



# Library Legacy Foundation

## 2023 Annual Report







Library Legacy Foundation  
Annual Report of the President, Frank D. Jacobs

As President of the Library Legacy Foundation of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library (the Foundation), I am pleased to submit this message to the Foundation's friends, patrons, volunteers, supporters, users, and employees of the Library system.

The Foundation's role is to support financially the Library system in carrying out its mission. Although the Library is supported by taxes, there are also many necessary projects that do not or cannot be supported by tax revenues.

By the way, the Library system is not only one of the oldest in Ohio, but also, is one of America's most popular and heavily used Library systems in the nation.

In 2023, the Library received a National Award given annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (the Institute) to U.S. libraries and museums. This award is given for outstanding service to their community. The Institute refers to the medal as "the nation's highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community."

We were selected from 30 national finalists and we represent institutions that provide dynamic programming and services that exceed levels of service. Through our community outreach, the Library brings about change that touches the lives of individuals and helps communities thrive. The Library provides passport services, job search and resume help, support for small businesses and nonprofits, access to computers and WiFi, class visits and field trips, free legal clinics and health screenings, tutoring support, home delivery of materials, making spaces, and more.

Notwithstanding the foregoing list of services, please be assured that the services provided by the Library to its users are genuine and proactive. To bring to life what the list really means, consider the following situations: (1) a parent who didn't know where to turn for help goes to the Library's early literacy classes and now feels more confident in sending their child to kindergarten because they can read; (2) an entrepreneur who signed up for small business courses refines an idea with colleagues and turns that into a full-scale business; (3) a new citizen who stopped in for a cooking demonstration makes some friends in a new country.

The Foundation has a dedicated and hard-working Board of Directors, all volunteers, working to make sure that the Library continues its important role in our community. If you have not already done so, please consider becoming a donor to the Foundation or a volunteer in many of our activities. As we like to tell the public: "Nobody doesn't like the Library!." See you at the Library!

# NATIONAL MEDAL WINNER

With support from generous supporters like you, the Toledo Lucas County Public Library was recognized with the 2023 National Medal for Library and Museum Service.

Presented annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the award is the United State's highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. TLCPL is just one of four libraries to be named as a 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winner. With a nomination from Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, highlights of Toledo Lucas County Public Library's award include recognition for:

- **Bringing the library to the community:** TLCPL Ready to Read librarians don't wait for families to come to the library. They head to popular spots to make it easy for families to get reading help for developing readers. More than 1,100 families are trained annually and receive age-appropriate early literacy materials to take home for continued exploration.
- **Bringing the community to the library with partnerships:** TLCPL works to reduce overlap and competition with other organizations in the region and reinforces the idea that the library is the first place to turn to connect with resources or one another. The partnership model connects customers directly with essential community service providers in sustainable, equitable, and transformative ways. There are 20 regularly rotating health and human services partners with 550+ hours spent in the library each month, and the number of partners and service hours continues to grow.
- **Building community with a focus on inclusivity and fiscal responsibility:** TLCPL builds on the partnership model above to identify and implement programming and services for people of all abilities, as well as expert recommendations on providing programs, services, spaces, and outreach as inclusive and accessible as possible to connect more people with one another and the community at large.







# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

TLCPL focuses on five priorities that play to the Library’s strengths, reduce overlap and competition with other organizations in the region, and reinforce the idea that the public library is a place where communities come together, and lives become a little bigger and better each time:

**Help children learn to read (birth-third grade):** According to Ohio’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment of Lucas County, only 1/3 of children are ready for kindergarten, 1/3 of children are approaching readiness, and 1/3 of children need intensive intervention to succeed. In some of the county’s school districts, the number of children requiring intervention exceeds 70 percent.

In response and with generous donor support, TLCPL has expanded the **Ready to Read** team to include support for kindergarten through third-grade reading development. These reading specialists provide free books and guidance to help parents and caregivers learn how important it is to talk, read, sing, write, and play with children from birth. The reading specialists go to parks, the zoo, area YMCAs, laundromats, and on city buses.

The Ready to Read team went out to 335 locations last year to meet families at laundry mats, stores, or events to talk about the importance of reading and to provide guidance and tools for helping children learn to read. In those visits, they reached over 6,000 adults and more than 4,000 children. Since the program began, Ready to Read has worked with 30,000 adults and 25,000 kids.

Your support has also helped get books in the hands of thousands of Lucas County children with **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library**. TLCPL is the official Lucas County partner for this program where all children under the age of five can be registered at any Library location to have one free book per month mailed directly to their homes. One year after assuming responsibility for administering Lucas County’s Imagination Library program, there has been a 20% increase in participation, which means about 4,000 more kids per month are getting books delivered to their homes.

With 30,000 eligible children in Lucas County, the program’s total cost would come to \$750,000 per year if every child was enrolled. The Library Legacy Foundation covers 50 percent of the costs. For every dollar raised for the program by the Foundation, 100 percent goes directly toward the cost of purchasing books for local children. There are no administrative or hidden fees. The other half of the costs are funded by the Ohio Governor’s Imagination







Library, the statewide initiative supported by First Lady of Ohio Fran DeWine, who became a keen advocate for the program after seeing its impact on her grandchildren.

Another way the Library is helping children learn to read is by providing **Storytimes** that incorporate evidence-based pedagogy. Since children are ready to develop different skills at different ages, TLCPL provides different options:

- Babytime, 0-18 months
- Toddler Storytime, 18-36 months
- Preschool Storytime, 3-5 years
- Family Storytime, 2-5 years

There are **41 Storytime programs** offered each week, helping hundreds of families provide their children with a strong early literacy foundation. With books, rhymes, puppets, musical instruments, dancing, singing, and lots of smiles, Storytimes also help children connect reading with fun to build positive connections about learning and the Library.



**Help students succeed (third-twelfth grade):** Emerging data quantifies some of the pandemic's academic and emotional tolls on our youth. To address these losses, TLCPL youth librarians engage children with programs ranging from poetry, hip hop, aromatherapy, dough-making, gaming, short film screenings, themed escape rooms, open mic nights, chess, and more. Students get direct help through the TutorSmart partnership, which provides in-person afterschool tutoring to more than 300 students. A new Youth Ambassadors Program acts as an advisory board, providing input on the Library's youth programming and positioning teens to become leaders in the community.

The Library's youth services staff have intensified outreach to educators by:

- Centralizing educator outreach and resources.
- Providing both an Early Educators and a K-12 Educators monthly newsletter.
- Offering two annual Educator Resource Days.
- Creating a simple process for signing up entire classrooms for student Library cards.
- Coordinating hundreds of class visits and field trips.
- Making it easy for educators to get books in their classrooms for specific projects, topics, or age groups.

**Help adults expand their horizons within our areas of expertise:** In 2023, TLCPL had more than **1.3 million digital** and **2.6 million physical material checkouts**. The Library has created systems and initiatives that make it easier for





customers to expand their horizons with Library materials, including:

- automatic renewals
- expanded self-checkout
- more remote lockers
- a dedicated focus on website and app accessibility and design
- a robust blog and readers advisory strategy to help people connect with materials—including a recommendation service where staff provide book lists based on individuals' interests

**More than 100,000 people attended Library programs in 2023.** With support from committed donors like you, these programs range from the popular Live at the Library and Summer Concert series to the in-demand Better Toledo Series and large community events such as Metroparks takeovers at Main Library.

There are hundreds of programs each month from outside presenters—primarily talented local people—to teach everything from jewelry making to kombucha brewing and sign language basics. Many programs were so effective in 2023 that TLCPL could not even promote them because they filled so quickly.

**Provide technology access and skill development:** TLCPL provides access to nearly a thousand public computers, WiFi access, and 1,000 hotspots (funded through a \$1M Emergency Connectivity Fund award.) The Library led and formalized the “Greater Toledo Digital Equity Coalition” and launched a Digital Equity Gap Analysis with BGSU Center for Regional Development.

The results of this analysis have led the Library, with Library Legacy Foundation support, to find more ways to connect the community with technology access and training including a new computer and technology instruction system called Northstar Digital Literacy which is available via the Library’s website for self-guided use, and an expansion of in-person computer classes.

**Serve as the go-to community connection and hub:** Free health screenings by Mercy Community Nurses, City of Toledo rental assistance sign-up sessions, legal assistance from the Ohio Justice Bus, and daily meals for kids at 14 Library locations from Connecting Kids to Meals are a few ways the Library serves as a trusted, accessible community anchor. In 2023, the Library provided more than 20,000 free meeting room reservations for groups such as the YMCA, Girl Scouts, historical societies, Rotary Club, neighborhood groups, and the MetroParks to conveniently bring people together for community meetings and opportunities.





# DONOR PROFILES

## Mary Weiss

I come from a family of prolific readers, and the Library has always been part of our lives. Sanger was our branch back when it was in a strip mall with Kenwood Pharmacy and Foodtown. My children checked out books and went to storytimes, my husband checked out and read at least five books each week, we did research, and chatted with friends and neighbors. The Library was, and remains, a treasured destination.

Now, I am more likely to visit the King Road Branch and also access the Library's many digital resources, such as audiobooks, from home. My absolute favorite Library destination, though, is Children's Library. My husband Steven and I were thrilled when we could honor our daughter Sarah by funding the installation of the bus from The Last Stop on Market Street. I get such a boost when I visit and see so many children of different backgrounds, ages, and abilities enjoying Sarah's bus.

The Library has given my family so much, there is no way on earth we could ever repay it. I see the Library touch so many people. The partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library brings joy to my heart as these little ones get a book sent to them every month. Through my years as an educator, I know that children need exposure to many books very early in their lives, and this remarkable outreach will make a difference. I brought my classes to Mott each year to get Library cards and love to see the Library working so closely with schools to make sure all students get this access. My husband also met with many adult learners through the years who relied on the Library for a convenient and conducive environment for tutoring.

I also see the library as a welcoming place—one of the few places in our society, actually—where anyone can enjoy a safe environment and lead a fuller life, no matter their circumstances.

I am proud and grateful to support the Library and encourage others to join me to help maintain offerings, grow, expand, and change with our ever-evolving times. We have a gem and it must continue to shine.

## Holly Sydlow

Libraries are a major pillar in the foundation of our democracy because they level the playing field across society by providing free information to all. No matter who you are, you can freely access everything the libraries offer and form your own ideas and opinions. This open access to information which fosters a well-functioning democracy.

The information at libraries has been available to me throughout my life. The library was the first place my mother let me go by myself. From my grandparents, I learned to revere the books at home, school, and the library. My





fifth-grade teacher had a contest where the student who read the most books won a book. That contest triggered numerous library visits. I continue to read and learn at the library, as I did during my formal education and career.

I took my children to the storytimes at Sanger Branch when it was just a small space in a strip mall on Central Avenue. Now Sanger is a huge branch where I take my grandchildren. We also visit Main, Sylvania, and King Road branches regularly.

Libraries bring our community together. By supporting the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, we participate in nurturing a healthy community and democracy.

#### **Dr. Jayantilal and Prafulla Galani**

I think of the library as my second brain and visit at least two times per week. I read the newspapers to stay up-to-date on politics, current events, and science, and I read magazines such as Kiplingers and Consumer Reports to see what is happening and how to manage real-life issues.

I grew up in India and always, always went to the library. Although my local libraries were much smaller than what we enjoy here in northwest Ohio, I used the libraries constantly and effectively throughout my primary education, college, and medical school.

Now, I can access literally everything from multiple Toledo Lucas County Public Library branches—everything is so well organized, and there is so much to choose from. I talk to my friends and family daily about what I have learned and encourage them to visit the library as well.

I want everyone to go to the library all the time, especially children and the adults who care for them. I think children need to have a strong foundation to be well-educated for future careers and knowledge. Going to the library together, where they can read books, talk, play, think, and explore, builds this foundation. When people see how fun this is, I hope they invite their own friends and neighbors to join them.

This is why we made a gift to the Toledo Library and the Library Legacy Foundation to name the Children's Library at the King Road Branch. I want everyone—no matter their economic means, caste, religion, gender, or beliefs—to take advantage of the library's infinite resources and knowledge. People can change their minds, perspectives, and very lives with this amazing asset that is so positive and important to our community.



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