

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



BUTLER AREA
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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A Note from the Director's Desk

Once again, I find myself reminiscing about the year past. The many faces of our patrons, the stories, some sad and some happy all come to mind. The laughter and voices overheard during special events were rejuvenating after another challenging twelve months. One common thread was woven through all of my thoughts. Another successful year was sewn together by teamwork and partnerships.

The staff worked with the Blind Association of Butler and Armstrong Counties, Butler Succeed, and the Anti-Poverty Coalition to fight hunger. The Youth Service staff partnered with Broad Street and Emily Britain Elementary Schools to support the students and staff. Our partnerships with PBS and Slippery Rock University also continued to flourish. The library team faithfully planned and implemented both virtual and in person programs and services to meet the needs of our patrons.

Next year, the theme for National Library Week will be “Connect with Your Library. I look forward to reconnecting with long time patrons and establishing new connections with our neighbors, community organizations, local businesses. I hope you will connect as well.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Lori Hinderliter
Executive Director

Organizational Information

MISSION

The Butler Area Public Library will continue to provide programs, services and a balanced collection which will serve and enhance the informational, educational and cultural needs of the greater Butler community, thereby creating possibilities for individual and community growth and development.

VISION

To serve as a versatile community hub of evolving information access, creativity and collaboration. Through innovative programming, relevant collections and superior services, our goal is to empower an informed, educated and connected community.

GOALS

- Support Intellectual Freedom
- Promote Technology and Information Access
- Promote Education and Lifelong Learning
- Foster Community Culture and History
- Cultivate Innovation and Excellence
- Embrace Diversity

Funding

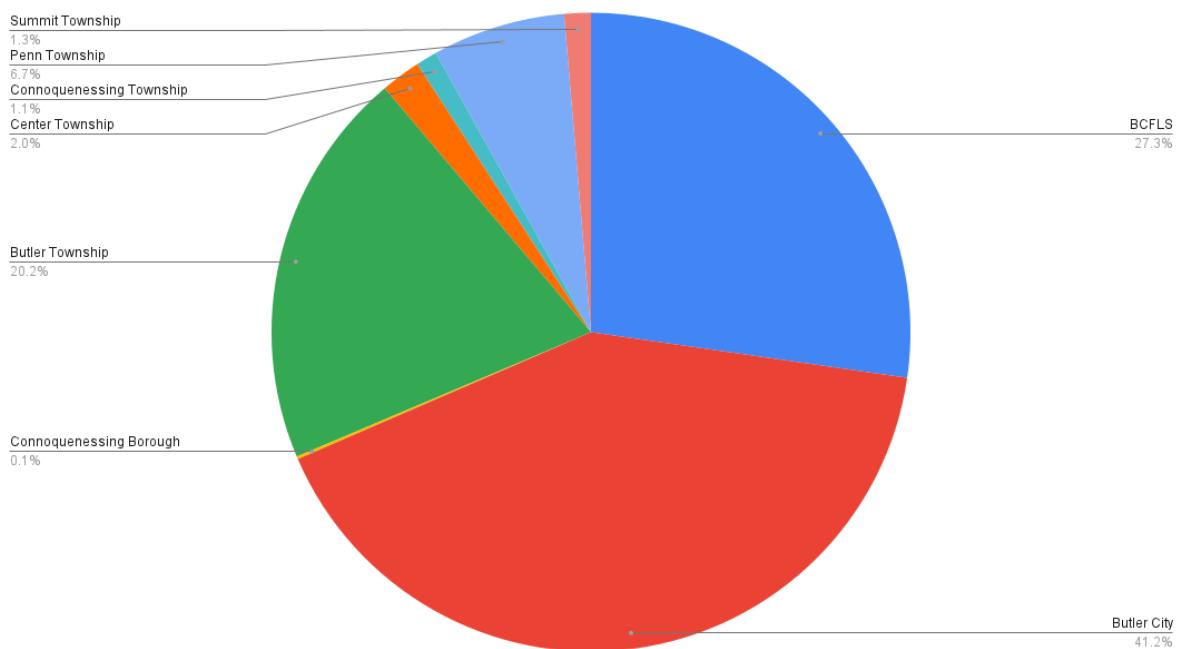
STATE AID

The state aid for 2021 was \$189,093.12.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

The city of Butler, five surrounding townships, one borough, and BCFLS supported the Butler Area Public Library by donating \$74,276.38.

Municipal Funding for Public Library = \$74,276.38



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MY LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

The library raised \$26,700 through our 2021 "My Library" campaign.

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Other gifts and memorials given to the library amounted to \$62,972.09.

FUNDRAISERS

2021 fundraisers raised \$1,516.37.

GRANTS

The library also received \$78,696.26 in grants.

Programming

ADULTS

2021 Continued to be a challenging year for library programs, but with 2020 behind us, we were well prepared to provide exciting and interesting adult programming in a variety of ways. We continued to provide some old favorites, added some new reading challenges, held a variety of events, and added in some community partnership for good measure.

What can you do when you're stuck at home, besides read? Make crafts! Our popular adult crafting program was provided through in-person and grab-n-go craft kits, reaching 635 patrons over the year. What about games? We held online and in-person gaming events for 39 patrons as well. We visited our friends at the Lowrie Place, in-person throughout the year, spending time with over 50 residents. We also reached out to the Intermediate League for an evening of programming. We tried a variety of online reading challenges in 2021: Adult Winter Reading, Black History, IDEAL Book Club, and Adult Summer Reading, with a total of 85 participants with over 400 books read...Well done Butler! To top off the year, we took a survey of 29 patrons to see what kind of adult programs they would like to see in 2022.

But, we missed seeing our patrons so we decided to hold a few in-person events. We observed the 20th anniversary of 9/11, with a self-guided exhibit of posters and film, in partnership with the 9/11 Memorial and Museum with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. As a whole, the library held an outdoor event, Flannel Forest Fest in December, with music, lumberjack games, beard contests, food, crafts, and birds! This lumberjack themed event was a fun way to celebrate winter for all ages and we invited community organizations to decorate trees for our courtyard as well.

In addition to library sponsored programs we also participated in Bundle-Up Butler hosted by the Center for Community Resources. At the event we handed out goody bags with gloves provided by the Friends of the Library, snow scrapers, and treats to over 150 people. We also participated in the Butler SUCCEED Stick a Fork in Hunger Project, where we held a food drive with fine forgiveness in October. We collected over 583 non-perishable items of food, weighing in at over 400lbs, and forgave \$510 in patron fines! In December we created a Giving Tree to collect donations of office supplies to benefit other nonprofit organizations. Our generous patrons donated over 47 bulk items of office supplies. We created a Job Board for local businesses to post their hiring needs, and we created a Community Spotlight board to highlight local nonprofit organizations each month, throughout the year.

2021 brought great community partnerships to the library and we look forward to what new and exciting things 2022 will bring. We hope you stick around to find out.

Dianne McCauley, Adult Program Coordinator

GENEALOGY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

It is never a quiet or dull day in the Genealogy Department, even during year two of a pandemic. This year, we responded to 1,048 research questions from library visitors and long-distance patrons in 35 states and the United Kingdom. We're always amazed by the variety of questions - they come from beginners and professional genealogists, law firms and educators, and people of all ages. We helped people start family trees, tackle 200-year old mysteries, research the history of their house, and learn more about their community.

Our library users completed 5,564 searches using Heritage Quest and a whopping 35,179 searches through Ancestry Library Edition. We were able to offer remote access to Ancestry Library Edition all year, which was an amazing asset for all our researchers, whether they were dipping their toes into research for the first time or a seasoned vet used to weekend-long research binges.

We added 4 new on-demand videos to our “Family History Friday” genealogy video series. The series is available on both Facebook and Youtube. The new videos had a combined 997 views/impressions on the two social sites.

We also taught 7 live classes this year virtually through Zoom for the library, and as outreach with the Boy Scouts, the Institute for Learning in Retirement, and the Butler County Genealogical Society. Topics included genealogy basics for kids, immigration research, DNA, and land records. Our live programs were attended by 104 people. We even had participants join us from Canada and England!

In the fall, we finished a several years-long indexing project about Butler County servicemen. Our amazing volunteers compiled notes on

thousands of news articles from the Butler Eagle, including drafts, training, letters home, promotions, injuries, and deaths. The resulting indexes cover World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. These wars are all still difficult to research for genealogists, so this index has already proven to be a huge help.

In October, I was thrilled to present at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference Fall Meeting in Gettysburg, PA. I spoke on a panel session with 3 other archivists from Michigan and Maryland, called “Reuniting Collections Physically: Reunited and it Feels So Good?” addressing the challenges of reuniting previously-split collections. My segment focused on the library’s collection of thousands Standard Steel Car Company employee cards, which were salvaged in the 1980s and dispersed between a variety of historic organizations, churches, and private collectors, before the majority were finally re-combined into a single collection at the library in 2020.

The Genealogy Department earned a \$1,000 PA Forward virtual programming grant from the Pennsylvania Library Association in recognition of our Family History Friday video series. As part of that award, our video series is highlighted on the PA Niche Academy portal for library professionals, offering librarians across the state access to the videos for personal professional development training or to share with their patrons.

Margaret Hewitt, Special Collections Librarian

CHILDREN'S

2021 saw the Youth Services Department continue to offer primarily virtual programs, passive programs, and grab and go activities. A total of 189 youth services programs were offered, with 11,503 children and 532 adults participating. 2 in person programs, the summer reading wrap up party and the annual family holiday program, were held.

4 outreach activities were held, including partnering with Broad Street and Emily Britain schools, as well as Positive Steps Therapy.

40 permanent youth services resources videos were added to the YouTube channel.

Approximately 23,000 physical juvenile material items circulated in 2021. There was additional circulation of digital items as well.

The youth services department was once again invited to participate in the Public Library Association Inclusive Internship Initiative, and had a high school student as an intern over the summer months.

The youth services department was awarded the 2021 Tales and Tails and Health from the Pennsylvania Library Association.

The youth services librarian was also recognized as a 2021 PBS Early Learning Champion, the first librarian to ever receive that honor.

- Tiffany Harkleroad, Youth Services Librarian

YA - TWEENS AND TEENS

For most of 2021 in the YA Zone, we offered virtual live programming to tweens and teens. We also continued to give out grab-n-go kits every other week. Thanks to a generous grant from PNC, we were able to expand on the quantity of these kits. Even so, they always fly out the door, so our stocks were usually empty within a few days. This virtual trend continued into Summer Challenge 2021 and early Fall. We began offering a few in person programs in the last months of the year. We also had the chance to collaborate and partner with a couple of local organizations in 2021. The YA Zone also welcomed new books and expanded its collection of manga.

Virtual programming attendance increased from 2020. In 2020, 35 virtual programs were offered, and they were attended by 40 young adults. In 2021, 33 virtual programs were offered, and they were attended by 81 young adults. I would estimate that the consistency of programming contributed to higher attendance, and more frequent social media advertising has also played a huge role. Many of these programs were attended by young adults who had gone to previous programs as well, so we seem to be on the right track. As we begin to shift into more in-person programming in 2022, I hope to keep attendance on this upward trend.

Grab-n-go kits also significantly increased from 2020. In 2020, 505 kits were distributed. In 2021, the number of kits was 1,664. As stated before, this is made possible by a grant given by PNC, which was also used to purchase Nintendo Switches, sewing machines, and cooking supplies for general and program use. With the budget for 2022, these numbers will likely decrease, but through careful planning and smart spending, I am hopeful we can offer above 1,000 kits. Grab-n-gos are by far the most popular program offered by YA, so I believe a continued investment in them would have positive results.

Summer Challenge programming was held exclusively online through pre-recorded videos, which are permanent installments on our YouTube channel and Facebook page. These videos received 1216 views collectively across those platforms. We also had 29 young adults sign up for the Summer Challenge through Beanstack. I was very thankful to partner with Jennings Environmental Education Center for one of our programs centered around owls. Our grab-n-go kit for the week was an owl pellet dissection kit, and Brandi from Jennings taught us all about owls and why they make the pellets! My hope is to host in-person programs for Summer Challenge 2022 and invite speakers from Jennings and other local organizations to attend.

We also hosted three YA contests, which received entries from 20 young adults. One of these was a pumpkin carving contest, and we had the opportunity for another collaboration. Brenckle's Farms and Greenhouses offered us very generous pricing for 30 large pumpkins and even threw in another 10 for free! I was very grateful that we were able to supply so many pumpkins to our young adult patrons. I could see this possibly becoming a yearly tradition in the YA Zone, especially with such kind local businesses.

We offered eight in-person programs in 2021, and they were attended by 27 young adults. About half of these were meetings for a teen Anime Club that was formed in October. This club seems to have gained some traction already, and I anticipate that it will be popular in 2022.

Around 150 new books were added to the YA collection in 2021. As with last year, books were considered for quality as well as diversity and inclusivity before purchase. The manga collection was also refreshed. We added about 30 titles, and manga books now have their own shelf space to make for easier browsing.

Lastly, we added eight videos to our two existing YA series: "What's New

with YA?" and "Mug Mondays". The former is a series that details new books added to the YA collection, and the latter is a series that teaches young adults simple recipes they can make using a microwave. These videos received 1462 views in total. Since I am shifting my focus towards building programming numbers this year, I am unsure if I will continue these series. Instead, I would like to host in-person cooking programs using the new equipment purchased with the PNC grant.

All in all, I am pleased with our turnout for 2021 in the YA department. My goals for 2022 are to continue to increase programming numbers, keep steady grab-n-go numbers, continue to develop the collection, and form more partnerships within the community.

- Tristyn Parker, Library Assistant