

Report to the Community

2025



About Oakville Public Library

Established in 1895, Oakville Public Library (OPL) has evolved from a small reading room to a modern library system with multiple branches and express locations. We offer a wide range of services, including access to physical and digital collections, children's and adult programs, community events, and technological resources such as internet access and digital media. The library system operates seven branches and serves a diverse and growing population of 240,000 Oakville residents.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Connecting people to what inspires them.

Mission

We bring together people, information and ideas to enrich lives and build healthy communities.

Values

Equitable Access

Curiosity

Belonging

Lifelong Learning

Intellectual Freedom

Exceptional Service

To learn more about Oakville Public Library, visit [opl.ca](https://www.opl.ca).



Letter from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

In 2025, Oakville Public Library demonstrated what is possible when a trusted community institution continues to evolve and lead. We expanded our impact, strengthened community connections, and introduced new programs, services, and experiences that reflected the changing needs of Oakville residents. As we celebrated our 130th anniversary, we honoured our legacy while boldly investing in the future of public library service.

Throughout the year, our branches were active and welcoming. From expanded programming for all ages to enhanced digital services and refreshed spaces, OPL remained focused on equitable access to learning, creativity, and connection. Our staff continued to deliver exceptional service, helping customers feel supported whether they visited in person or connected with us online. A highlight of the year was Canadian Library Month in October, which coincided with Ontario Public Library Week and OPL's 130th anniversary. The milestone gave us an opportunity to honour OPL's legacy of storytelling, discovery, and connection. Celebrations began with a kickoff event at Glen Abbey Branch featuring members of Oakville Town Council, the Library Board, OPL leadership, and community members. The event set the tone for a vibrant three weeks of themed programs, historical storytelling, and branch activations that connected OPL's past and present. OPL also contributed to the CULC

and CBUC National Social Impact Study, the first research project of its kind in Canada to measure the emotional, intellectual, creative, and social value of public libraries. By inviting customers to participate, OPL helped shape a national understanding of how libraries support wellbeing, life transitions, connection, and equity.

The findings affirm what our community has long known: libraries matter.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to building on 2025's achievements and continuing to serve as a trusted, welcoming, and innovative public institution for all. This includes advancing plans for the New Central Library in downtown Oakville, informed by extensive community engagement and the voices of residents, Indigenous community members, staff, and children. Together, we are building Oakville Public Library to serve the community for today and years to come.

Thank you for being part of OPL's story.

Sincerely,

Councillor Jeff Knoll,
Oakville Public Library Board Chair

Tara Wong,
Oakville Public Library Chief Executive Officer

By the Numbers

2025 performance measures highlight a library system that continues to grow its impact, strengthen community connection, and adapt services to meet the changing needs of Oakville residents. Supported by three-year trend analysis, the data reflects a library system that is both resilient and forward-looking.

Cardholder Growth

Cardholder activity continued to rise, with 45,721 households using their OPL card, a 6 percent increase that represented **57 percent of all Oakville households**.

Active cardholders reached 77,399 individuals, a 7 percent increase. With 19,565 new cardholders joining this year.



77,399
Active Cardholders



Borrowing Trends

Borrowing trends also point to growth.

Total circulation increased by 14 percent to 2,978,297, driven by strong digital use, including a 13 percent rise via the Hoopla digital content platform. Physical borrowing declined slightly but continues to represent more than half of all circulation, offering a balanced opportunity to refine collection strategies across both formats.



2,978,297
Items Borrowed

Library Spaces

Library spaces saw renewed vibrancy, with **1.3 million visits across seven branches**, a 7 percent increase. Enhanced foot traffic sensors improved reporting accuracy, while branches such as Sixteen Mile and Glen Abbey experienced notable growth, creating opportunities to deepen in-branch engagement.



1,300,000
Branch Visits



51,369

Programs & Event
Attendees

Programs Reached

Programs reached **51,369 attendees** and reflected a strategic shift toward smaller, high-impact experiences. Maker programs grew by 32 percent, and newcomer programs expanded to meet community needs.



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Public
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Connecting
Community
opl.ca

Expanding Our Reach

In 2025, OPL continued to broaden its reach across Oakville by strengthening access to spaces, stories, and shared experiences. Several major initiatives advanced throughout the year, each designed to help residents connect with their library and with one another. These initiatives reflect OPL's commitment to expanding access, strengthening community connection, and helping every resident find their place in the library's growing network of spaces, services, and stories.

Building for the Future: New Sixteen Mile Branch and New Central Library

Throughout 2025, staff prepared to transition Sixteen Mile Branch from a temporary portable, to a new purpose-built facility. The new location opened in March of 2026 and features a Children's Area, Discovery Zone, Community Living Room, mezzanine, and diverse work and study spaces. It also offers an expanded print and digital collection, Library of Things, public access computers, and free Wi-Fi.

OPL also kept focus on the New Central Library project. In February 2025, OPL released the Public Engagement Summary Reports from architects Perkins&Will. Residents shared ideas, priorities, and aspirations through surveys and in-person engagement sessions, and this feedback guides planning as detailed design work continues in 2026.

Other Highlights:

- OPL expanded its presence through community installations. In summer, OPL **added its fourth StoryWalk installation** at Memorial Park, with a special dedication in honour of the late Eric Sillius, a beloved OPL staff member whose passion for children and literacy shaped many StoryWalk initiatives.
- The **OPL Newspaper Digitization Project** completed phase one and two of digitizing OPL's local newspaper collection, creating a high-quality archive that preserves Oakville's history for future generations. Phase three began in early 2026 and focuses on quality assurance and database cleanup. OPL will enable public access to the digitized records to share this new community resource once the final phases are completed.





**OPL plays a vital role
in the community –
enriching the lives of
residents each day.**



Oakville
Public
Library

Enriching Lives and Building Healthy Communities

In 2025, OPL enriched lives and supported community wellbeing through programs, partnerships, and initiatives that encouraged learning, creativity, and connection. This work reflects OPL's commitment to serving residents of all ages and backgrounds while creating opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Launching into Literacy: Summer Reading at OPL

The Summer Reading Club is one of Oakville Public Library's most anticipated and beloved programs, bringing children and families together through a shared love of reading. As OPL's largest annual program, it encourages young readers to make reading part of their summer adventures, explore new ideas and perspectives, and develop habits that can nurture a lifelong enjoyment of books. Year after year, the program strengthens our connection to the community while creating memorable experiences that inspire the next generation of readers and library users. The results show strong community participation: 2,640 children registered, with more than half signing up for new library cards. Participants visited OPL branches more than 7,100 times to report reading progress and borrowed over 26,000 collection items, representing nearly one quarter of all borrowing during the summer period. In addition, 1,800 children attended 86 themed programs. Teen participation also grew, while the program created new opportunities to connect with parents and caregivers of younger children.



Protecting our Freedom to Read

OPL championed intellectual freedom through Freedom to Read Week. A highlight was the Tower of Banned Books, an installation by artist Kelly McCray. Built from 400 used books, mirrors, and symbolic materials, the piece invited visitors to reflect on censorship, control, and open access to information. The installation was unveiled in February at Central Branch and remained on display for three months, culminating in an insightful special event with McCray where he shared the story behind the tower - from its early inception to its current banned book theme and beyond.



Connecting Community

In 2025, OPL brought people together through programs and events that celebrated culture, creativity, and shared experiences through different stages of life. These initiatives gave residents opportunities to engage with new perspectives, share in cultural experiences, and connect with one another through learning and conversation.

A significant highlight was OPL's presentation of "Walking Through the Fire," a musical and multimedia experience created with award-winning First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists from across Turtle Island. Guided and supported by Elder Stephen Paquette, OPL's Indigenous Knowledge Guide, the event was part of OPL's Truth and Reconciliation programming and invited the community to engage with Indigenous stories through music, performance, and reflection.

Partnerships also helped connect residents. A sponsorship from Amica Senior Lifestyles, Glen Abbey, revitalized OPL's Adult Book Club series during the winter and spring. More than 120 readers participated between January and April, enjoying enhanced sessions that encouraged discussion and celebrated reading. Participants valued receiving books, meeting authors, and connecting through conversation. The series showed how collaboration between public and private organizations can enrich community life.

Strengthening Service, Access and Support

Partnerships extended OPL's reach and amplified community impact. Local organizations helped connect residents to learning, support, and cultural experiences. The Oakville Parent Child Centre reached more than 3,100 participants through Tales and Tunes and Welcome Home. The Centre for Diverse Learners supported nearly 800 participants through Leaps in Literacy and Homework Help. Halton Multicultural Connections engaged more than 600 residents through programs like conversation circles, and computer training workshops. Additional partnerships with the Oakville Fire Department, Community Oak Park Family Network, PFlag Halton, and The Centre for Skills Development created welcoming spaces for families, newcomers, and equity-deserving communities.

Through cultural programming, community partnerships, and literary events, OPL created opportunities for residents to come together, learn from one another, and celebrate the diverse stories that shape Oakville. These initiatives reinforced OPL's role as a welcoming gathering place where community connection thrives.



Making an Impact in Oakville

In 2025, Oakville Public Library made a meaningful impact through programs, events, and community support that strengthened its role as a cultural and social anchor in Oakville. These initiatives reflected the community's appreciation for learning, creativity, and connection, and showed how collective support helps OPL grow and evolve.

BookTalk, Live! was one of the year's most engaging literary events. Held at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, the evening brought book lovers together for a celebration of reading and discovery. Publishers from HarperCollins Canada, Hornblower Group, Martin and Associates, and Ampersand Inc. shared their top picks and hidden gems for the fall season. The event highlighted a wide range of genres and authors, including Canadian and Indigenous voices and works by Oakville authors such as Hannah Mary McKinnon and Susan Aglukark. Attendees heard directly from industry insiders, connected with fellow readers, and discovered new titles.

Fundraising and community support also expanded OPL's impact. In 2024, OPL saw meaningful growth in donations and sponsorships, helping strengthen programs and services for residents of all ages. This support continued into 2025, reflecting the community's belief in the library as a place of learning, connection, and opportunity. Contributions from individuals, families, and local organizations helped OPL deliver programs, expand access to resources, and create welcoming spaces across Oakville.

Thank you, Friends of Oakville Public Library

The Friends of Oakville Public Library continued to be a vital part of this success. This dedicated volunteer committee supported OPL through fundraising. Their popular book sales remained a cherished Oakville tradition, offering affordable books to the public while raising funds for library programs. The Book Sales generated just over \$19,000 in donations to support vital library programs, services and spaces. The Friends also participated in outreach initiatives and local events, helping raise awareness of library services and opportunities.

Together, these efforts demonstrated the power of community involvement in shaping the library's future. Through literary events, fundraising, and volunteer support, OPL continued to build momentum and expand its reach. Residents were encouraged to learn more about becoming a donor or community sponsor by visiting opl.ca/donate.



Looking Ahead

Oakville Public Library is excited by the opportunities that lie before it. Building on 130 years of service to the community, OPL will continue to evolve, innovate, and create experiences that connect people with ideas, with one another, and with a lifelong love of learning and reading.

The library is grateful to all those who have contributed to its success and looks forward to continuing this shared journey with the Oakville community.



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