opened in 1960 at 134 E. Main in rented space that formerly housed a grocery store. By the mid-1960s its collection had grown to about 8,000 volumes and was circulating about 500 of those each week. With continued growth, by 1999 the city proposed that the Library trade its location on Main Street for one near-by at Shawnee and Elm Streets. Ground was broken in September 2000, and the new library opened in November 2001. The new building was almost four times the size of the old building and was justified by burgeoning use in the years since.



### LEAWOOD PIONEER LIBRARY

19,000 sq. ft.

4700 Town Center Drive, Leawood, KS 66211

The Leawood Pioneer Library is one of the busiest in the system, recirculating an average of 300,000 items a year. It opened its doors in May 1994, with a name chosen to honor the city and the nearby pioneer trails to Oregon, Santa Fe, and California that passed nearby from the 1820s to the 1870s.

While built with expansion in mind, by 2006 planning and funding were moving forward to add approximately 8,000 square feet. Neither the Library staff nor the community wanted to go without a library in that neighborhood for a year during construction, so a temporary location opened nearby. The renovated Leawood Pioneer Library reopened on October 1, 2009. The bustling branch's parking lot was repaved and repainted in 2023.







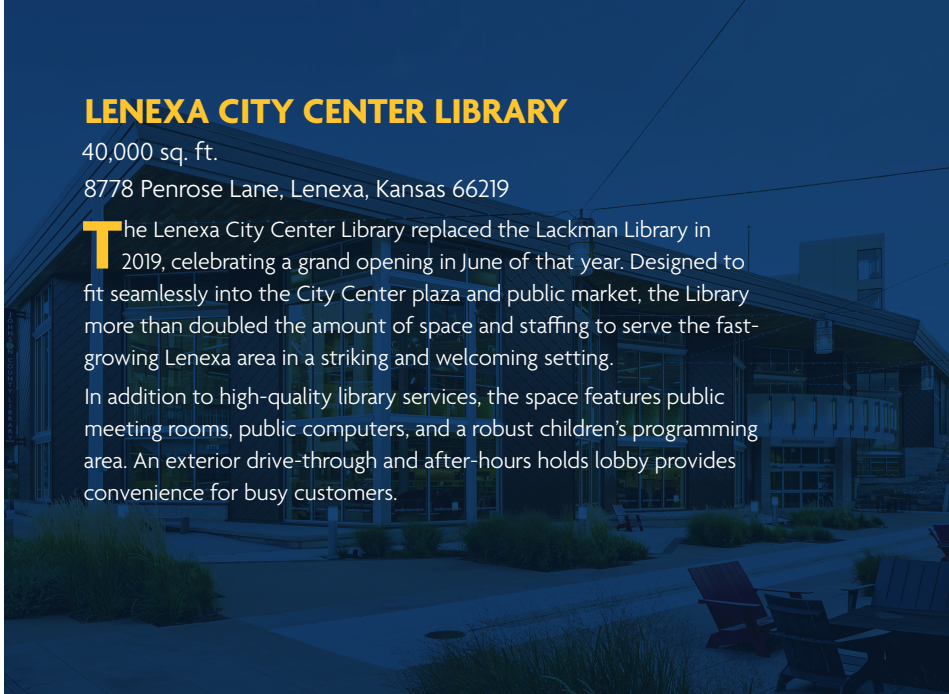
## LENEXA CITY CENTER LIBRARY

40,000 sq. ft.

8778 Penrose Lane, Lenexa, Kansas 66219

The Lenexa City Center Library replaced the Lackman Library in 2019, celebrating a grand opening in June of that year. Designed to fit seamlessly into the City Center plaza and public market, the Library more than doubled the amount of space and staffing to serve the fast-growing Lenexa area in a striking and welcoming setting.

In addition to high-quality library services, the space features public meeting rooms, public computers, and a robust children's programming area. An exterior drive-through and after-hours holds lobby provides convenience for busy customers.

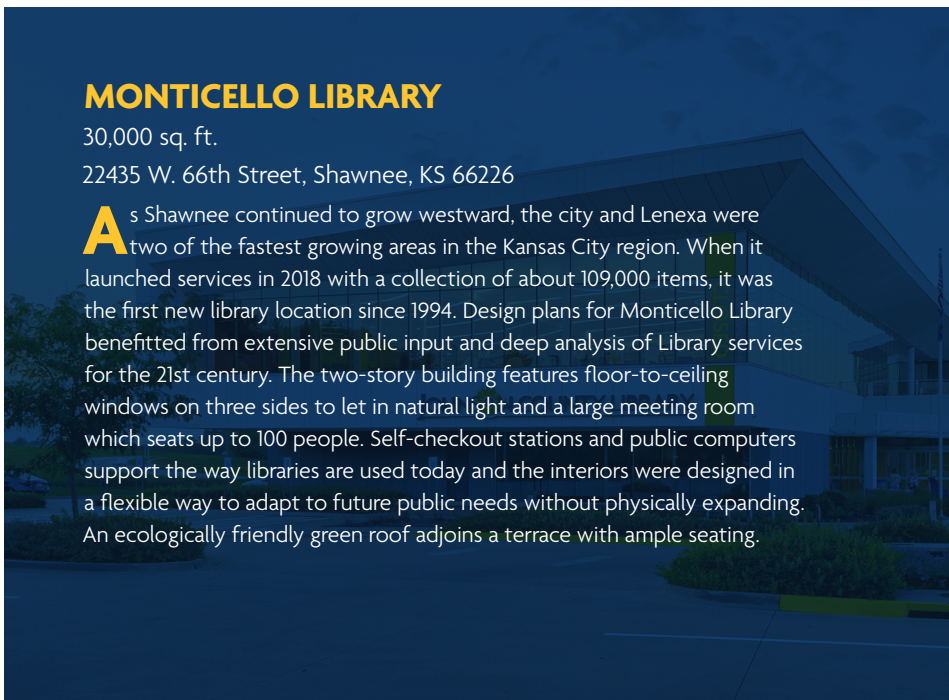


## MONTICELLO LIBRARY

30,000 sq. ft.

22435 W. 66th Street, Shawnee, KS 66226

As Shawnee continued to grow westward, the city and Lenexa were two of the fastest growing areas in the Kansas City region. When it launched services in 2018 with a collection of about 109,000 items, it was the first new library location since 1994. Design plans for Monticello Library benefitted from extensive public input and deep analysis of Library services for the 21st century. The two-story building features floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides to let in natural light and a large meeting room which seats up to 100 people. Self-checkout stations and public computers support the way libraries are used today and the interiors were designed in a flexible way to adapt to future public needs without physically expanding. An ecologically friendly green roof adjoins a terrace with ample seating.



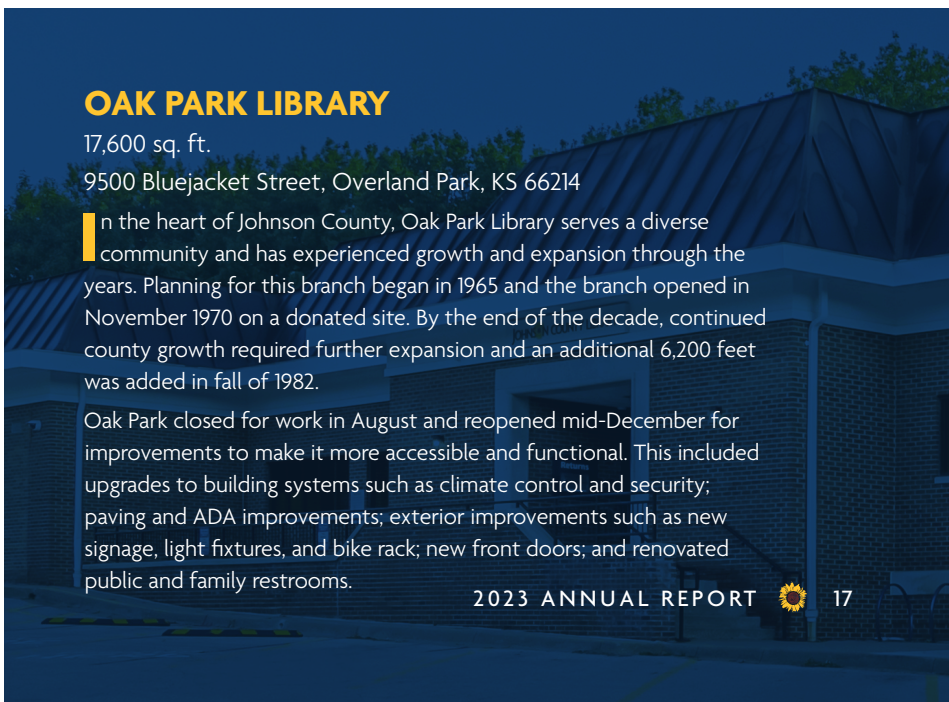
## OAK PARK LIBRARY

17,600 sq. ft.

9500 Bluejacket Street, Overland Park, KS 66214

In the heart of Johnson County, Oak Park Library serves a diverse community and has experienced growth and expansion through the years. Planning for this branch began in 1965 and the branch opened in November 1970 on a donated site. By the end of the decade, continued county growth required further expansion and an additional 6,200 feet was added in fall of 1982.

Oak Park closed for work in August and reopened mid-December for improvements to make it more accessible and functional. This included upgrades to building systems such as climate control and security; paving and ADA improvements; exterior improvements such as new signage, light fixtures, and bike rack; new front doors; and renovated public and family restrooms.



# Our Branches

## SHAWNEE LIBRARY

10,900 sq. ft.

13811 Johnson Drive, Shawnee, KS 66216

One of the first Johnson County Library branches opened in 1953 in the old Dunbar School in Shawnee at 57th and Reeder. It moved into rented space a block west of Nieman Road on Johnson Drive in 1955. Unfortunately, a 1958 budget cut required closing the Shawnee location for 34 years.

As Shawnee expanded to the west in the early 1990s, the city offered the present site and in April 1992 the Shawnee Library opened. The new facility was a showstopper and was among the libraries pictured in Library Journal's Annual Architecture Issue in 1992. The branch has large scale improvements slated for 2024: upgrades to HVAC and electrical systems, window repair, and replacing shelving and furniture.



## SPRING HILL LIBRARY

2,700 sq. ft.

109 S Webster Street, Spring Hill, KS 66083

The first branch at Spring Hill was set up with no designated funding and was run on a shoestring for its first few years. Open just a few hours a week, it was a joint effort of the Library and Spring Hill School District. By 1980 the Spring Hill Library was included in a multi-service center, which offered a number of county services. In that year, Johnson County Library proposed building permanent libraries in the cities of Spring Hill, De Soto, and Gardner, where the libraries were in rented space.

The new Spring Hill Library opened officially on June 1, 1982, and serves the community today. The interior has been remodeled to accommodate new media, and public PC workstations has been added. Design for renovation and expansion of Spring Hill is slated to begin in 2024.

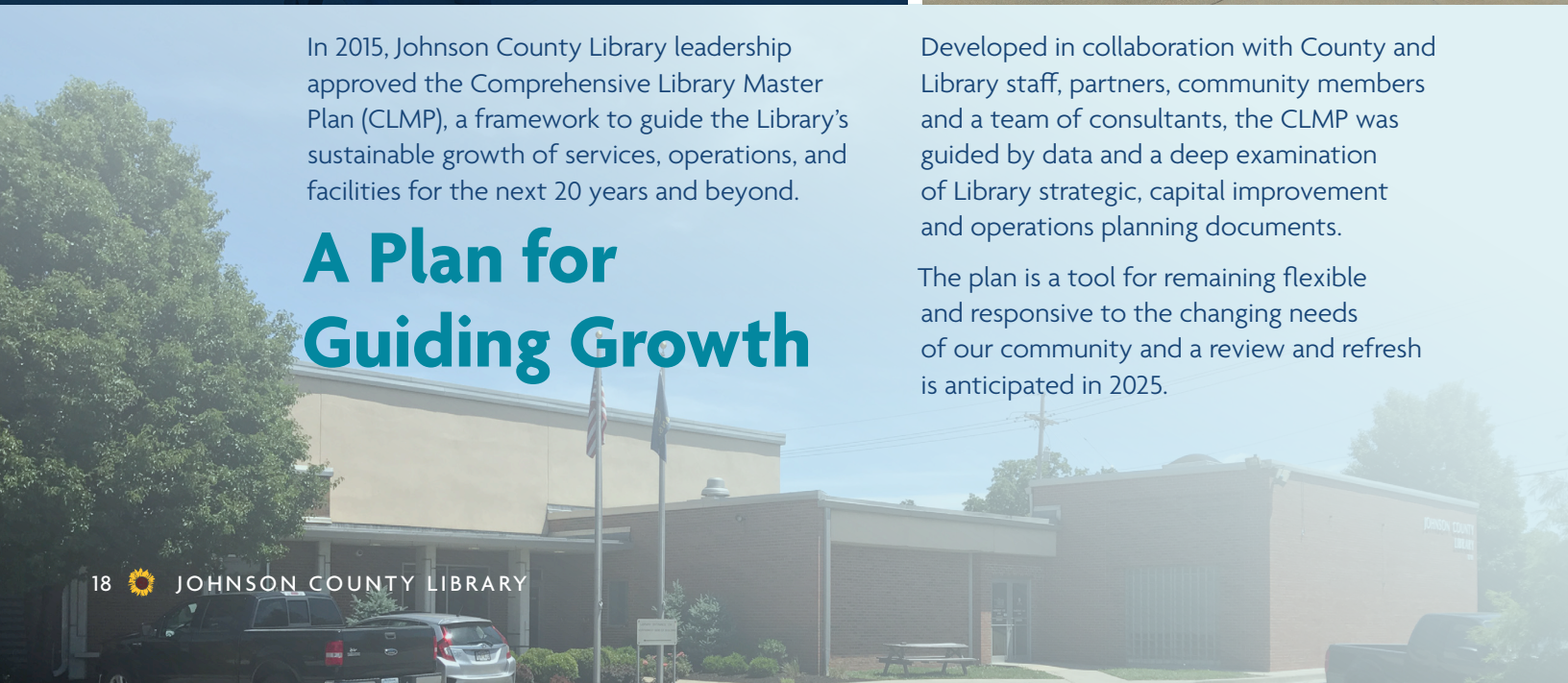


In 2015, Johnson County Library leadership approved the Comprehensive Library Master Plan (CLMP), a framework to guide the Library's sustainable growth of services, operations, and facilities for the next 20 years and beyond.

## A Plan for Guiding Growth

Developed in collaboration with County and Library staff, partners, community members and a team of consultants, the CLMP was guided by data and a deep examination of Library strategic, capital improvement and operations planning documents.

The plan is a tool for remaining flexible and responsive to the changing needs of our community and a review and refresh is anticipated in 2025.



- Johnson County is the top-rated public service in Johnson County, with a satisfaction rating of 87.9 percent.
- As of January 2024, 85.7 percent of respondents said that Libraries are important to the quality of life in our county over the next 20 years.
- Agreement that Johnson County Library is succeeding in our mission increased by nearly 10 points, from 77.6 percent to 86.9 percent.
- We know we are important to Johnson County. And we continue to work hard to earn this trust. Thank you.

The County's annual Citizen survey assesses community needs and priorities on behalf of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners. This survey helps the County understand effective use of resources providing services that residents want from their county government. Surveys were completed in each of the county's six commission districts in early 2024.

## Johnson County Citizen Survey

## Newsworthy



Our Librarians made more than 26,000 new Library cards in 2023, the most new cards in years and a 25 percent increase over 2022. More than 2,200 of those were during National Library Card Sign-Up month in September, which was also the month of Library memes! The Library got some inspiration and a little bit of viral love thanks to Kansas City's new favorite couple: Travis Kelce & Taylor Swift.

In September, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel visited Central Resource Library as part of the Secretary's "Back to School Bus Tour 2023: Raise the Bar" campaign in partnership with local non-profit KC Digital Drive. Cardona participated in a roundtable with local educators about our country's digital divide, then held an impromptu Storytime in the kids' area.



# Nurturing Our Community's Collective Wisdom

Johnson County Library's five Key Performance Areas guide us in meeting our commitments and serving the community. Shaped by feedback from our community and staff, these focus areas help us bring our values to life as we deliver on the wants and needs of the people we serve.



## COMMUNITY

### Providing Safe Havens for County Mental Health Staff

The hush of a branch often makes it an inviting space for patrons, and as it turns out, the setting is also beneficial for Johnson County mental health workers.

As a Johnson County Mental Health case manager, Brian Young said many young adults he sees are nervous in busy social settings.

But at the Library, he said, "It's not fast-paced. It's not overwhelming. It's calming. Plus, it gets (the clients) out of the house." Clients can access the Library's collection – to check out video games or use reading as a coping mechanism – and programming lineup.

It's not unusual for case managers to stop off at branches upwards of four or more times a day, often bumping into colleagues. They also offer busy case managers a respite to focus on their own well-being.

"Sometimes I just go and drink my coffee and stare at my phone and take a break — just to disconnect for a little bit," Young said.



Meeting rooms are used for client appointments, and offer privacy for work on sensitive client material and calling physicians.



## CONVENIENCE

### Bolstering Our Book Club Outreach

Book discussion groups that Johnson County Library hosts monthly in its branches and online are thriving, offering patrons a wonderful way to meet and share insights about thought-provoking books.

Readers Advisory Librarian Gregg Winsor thought other book clubs could benefit from access to a convenient set of books ready for borrowing. He took his stockpile of official selections and offered "Book Clubs in a Bag" to external book groups eager to check out and discuss popular titles.

"We pick out selections with an eye toward modernity/currency," Winsor said, adding that a staff committee seeks out titles that are diverse, engaging and likely to prompt lively discussions.

Books of the same title are placed in clear plastic backpacks with handles and wheels that are easily transportable. Available to browse at Central Resource Library, patrons can find and reserve them through the Library's web catalog.



The Book Club in a Bag was the brainchild of Readers Advisory Librarian Gregg Winsor.

## Sparking Inspiration and Collaboration at Writers Conference

to immerse themselves in three days of learning about, talking about, and sharing works of writing. The annual Library event featured a mix of external speakers and Library staff, with kickoff event speaker Joaquin Zihuatanejo taking participants on a poetic journey from “barrio boy” to Dallas’ inaugural poet laureate.

In early November, attendees gathered at Central Resource Library and virtually

Sessions and workshops ranged from collaborating with editors, incorporating “the hero’s journey” in travel writing, an exploration of writing an opera libretto, interactive games to spur creative thinking and open critiques of participants’ writing. Attendees could bring clothing to add the conference’s “Write Your Own Story” artwork with on-demand printing. When asked for a word to describe the conference, the most common response attendees gave was “inspiring.”



Library Staff including Jesseca Bear, Cindy Frazer, Lisa Allen, Helen Hokanson, Diane Haner and Eden Pierce planned the Writers Conference. Not pictured: Joseph Keehn.



## EDUCATION



## OPERATIONS

### Partnering to Provide Free Period Products

In August, the Library Board approved an agreement with the Strawberry Week Society, a local nonprofit that collects and distributes free menstrual products to schools, hospitals, shelters and community organizations, to



Warehouse Coordinator Josh Adkins ensures products make it to branches after quarterly drop-offs.

increase accessibility and combat period poverty. Now, restrooms within all 14 branches provide free

products for the public’s convenience and comfort. According to staff, this enhances customer service, fosters a welcoming and healthy environment and safeguards privacy. Products are donated quarterly, for an annual total of about 10,000 pads and 6,000 tampons. This saves Johnson County government more than \$3,000 if it were to purchase the products. Youth Information Specialists Emma Fernhout and Heather Miller advocated for the service and said Strawberry Week is a great partner. “If I go to a gym or an airport and I see period products, especially if they are free, then I immediately feel like that organization cares,” Fernhout said. “It just seemed in alignment with what the Library wants people to feel.”

Our three courier trucks transport materials between the branches and travel countless miles each year, serving as billboards on wheels with images promoting new Library services. In 2023, three local artists designed the wraps, bringing uniquely creative visions to the task and giving each truck a bold and brilliant exterior.

“We asked artists to interpret what the Library means to them, how the Library impacts the community, and translate that into art,” said marketing specialist Ben Oglesby.



Each has a distinctive, eye-catching style that brings something different to the project. Yet all share an enthusiasm for the Library’s mission and their artwork conveys this message in captivating ways.

## COMMUNICATION

### Promoting Our Resources Through Work of Local Artists



# Johnson County Library Goes Fine-Free

In a major milestone, the Library stopped assessing daily fines for overdue materials on April 14. Patrons checking out books, DVDs or other materials from any of our 14 branches no longer have to worry about the assessment of a fine for items returned after their due date. In addition, existing overdue fines were automatically waived, along with fees older than seven years.



After asking staff to explore the impact of going fine-free, the Johnson County Library Board voted to approve this new policy and Johnson County joined a nationwide trend of Libraries going fine-free.

It was all about improving access and removing barriers that might keep our community from taking advantage of everything the Library has to offer.

"We know there's an opportunity to bring people back to the Library who aren't using it because they are concerned about accruing fines," said Elissa Andre, Marketing and Communications Manager. "We also frequently hear stories from patrons who felt so guilty about a long-ago fine, they hadn't been back in decades. So, this was a huge opportunity to make the Library a more welcoming place."



Revenue from fines had declined every year since 2014. For several years, the Library sent regular due date reminders, which dramatically improved on-time returns. After accounting for staff time spent assessing and collecting fines, actual revenue totaled only about \$79,000 in 2022. That is less than 1 percent of the Library's total budget, and that revenue reduction will not affect Library services.

The Library still charges fees for lost or damaged items. Items more than 30 days overdue will have a lost item fee assessed until the item is returned. And checkout periods have not changed; materials still have due dates, with reminders to keep patrons on track.

In deciding to go fine free, Johnson County Library joined other regional systems including Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas, as well as Lawrence, North Kansas City, St. Joseph, Topeka, and Wichita.

Circulation Manager Michelle Olsen said that eliminating fines makes the Library even more inviting.

Shauna Anderson

This is big for busy homeschool Moms. So many don't use the public library because they are super busy and trying to get everything back/ remembering to renew things is just adding to the super long list of things. Very helpful. Thank you!

Love Reply Hide

5

Trishna Bhattachan

Best news !! Time to reconnect with library 📖

Like Reply Hide

"Our 30-cents per day fine [was] the highest in the metro, so we really want to make sure our patrons are getting experiences of other Library systems, like those in and around our community, that have gone fine-free," Olsen said.

Community sentiment was overall positive, especially among busy parents, with some concerns voiced about accountability. While other trends may be contributing factors, circulation has increased with positive trends in both new cardholder registration and patrons returning to the Library. And rather than dealing with questions and concerns about charges, staff can spend time on more positive interactions.

It was a chance for the Library to welcome people back with open arms, according to Andre. "Come rediscover the Library. We have no more fines. And we have this amazing suite of resources you can unlock with your Library card."

Revenues FY2023	Actuals
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$40,648,142
Other Taxes	\$3,332,252
Other Library Revenue	\$861,280
Grants	\$132,569
Investment Interest	\$577,290
Donations to Gift Fund 1380	\$113,040
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$45,664,573</b>

- << The ad valorem is a mil levy, a tax rate that is applied to the assessed value of property in Johnson County excluding Olathe. The Olathe Library is supported by Olathe tax payers only.
- << The Johnson County Library Foundation regularly seeks grants to support Library services and programs.

Expenditure Actuals FY2023	Actuals
Payroll Expenses	\$23,588,568
Contractual Services	\$4,532,352
Commodities	\$5,139,263
Transfers to Capital Projects	\$4,497,634
Lease Payments to Public Building Comm. (PBC)	\$3,110,703
Interfund Transfers to Debt Service Fund	\$0
Interfund Transfer	\$3,248,462
Grant Expenses	\$132,233
Risk Management Charges	\$303,688
Capital	\$93,943
Expenditures out of Gift Fund 1380	\$149,953
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$44,796,799</b>

- << By definition, libraries are service- rich agencies that require a broad variety of specially-skilled staff.
- << In 2016 the Library launched a multi-year expansion campaign to build new libraries and to remodel some existing branches.
- << Most grant funds are required to be expended during a defined period. We carefully track these funded projects.
- << Total Expenditures includes authorized expense obligations active at year-end 2023.

\*All figures are rounded to the nearest dollar



