

## OCPL Director's Report

January 2024

**1. Programs and Services:** Programs were well attended in November and December. Children's programming picked up slightly with Letters to Santa and a couple of holiday-themed programs, as well as Sit, Stay Read (reading to therapy dogs). The branches offered LEGO programs, BINGO, and a Dino(saur) Soiree. We resumed Story Times at the Walhalla and Seneca locations, and will start back with the Westminster Branch in January 2024. We are now offering blood pressure self-screening at the Walhalla Library thanks to the American Red Cross, which donated two blood pressure monitors to the library. This may be expanded to the other branches as it becomes more well-publicized.

**2. Usage Statistics and Narratives:** Usage statistics for November and December as well as individual branch/department narratives are attached.

**3. Finance and Budget:** OCPL budget figures for FY24 to date are attached.

**4. Personnel and Training:** Youth Services Librarian Kasey Swords started with the library in November, as did new Bookmobile Manager Angie Clark. The director spent the December Bookmobile routes training Angie. The Branch Services position will be converted to an Adult Services position and we are still taking applications for that position.

**5. Building and Grounds:** There was some positive movement with the ADA-compliant ramp in Seneca. An ordinance to use ARPA money will be presented to County Council in January 2024. We're still having an issue with drainage in the parking lot at the Westminster Branch, and an issue with the HVAC in Seneca. Johnson Controls visited the libraries in November to make sure the "schedules" in the programmable thermostats were working, but that has resulted in some pretty cold mornings since the temps have dropped.

**6. Technology:** We are still hoping there is a good chance that the library could be isolated on its own server and that would alleviate many of the security concerns with USB drives, downloading documents to print, and so on. We're also exploring lending of Mi-Fi hotspots again through the State Library. We hope this will take place by spring 2024.

**7. Friends of the Library:** Used book sales have continued each Thursday from 10:00 to 3:30 p.m. The Friends had excellent sales figures in November and December.

### November

Basement Sales	\$1,764
Books on the Alley	1,660
Lobby	294
2nd Party	20

Online	37
Cafe Sales	52
Seneca	30

Total \$3,859

December

Books on the Alley	\$2,820
Basement Sales	2,062
Lobby	306
2nd Party	317
Online	302
Cafe Sales	49
Seneca	63

Total \$5,919

**8. Oconee County:** Employees have started working on the study from Evergreen Solutions for a Wage, Compensation, and Time Use. We anticipate that to be completed by March 2024. Each employee (full time or PT employed by the county) will complete an extensive questionnaire about his or her duties and their job functions. There will also be some focus groups that will be convened so that some (around 20%) employees will have that opportunity to contribute as well.

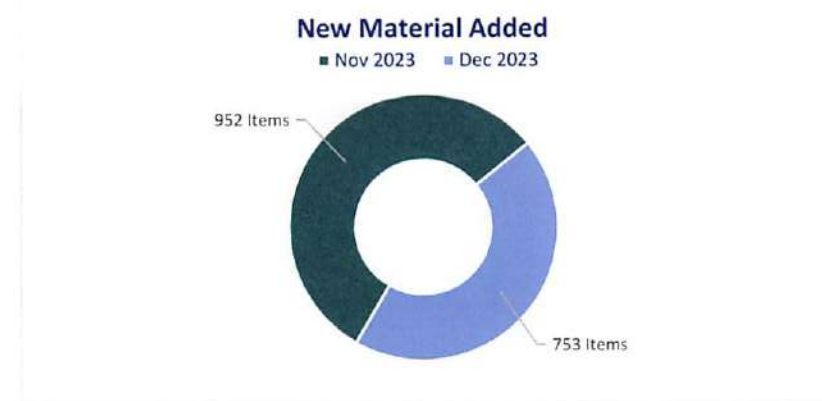
**9. State Library:** We are working with Leesa Aiken, the library agency head, on crafting the legislative agenda for public libraries in FY25 as well as BEAD funding for possible infrastructure and technology upgrades. The library will send staff to participate in a Library Legislative Day on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. Other counties will also have Library Legislative Days. Rather than one day for all counties, over a two month period most counties will have the opportunity to visit their legislative delegation in Columbia.

**10. Community Involvement:** See Kerry Leeper Brock's report for good news about a grant from the All-In Foundation. The Director has also spoken at Rotary Clubs in Seneca. We also participated along with other county agencies in Salvation Army bell-ringing at the Ingles in West Union in December.

**11. Other:** Despite the major changes in personnel over the last two months, morale has remained high, staff have been very cooperative and receptive to new ideas. I particularly appreciate the support of

Leah Kelley and Bethany Culp, who have helped with several interviews as well as helping to edit and update job descriptions. I also wish to thank Quientell Walker for his work in the genealogy content of the library. He has begun digitizing the Ann Rogers index.

	Nov 2022	Nov 2023	Change	Dec 2022	Dec 2023	Change
Visits to Library	10,609	10,874	2.5%	10,227	9,678	-5.4%
Material Circulation - Adult	11,889	11,416	-4.0%	11,031	10,615	-3.8%
Material Circulation - Youth	810	733	-9.5%	772	662	-14.2%
Material Circulation - Juvenile	8,749	8,033	-8.2%	7,651	6,543	-14.5%
Total Material Circulation	21,448	20,182	-5.9%	19,454	17,820	-8.4%
Internet Uses	701	772	10.1%	644	631	-2.0%
Internet Hours of Use	346	391	13.0%	305	309	1.3%
New Cards Issued	137	111	-19.0%	123	119	-3.3%
Programs - Adult	10	10	0.0%	7	9	28.6%
Programs Attendance - Adult	61	76	24.6%	89	71	-20.2%
Programs - Youth 12-18	1	1	0.0%	1	0	-100.0%
Programs Att - Youth 12-18	3	0	-100.0%	15	0	-100.0%
Programs - Juvenile 6-11	9	5	-44.4%	8	13	62.5%
Programs Att - Juv 6-11	106	39	-63.2%	166	142	-14.5%
Programs - Children 0-5	26	10	-61.5%	23	8	-65.2%
Programs - Att - Children 0-5	512	138	-73.0%	456	133	-70.8%
Outreach Activities	18	16	-11.1%	15	11	-26.7%
Outreach Act. Attendance	386	227	-41.2%	244	194	-20.5%
Public Training Sessions	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Participants	4	4	0.0%	4	4	0.0%
Public Training Hours	4	57	1325.0%	4	87	2075.0%
Staff Training Sessions	1	3	200.0%	3	4	33.3%
Staff Training Participants	34	25	-27.2%	29	4	-86.2%
Staff Training Hours	3	77	2466.7%	3	42	1283.3%
Number of New Volunteers	0	0		1	0	-100.0%
Number of Vol Hours	4	5	25.0%	2	2	0.0%
Meeting Room Use	52	72	38.5%	58	43	-25.9%
Meeting Room Attendance	399	474	18.8%	455	361	-20.7%
Number of Web Site Hits	9,505	9,633	1.3%	9,400	9,406	0.1%
Wi-Fi Users	327	305	-6.7%	338	321	-5.0%
Wi-Fi Sessions	2,175	1,978	-9.1%	2,549	2,645	3.8%
CloudLibrary Downloads	3,062	3,426	11.9%	3,223	3,529	9.5%
Flipster Users	76	197	159.2%	68	91	33.8%
Kanopy Users	1,701	1,908	12.2%	1,165	1,632	40.1%
Ancestry.com Hits	211	118	-44.1%	107	54	-49.5%
Interlibrary Loans	52	50	-3.8%	32	34	6.3%
New Material Added	937	952	1.6%	687	753	9.6%



## OCPL Budget 2023-2024 1-4-2024

Account Number	Description	Budgeted	Spent	Percent	Balance
<b>Local Budget</b>					
010-206-30024-00000	Equip. Maintenance	2,703	2,703	100%	0
010-206-30025-00000	Professional -Staffmark	140,000	61,860	44%	78,140
010-206-30041-00000	Telecommunications	1,000		0%	1,000
010-206-30056-00000	Data Processing	29,477	29,185	99%	292
010-206-30059-00000	Copier Click Charges - Xerox	8,500	4,221	50%	4,279
010-206-30080-00000	Dues	750	441	59%	309
010-206-30084-00000	School, Training, Sem.	3,000	1,390	46%	1,610
010-206-30090-00000	Honorarium	900	900	100%	0
010-206-33022-00207	Bldg Maint - Walhalla	7,829	5,680	73%	2,149
010-206-33022-00208	Bldg Maint - Seneca	4,753	3,187	67%	1,566
010-206-33022-00209	Bldg Maint - Westminster	3,309	2,872	87%	437
010-206-33022-00210	Bldg. Maint - Salem	2,020	1,464	72%	556
010-206-34043-00207	Electricity - Walhalla	18,000	7,877	44%	10,123
010-206-34043-00208	Electricity - Seneca	12,000	6,275	52%	5,725
010-206-34043-00209	Electricity - Westminster	12,000	3,314	28%	8,686
010-206-34043-00210	Electricity - Salem	5,000	5,000	100%	0
010-206-34044-00207	Water - Walhalla	1,700	614	36%	1,086
010-206-34044-00208	Water - Seneca	2,000	1,230	61%	770
010-206-34044-00209	Water - Westminster	1,200	359	30%	841
010-206-40031-00000	Sm Capital Equip (Loc)	2,800	2,351	84%	449
010-206-40032-00000	Operational	6,000	5,897	98%	103
010-206-40032-00000-A	Youth Services	2,000	192	10%	1,808
010-206-40033-00000	Postage	500	26	5%	474
010-206-40034-00000	Food	500	271	54%	229
010-206-40101-00000	Books (Local)	85,000	39,293	46%	45,707
010-206-40102-00000	Periodicals (Local)	22,200	17,712	80%	4,488
010-206-40103-00000	AV (Local)	11,300	4,999	44%	6,301
010-206-80206-00000	Automobile Maint - Library	1,500	905	60%	595
010-206-81206-00000	Gasoline - Library	4,000	1,194	30%	2,806
010-206-82206-00000	Diesel - Library	3,000	1,206	40%	1,794
<b>TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS</b>		<b>394,941</b>	<b>212,619</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>182,322</b>
013-206-60010-00000	Gift's	53,919			53,919
013-080-00805-11001	Nettles Trust	67,760		0%	67,760
<b>TOTAL MISC. FUNDS</b>					<b>121,679</b>
<b>State Aid Budget</b>					
240-206-30056-00255	Data Processing (State)	\$13,558.61	9,624.40	71%	3,934.21
240-206-30080-00255	Dues (State)	\$500.00	0.00	0%	500.00
240-206-30084-00255	Schools, Training (State)	\$2,000.00	0.00	0%	2,000.00
240-206-40031-00255	Sm Capital (State)	7,065.42	2,106.69	30%	4,958.73
240-206-40032-00255	Operational (State)	\$15,000.00	4,880.20	33%	10,119.80
240-206-40045-00255	IT Equipment	\$8,500.00	4,548.92	54%	3,951.08
240-206-40111-00255	Books (State)	\$81,500.00	49,764.56	27609%	31,735.44
240-206-40112-00255	Periodicals (State)	\$32,356.00	27,608.92	85%	4,747.08
240-206-40113-00255	AV (State)	\$16,600.00	7,254.29	44%	9,345.71
<b>Total State Aid Funds</b>		<b>\$177,080.03</b>	<b>105,787.98</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>71,292.05</b>

010-206-30025-00000      Thomas & Hutton Engineering      ADA Ramp - Seneca Library      Enc. \$5,454.80

## **Bookmobile and Outreach Narrative, November/December 2023**

### **Operations**

In November, 27 regularly scheduled stops were completed. Four volunteers worked with me, along with two Walhalla staff members. Blair and Angie participated in the Seneca parade.

In December, 13 regular stops were completed. We did not have routes the last two week in December because of the holidays. No volunteers were needed since Angie, the new bookmobile manager was training with Blair. One Walhalla staff member was used. Blair and Abbi participated in the Salem parade.

### **Outreach**

We participated in Walhalla Elementary literacy night with Maddie Owens as the bookmobile helper and Kasey Swords, our new Youth Services Librarian. We had 21 visitors on the bookmobile and signed up 2 new cards.

### **Statistics**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2023</b>
<b>Stops</b>	27	13
<b>Hours Open</b>	21.75	14.5
<b>Total Attendance</b>	264	158
<b>Outreach Stops</b>	13	8
<b>Outreach Visitors</b>	168	92
<b>New Cards</b>	0	3
<b>Volunteers/Hours</b>	4/21.75	0



## Community Resource Report November-December 2023

### **Programming**

November/December

In addition to the Sleep Better program held on 11/2/23, handouts and books on healthy sleep habits were available in a Community Resource display at the Walhalla branch during the months of November and December.

<b><u>Program name</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Number of participants</u></b>
Sleep Better	11/2/23	Walhalla OCPL	13
Sit Stay Read	11/9/23	Walhalla OCPL	8
Dementia Caregiver Support Group	11/17/23	Seneca OCPL	6
Christmas Program (Cultural Outreach)	12/2/23	Walhalla OCPL	50
Self-defense	12/6/23	Seneca OCPL	8
Chair Yoga	12/8/23	Salem OCPL	2
Dementia Caregiver Support Group	12/15/23	Seneca OCPL	6

### **Assistance to Individuals/Families**

The Community Resource Associate and Community Resource Assistant assisted 9 individuals/families in November and 6 individuals/families in December. (We assisted one family on numerous occasions during this period.)

### **Other Community Resource Activities/Collaborations/Training**

The Community Resource Associate attended/participated in the following in November and December:

- “Stronger Together: Navigating Community Engagement”
- Dabo’s All In Team Foundation Luncheon
- “Hope and Help for the Holidays and Beyond” (grief seminar)
- “Let’s Talk Race: Community Healing through Conversation” webinar
- Cultural Outreach Committee Christmas program planning meetings
- “Self-Care in the Helping Professions” (continuing education webinar)

### **Programming, Operations, Staff Development, etc...**

- ❖ Programming for the months of November and December were successful, despite the busy holiday season.
- ❖ Our Kid Craftin': Turkey Windsocks program brought in seven attendees. Each child created a windsock using fabric and a tin can.
- ❖ Salem Stem Club, our newest monthly program, brought in 3 attendees for both November and December.
- ❖ Page Turners, Salem's monthly Zoom book club, had 3 in attendance during November and 2 in December. For November, we read *The Women of Chateau Lafayette* by Stephanie Dray and in December, *The Christmas Bookshop* by Jenny Colgan.
- ❖ The Salem branch held a Kid Craftin': Rememberall Ornament program on December 18th to celebrate Harry Potter during the holidays. Six were in attendance for the event.
- ❖ Our bimonthly Coffee and Crafts program on December 13th gave each attendee a chance to create a microwavable Snowman heating pad while drinking delicious seasonal coffee. There were six in attendance.
- ❖ In addition to our regular programming, we held a seasonal rock painting event on December 19th for all ages. We had five in attendance.
- ❖ Our take and make craft kits are a continued success. For November, we distributed twelve scarecrow magnet kits. In December, we distributed twelve gingerbread door sign kits. These are perfect for families that are unable to attend our craft programs.
- ❖ During November/December, Kayla completed the webinar and Abigail completed the *Dealing with Difficult Patrons* webinar via WebJunction.


### **Building Maintenance**

#### **Resource Allocation**




- ❖ Our Easy collection was weeded towards the end of December to make room for newer titles.
- ❖ As our Coffee and Crafts program is growing more popular, we've decided to add more focus towards adult programming in the upcoming months. The remainder of our FOTL gift money will go towards creating new program opportunities for adults.




Stats	Nov	Dec
Visits	1561	1477
New Cards	6	5
ILLs	3	3



**Kid Craftin':  
Turkey Windsocks  
Salem Library**



**COFFEE AND  
CRAFTS:  
SNOWMAN  
HEAT BUDDY**



Narrative

**Genealogy Classes:**

In an effort to get out into the community I began, offering a new class series called Genealogy Basics. The first class focused on how to use Ancestry Library Edition. This one class increased to three, with the other two focusing on how to get started with genealogy and what to do when you travel for genealogy research. Currently, I am working on a fourth class that will focus on African-American Genealogy. Based on personal and work experience African-American Genealogy has its own set of roadblocks, for example, trying to find ancestors before 1870 is particularly challenging. My intention with this class is to provide patrons with a brief primer on how to start genealogy research, a timeline of historic events, and possible strategies to break through a roadblock. Moreover, this will present an opportunity to highlight OCPL's collection, and ask for patron assistance to increase our holdings of African-American family histories.

**Newspaper Indexing Projects:**

I have continued daily indexing of The Journal for Marriage License Announcements and Obituaries. Prior to my involvement work had been done to process the physical newspapers in our collection, and to start indexing the current issues of The Journal. In December, I was able to work on converting this spreadsheet into a physical index. I have completed a print draft, and it totals 237 pages.

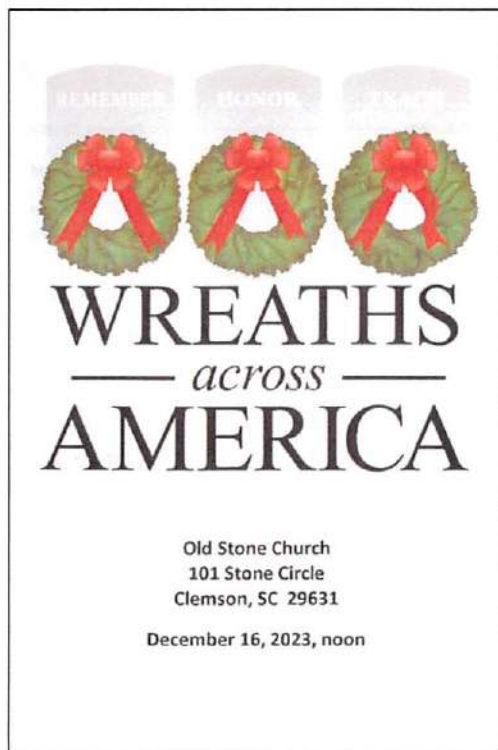
Sara, the SC Room Volunteer, has been indexing the Rogers Newspaper Index. At this time, she has made 32,217 entries, which covers A—Franklin. I have been able to review her work fully, and I am impressed with her progress and data entry. I did notice a few items that had to be revised. Based on this I updated the entry form to decrease some typing errors and to increase more precise data entry.

Lastly, I have arranged to train a new volunteer in January. I am considering having this volunteer index the Rogers Cemetery Index. However, I am considering having her index the other end of the Rogers Newspaper Index. In essence, she would start with Z's and work her way toward meeting Sara in the middle. Should I go this route it would divide the work between two people over just having one person do it all.

**Patron Highlight:**

In November, a patron and her mother asked for research assistance. They were taking part in Wreaths across America, and wanted assistance in researching a veteran buried at Old Stone Church in Clemson. She did a presentation last year, and I provided some assistance with that research. The veteran this year was Captain Robert Rowland Bowen. Over the course of a few days I went over how use Ancestry Library Edition, the Rogers' Newspaper Index, and Clemson University's online yearbook collection. Also, we discussed how to organize the information into an essay.

I was invited as an honored guest to attend the ceremony at Old Stone Church, and I was able to attend. The patron delivered a stirring presentation about Captain Bowen, and I was able to visit his gravesite after the presentation. I did get a chance to tell the patron's mother that getting this opportunity to see such a successful conclusion to the research was wonderful, and that this was only the second time I had seen this happen. In essence, I mainly assist patrons in their research, and rarely do I hear back or see a completed project.



**Rogers Room Statistics:**

I am unable to provide pertinent statistics for the ScanPro machines. This due to the switching the machines, thus producing irrelevant data.

Statistics Recorded	Nov. 2022	Nov. 2023	Dec. 2022	Dec. 2023
Walk-In	6	16	4	5
Phone Call	0	6	2	4
Mail	-	0	-	0
Email/Online	4	2	1	3
Books	2	36	4	6
Microfilm	9	5	1	18
Map	4	0	0	0
SC Room Classes	0	0	0	0
ScanPro 3000 Scan Count	28	0	4	0
ScanPro 3000 Printer Count	15	0	8	0
ScanPro 3500 Scan Count	111	0	29	0
ScanPro 3500 Printer Count	75	0	36	0
Questions Completed	5	31	4	15
Outstanding Questions	3	0	3	0
Volunteer Hours	-	10	-	6

**Facilities:**

- I sprayed all the weeds in the two beds in December. The cold weather has not deterred them.
- We have not had a recent update on procuring money to build a ramp in the front. It is discouraging that we have to apply for grants to have this done rather than getting money from the county directly.
- In December someone from Johnson Controls came by to check on our thermostats. After that they intermittently cut in and out. Facilities Maintenance found faulty wires and tried to fix those. Should it start going out again they will replace the transformer part of the HVAC unit.

**Operations:**

At the beginning of November we hosted another painting class. We are doing this quarterly. For future classes, we are going to limit registration to one person per Eventbrite account because people are registering multiple attendees and not all of them are attending. Our next painting class will be in January.

Bingo remains our most popular program and both November and December events were well attended. I am taking January off due to short staffing.

We continue to weed books systematically in line with industry best practices. The staff is working hard to keep the shelves maintained.

Groups using the meeting room include multiple HOA boards, Mentor Oconee, Oconee Writers Association, America's Boating Club, Baby Read, Ripple of One, the Guardian ad Litem program, and others. The study rooms remain popular.

**Staffing:** We hired a part time person to replace Angie who moved to the bookmobile. One of our full time staff has left as of late December. We hope a new person will start the week of MLK Day. Our shelving volunteer took off November and December but will return in late January. I appreciate myself and the other employees taking on more Saturdays and closing days and desk shifts during periods of illness and short staffing.

Statistics	Nov 2023	Dec 2023
Visits to library	4,384	3,665
New Cards Issued	46	57

Walhalla Library

November - December 2023

Tucker Brown, Circulation Manager

Staffing:

December saw a shake up to the circulation staff of Walhalla. Our circulation assistant Shannon Humphrey has kindly decided to use her years of experience as a teacher to elementary aged children to assist our youth services department with their programming. Having seen the way she can build a rapport with the children who come into the library from the circulation desk, I know that she will be an extremely strong asset to youth services going forward.

As to not leave circulation lacking, the longtime Youth Services Assistant, DJ Wharton, is going to be splitting her time between helping Youth Services and supporting circulation. With DJ's years working in the library system, she is a boon to our day-to-day operations here at Walhalla. She exemplifies the aspects of customer service that we pride ourselves in at the Oconee County Public Library and saves us from the downtime of finding and training a new circulation assistant with her expertise.

Meeting Room:

November – Guardian Ad Litum, BabyRead, Tri-county Home Educators, St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, Oconee Homeschool Group

December – BabyRead, Oconee Writers Association, Foothills Care Center

Study Room:

November – 34 uses

December – 23 uses

Facilities:

In mid-November, the mechanical smell that had previously been reported in the South Carolina Room reappeared. Facilities was called to look at the former boiler room beneath that corner of the library and reapplied the sealant to the problem areas. This seems to have stopped the smell from permeating the South Carolina Room for the time being.

Events:

In the week before the Christmas holidays, Oconee First Steps providing a hot meal for school age children at the Walhalla Library. As the school system had the entire week off, First Steps had asked the library to host an area for their Feed a Child Project where different community groups serve lunch to children. The turnout was great with numbers similar to the summer lunch program despite the shortened duration. A huge thanks goes out to First Steps for setting this up and to their community partners for helping to provide a free meal to the area kids while school was out.

Statistics:

<b>Category</b>	<b>November 2023</b>	<b>December 2023</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	3031	3050
<b>New Cards Issued</b>	44	33
<b>ILL</b>	32	20
<b>Hours Open</b>	179	174



## Westminster Report for November and December 2023

### Community, Staff, and Programming

- Westminster had 17 attendees stomp, chomp, and roar to the library for our Dino Soiree in November.
- In November, the library hosted another Nerf Night, this time it was Parents vs. Kids. There were 20 in attendance.
- In December, the library had an adult craft program. There were 6 who came to paint wooden Christmas signs.
- We had 16 (out of 25 registrants) attend our Christmas Bingo on December 13.
- We had 20 kids come to the library to make a sand art Christmas tree necklace.
- We still have family members of the artist submissions for the bookmark contest held in October coming in to pick up bookmarks.
- Staff were very appreciative of this year's gifts from the county.

### Building Management

- There were several nuisance issues that occurred in November over a two-week period. There was something poured all over one of the side windows that maintenance had to come scrap off (they cleaned all the windows at the same time). A drink was put in the outside book return over a weekend, causing two items to have to be deleted because of the liquid damage. Two days later someone poured chips all over the entrance and put the empty container in the outside book drop.
- A new outdoor light was installed by maintenance on the outside of the library in the handicap parking area. This will give those parking there better visuals and will hopefully help with some of the issues listed above. Around the same time staff noticed the street light at the back entrance was out. It was replaced on Jan 4.
- Facilities maintenance did a wonderful job this fall keeping the leaves blown out of the parking area. It really makes a difference in the curb appeal and safety of the library.

### Resource Allocation

- Kerry requested we send some of the reminisce kits to the Seneca Library for their monthly Dementia Caregiver Support Group to highlight this resource. One of the kits was checked out. The 9 kits have gone out a total of 37 times since they were added in November of 2021.

### Use Statistics

#### BBW Seed Library

Year	Total Packs Taken
2021	2,000
2022	4,212
2023	4,772

Branch Statistics	November	December
Door Count	1634	1328
Meeting Room Use- Library Programs	2/37	3/48
Meeting Room Use- outside groups	16/85	6/34
New Users	15	21

# BETTY B. WATKINS SEED LIBRARY

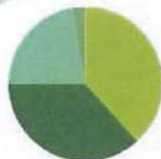


## Two Permanent Locations

The BBW Seed Library is always available during growing seasons at the Oconee History Museum and the Westminster Branch Library.

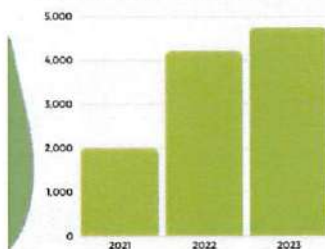
## 4,750 Seed Packs Taken

All ages are welcome to take 10 packs at the permanent locations or 5 packs at pop-up libraries during each growing season.



- Oconee History Museum - 1,828
- Westminster Library - 1,731
- Pop-up Libraries - 1,071
- Outreach Kits - 120

Total Seed Packs Taken Each Year



## Growing Every Year

Not only are more people learning about and taking seeds from the library, we are also receiving more donations! This year we were able to create 3,470 seed packs from seed donations!

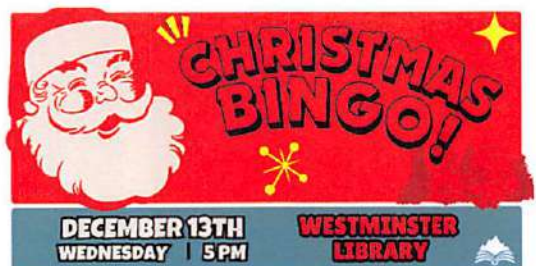
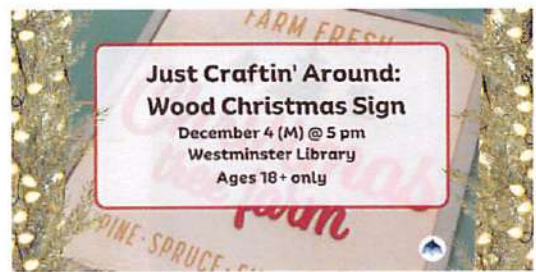
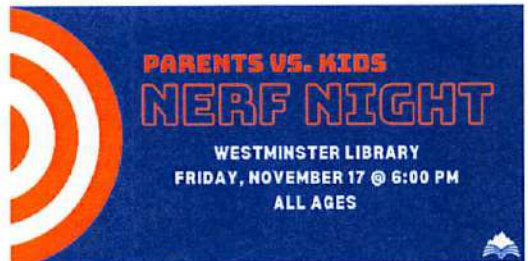
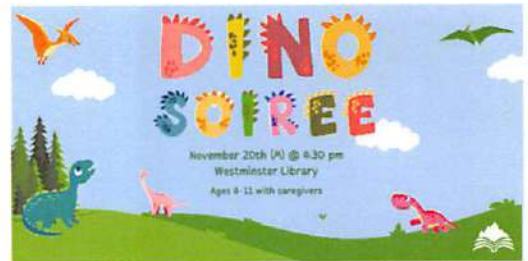
## Variety is the spice of life

This year the seed library offered the most variety of seeds with over 76 types of plants with 229 varieties and cultivars available.



## Ready for a new year!

The Spring season of the BBW Seed Library will launch on March 1, 2024. Come grow with us!



**Youth Services Department**  
**November-December 2023**  
**Kasey Swords, Youth Services Librarian**

### **New Youth Services Staff**

The end of 2023 saw several changes to the Youth Services staff. First, I would like to introduce myself, Kasey Swords, as the new Youth Services Librarian for OCPL. I have lived in the Upstate for almost thirteen years and have worked for Pickens County Library System for eleven. During my time with PCLS, I worked in reference, with House Calls, as a branch manager, and, most recently, as the Youth Services Manager. I'm enjoyed my time getting to know Oconee County better, and I look forward to working with the awesome people here. I live in Liberty with my husband and two children, Scout and Hudson.

There was a second new face added to the Youth Services staff in December. One of our circulation staff, Shannon Humphrey, will be assisting the Youth Services department to help out with programming. Shannon has many years of experience as a Pre-K through first grade teacher and brings valuable knowledge to the department. Recently moving from Ithaca, New York, Shannon lives in Walhalla with her husband and has two adult children who live in New York.

Our longtime Youth Services assistant, DJ Wharton, is still working in the department while also helping out in circulation as well.

### **Programs**

With the changes in staff, the end of 2023 saw fewer programs than normal as Shannon and I were getting used to our new roles. We continued with Storytime at the Walhalla and Seneca branches and have already seen an increase in attendance welcoming the new staff. In December, our "Letters to Santa" mailbox was once again a success, receiving and sending 52 letters.

Looking forward, January will see a return to most of OCPL's normal Youth Services programming with programs such as Explorer's Club, Homeschool Hangout, LEGO Club, Sensory Bins, and more returning. We're excited to continue the programs this community has loved while adding new opportunities of our own!

### **Community Outreach**

We have continued with our arranged monthly story time visits with several locations this year including Golden Corner Preschool, Tamasee DAR school, The Learning Center at Open Door Baptist Church, and Trinity Baptist Preschool, as well as attending the Bookmobile stop at Golden Corner Preschool.

When I first started, I made it a priority to introduce myself to all the Media Specialists with Oconee County School District. Thanks to these introductions, I was able to attend Walhalla Elementary's parent night in December and have several more school visits scheduled in the coming months.

## Program Attendance

Storytime	179
Santa Letters (Dec.)	51
Outreach	161
Sit Stay Read (Nov.)	12