



# Annual Impact Report

# FY 2024



Connect

Inspire

Enrich



# From the Library Director

In Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), the Palm Beach County Library System deepened its connection with our vibrant and diverse community and stayed steadfast in our vision, mission and values.

This past year we made meaningful strides in expanding our community support. With the addition of a dedicated Social Services Coordinator, we are bridging gaps by connecting individuals and families to vital county resources. Many of our branches reach communities where food insecurity is prevalent. That's why we introduced free weekend meal kits for children 18 years old and younger. The kits help to address the 68-hour food gap faced by 18% of Palm Beach County's children. A partnership with the Palm Beach County Food Bank and Feeding Dreams allows for easier access for families to receive nourishing food when otherwise their plates would be empty.

Our libraries remain cornerstones of intellectual freedom—guardians of access to knowledge and champions of different perspectives. Throughout our branches we offer free resources and services that reflect and celebrate the diversity of Palm Beach County. From books and digital media to innovative programming, we empower our community members to explore, learn and grow in a safe and encouraging environment. By fostering critical thinking and creativity, we continue to uphold the principle that knowledge should be freely accessible to all.

The Library is proud to open our new Canyon Branch in western Boynton. Although the Branch opened in FY25, the bulk of the construction was completed in FY24. Also, plans for the new Hypoluxo Branch are underway with construction expected to start in 2025. Additionally, two of our branches achieved milestone anniversaries; the West Boca Branch reached 15 years of service and the West Boynton Branch celebrated an impressive 30 years.



*Town of Hypoluxo's Council Meeting with Commissioner Marci Woodward, Todd Bonlarron and Douglas Crane.*

This success would not be possible without the unwavering support of the Board of County Commissioners, County Administration, the Library Advisory Board, the Friends of the Palm Beach County Library System, our devoted Library staff and our passionate advocates. Thanks to their dedication, we proudly serve as a space where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Most of all, our libraries remain possible because of the overwhelming support of our residents. You are what makes the Palm Beach County Library System a vital institution in the community.

At the Palm Beach County Library System, our vision is to open minds to a world of unlimited possibilities—both physically and virtually. As we reflect on this year's achievements, I warmly invite you to join us on this journey. Together, we will connect communities, inspire thought and enrich lives.



*Douglas Crane*

*Douglas Crane  
Library Director  
Palm Beach County Library System*



## OUR VISION

Opening minds to a world of unlimited possibilities.



## OUR MISSION

Connect communities, inspire thought and enrich lives.



## OUR VALUES

Service  
Community  
Access

# GOALS

## CONNECT COMMUNITIES

- 1 We engage our communities and partners by promoting and enhancing the role of the Library and offering services beyond the Library's walls.

## INSPIRE THOUGHT

- 2 We provide free access to resources and services that reflect and engage Palm Beach County's diverse communities and residents.
- 3 We inspire thought by offering a diverse range of activities designed to enrich, stimulate and engage members from early literacy through adulthood.

## ENRICH LIVES

- 4 We provide a welcoming environment, both physically and virtually, to spark creativity, stimulate thoughtful conversation and encourage collaboration.
- 5 We serve as a bridge for community members to access social services.

# Library Advisory Board

Our Library Advisory Board consists of 15 members, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Each member serves a three-year term and is required to reside within the Library District. The Board meets on a monthly basis and members serve on a voluntary basis.

## Library Advisory Board Leadership



Megan Bob  
*Chair*



Linda Knox  
*Vice-Chair*



### Dr. Ron Giddens Proclamation

On October 02, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners honored Dr. Ron Giddens for 44 years of service to the Palm Beach County Library System. Appointed in 1978, he served as Library Advisory Board Chair three times and played a key role in selecting three Library Directors, shaping budgets and guiding major technological and facility expansions.

Commissioner Marci Woodward led the tribute, joined by Library Director Douglas Crane, Advisory Board Chair Megan Bob and Board Member Virginia Savietto, M.A.. Dr. Giddens's dedication and leadership have left a lasting legacy on the Library and its community.

## Library Advisory Board Members

Sherry Albury



Abby Baker



Dale Blanton



Lainey Brooks



Kathi Gundlach



Annie Ifill



Maria C. Martinez



Julia Matthews



Perri McDowell-Demps



John McGovern



Joseph Mindell



Virginia Savietto



Lisa Seymour



# Friends Board



The Friends of the Palm Beach County Library System serves to create an association of people interested in books and libraries. They focus public attention on Library services, facilities and needs. They raise funds for scholarships and special projects and to stimulate donations, gifts, endowments and bequests.

They assist in the development of activities for the extension and improvement of Library services and resources to adequately serve the needs of the community.

They advocate on the Library's behalf in order to inform elected officials, as well as the public, about the services that the Library provides to our community and their continued need for funding.



Mary Ellen Beck  
(President)



Carolyn Kruger  
(Vice President)



Marc Bressman  
(Treasurer)



Sue Sim  
(Secretary)



Jill Beach



Anne Bressman



Louise Davis



Connie Kist



Arlene Mishanie



Joyce Smith



Damon Webb

## Overview of the Library



Total  
Visitors  
2,599,600



Total  
Items Borrowed  
8,502,064



New  
Card Holders  
36,427

## Physical Library Spaces Utilized



Physical Items  
Loaned  
5,655,610



Meeting Room  
Bookings  
2,739



CreationStation Locations  
Main Library, Canyon, Lantana Road &  
Wellington Branches



Study Room  
Reservations  
69,759

## Digital Technology Accessed



Computer  
Sessions  
399,178



Mobile App  
New Downloads  
4,405



Website  
Visits  
7,557,961



E-materials  
Borrowed  
2,846,454



Online Research  
Resources Use  
84,256



WiFi  
Sessions  
95,779

## Value to Entrepreneurs & Businesses

Total: \$23,493,468\*

\*Urban Libraries Council, Business Value Calculator

# Community Activities Coordinated



Adult Activities  
Attended  
64,997



Children Activities  
Attended  
136,830



Teen Activities  
Attended  
10,619



Adult Literacy  
Tutoring Hours  
11,268



Summer Reading  
Program Participants  
9,459



Tech Classes  
Attended  
4,241

# Community Services Provided



Research Questions  
Answered  
872,767



SNAP Benefits  
Appointments Made  
2,000



Passports  
Issued  
1,516



Volunteer Service  
Hours Donated  
42,264



Summer Meals  
Distributed  
26,865  
Total Meals Distributed  
40,257



ABC Daycare  
Kits Loaned  
1,860

# Social Media Interactions



Facebook  
Total Followers  
9,154  
Impressions  
926,847



X (Formerly Twitter)  
Total Followers  
6,937  
Impressions  
1,080,913



Instagram  
Total Followers  
4,995  
Impressions  
417,868



LinkedIn  
Total Followers  
910  
Impressions  
18,198



YouTube  
Total Followers  
458  
Views  
50,138

# West Boynton Branch 30th Anniversary



The West Boynton Branch marked its 30th anniversary with a spirited celebration on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. The festive atmosphere brought in community members and dignitaries to honor the branch's three decades of service. This event was sponsored by the Friends of the Palm Beach County Library System.

The event kicked off with a lively presentation, complete with music and nostalgic photos of the branch's evolution and its staff over the years, curated by Laura Hilinski, of the Member Services staff. Library Director Doug Crane opened with a warm welcome to the crowd, followed by appearances from notable guests. The branch's first manager, Nemoure Ahmed-Nianombeko and Barbara Roth, the incoming president of COBWRA, accompanied by her first and second vice presidents, Debbie Murphy and Myrna Rosoff were in attendance. Graham Brunk, now the Glades Area Manager, delighted attendees with a heartfelt story of visiting the Library as a child 30 years ago.

The highlight of the celebration was a captivating virtual presentation by Sharon Koskoff, president of the Art Deco Society of the Palm Beaches. Her talk, titled "Modernism: Hidden Treasures of the Art Deco World Congress in Palm Beach County," fascinated the audience with its vibrant exploration of local treasures.

Guests indulged in cake and drinks while the first 30 attendees received complimentary Library bags brimming with freebies and donated books. Attendees also admired four volumes of photo albums chronicling West Boynton's history, meticulously assembled by Mary Roedel of the Member Services staff. Adding to the fun, Jeffrey Barton (also from Member Services), donned the Dewey costume and greeted visitors in the lobby.

The day ended on a sweet note as 75 children, parents and adults cooled off with shaved ice from Kona Ice, enjoying the beautiful weather and celebrating the Library that has been a cornerstone of the community.





# West Boca Branch 15th Anniversary

The West Boca Branch Library celebrated its 15th anniversary in grand style on Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, with a fun-filled day that blended music, history, crafts, food and community spirit. This event was sponsored by the Friends of the Palm Beach County Library System.

The festivities began with a lively outdoor performance by the Olympic Heights High School Jazz Band, "OH Big Band," setting the tone for the event. Attendees explored the Veteran's Community Micro-Farm, engaging in a scavenger hunt, taking in the garden's beauty and learning about Florida's Spanish explorers through a pop-up history display from the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.

Inside, the excitement continued. Guests snapped photos with Dewey, the Library's friendly mascot, browsed a 15th-anniversary scrapbook and shared heartfelt sentiments on why they love the West Boca Branch Library. The green screen photo booth and craft room offered kid-friendly activities, including decorating favor boxes, creating bookmarks and enjoying coloring sheets.

Adding to the celebratory vibe, two food trucks made an appearance. Tacos Wey served up delicious Mexican street food, while Kona Ice of Boca Raton treated everyone to their favorite shaved ice. Guests dined at tables under shaded tents in the parking lot, where kids played outdoor games like hopscotch, corn hole and ring toss. Some chose to enjoy their food in the meeting room while watching a digital scrapbook on the big screen.

The meeting room also featured an array of Palm Beach County Library System-branded giveaways, including owl pencil sharpeners, chip clips and fidget spinners. Outside the room, children got their names printed in Braille at the Talking Books table while adults learned about the program. To top it all off, families paraded through the Library, dancing and shaking tambourines.

More than 300 community members joined the celebration, enjoying the various activities. The event's success was a testament to the dedication and hard work of the West Boca staff, volunteers and the 15th Anniversary Committee, whose efforts over three months brought the memorable celebration to life.



The Friends of the Palm Beach County Library Presents

# Writers LIVE!

"Connecting readers and authors throughout Palm Beach County"

Writers LIVE!, our flagship author event series, returned for another season of bringing the community together with authors and their books. The 2025 line-up of bestselling, critically acclaimed and award-winning authors discussed their work in-person or virtually via Zoom.



**Debbie Babitt**  
"The Man on the Train"



**Alafair Burke**  
"The Note"



**Rachel Dodes & Lauren Mechling**  
"The Memo"



**David Ellis**  
"Lies He Told Me"



**Joseph Finder**  
"The Oligarch's Daughter"



**James Grippando**  
"Grave Danger"



**Gregg Hurwitz**  
"Nemesis"



**Alka Joshi**  
"Six Days in Bombay"



**Elinor Lipman**  
"Every Tom, Dick & Harry"



**Mallory O'Meara**  
"Daughter of Daring"



**Jason Rekulak**  
"The Last One at the Wedding"



**Carrie Sheffield**  
"Motorhome Prophecies: A Journey of Healing and Forgiveness"



**Susan Shapiro Barash**  
"Estranged: How Strained Female Friendships Can Be Mended or Ended"



**Dawn Tripp**  
"Jackie"



**Dr. Robert Watson**  
"When Washington Burned"



**Carter Wilson**  
"Tell Me What You Did"



### LEAD Day: A Day of Learning and Collaboration

On May 02, 2024, all branches closed for LEAD Day, The Library's first all-staff training closure since 2007. Held at the Eissey Campus Theatre, the event focused on professional growth, collaboration and public service milestones.

Staff participated in presentations, networking activities and games, wearing special LEAD polo shirts to promote unity. Highlights included keynote speaker Stephen Hughes on "The Ted Lasso Effect" and guest appearances by Mayor Maria Sachs and County Administrator Verdenia Baker. Deputy Director Aurora Arthay called it a "fun-filled day of learning and camaraderie."

### Glades Libraries at Senior Resource Expo

On June 21, 2024, the Glades Libraries participated in the Community Senior Resource and Expo Day at the West County Senior Center, connecting seniors with local services. Library staff showcased Book Club in a Bag, Books-by-Mail, Talking Books and more.

Attendees enjoyed lunch, live music by Flavio and met organizations like Morselife, HealthSun and Humana. Conversations with seniors led to new programs, including gardening workshops, bingo nights, computer basics and paint-and-sip classes, reinforcing the Library's commitment to community enrichment.



### Family Meal Kits

In fiscal year 2024, the Palm Beach County Library System introduced a Social Services Coordinator role to connect residents with vital resources. Led by Chandra Thornton, this initiative addresses food insecurity through the Weekend Meal Kit program, in partnership with the Palm Beach County Food Bank and Feeding Dreams. With 19% of children in Palm Beach County experiencing food insecurity, these kits provide nutritious, easy-to-prepare meals for children 18 and younger to bridge the 68-hour hunger gap over weekends. Distributed Fridays at select Library branches, the program ensures families receive support beyond books, fostering a healthier community.



### Disability and Neurodiversity Resource Expo

The Palm Beach County Library System hosted its first Disability and Neurodiversity Resource Expo on May 30, 2024, at the Hagen Ranch Road Branch. Organized by the Disability and Neurodiversity Advocates, the event provided parents and caregivers with vital resources, programs and support.

Attendees connected with Library staff and representatives from local, state and federal agencies, including 211, the Coalition for Independent Living Options and local autism schools. The expo was a major step in strengthening community support and accessibility.



### The Palm Beach County Department Fair

The Palm Beach County Department Fair occurred on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at the Lantana Road Branch. A vibrant showcase of community connection, the event brought together 19 county departments, each enthusiastically presenting their programs and services to local residents. The fair drew an engaged crowd of 107 attendees, all eager to learn, mingle and take part in the excitement. Creating an atmosphere of fun and suspense, 23 lucky individuals were thrilled to win custom book bundles in a lively raffle—each tailored to their favorite genres. It was an afternoon brimming with information, interaction and a sprinkle of literary delight.

# Awards, Grants & Scholarships

## 2024 Golden Palm Award For Creating the New Library Website

*The Golden Palms honors the work done in the previous year.*

Congratulations to the team of Adam Davis, Sandra Frens and Vicky Knecht for being awarded a Golden Palm for their work on creating the new Library website. From the nomination for the award:

"What do you do when you have a website that is no longer serviceable and on a dying server? You move at a marathon pace to build a replacement. If you are the Palm Beach County Library System, you take that opportunity to incorporate innovative technologies expanding the services beyond what was originally capable. Such renovations take a year for a site with an excess of 100+ pages. This is especially true when adding in completely new features and innovations. For this gargantuan undertaking, our given timeframe was only six-months." Mohammad Chowdhury, now with County Information Systems Services, was also part of the team (not in photo).



## Palm Beach County HIV Council

Congratulations to Glades Area Manager Graham Brunk who was recognized for his unwavering support of the Palm Beach County HIV Council. His efforts in facilitating their meetings at the Belle Glade Branch Library were instrumental in resolving their long-standing transportation challenges. Graham is a valuable asset to the Palm Beach County Library System and to the County as a whole.



## Bernays Awards

The Palm Beach County Library System was honored to take home two Bernays Awards at the Gold Coast PR Council annual ceremony on Friday, October, 25, 2024.

The first award category was for "Best Nonprofit Project or Campaign, Large." The Palm Beach County Library System won for the "Strategic Plan FY 2024-2028 & Action Plan FY 2024."

The second award was for "Best Marketing Material (Video/Digital)." The Palm Beach County Library System won for "Embracing the New: The Complete Renovation of [www.pbclibrary.org](http://www.pbclibrary.org)."



# FLORIDA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AWARDS: INDIVIDUAL HONORS



## Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award - Children: Joseph Dellosa and Jazmin Jimenez

Joseph Dellosa and Jazmin Jimenez created "STORYTIMES TOGETHER," a virtual storytime series that reached 7,959 participants across 46 schools in 1.5 years. Their program connected thousands of children and teachers to Library storytimes, strengthening ties between public libraries and schools during a challenging time for Florida libraries.



## Friends, Foundations and Boards Outstanding Member: Kimberly Doyle

Kimberly Doyle's extensive educational knowledge, teaching abilities and dedication to the Palm Beach County Library's Adult Literacy Project make her indispensable to the Library Literacy Friends and the Palm Beach County Library System. Over the past fourteen years, Kim has facilitated tutor training, roundtables and provided ongoing support through workshops and articles, ensuring that the resources offered remain up-to-date and relevant. Her adaptability and commitment contribute to the excellence of both the Adult Literacy Program and the Library Literacy Friends Board for the Palm Beach County community.



## Minority Scholarship Winner: Briana Thomas

Briana Thomas was born and raised in Belle Glade, Florida. Thomas is the youngest of a blended family of six. With a love of reading that began at a young age, Briana has always loved libraries. So, when the opportunity came up to be a student employee at her local Library in Belle Glade, she took it. Fast forward several years and Briana is still working with the Palm Beach County Library System. Starting as a Library Associate, she followed through with her goal of becoming a librarian. She graduated from Florida State University in summer of 2024 with her Masters of Science in Information.



## Outstanding Paraprofessional: Chandra Thornton

Chandra Thornton, while a Library Associate at the Palm Beach County Library System, exemplified the Outstanding Paraprofessional Award through her dedication to professional growth and service. For 15 years, she has played a key role in the Talking Books for the Visually Impaired program, having collaborated with the Library of Congress. As president of the KLAS Users Group, she led conferences and workplace culture initiatives. She also provided technology training and outreach to visually impaired individuals. Her Talking Books Theater initiative earned national recognition, highlighting her commitment to innovation and excellence in library services. Since this award, she has taken up the new role as the Library's Social Services Coordinator. In this position she has strengthened her commitment to the community by connecting individuals with essential services.



## Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute

The Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute (SSLLI) is the premiere professional development program for Library staff in Florida. Sponsored by the Division of Library and Information Services, SSLLI is celebrating its 18th class, split into two groups – Lake County and Palm Beach County. They hosted the series at Hagen Ranch Road Branch.

### According to the Division:

The primary goal of the Institute is to assist in preparing Library leaders to provide the highest quality Library services to the citizens of Florida, in the most effective and innovative manner, in order to meet today's needs and tomorrow's challenges.

### The Institute objectives are to:

- ◆ Develop diverse leaders who can serve in Library leadership roles at local, regional, state and national levels.
- ◆ Retain staff currently working in the Library and information management professions by reenergizing them and helping them develop new leadership skills.
- ◆ Develop leaders with the skills to replace those who retire.
- ◆ Build collaborative networks within the Library community across the state that are sustained over time.
- ◆ Establish professional support systems using recognized leaders as mentors.

This cycle, we have several staff accepted as participants and mentors.

### Participants

- Kenyarna Harden
- Elizabeth Griffin
- Carol Groceman
- Craig Santiago
- Jessica Waters

### Mentors

- Doug Crane (Admin)
- Adam Davis (System Services)

## Ingrid Eckler Scholarships Provided by The Friends of the Library

Every year, the Friends of the Library awards the Ingrid Eckler scholarship to employees who are pursuing their degree in Library Science. Congratulations to all of the 2024 winners!

Sharon Ennist  
Shelsea Estiverne  
Amber Fairchild  
Tiffany Gresh De Berry  
Nafisah Hamed  
Jazmin Jimenez  
Emily Logan

Jennifer Medler  
Jake Moore  
Keisha Phillips-Daley  
Briana Thomas  
Jessica Waters  
Melissa Gift



# \$883,428

## STATE AID TO THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



### TOOMEY FUND

Each year, the Friends of the Library receive \$10,000 from the Toomey Fund to support "Reading Is So Delicious," an initiative dedicated to fostering a love for reading among children and teens. The funds are used to purchase a curated collection of age-appropriate books, which are distributed during summer lunch programs at Library branches.

In 2024, the program handed out an impressive 1,715 books to young readers. "Reading Is So Delicious" launched in 2013, when the Palm Beach County Library System began distributing free books to children at County summer camps during lunchtime—an effort that inspired the program's unique name.



### FLORIDA TALKS

A cornerstone program of Florida Humanities, Florida Talks connects nonprofit organizations with engaging speakers who delve into the state's vibrant history, culture and heritage. The organization fully covers the \$300 presenter fee, making it accessible for nonprofits to host these thought-provoking events.

On August 17, 2024, the West Boynton Beach Branch welcomed 50 attendees for "Only in Florida: Why Did the Manatee Cross the Road?" Dr. Caren Neile captivated the audience with a lively mix of performance and lecture, sharing the charming and distinctive stories that define the Sunshine State.



### COOKING UP CREATIVITY WITH READ A RECIPE FOR LITERACY

The Palm Beach County Library System is serving up an innovative twist on childhood literacy through its partnership with Read a Recipe for Literacy funded by the Weing Foundation. Together, events are hosted across several branches—and the results are nothing short of spectacular.

Read a Recipe for Literacy (RRL) was founded in 2007 under the auspices of the Weing Foundation. Established in 1995, this fully-accredited 501 c (3) organization promotes education and literacy in innovative and engaging ways.

Children at participating branches—Belle Glade, Clarence E. Anthony in South Bay, Loula V. York in Pahokee, Jupiter, Lantana, Wellington, Okeechobee Boulevard, Tequesta and West Boca—are diving into a buffet of activities. These include cosplay design, clay sculpting, jewelry-making, food science and even engineering projects like building a speaker.

In one recent event, kids turned shredded newspaper into handmade paper. The sheets became heartfelt letters to family and friends, proving that literacy can be both meaningful and fun.

The Weing Foundation, based in New York, focuses on advancing education through scholarships, grant and literacy programs like this one. By teaming up with local libraries, the foundation has created a recipe for success that's bringing the joy of learning to life.

[www.readarecipeforliteracy.org](http://www.readarecipeforliteracy.org)



## **Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners**

Maria G. Marino, Mayor  
Sara Baxter, Vice Mayor  
Gregg K. Weiss  
Joel G. Flores  
Marci Woodward  
Maria Sachs  
Bobby Powell Jr.

**County Administrator**  
Verdenia C. Baker

**Assistant County Administrator**  
Todd Bonlarron

**Library Director**  
Douglas Crane

**Leadership Team**  
Aurora Arthay, Deputy Library Director  
Adam Davis, System Services Director  
Alicia Garrow, Finance & Facilities Director  
James Larson, Intellectual Resources Manager  
Craig Lessard, Information Technology Director  
Elizabeth Prior, Branch Services Director  
Andrea Taylor, Library Personnel Services Coordinator