

2020 Annual Report



A message from our Chair & Chief Librarian

Unpredictable. Resilient. Creative. These are just a few of the words I would use to describe this past year. From early in 2020, it became clear that trying to plan ahead would only be met with success if that plan included an array of possible outcomes. Milton Public Library accepted this challenge and successfully engaged with the community through numerous online platforms, being recognized by other library systems as an innovator and leader in promptly creating and delivering virtual services.

In the face of pandemic restrictions, MPL worked tirelessly to ensure our patrons could access our physical collections. This included the addition of Curbside Collection and, when permitted, enhanced safety precautions when inside our physical space. MPL also extended its family to include four queen bees and their colonies at our Beaty Branch. Looking ahead, MPL is in the early planning stages of our first bookmobile - another way for us to stay connected with you.

We are forever grateful for MPL's leadership and management teams, and indeed, all staff, for finding creative ways to endure this difficult year. We are also so very thankful for our community and its continued use of our services. We have greatly missed being able to engage with you in our physical space and through our in-person programming. We hope you have felt our support, even if only virtually, to Read. Learn. Create. Connect.



Sarah Marshall
Chair

Well, what a year it's been! Who would have thought at the start of 2020 that we would have been thrown into the midst of a global pandemic? As the year began, MPL was set to have our most successful year, with the Sherwood branch being fully operational and all of our key metrics, in their ascendancy. And then we were forced to close; but this didn't stifle MPL's focus on innovation as we were the first library to pivot to a virtual only model. Through online storytimes and online book discussions, icons including Jann Arden, Clara Hughes, Iliza Shlesinger and Samra Habib, amongst others, were 'inspired' to support our efforts.

Through the various iterations of service provision that followed, whether Curbside Collection or re-opening with capacity restrictions and physical distancing measures, at every opportunity staff at MPL provided access to public library services in the most helpful and customer service focussed ways as possible. And that spirit of customer service excellence will continue once we are able to fully resume normal operations.

I would, therefore, like to commend MPL's management team. Without their tireless dedication to ensuring your needs were met throughout the course of the pandemic we would not have been able to provide you with the exemplary levels of service you have come to expect. It is to them that we all owe a sincere debt of gratitude for making MPL such an inspiring place.



Mark Williams
Chief Librarian

In the beginning...

Going into 2020, Milton Public Library was all set to have its most successful year ever... We had just opened our third branch, Sherwood, a few months before, had a record number of programmes planned and circulation was higher than ever. January and February saw:

↑88% new cardholders **↑35%** number of programmes **↑20%** total circulation

Then, the pandemic hit (more on that soon).

Our total approved funding in 2020 was \$5,278,321.

Despite the challenges faced by a pandemic, MPL was still able to generate almost \$500K in revenue. In addition, we were able to return over \$600K of our approved budget, in unspent dollars, from the Town of Milton's funding in order to help offset lost revenue experienced by the Town.



Pivoting through a pandemic

MPL continued to inspire the community through an unprecedented pandemic, paving the way with innovative virtual programming, services and resources for patrons to access from the comfort of their own homes.

Shifting to serve you better...

- Curbside Collection
- Mobile Library App
- Online card registration
- Automatic card renewals
- Live Chat with a Librarian

*"I wanted to give you a **HUGE** thank you for your library pick up this morning! You were so well organized and efficient. Best curbside pick up I've experienced."*
MPL Patron



Keeping you safe

We re-configured our spaces to ensure the safety of both our patrons and staff. Through applying social distance measures, following capacity constraints, installing protective glass, enforcing the use of masks and creating signage for each branch, health and safety was our top priority.



Staying social

Throughout the pandemic, we found more creative ways to connect with our patrons through email marketing campaigns, creating a more pandemic-relevant website and increased interaction through our social media channels.

↑104% total engagement **↑103%** total instagram followers **↑50%** total facebook followers

16,763 YouTube views

35,130 eNewsletter subscribers



Paving the way: shifting to digital

As the pandemic forced us to close our doors, we quickly pivoted to a “virtual” only service model, expanding our digital collections, offering online programming and services and reconfiguring our website homepage to make it easier for patrons to find what they needed.

“You have been doing amazing things since the lockdown began... Keep up the awesome work and be PROUD of what you have accomplished in such a trying time.” MPL Patron



Digital stats

↑62% eLearning use

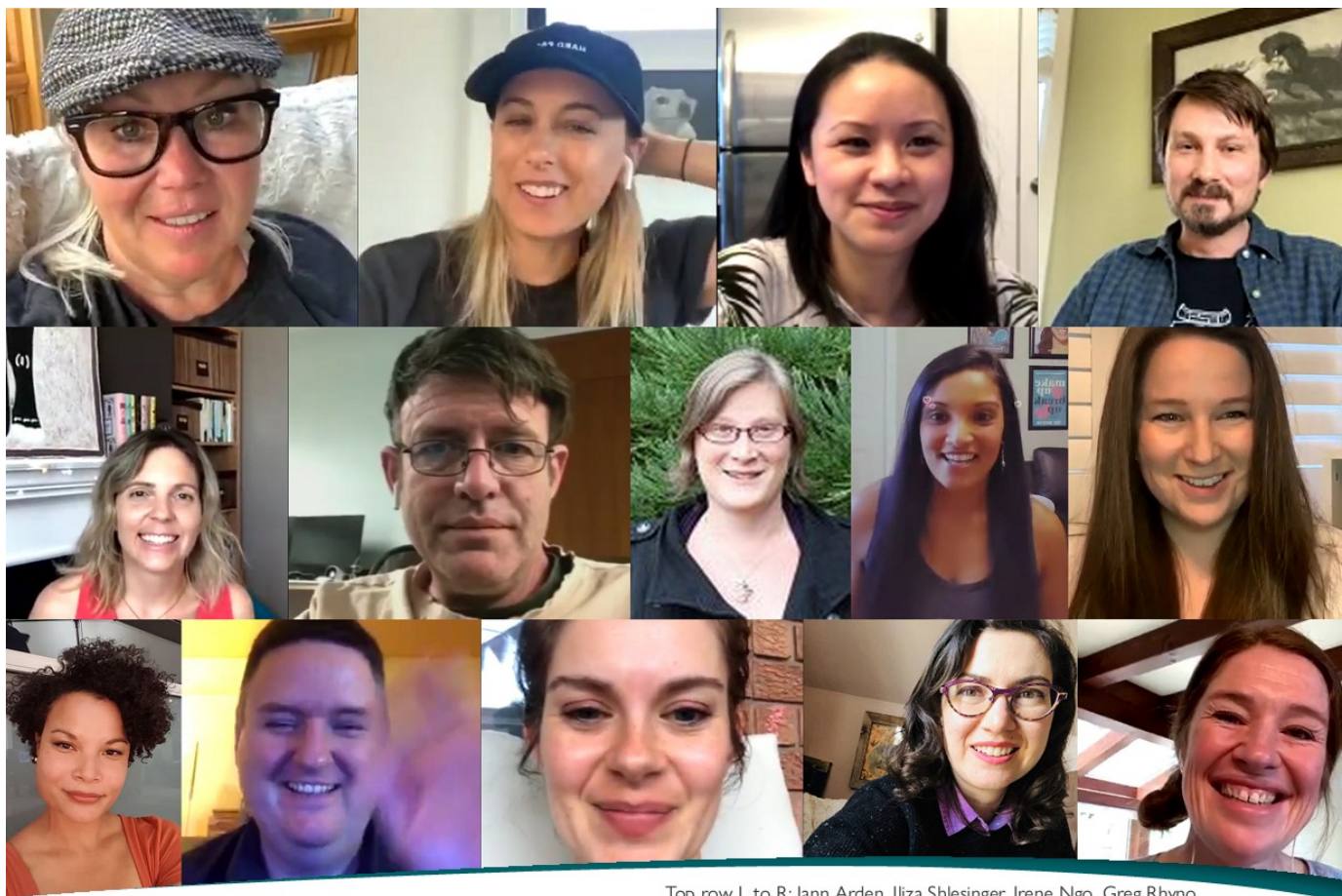
↑35% eMagazine use

↑33% eVideo use

↑28% eAudiobook/eBook use

“cloudLibrary is the best thing ever! Thank you to everyone working on it behind the scenes. You are all heroes who have made all this isolating and staying home business bearable and actually enjoyable too.”

MPL Patron



Top row L to R: Jann Arden, Iliza Shlesinger, Irene Ngo, Greg Rhyno
 Middle row L to R: Tara Ross, Kevin Patterson, Lenore Newman, Sandya Menon, Mieka J. Forte
 Bottom row L to R: Alicia Cox Thomson, Brian Bradley, Robin Doolittle, Vicki Vansickle & Clara Hughes

Continuing to **Inspire**

Understanding the shifting needs of our patrons during a pandemic, we were the first Canadian public library to pivot to delivering innovative online programming through YouTube, Beanstack, Zoom, Crowdcast, Facebook and Instagram including:

- Online Storytimes
- Books Before Bedtime
- How-to Videos
- Tech Talks
- Social Distance Book Club
- Multilingual Storytimes

↑ 84% adult programme attendance

↑ 78% Laurier Milton lecture series programme attendance

↑ 72% teen programme attendance

Be Inspired: Our Beaty transformation

The pandemic wasn't going to stop us from being busy bees and continuing to *inspire*. We transformed our Beaty branch and installed our Beaty Beehives and viewing area. Patrons will soon be able to purchase 'Bee-ty' branch honey while staff will be delivering STEAM-based programming for patrons of all ages.

One of the social media highlights during the lockdown was our "Name the Queen Bees" social contest. The four Queens were named by an overwhelming majority through our online poll as:

- Queen Bea
- Queen Sophia
- Queen Blanche
- Queen Rose



Redefining excellence: awards & recognition

John Cotton Dana Award

In recognition of our re-branding efforts, we received the John Cotton Dana Award for Public Relations from the American Library Association. The award is one of the most coveted and prestigious awards recognizing marketing and public relations excellence and includes a \$10,000 USD prize.



ULC Top Innovator Award

We were also the recipient of the Urban Libraries Council's 2020 Top Innovator Award for "Communicating the Library's Value." The award recognizes and raises the visibility of cutting-edge programs, strategies, tools, techniques and ideas from ULC's member library systems across North America.



The Atlantic Magazine

In early 2020, we used our 3D printer to support Inksmith's Face Shields for Healthcare Workers initiative to print PPE for frontline workers. The Atlantic picked this up and included MPL in a feature story on public libraries' responses to COVID-19.

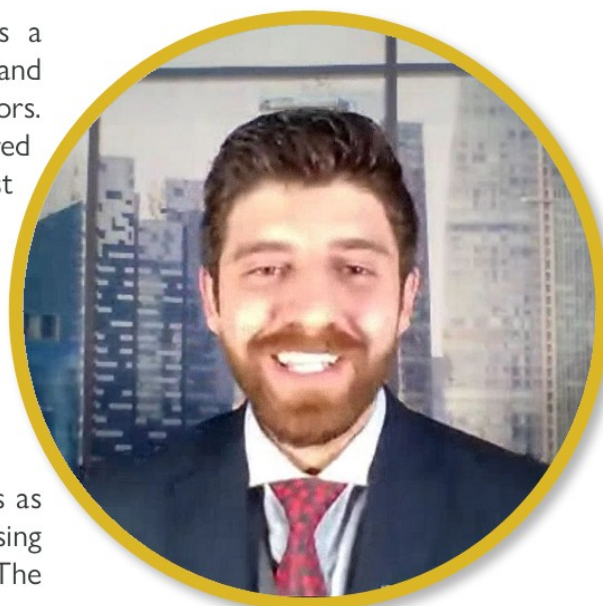


Community-responsive approach

Throughout 2020, we maintained our ongoing commitment to our community-led approach, being responsive to the needs of the different communities we serve.

Read Woke

Our campaign began November 1st 2020 as a seven-month long series of activities, challenges, and events to highlight “own voices” of diverse authors. In the first two months, **2565** patrons registered for Read Woke programming. One of the most successful events was Peace by Chocolate’s Tareq Hadhad’s engaging discussion during December’s “Newcomer Voices” month.



REDress Project

Red dresses were displayed at all MPL locations as part of the REDress Project, in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The dresses were provided by Grandmothers Voice, a local group of Indigenous women who provide a safe community for Elders and Knowledge Holders to gather, support, and heal their communities. The display linked to Our Women Now, a virtual presentation by Grandmother’s Voice where youth logged in to learn more about Indigenous heritage, the MMIWG Inquiry, and to observe cultural displays of dancing and song.

“Thank you for hosting the presentation today. It was a wonderful learning experience and really cool to see someone my age making a difference in the world. I learned a ton about Indigenous culture.”

MPL Patron



1000 Books Before Kindergarten

At the beginning of 2020, we launched the 1,000 Books before Kindergarten programme, encouraging parents and caregivers to share 1000 books with their little ones promoting early literacy. Through tracking their reading, participants earned a certificate of achievement.

Summer Reading Club

Our 2020 SRC was held virtually using the Beanstack app where participants were invited to collect badges and earn ballots by reading and participating in activities throughout the summer months. Over the course of the programme, 2,783 patrons participated, completing 852,253 minutes read and 8,113 activities.



Speak for the Bees

Following our series of Community Conversations, we heard you loud and clear: Miltonians are passionate about environmental issues. Whether students or seniors, urban residents or rural: environmental consciousness was a key priority across all of our conversations. Throughout the year, we hosted a series of events under the Speak for the Bees banner, with generous support from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Sensory Kits

In 2020, we obtained a grant enabling MPL to offer 'Sensory Kits' that contain an assortment of items designed to reduce stress and anxiety, stimulate learning, and provide comfort to our patrons during library visits. They were designed in collaboration with members of the Halton Youth Disability Advisory Council and with funding from the Libraries and Autism: We're All Welcome Here Grant.





MCRC's Fill-a-Crib campaign

MPL led a successful Food for Fines campaign in November, collecting donations to support the Milton Community Resource Centre's Infant Food Bank. The campaign gathered baby food, diapers, and formula to help Milton families in need. Throughout December, MPL was a contactless drop-off point for donations during the Infant Food Bank's annual Fill-a-Crib campaign.

Virtual volunteer programme

Our student volunteer programme is an opportunity for high school students. Under the guidance of our existing volunteers, MPL launched its first-ever Virtual Volunteer Programme, featuring workshops hosted by community partners to empower students with knowledge on community issues that are important to them. In the first three months of the programme, over 200 students earned community volunteer hours with MPL.

Looking ahead

Website revitalisation

Coming later this year, MPL's website will be completely relaunched, focussing on improving the user experience.

Bookmobile

Staff at MPL are in the process of selecting the manufacturer to create MPL's first-ever Bookmobile which should hit the streets in 2023!

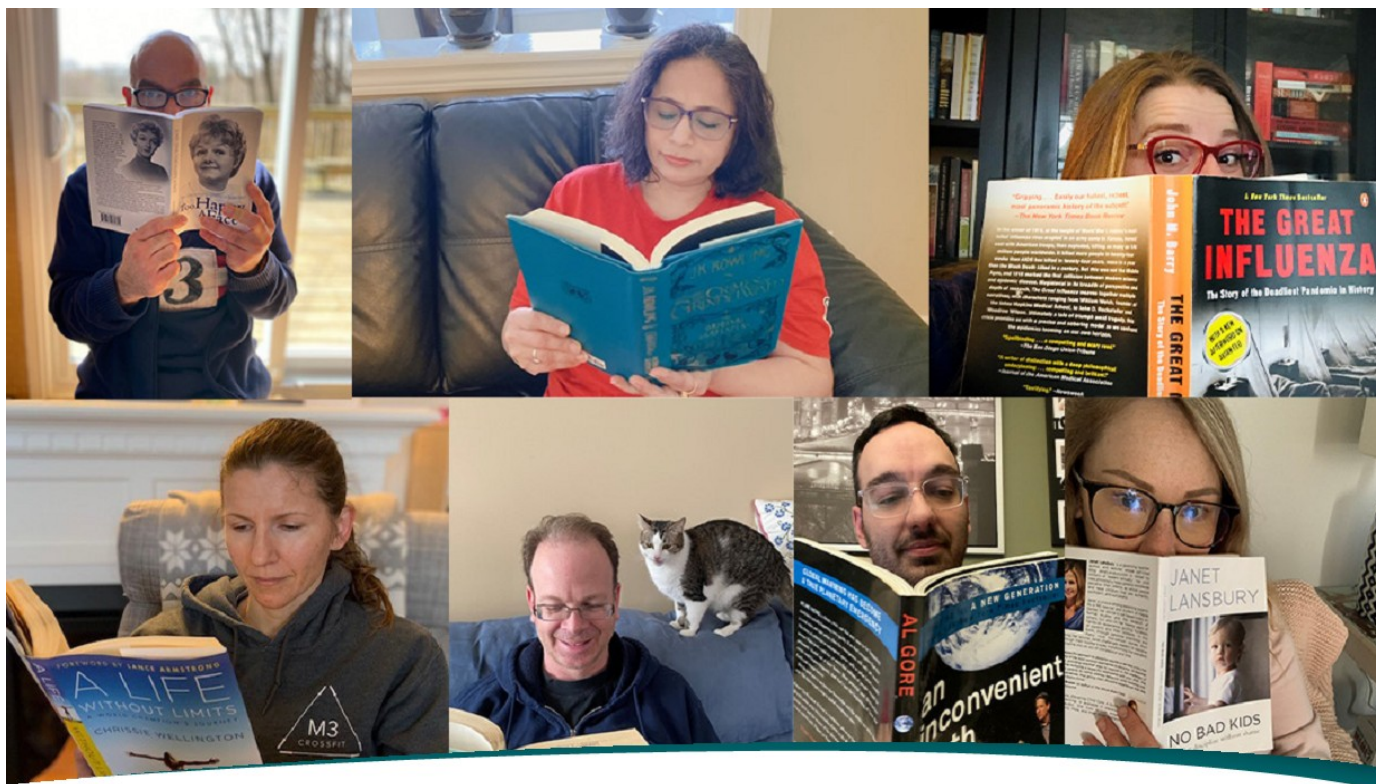
Continued focus on staff training

MPL is undertaking a multi-year process focussing on ensuring policies, practices and procedures are anti-racist. In addition, staff are being trained on understanding the importance of intellectual freedom.

Fully vaccinated

Let's just hope so! :)





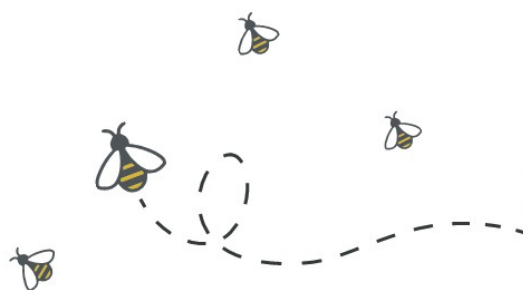
Top row L to R: Mark Williams, Kanta Kapoor, Lee Puddephatt
 Bottom row L to R: Maria Petricko, Dave Hook, Vito Montesano, Ashley Directo

Management Team

- Mark Williams, Chief Librarian
- Dave Hook, Deputy Chief Librarian
- Vito Montesano, Senior Manager, Human Resources
- Lee Puddephatt, Manager, Public Service
- Maria Petricko, Manager, Branches
- Kanta Kapoor, Manager, Support Services
- Ashley Directo, Manager, Marketing & Communications
- Manager, IT vacant effective June 2020

Board Members

- Sarah Marshall, Chair
- Margaret Warmels, Vice Chair
- Omer Amin
- Maggie Chan (until May 2020)
- Matthew Fabian
- Paul Hubahib (effective Aug 2020)
- Councillor Sameera Ali
- Councillor Kristina Tesser Derksen



From left to right: Matthew Fabian, Councillor Kristina Tesser Derksen, Maggie Chan, Sarah Marshall, Councillor Sameera Ali, Omer Amin
 Missing: Margaret Warmels & Paul Hubahib



Mission

MPL empowers the community to:
Read. Learn. Create. Connect.

Vision

To inspire through discovery,
collaboration, and creation.

Values

Intellectual Freedom. Inclusivity. Accessibility. Exceptional
Public Service. Lifelong Learning. Accountability.

Locations

Main
1010 Main Street East,
Milton, Ontario L9T 6H7

Sherwood
6355 Main Street West,
Milton, Ontario L9T 2Y1

Beaty
945 Fourth Line,
Milton, Ontario L9T 6P8



www.beinspired.ca