

Annual Report

2023






Letter from Aimee and Carole

At The Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County (PLYMC), we believe in the power of working together. Throughout 2023, we worked hand in hand with our patrons, partners and staff to provide transformative experiences and serve as a cornerstone to our communities.

Together, we grew our collection, strengthened our connections and enhanced our services to meet the evolving needs of our patrons. From opening a Sensory Room to partnering with the American Heart Association to expanding our Culinary Literacy programming, 2023 was a year of growth and adaptability. This report highlights our shared achievements and the collective impact of our efforts.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Together, we will continue to make PLYMC a place where everyone is welcome, learning is celebrated and new paths are forged.


Aimee Ffarek
Director and CEO, PLYMC


Carole Weimer
President, Library Board of Trustees





Community Engagement

Special Delivery and the Pop-Up Library

Our Community Engagement team is always on the go! Whether they are sending books by mail to our area's seniors or visiting local organizations, they are constantly working to expand our reach and meet patrons where they are.

In 2023, Community Engagement made 519 stops including local events, schools, senior care facilities and adult day cares. From signing people up for a library card to checking out materials, they engaged with 26,859 community members!

Summer Discovery Growth

The all-ages Summer Discovery program surpassed expectations in 2023 with a **98 percent** increase in adult participation from 2022. By the end of summer, there were 1,211 finishers – a **58 percent** increase from the previous year!



An Evening with David Baldacci

We welcomed New York Times best-selling author David Baldacci to Main Library. The Literary Society hosted Baldacci, along with 300 guests, for our annual author event. Known for his suspense novels and legal thrillers, Baldacci discussed his new novel *Simply Lies* and shared his passion for libraries and literacy.

Baldacci announced that he and his wife, Michelle, would be donating \$10,000 to PLYMC on behalf of their Wish You Well Foundation, which supports adult and family literacy in the United States.



“ It was the best. He was very interesting. Very friendly too. ”

- Linda L.



America 250-Ohio Kick Off

In June, we hosted the Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial to start planning for the 250th anniversary of the United States which culminates on July 4, 2026. This multi-year commemoration will spotlight the impact of Ohioans on the nation’s past, present and future. Looking ahead, PLYMC will highlight our area’s role in national history through system-wide programs, services and archives.



Inspiring Lifelong Learning

At PLYMC, we strive to offer programs that meet the needs and interests of our patrons. From storytimes to computer basics to cooking classes, we provided opportunities for all ages to learn, grow and connect.

-|- Hosted 394

children’s story times with 8,547 attendees

-|- Offered 1,219

programs for adults including workforce development and technology classes

-|- Saw 15,493

teens come through our doors to attend programs





Planning for the Future

In 2023, we began our strategic planning process with a focus on listening to our community – both internally and externally. Our Director and CEO and Strategic Communications Officer spoke with more than 200 people in our communities, engaging them as they visited the Library or local events.

We received 800+ responses to an online survey that was shared with PLYMC cardholders and patrons. We also held townhalls in every branch with over 200 staff members.

In the survey, we asked patrons about their Library habits, how often they visit the Library, whether they utilize our digital services, and what branches they visit. We also asked if they had suggestions to improve the Library services they use, what the more important issues are when it comes to their community, and how the Library can help make a positive impact.

In our individual community conversations, we asked if the Library is doing a good job providing services to them and if there is anything we could do better.



Connecting with Our Patrons





Fostering Collaboration

Working with other organizations is vital to serving our patrons and expanding our reach. We are proud to partner with several local groups to help make a difference in our communities.

Mobile Market

We continued our partnership with A.C.T.I.O.N. and Flying High to bring The Mahoning Valley Mobile Market to the Library. The Mobile Market visited PLYMC locations in neighborhoods classified as food deserts and allowed visitors to shop for fresh produce and groceries.



Children's Hunger Alliance

In an effort to end childhood hunger, we provided free meals to individuals under 18 in June and July. Meals were funded through the Children's Hunger Alliance and served at Main Library.





Fostering Collaboration

American Heart Association

We partnered with the American Heart Association to offer a blood pressure station at our Sebring location. Patrons were able to check their blood pressure and access materials to learn more about their numbers and the impact on their overall health. The success of this partnership led to the program being expanded system-wide for the following year.

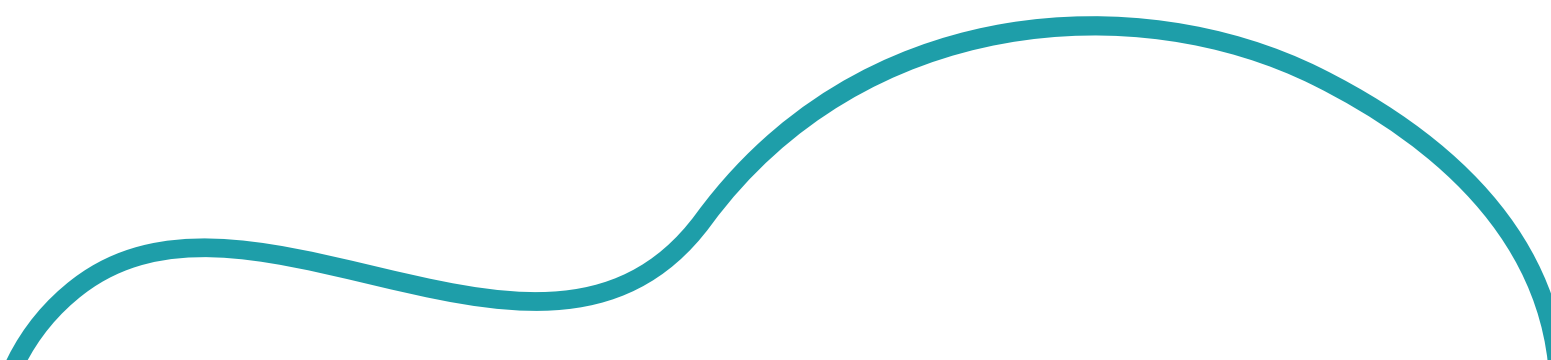


Imagination Library

PLYMC strives to inspire a love of reading in young learners. In collaboration with the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, we encourage families to sign up for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and receive one free book per month for their children until age five.

American Red Cross

In 2023, we continued our partnership with the Mahoning Chapter of the American Red Cross to host blood drives at select PLYMC locations.





Creating Welcoming Spaces

Sensory Room

In July 2023, we opened a Sensory Room at our Boardman location. The space includes play materials like colorful displays to create a visually stimulating and soothing atmosphere, gentle sounds or silence to reduce sensory overload and tactile stimulation like textured objects for sensory integration.

The Sensory Room was made possible through a grant from the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services as well as community donors including The Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley, The Thomases Family Endowment, The Boardman Rotary Club and The Boardman Community Foundation.



“The inclusion of a sensory room in the Library aligns with our commitment to providing diverse and accessible services, ensuring that all members of the community feel welcome and supported.”

*-Pam Brockway
PLYMC Public Service Manager*



Main Library's Computer Center

The Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley donated \$25,000 toward the computer center at Main Library.



Creating Welcoming Spaces

Brownlee Woods Library

In 2022, we began to refurbish our Brownlee Woods location with new flooring, lights and computers and a fresh coat of paint. The branch reopened to the public on February 6, 2023.



Poland Library

PLYMC's Poland location received updates including new carpets and paint as well as furniture. The project included repairs to the clock tower and acoustic improvements in the children's area. Additionally, the building received upgrades to its electric, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

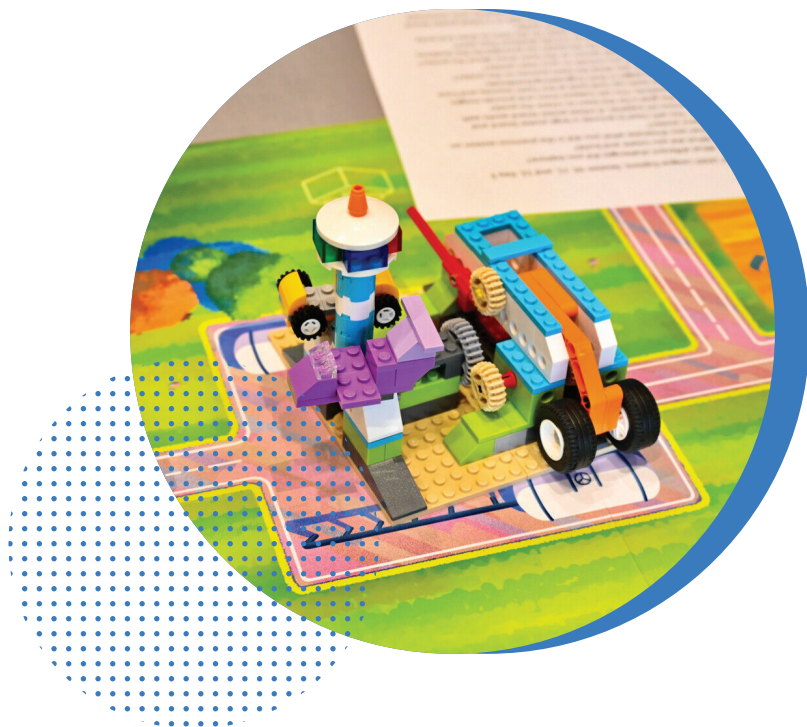
Springfield Library

Upgrades to the Springfield Library included a new circulation desk and new technology. The project concluded with an open house to celebrate the location's new look.



First Lego League

With a grant from the Ohio Department of Education's Libraries Accelerating Learning Program, PLYMC purchased Lego Spike Essentials kits and iPads to help 2nd-4th graders explore the fundamentals of engineering. Through First Lego League programs, students have learned to design, code and create unique solutions to real-world problems while building teamwork skills.



Library of Things

We launched a Library of Things, a unique collection of items including games, tools, technology, exercise equipment and more. The Library of Things gives patrons the opportunity to borrow items to pursue their interests or try something new.



Culinary Literacy

Thanks to a grant from the Ohio Department of Education's Libraries Accelerating Learning Program, PLYMC and Salem Public Library purchased Kitchen a La Cart mobile kitchens. The kitchen carts travel to various library locations for programs to develop stronger literacy, math, teamwork and kitchen skills.

Ten Years of Tri-Lakes

We recognized the ten-year anniversary of Tri-Lakes Library with a celebration! Tri-Lakes opened in North Jackson on July 22, 2013, and was dedicated on August 13, 2013.



New Board Members

In 2023, we welcomed Denise Glinatsis Bayer to PLYMC's Board of Trustees. Bayer is the Vice President, Senior Trust Officer for Premier Bank.

Recognition and Rewards



Historic Preservation Award

Main Library

Awarded by the Mahoning Valley Historical Society

Best in Category

Additions, Renovations and Restorations

Main Library Renovation and Expansion

Architectural Firm: Bostwick Design
Partnership

Awarded by American Institute of Architects Ohio



Outstanding Volunteer Fundraising Group

Friends of PLYMC

Awarded by Association of Fundraising Professionals - Mahoning-Shenango Chapter



Financials

GENERAL FUND 12/31/23

Encumbered Balance	\$1,027,133.25
Balance Forward	12,395,216.73
Receipts	
Public Library Fund	10,850,592.43
Property Tax	9,327,929.53
Intergovernmental	1,287,851.08
Patron Fines & Fees	99,657.62
Interest Income	645,034.70
Rental/Lease Income	13,950.00
Miscellaneous	113,855.38
Total Receipts & Balances	\$35,761,220.72
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	\$13,179,591.28
Supplies	669,406.78
Purchased & Contracted Services	2,833,286.27
Library Materials	1,519,555.26
Equipment	216,165.66
Other Objects	52,564.39
Transfers To Other Funds	3,600,000.00
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/23	1,469,486.86
Balance Forward, 12/31/23	12,221,164.22
Total Expenses & Balance	\$35,761,220.72

BUILDING & REPAIR FUND 12/31/23

Encumbered Balance	\$1,321,043.62
Balance Forward	17,920,881.01
Receipts	
Interest Income	526,979.40
Contributions	100.00
Miscellaneous	-
Transfers From Other Funds	3,000,000.00
Total Receipts & Balance	\$22,769,004.03
Expenses	
Investment/Banking Fees	\$10,482.49
New Buildings	-
Building Improvements	1,635,574.37
Equipment	53,180.36
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/23	100,550.80
Balance Forward, 12/31/23	20,969,216.01
Total Expenses & Balances	\$22,769,004.03

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FUND 12/31/23

Encumbered Balance	\$18,536.02
Balance Forward	3,344,366.21
Receipts	
Federal Grant/E-Rate	\$37,741.84
Interest Income	18,409.47
Transfers From Other Funds	600,000.00
Total Receipts & Balances	\$4,019,053.54
Expenses	
Investment/Banking Fees	\$586.64
Equipment	158,080.51
Encumbered Balance Forward, 12/31/23	31,386.75
Balance Forward, 12/31/23	3,828,999.64
Total Expenses & Balances	\$4,019,053.54

LIBRARY FOUNDATION 12/31/23

Balance Forward	\$1,407,983.18
Receipts	
Distributions from Trust Funds	168,509.10
Contributions	193,746.79
Miscellaneous	-
Interest & Investment Income	52,924.70
Total Receipts & Balance	\$1,823,163.77
Expenses	
Books & Related Purchases	\$90,561.24
Audit Fees	-
Legal Fees	-
Marketing Costs	-
Miscellaneous	2,431.17
Memorial gifts	-
Balance Forward, 12/31/23	1,730,171.36
Total Expenses & Balance	\$1,823,163.77





we share. we create. we grow.

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