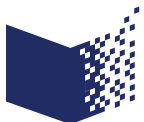




ANNUAL REPORT

Learn, Enjoy, Connect with your Community



**Pierce County
Library System**

Information & Imagination



ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2023

"I want to say how much I appreciate how libraries are really meeting community needs. Bravo for being willing to change with the times and to be a true community resource."
– Bonnie
Pierce County Library cardholder

In 2023, the Pierce County Library System directed its resources toward the development and delivery of high-quality information and services to all of Pierce County, focused on removing barriers to access, and worked toward a vision of culture, inclusion, and belonging.

The Library System made continued progress to open an interim Lakewood Pierce County Library and secured funding for a new Sumner Pierce County Library. The Library System adjusted hours of operation, eliminated fines, and improved public technology at all libraries to better meet community needs.

The Library System offered more in-person, in-building activities, marking the full return of services to the public since the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the Library System extended services beyond buildings and delivered valuable resources in communities.

FROM STORY TIME TO PRESCHOOL

Heather owned a senior care business for 10 years. Then, when her first grandson, Carter, was born, Heather pivoted from business owner to nanny.

While the world slowly reopened from the COVID-19 shutdown, Carter's family was cautious and continued to stay home.

"Carter was very quiet. He was doing fine, but he just didn't get socialization; he didn't get to be around other kids," Heather said.

Carter's first experiences—from his first trip to the grocery store to his first ride in an elevator—started to open up his world. When he was a year old, Heather took him to his first Toddler Story Time at the South Hill Pierce County Library, where he found friends and his first words.

"This has been the very best," Heather said. "Story time has just opened him up and he's so much more engaging, and getting ready for preschool."

Now, Carter and his grandmother spend additional time at the library following story time each week, for the toddler to use his imagination in the children's area, play with his story time friends, and spend time looking at and reading many books. The library has become a special place for Carter and his family.

"Libraries are a safe place he can come to anytime he would ever need to," Heather said. "He can learn and keep growing. It doesn't have to be just what's in his small world."



Carter, left, stands with his grandmother at the South Hill Pierce County Library.

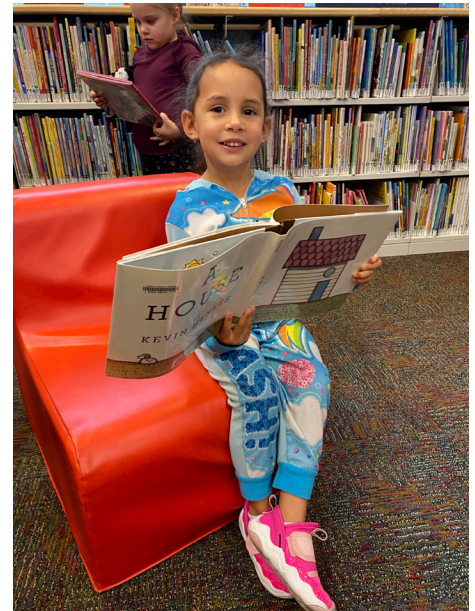




LEARNING

The Library supports growth and curiosity, so children enter kindergarten ready to learn and people of all ages can navigate the real world and meet their goals.

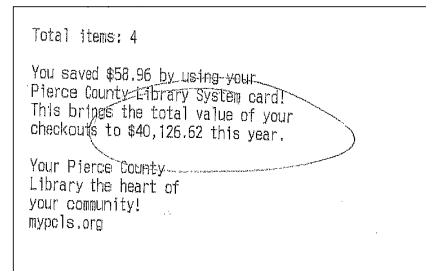
- Partnered with A Step Ahead, Childhaven, First Five Years and Beyond, Green Trike and Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, and expanded early learning through play groups and language offerings.
- Facilitated connection between the Pierce County Early Childhood Network and the Puyallup Tribe Language Center, and included Lushootseed in Math & Me early learning kits.



ENJOYMENT

The Pierce County Library helps people enjoy their free time, so they discover outlets to offset the pressures of daily life, relax and live balanced lives.

- Surpassed 2 million digital book checkouts—another record!—for a second consecutive year. The Pierce County Library Foundation helped fund the digital audiobooks and e-books.
- Added six new e-sources, including Comics Plus, providing access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels and manga for all ages; and LOTE4Kids, language learning for children.



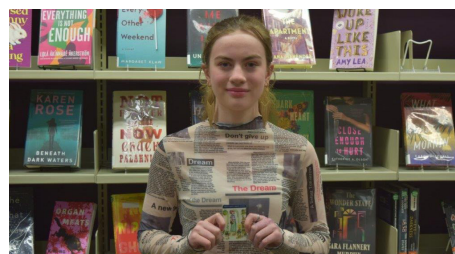
Rune, a frequent Buckley Pierce County Library visitor, saved more than \$40,000 in 2023 by using her library card.

Cardholders saved \$387,017,971.05 checking out books and materials from their Pierce County Library in 2023



The Pierce County Library connects and strengthens communities, so people are engaged in thriving communities and are optimistic about their future.

- Established framework for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to be a strategic part of library services and resources.
- Nearly 600 children and teenagers participated in the Library's Card Design Contest. The winning designs, decided on by more than 3,000 online votes, became Pierce County Library cards.





CORE SERVICES

The Library System continually strengthens its core services to operate effectively and carefully advance taxpayers' investment. Some of its 2023 achievements include the following.



Materials

Thanks to funding from the Pierce County Library Foundation, donated \$10,000 of books to children in asset limited households to keep.



Staff

Made progress on the Public Services Division's three-year development plan to improve staff service clarity and build capacity.



Spaces

Investments in capital infrastructure:

- New Sumner Library.
 - Thanks to voters in the City of Sumner, residents will enjoy a new, modern, centrally located, community-focused library.
 - The vote created a Library Capital Facility Area, which is an independent taxing district, separate from the City, the Library System and Pierce County, for the sole purpose of funding a new Sumner Library. The Pierce County Library Foundation is raising \$3 million to support the new library and the State of Washington provided a \$2 million grant as part of the Department of Commerce's Library Capital Improvement Program.
- New library to include:
 - Books and movies to checkout.
 - Computers and technology.
 - Meeting spaces and study areas.
 - Other services based upon the community's needs.
 - Larger indoor spaces.
 - Space for collaboration with nonprofit organizations to provide much-needed services for children and families not easily available or accessible in east Pierce County.
- Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries:
 - Offered pop-up libraries and services with community partners throughout Lakewood.
 - Made continued progress to break ground on an interim Lakewood Library, a full service, multi-generational library to serve the Lakewood community.
 - The Board of Trustees is making plans for long-term library service in Lakewood.
- Bonney Lake Pierce County Library improvements: Refreshed the building's interior with paint, new furniture, updated restrooms, meeting rooms and ceiling fans. Created a community art wall.
- Graham Pierce County Library improvements: Repaved/restriped parking lot and added additional spaces; and refreshed meeting and study rooms, along with staff area.
- Buckley Pierce County Library soil cleanup: Cleaned up nearly all soil outside of the Buckley Library, as an environmental protective step from underground gasoline storage tanks that were on the property decades ago.



Technology

- Replaced public laptops at all locations for improved online experiences.
- Doubled internet and Wi-Fi speed at all locations at nearly half the cost as the previous vendor contract.
- Installed modern technology in all of the Library's public meeting rooms to allow for improved connectivity to in-room devices and displays.



Partnerships

- Served alongside many community partner organizations, including MultiCare (Women, Infants and Children clinics), Tacomaprobono (Legal Help Pop-Ups) and Blue Zones Project (Parkland-Spanaway location). Also, increased outreach to schools.
- Friends of the Library groups restarted book sales with donated books in support of the Library.



Classes and Events

- Provided a weekly bilingual Marshallese-English play group at the Fife Pierce County Library in partnership with Childhaven and Kaleidoscope.
- Prioritized STEAM learning through a variety of programs, services and initiatives with support from the Foundation.



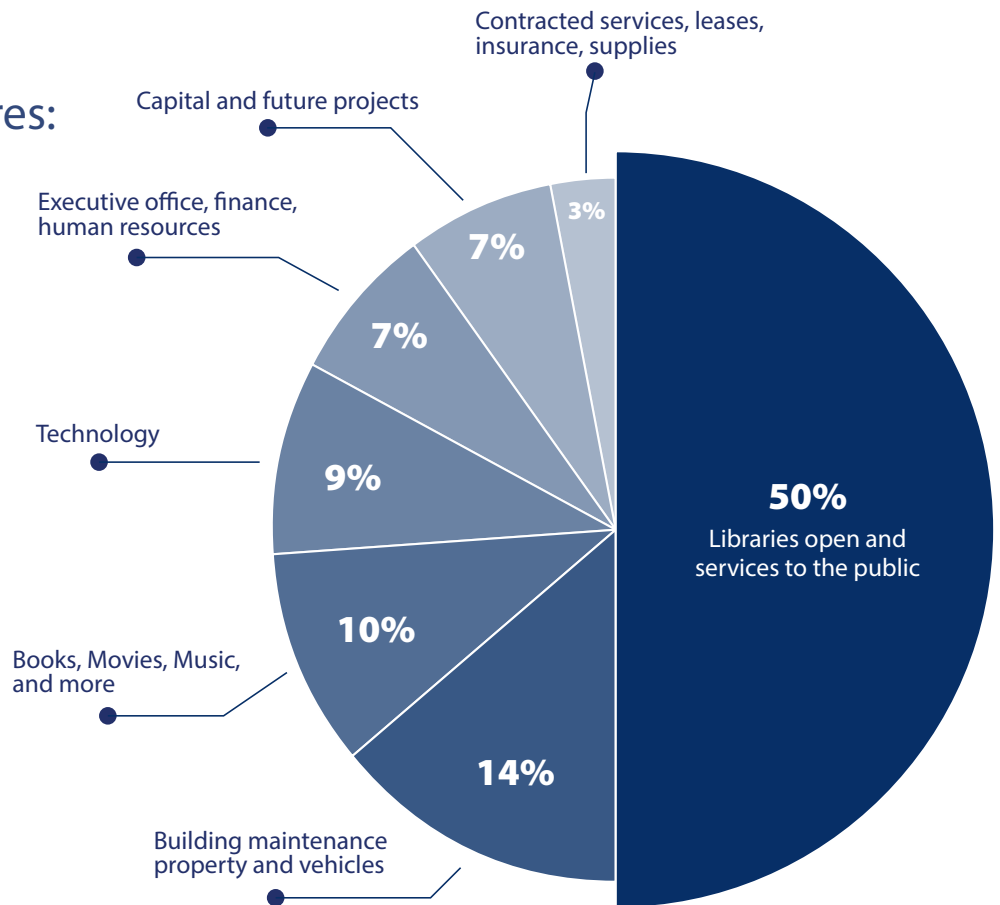
Business Processes

- Eliminated fines on overdue books and materials, and waived fines to decrease barriers and allow all people to use and enjoy library services.
- Redeveloped public website, with new address—mypcls.org, and improved visitors' experiences and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for equitable access.
- Established Policy Framework. Developed and started implementing a new process to update and review the Library System's Board of Trustees' policies, and used an EDI lens to ensure policies assert equitable access for all people in the communities the Library serves.

YOUR INVESTMENT IN THE PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY

Total 2023 revenues:
\$42,849,288.10

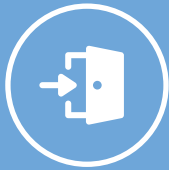
Total 2023 expenditures:
\$42,842,692.52



OVERVIEW OF THE PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

- Established in 1946.
- Includes unincorporated Pierce County and 15 annexed cities and towns.
- Serves approximately 650,000 people through 19 libraries and online services.
- Operates as an independent taxing district and reports to a volunteer Board of Trustees.

FAST FACTS 2023



2,276,655

Visits



1,270,740

To 19 libraries



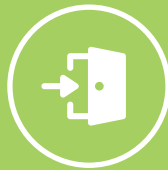
996,361

To website



9,554

To curbside



4,966,541

Books/materials checked out

2,621,339

From shelves

2,345,202

From online e-books
& audiobooks



276,362

Uses of online
databases/e-sources



55,932

Event attendance online
and outdoors



298,340

Cardholders
It is the card to have!

2023 CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to taxpayer funding, thank you to the Pierce County Library Foundation and Friends of the library groups.



Friends of the library

The 17 friends of the library groups contributed \$17,000 in support of library services.



Pierce County Library Foundation

The Pierce County Library Foundation's fifth annual Trivia BEE yielded its highest attendance in event history and raised \$45,000 to support the Library's On the Road program, to help reduce barriers to access by delivering materials directly to communities, visiting schools, community centers, food banks and senior centers. Funds raised also support 24/7 access to the Library's digital collections, which include e-books, online tools for students and job seekers, as well as courses and certifications for life-long learners.





2023 DONORS

The Pierce County Library Foundation thanks the following individual and corporate donors for their generous support of \$727,332 through December 31, 2023. For information on how you can make a gift in support of your Pierce County Library, please contact the Foundation office at 253-548-3541 or mypcls.org/Foundation.

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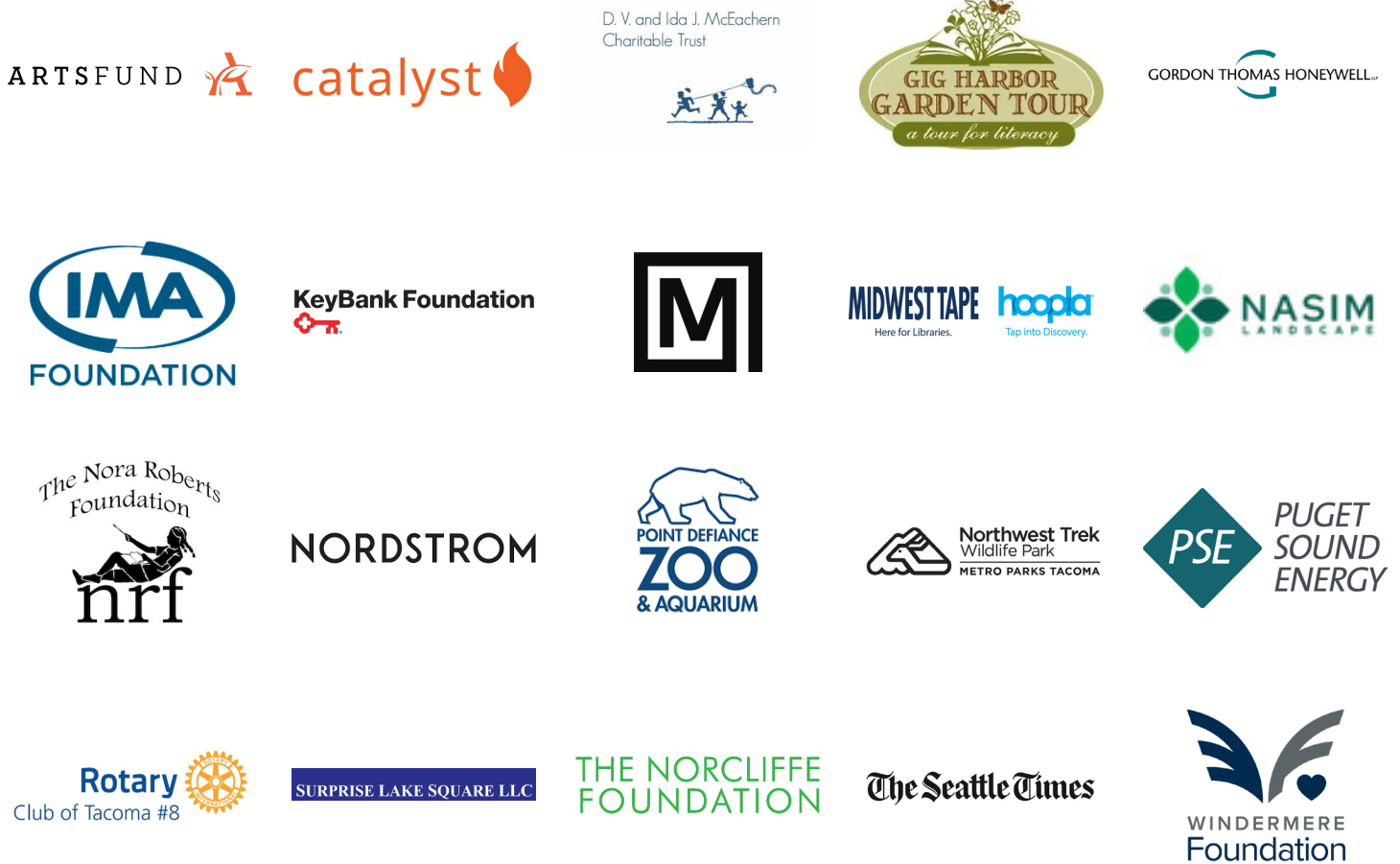
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In Memory of Judy Wagner

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In Memory of Library staff
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