



2023 Annual Report



A Message from our Chief Librarian



The last year held significant milestones for our Library. Launching the Strategic Master Plan was an important step to set goals for the next five years. Formalizing our partnership with Grandview Kids affirmed our commitment to supporting local families. Wrapping up the year with the opening of our Makerspace in the McLean Branch was exciting; watching visitors light up as they imagined all the possibilities now open to them is part of why we work so hard to bring the best Library services to Ajax.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Vaisler".

Sarah Vaisler, Chief Librarian and Executive Officer

2023 Library Board



Back, from left:

Voytek Bialkowski
(January 2023-Present)

Doug Miller
(January 2019-Present)

Rebecca Hayes
(October 2021-Present)

Regional Councillor Sterling Lee
(January 2019-Present)

Front, from left:

Deborah McDougall
(January 2019-Present)

Sandy Taylor
(January 2019-June 2023)

Piyali Correya
(January 2023-Present)

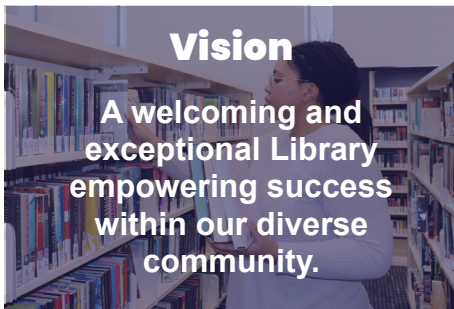
Sepelene Deonarine
(February 2020-Present)

Not pictured:

Mallik Fernando
and Pia Kaukoranta
Vahabi (both
September
2023-Present)

2023–2028 Strategic Master Plan

In 2023, Ajax Public Library released a new Strategic Master Plan, which included new vision and mission statements to guide the Library to 2028 and beyond.



Vision
A welcoming and exceptional Library empowering success within our diverse community.



Mission
Ajax Public Library designs experiences and connections where community, discovery, and innovation intersect.

Find the Strategic Master Plan online, with four strategic pillars and 40 recommendations that will inform Library service between 2023 and 2028.

ajaxlibrary.ca/policies

In This Report: Library Board Ends

The Ajax Public Library Board sets “Ends” which outline the reason for the existence of the Library, and guide the design and provision of service. Board Ends are identified throughout this report, showcasing how the Library has supported our residents.

Services to Support: Customers will have access to valuable Library services that support their financial, physical, social, and mental well-being.

Just for You: The Library will attract new customers and satisfy existing customers leading to an increased adoption of services.

Best Borrows: The Library’s collections will be current, relevant, and representative of the community.

Safe & Welcoming Spaces: Customers will have safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces to meet, interact with others, read, work quietly, or simply be.

Engaging Together: The Library will foster civic engagement and diverse discourse.

Learn to Grow: The Library will increase customers’ transliteracy skills with inspirational and creative opportunities.

By the Numbers



The average cardholder borrowed 25 items. In hardcover books, that's an average savings of \$906!



2023 Showcase



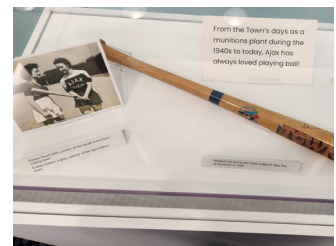
Makerspace @ McLean Opened

Over 6,000 visits and 200 projects, we're just getting started!



Grandview Kids Partnership

Formalizing our commitment to supporting families and building accessible spaces.



Archives Awareness

Showcasing Ajax's history and preserving it for the future.

Services to Support



Advancing Innovation, Diversity, and Equity in Employment: Career Fair

Featuring speakers, regional and municipal partners, and 36 job booths, the Career Fair in March 2023 supported over 450 job seekers. The Library hosted a booth and provided spaces for workshops and interviews, while highlighting employment resources available for free with a Library card.



A Program On Just About Everything

In 2023, the Library hosted over 400 programs that were designed to support customer financial, physical, social, and mental well-being. These included features such as Bibliotherapy, Money Matters series, Learn to Camp, and Seniors Centre Without Walls programs.



Connecting Social Services

Ajax Public Library offered space to community organizations to create new access points for customers and residents. These services supported housing, financial resources, harm reduction, legal clinics, transit, and employment help.

Just for You



Expanded Hours

In October 2023, the Library extended hours to open at 9 a.m., Monday through Saturday. This small change had big impact, providing access to space and services sooner.



Big Book Sale Returns!

When items no longer have a place on Library shelves, our customers are given the opportunity to take them home (this time forever!) at the Big Book Sale. In April and November, materials were available free of charge, with line-ups out the doors!

Best Borrows



Race to One Million

Ajax Public Library loaned its one millionth digital title through Overdrive in April 2023. This milestone emphasized our communities transition to digital formats, and how our curated collections are important to readers.



Launched in 2023

Keeping the collection relevant to our community means adding new and exciting items regularly. In 2023, this included:

- Sensory Kits
- C-Pens
- CBC Corner
- Bird Watching Kits
- Decodable Books
- Solaro

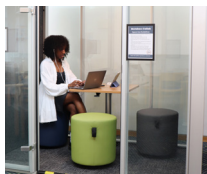
Check out the most popular titles from our collection on page 10. How many did you borrow?

Safe & Welcoming Spaces



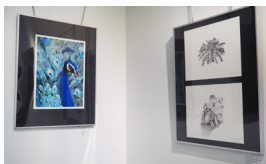
Drag Queen Storytime

Durham Region Public Libraries continued to support Drag Queen Storytime through May and June 2023. Performers read stories and answered questions; the program was a community connector for 2SLGBTQIA families.



Muteboxes

In June 2023, the Library opened three “Muteboxes”; standalone spaces to work or study apart from the hustle and bustle of the Library around you.



Art on Display

Main Branch’s Rotary Room featured art for viewing throughout the year. Local artists, as well as children’s work for initiatives such as the SPARK! Art Juried Art Show and the teen HeARTbeat Art Show, create a low-barrier gallery experience for community members.

Engaging Together



Durham World Religion Day

In partnership with the Durham Multifaith Community Committee, the Library welcomed 260 people to Durham World Religion Day on January 15, 2023. The opportunity to learn and connect with other faiths created a unique cultural community opportunity.



Volunteer Appreciation

The Library relies on volunteers to support initiatives such as our Board, book clubs, advisory councils, and Visiting Library Services. An average of 145 volunteers assist each year, and they were honoured at an event on April 15, 2023 as part of Volunteer Appreciation Week.

Learn to Grow



Ajax-Pickering Science Fair

The annual Science Fair showcases the curiosity and learning of students from grades 3 to 8. In 2023, the Senior Division leader had to leave the Science Fair early, to catch a plane to Edmonton for the Canada-Wide Science Fair!



Meet the Bees

In the summer, Audley Branch's Reading Garden was home to a honeybee hive. The hive was supported by the annual pizza garden, and interesting programs that explored the role of pollinators in the environment.



STEAM and the Makerspace

With help from partner organizations, the Library sparked curiosity with STEM, coding, and robotics programs for children all year long. The opening of the Makerspace boosted access to equipment to support STEAM skill development and creativity for all ages.

More in 2024!

The Library will continue many features from 2023, and new and exciting programs are always on tap! Discover What's On at ajaxlibrary.ca/whatson.

Partnerships

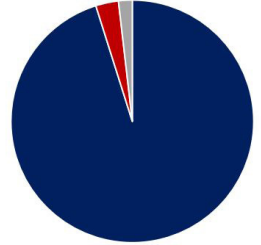
Special thanks to some of the partners who help us build a stronger community:



Financials

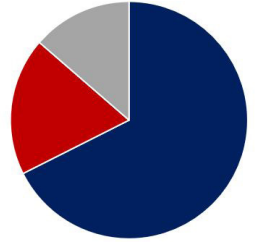
Income

- Town of Ajax Operating Grant: \$7,012,798
- Provincial & Federal Grants: \$157,700
- Other Income: \$75,000



Expenses

- Staffing: \$4,738,408
- Operations: \$1,629,490
- Collections: \$877,600

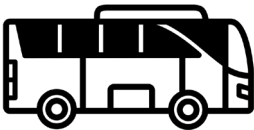


*Above figures may be adjusted pending completion of audit.

Fun Facts



Library programs in 2023 had the same attendance as a selling out Scotiabank Arena - more than twice!



If every person who visited a Library branch in 2023 came by a double-decker Go Transit bus, it would take 7,937 bus trips!



If every item checked out in 2023 was a 250 page book, it would take the average reader almost 778 years to read them all!

Library Love

Anonymous



I just want to thank the team here for being so kind in finding me all the books that could help me with what I was looking for. You guys are the best!! Thank you so so so much!

Donnette



Thanks so much. I love the Library. Thank you for your faithful service.

Ray



Please advise that my customer services experience at Ajax Public Library was EXCEPTIONAL. Also, they totally respected my disability and assisted when it was necessary. Amazing job!

Sasha



Doing a great job here at the library. This branch is so amazing with our compassion to the homeless. We love going to the programs and story times.

Nita

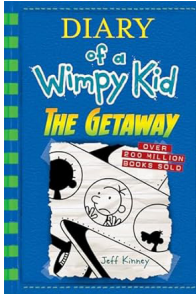


Excellent ideas, love to learn more all about what you have to learn through the machines that were here today. Congratulations on today's grand opening. Awesome thing to have here at our library. Looking forward to coming to do activities here.

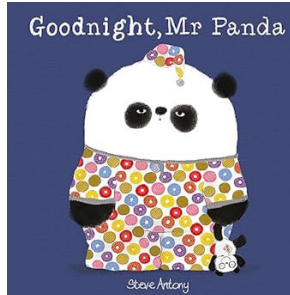
Favourite Finds

These are the books that our customers enjoyed most in 2023!

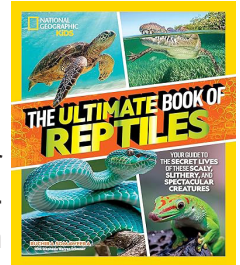
Junior Fiction



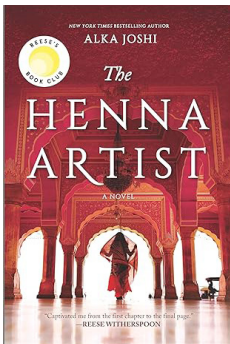
Junior Picture Book



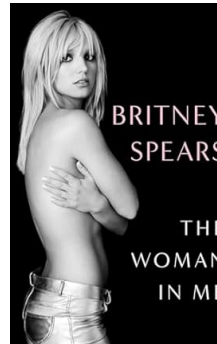
Junior Non-Fiction



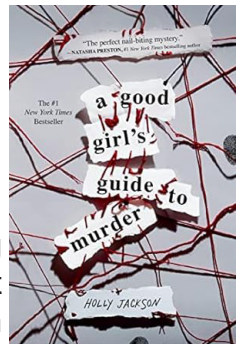
Adult Fiction



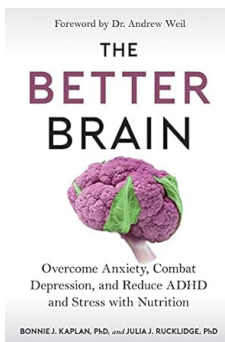
Adult Non-Fiction



Young Adult Fiction



Audiobook



Movie



Video Game



Top Authors! Throughout the year, our readers reached for Geronimo Stilton, Jeff Kinney, James Patterson, Dav Pilkey, and Mo Willems over and over again. 80% of our top authors are children's authors!



Stay Connected

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95 Magill Dr.

Audley Branch
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