



Rochester
Public Library

Re-Imagine, Re-Focus, Re-Engage



Annual Report to the Community 2021

More Than You Think



The joy of the first
library card!



Patricia Uttaro,
Library Director

Re-Imagine, Re-Focus, Re-Engage – all things we at RPL worked towards in 2021. Staff began looking at library services and programs differently as we heard new expectations from our patrons. Programs were modified to accommodate in-person and virtual participation; we welcomed patrons back into our buildings; new books showed up on the shelves, and things seemed to head back towards “normal.” Until December, when Covid surged and once again we had to pause our in-person programs and focus on masks and social distancing. As winter turns to spring, staff and patrons are re-engaging and re-discovering everything they love about the library. Despite the challenges of 2021, RPL staff produced some of the best programs and services I’ve seen in my career. The library wouldn’t exist without our excellent staff and loyal patrons. Thank you for believing!



Donna P. Benjamin,
RPL Board President

So much change continues to occur, and I’m as concerned as many of you are about the challenges our community faces. At the same time, there is a positive and constant force that remains and acts as a strong beacon for our community—it is the Rochester Public Library. In 2021, as we worked to fully reopen, the dedicated library staff dug deeper and continued to provide incredible service to the Rochester community—from access to books (hard copy or electronic), to music, movies, art and information sharing. As we strived to reconnect with the patrons we serve, it underscored that the gap of inequities in access to information needs to be our continued area of focus. The RPL staff continues to do what is necessary and vital to ensure access for all, to ensure that we meet our mission. Thank you, to the community and to donors who recognize that RPL continues to serve as a positive vital resource for the changing Rochester community. Please read on to celebrate all that we continue to accomplish together. Then, visit your local branch to engage and discover something waiting just for you.

Re-View 2021

2021 by the Numbers

472,090 people visited our library buildings—that's over **9,000 per week**.

3,167 programs (virtual and in person) were provided with **57,640** people attending—that's over **1,000 people per week**.

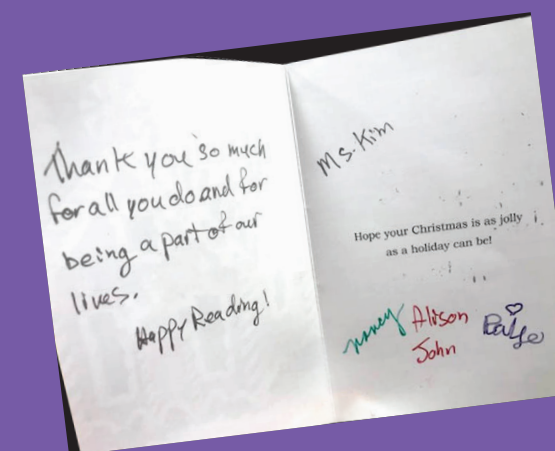
We provided:

7,202 curbside visits

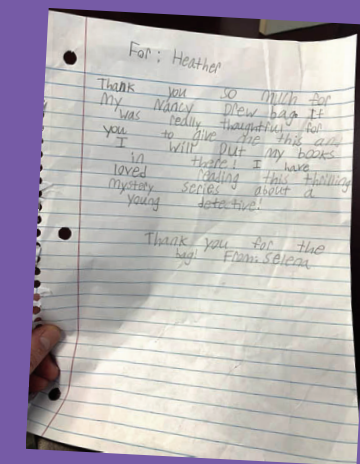
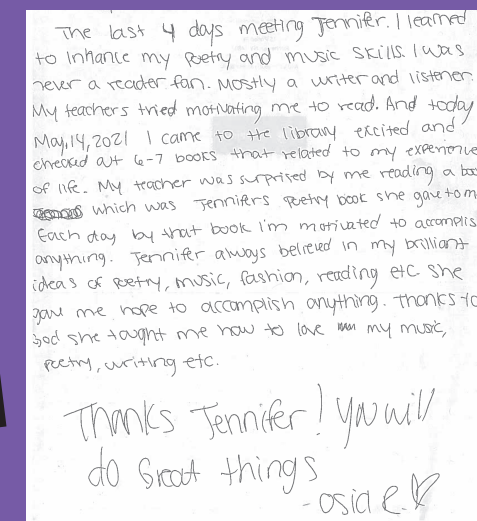
74,914 wifi sessions or **1,440 per week**.

We circulated **736,901** items or over **2,000 per day**.

Rewarding...



Letters sent to Charlotte Branch Library



Re-Imagine

COVID conditions in 2021 led the library to re-imagine all of our services, striving to serve our city residents with what they needed most:

- All RPL locations provided free face masks and COVID test kits to patrons.
- Vaccine information and appointment help were provided at all locations.
- The Arnett, Lincoln, Lyell and Maplewood branches served as vaccination sites in 2021. Thousands in our community received their vaccinations at libraries and recreation centers.

The Sully Branch had the WIC (Women, Infants & Children program) mobile unit visit with its curbside food market. One patron who visited the WIC mobile told Branch Supervisor Maria Heeks-Heinlein, “this market is going to make my life easier” and thought it would do very well at Sully.

The Business Insight Center (BIC) started several new initiatives in 2021:

- Professional Hours with Tracy Jong Law Firm began in February and patrons of the Carlson Center who received free intellectual property consultations had nothing but good things to say about this new service.

- BIC launched a new podcast called The Selden Files discussing their services and resources, with a focus on business startups. the-selden-files.sounder.fm/
- With recreational cannabis now being legal, BIC offered many programs for cannabis entrepreneurs.

With COVID conditions discouraging indoor gatherings at many times during 2021, library staff got creative in planning and presenting programs for patrons:

- At the Central Library, the **Technology Center** began hosting an open Dungeons and Dragons program on Saturdays. Most of the players were infrequent library users. Some were homeless, non-binary, or face personal challenges, but all found a safe space and a growing sense of community. The parents of some participants appreciated the provision of a welcoming environment that offered an opportunity for self-expression and personal growth.



- RPL children’s services staff offered summer Pop-Up in the Park programs. The Children’s Institute’s Grow Bus was available for developmental screenings for children under five and Librarian Katie Powell offered storytimes at Highland Park, along with the opportunity to check out the library’s Nature Backpacks.

- At the **Toy Library at the Lincoln Branch**, the Virtual Playtime program was a great way for kids to play together during the lockdown. Each week staff began with a puppet show or game like hide-and-seek. Afterwards, each child would get to introduce a toy they brought and Mr. Matt then helped them all play and interact with each other online.

Re-Focus

The library still performed normal activities such as research and collecting during 2021.

The **Local History Division’s** Emily Morry’s November blog post on Cab Calloway uncovered the fact that the Rochester house in which the jazz legend was born (until now thought to have been torn down) is still standing. The post garnered several positive comments commending her research:

“Ms. Morry, what a great detective story! It was like reading an episode of “finding your roots” with Dr. Gates on PBS. I am glad you are keeping Rochester’s history alive and accurate for the future of Rochester. Great work. Thank you.” -Paul Deeth

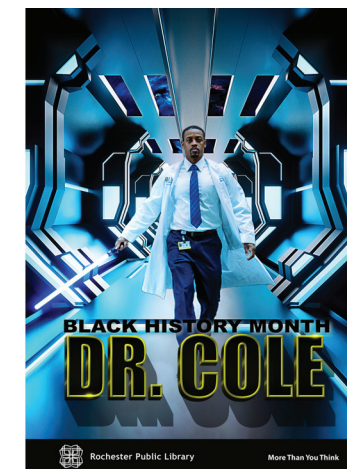
Cab Calloway’s grandson, Joshua Langsam, also lauded Morry’s research and indicated he and the Cab Calloway Foundation would like to work with the library to obtain a historical marker for the former Calloway house.

The Local History Division also began work on an archive of Black history and culture. They received a grant to help efforts to collect oral history interviews with Black elders and activists and to provide staff training on archiving and preserving Black local history.

Services that were begun in 2020 in response to COVID continued in 2021.

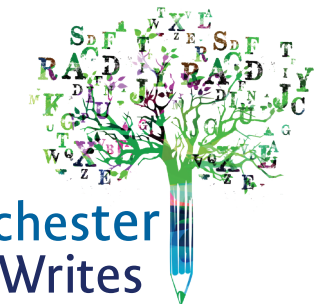
The library added more Mi-Fi units (internet hotspots) for a total of 300 and they were allowed to circulate freely throughout Monroe County.

With the state of the job market in 2021, the library created an online job search toolkit, pulling all of its various job search resources into one convenient location for patrons: roccitylibrary.org/services/job-seekers-toolkit/



In response to both the pandemic and Black Lives Matter, the library held a Black Men in White Coats panel discussion program during Black History Month. The discussion occurred in conjunction with a viewing of the documentary film of the same name.

The panelists included local African American medical doctors, a nursing professor, a mental health counselor, and a current medical student. Superhero posters of the various panel members were created by library staff and are now in the **Teen Center**.



The **Literature Division’s** Rochester Writes programs continued to attract a diverse group of people and to create positive connections between students that contribute to a strong and supportive writing community. One student evaluation commenter wrote: “We are living in a prolonged time nationally and globally of heavy hearts from the corona virus pandemic, political division, racial injustice, etc. However, a couple of hours writing, sharing and hearing others’ stories that revealed their humanity was an experience of hope and a lighter heart. Thank you.”

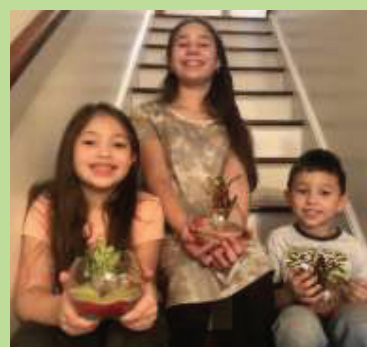
More Than You Think



Dinovember at Central Library



School visit to the Children's Center



Virtual succulent terrarium class



Teens at Phillis Wheatley



Zeta Phi Beta Sorority youth group at Lyell working with the Adopt a School program



Food Cupboard at Arnett Library



Summer Reading participant at the Charlotte Library

Re-Engage

Both staff and patrons re-engaged with the library and its services throughout 2021.

A patron came into the **Technology Center** in April, days after his release from 15 years of incarceration. He had no identification cards and no idea where to begin to get one. Staff helped him get familiar with computers and got him started toward getting replacement ID cards. He came back day after day, determined to rebuild his skillsets. They helped set up his cell phone, write his resume, get a learner's permit, and search for jobs. Later, he came to the Tech Center to photocopy his first paycheck, because he planned to frame it.

A new family from Afghanistan was placed near the **Maplewood Branch** by the group Keeping Our Promise. A volunteer brought the father of the new family to the library; he wasn't that interested until he saw what the library offered. The next day his wife and children came to the library so the younger ones could work on their English with the library staff.

Douglass Branch offered a twist on curbside service called Lit Loot where patrons could request books and media curated by staff. For instance, staff chose books for teens who wanted manga but

weren't sure what series to read next, for parents who were looking to support curriculum and for adults who wanted to try new genres but didn't know where to start. It was a very popular service!

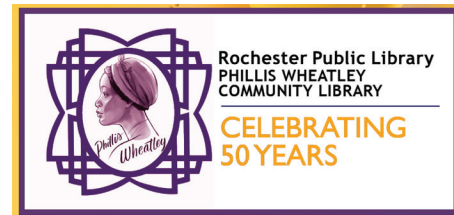
COVID could not stop the library from celebrating important milestones:

Arnett Branch hosted a wonderful night celebrating the completion of its



Book Spines mural. The three talented muralists, Richmond Futch Jr., Chloe Smith, and Ebony Singleton, and two popular authors whose works are featured in the mural, Kathleen Blasi and Leslie C. Youngblood, spoke of their love of art, literature, and libraries. Everyone enjoyed music by guitarist Ken Luk, socializing, light refreshments and viewing the murals.

Phillis Wheatley Community Library celebrated its 50th anniversary, having opened in July of 1971. A community



appreciation party was held with LuGia's Ice Cream Truck giving away free ice cream to everyone. Womba African Drumming and Dancing played in the meeting room and people were dancing and clapping along to the African beats. T-shirts and water bottles were given away to commemorate this special event.

In early 2021, RPL partnered with Common Ground Health on a grant for teen mental health in the time of COVID. A group of 15 teens was recruited to work on mental health resources for teens—300 applications were received for the 15 spots! The resources the teens developed included a zine and a variety of bookmarks, flyers and buttons, all of which were distributed to Monroe County libraries. In addition, area librarians received training from health professionals on teen mental health.

More Than You Think



Summer Reading and crafts at Charlotte Library



Sully Library and 3-D printing



Craft with the illustrator of *Monster In Your Basement* at Winton Library

Financials

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	2021	2020
Cash	\$1,240,397	\$776,393
Contributions and receivables	\$8,701,745	\$3,905,399
Long-term assets (investments)	\$3,319,408	\$2,743,328
TOTAL ASSETS	\$13,261,550	\$7,425,120
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Total current liabilities	\$7,192,445	\$3,104,941
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,340,069	\$1,166,031
With Donor Restrictions	\$3,729,036	\$3,154,148
Total net assets	\$6,069,105	\$4,320,179
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$13,261,550	\$7,425,120

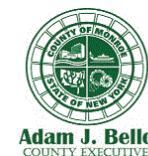
Statement of Activities

Support and Revenue	2021	2020
Contributions and grants	\$20,550,406	\$16,693,195
In-kind support	\$4,264,270	\$4,345,688
Fines and fees	\$278,064	\$299,139
Investment income	\$920,120	\$127,841
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$26,012,860	\$21,465,863
Expenses		
Operating expenses	\$19,934,991	\$19,848,193
Transfer to City of Rochester (capital/facility)	\$4,328,943	\$1,083,712
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$24,263,934	\$20,874,965
<i>Change in net assets</i>	<i>\$1,748,926</i>	<i>\$533,958</i>
Net assets - beginning of year	\$4,320,179	\$3,786,221
Net assets - end of year	\$6,069,105	\$4,320,179

The Rochester Public Library is funded by the City of Rochester and County of Monroe. The City of Rochester provides funding for the 10 neighborhood branch libraries and for capital projects in the Branches and at Central.

Monroe County provides operational funding for the Central Library.

The Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library raises funds, presents programs, supports special spaces and projects, and purchases supplemental materials.



Adam J. Bello
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



City of Rochester, NY
Malik D. Evans, Mayor
Rochester City Council



Friends & Foundation of the
Rochester Public Library

Rochester Public Library



**CENTRAL LIBRARY
OF ROCHESTER &
MONROE COUNTY**
115 South Avenue
428-7300



LYELL BRANCH
428-8218
956 Lyell Avenue



ARNETT BRANCH
428-8214
310 Arnett Boulevard



**MAPLEWOOD
COMMUNITY LIBRARY**
428-8220
1111 Dewey Avenue



CHARLOTTE BRANCH
428-8216
3557 Lake Avenue



MONROE BRANCH
428-8202
809 Monroe Avenue



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS
COMMUNITY LIBRARY**
428-8206
971 South Avenue



SULLY BRANCH
428-8208
530 Webster Avenue



**LINCOLN BRANCH &
TOY LIBRARY**
428-8210
851 Joseph Avenue



**PHILLIS WHEATLEY
COMMUNITY LIBRARY**
428-8212
33 Dr. Samuel McCree Way



WINTON BRANCH
428-8204
611 Winton Road North

RPL Board of Trustees

The RPL Board of Trustees is appointed by the Mayor and approved through City Council. 2022 Trustees include:

Donna P. Benjamin, President; Richard Hamilton, Vice President; Daniel Karin, Treasurer; Shawn Futch, Secretary; Katherine Baynes, Carolee Conklin, Alinda Drury, Glenn Gardner, John Lovenheim, Liaison to Monroe County Library System; Sharon Salluzzo, Liaison from Reynolds Library Board; Erick Stephens, Liaison from Monroe County Library System

Reynolds Library Board of Directors

The Reynolds Library Board of Directors remained intact when the Reynolds Library merged with the Rochester Public Library in 1908. The Reynolds Board meets twice a year and manages an endowment that supports innovation at the Central Library. 2022 Directors include:

Katherine Parsons, President; Sharon Salluzzo, Secretary; Kathryn Nixon, Treasurer; Jeremy Cooney, Elizabeth Gilbert, Bruce Marché, Kathleen Miller, Justin Stevens, Patricia Uttaro, Peter Willsea, Robert Wittman

RPL Administration

Patricia Uttaro, Director, Monroe County Library System and the Rochester Public Library; Brie Harrison, Manager of Library Finance; Melanie Lewis, Deputy Director of Community Services; Jennifer Smathers, Associate Director for Central Library; Ana Suro, Manager of Library Administration

RocCityLibrary.org



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