

T.B. SCOTT TREE LIBRARY IS ELEMENTAL

A library card is elemental.
36
Sr
Summer reading
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
51
Gn
Graphic novels
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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My
Mysteries
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Fp
Fishing pole
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Bo
Books
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Mo
Movies
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Tea
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A library card is elemental.
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Ro
Romance novels
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Pz
Puzzles
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Ck
Cake pans
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Mi
Musical instrument
#ilovelibraries.org



A library card is elemental.
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Bz
Books
#ilovelibraries.org

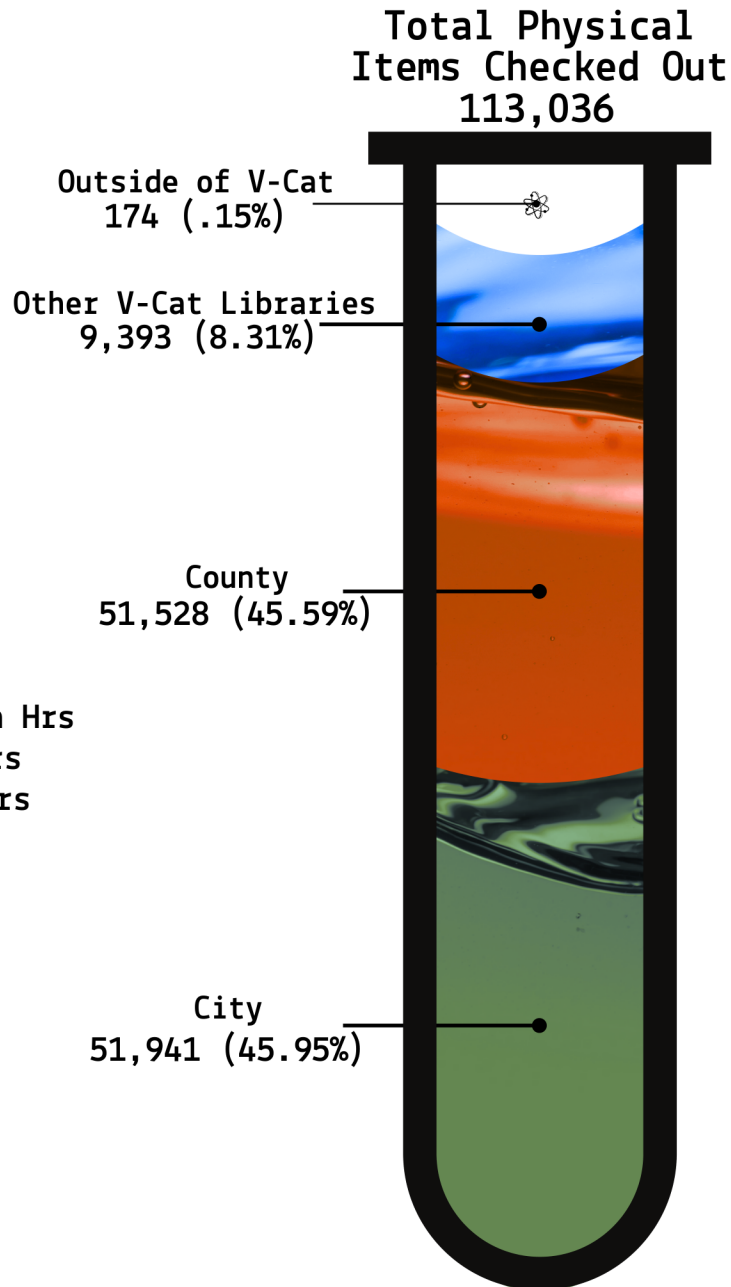
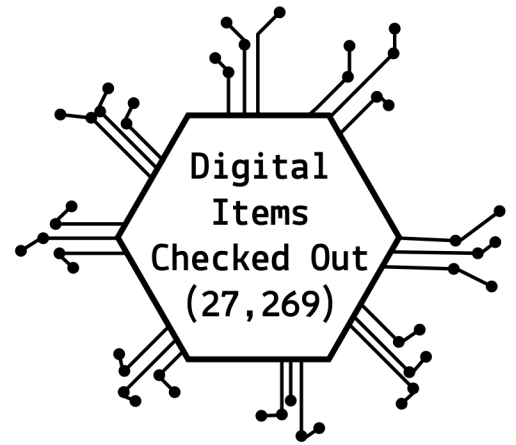
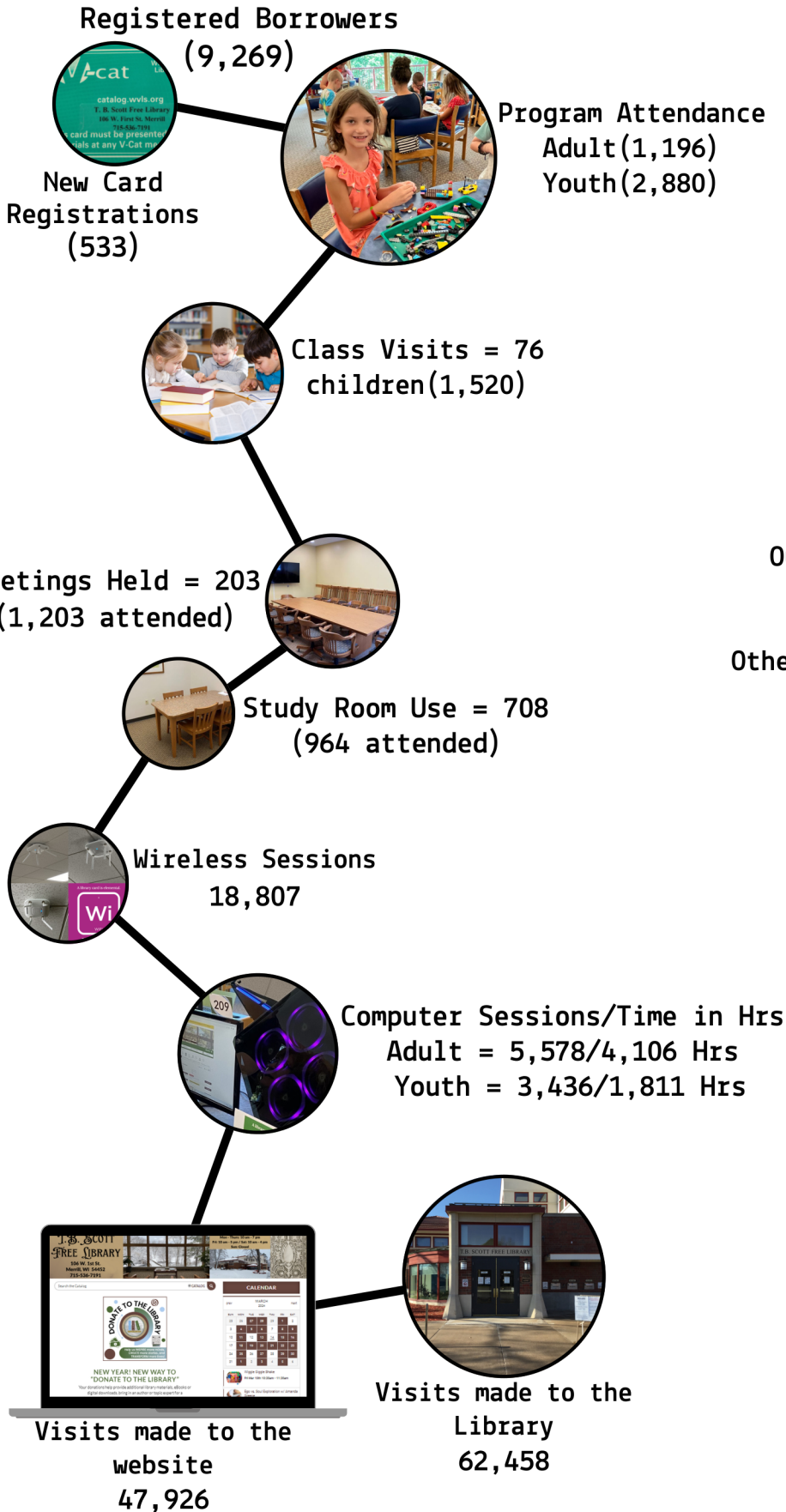
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Graphic novels
#ilovelibraries.org

A library card is elemental.
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Seeds
#ilovelibraries.org

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR IMPACT

A Quick Look at the Library's Key Elements



STRATEGIC ELEMENT 1

Promote and encourage community members of all ages to discover the joy of reading and to become lifelong readers.

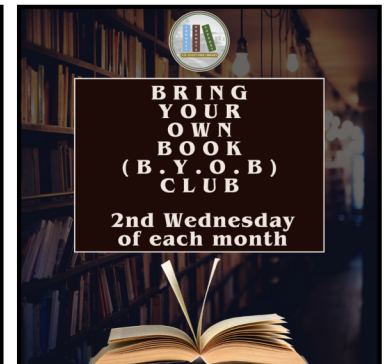
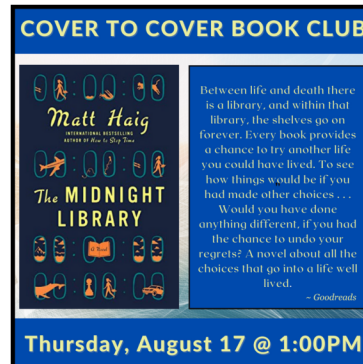
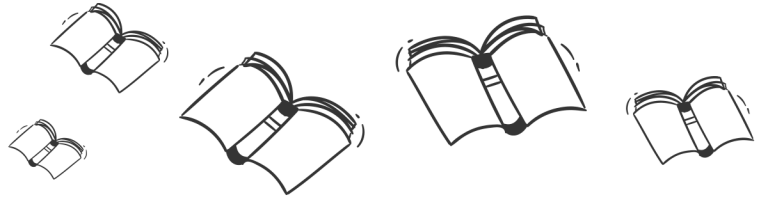
BOOK CLUBS SOAR

Book Clubs are the heart of libraries. T.B. Scott Free Library is no exception. The Cover-to-Cover Book Club has offered an active connection to books every month since 1997. Let's do the math:

$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \text{ years} \\ \times 12 \text{ months per year} \\ \hline = 312 \text{ books} \end{array}$$

That is a lot of books read and discussed over the years! With the recent emergence of virtual meetings and presentations, the authors themselves will sometimes join in on the discussion. Book selections vary from month to month with fiction and non-fiction titles.

In 2023, the library began expanding book club offerings with the creation of the **Bring Your Own Book (BYOB) Club** and opened its meeting spaces for area book clubs to gather. To the Gen Z's and Millennials in the community, we know you are out there. What will bring you to a Book Club at the Library? It is certain that there will be more opportunities for more book clubs in 2024.



LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS



The Merrill community has numerous activity centers that offer adults with special needs the opportunity to achieve independence by participating in activities throughout the community. The Library in collaboration with Kindhearted Care, LLC, Believe & Achieve Adult Day Center, and Opportunities Development Center (ODC) has created an Adult Story Time that focuses on literacy with a whole lot of fun. Each month the participants hear stories, sing, and create some amazing artwork to share with their family and friends.



SEASONAL READING PROGRAMS

Summer 2023 Youth Readers

Youth = 428
Teens = 53

Summer 2023 Adult Readers

Adults = 44



THEMED BOOK BAG REQUESTS - The Library's Partnership with Area Educators

Total Number of Teachers
146



Total Number of Items Requested
3246

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 2

Promote, support, and serve as a center for the practice & development of civic discourse, helping to develop responsible citizens by infusing a sense of importance of democracy

PROMOTING-SUPPORTING-SERVING

The Library could be seen throughout the Community in 2023. Staff enjoyed the opportunity to interact with adults and youth from Merrill and the surrounding area in numerous settings. Conversations varied from one age group to another; however, the focus remained “How can the library support the needs of the community in a safe and inclusive manner?” The Merrill Area Community Night Out offered an interactive puzzle-making station. Adults could converse while the youth colored to their hearts content.



GEARING UP FOR THE 2024-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

The end of 2023 brought to an end the Library’s 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. In June 2023, the process to re-evaluate the Library’s position among similar-size libraries based upon its physical size and the population of the community began with the Library Administrative Team visiting libraries throughout the state. We evaluated spaces and met with staff with questions in hand to ensure productive conversations. In September, the Library team worked to develop a Community Survey that residents throughout our area could complete. Questions related to resident experiences with the Library, their interest in what the library currently provided, and what they wished to be considered in the future. The data from the Survey has been extrapolated and a report is on file at the Library that the public is welcome to review. The Library team was then set to the task of developing the Goals & Objectives for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, The completion of this step is set for April 2024 at which time it will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Check back for the review of the final steps in the process in the 2024 Annual Report. We are excited to see what the next five years brings to the Library and its patrons.

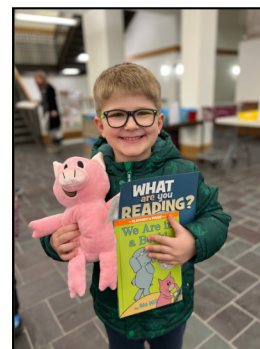


WE ARE YOUR DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY LIBRARY

Learning is a journey not a destination. And, the Library is one of the best places to put that into practice. Staff Development Days were developed and play a critical role in supporting and preparing the library team to provide the best service possible to the members of our community. Through a partnership with the Aging & Disability Resource Center, we brought the training to the Library team to help us earn the designation of a Dementia Friendly Library.

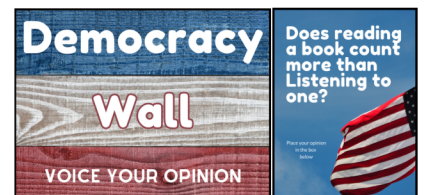


DEMOCRACY & YOUTH



The Library provides young patrons an opportunity to participate in the most democratic process, voting. An election was held. Votes were cast by the Library’s young patrons and Piggy won! And so did this young patron after the election was held and his name

was drawn from the youth that participated in the election. The Library’s young patrons truly enjoy being involved in the election process. They also enjoyed the right to have their voices heard as part of a Democracy Wall activity specifically designed for young Library patrons by the Youth Services team.



STRATEGIC ELEMENT 3

Develop and execute programming, serving a broad range of ages and interests, expanding our awareness of diversity in our community

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

~MULTI-GENERATIONAL~

The Library was full of activity in 2023 on all levels. The committed staff worked diligently to develop programs that would meet the needs of all community members. Developing and keeping connections from one generation to the next is critical for a community's sustainability. As you read through the Annual Report, you will see the pattern that has developed for the Library to help in achieving that goal.



~ADULT SERVICES~

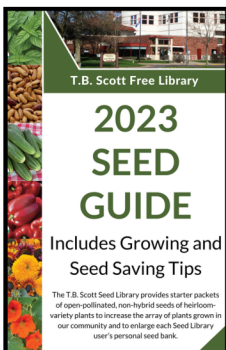


~YOUTH SERVICES~



~OUTREACH SERVICES~

The Library's Seed Library remains an outreach staple and has grown roots in the community. The 2023 growing season was on display through hydroponic growing methods. As libraries have transformed over the years, T.B. Scott has also grown into new areas of outreach into the community. The Library's outreach expansion created a relationship with the Wisconsin State Park System. Much like the library is a gem to this community, the Merrill Council Grounds is as well. Patrons had the opportunity to "checkout" a FREE pass to use at any state park to include the Merrill Council Grounds.



STRATEGIC ELEMENT 4

Provide collections, digital resources, and technology resources responsive to community interests and needs

RESOURCE INVESTMENT

VALUED ADDITION TO THE LIBRARY THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In an effort to meet the needs of all community members the Library continuously adds resources that enhance the library experience. In 2023, the Library was fortunate to receive a donation for an updated low-vision desktop device from Midstate Independent Living Choices (MILC). This resource is available to patrons on the 3rd floor in the Adult Services Department. While the unit is located in the Adult Services Department, it is available to library patrons of all ages. Individuals interested in learning more about the low-vision device and how it works may schedule an appointment.

Individuals familiar with the use of the equipment may stop in any time to use it. We are always looking for more ways to make the library experience more about the patrons who use it.



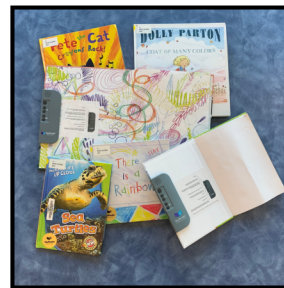
BRINGING NEW AND UPDATED TECH TOOLS FOR YOU

Always striving to improve the patron experience and developing a collection that patrons will enjoy, in 2023 the Library invested in new Youth Services work stations.

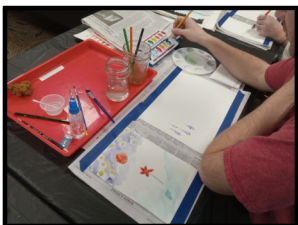


Purchase of this form of equipment can be made through the cost-savings made available through a statewide purchasing consortium. In layman's terms, "We get more bang for our buck through volume purchases." What you are seeing in the image of books is audio books with the audio feature built right into the book structure. No longer does a reader need a separate tape

or a CD player to listen to a book. It's right there in their hands in the book for their listening pleasure and to read along developing their literacy skills with a feeling of independence.



MORE THAN JUST BOOKS...ELEMENTALLY SPEAKING



Libraries have transformed and libraries are more than just books. The Library has branched out and is offering more programs devoted to the interests of community members and continues to expand the Library of Things that was first developed in 2018. After five years of expansion, the Library of Things relocated to the first floor in a space of its own. The relocation offers patrons the opportunity to view the items available for check out more closely. The addition of an assortment of cake pans was by far the largest development in the Library of Things collection in 2023. Patrons may request the cake of their choice at the Circulation Desk after browsing through the Cake Binder on display.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Promote and encourage use of the library as a safe, comfortable, and welcoming place to meet and interact with others

TAKING THE LIBRARY INTO YOUR HOME

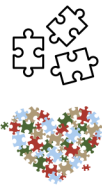
What young reader doesn't enjoy taking home a great book from the Library to read? Even better, what young patron doesn't enjoy taking a project kit from the library to enjoy a hands-on activity at home? Of course, at the Library, we know the answer Library families have asked for more and we have wholeheartedly replied, "Absolutely!



Enjoy!" The increased number of activity bags could not be made possible, however, without the support of the library's wonderful community partners. There are way too many to list here. So, if you see a business name on an activity bag the next time you grab one for the kids, now you know the importance of this recognition.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

What better way to relax, besides reading a book, then putting a puzzle together with your friends!



LET'S PLAY TOGETHER



READ! PLAY!
LEARN!

That is so what a Library is about! If you haven't been to the Library recently, it might be time for a visit. In 2023, the Youth Services team worked diligently to create a fun, safe, and inclusive environment for youth of all ages. Our literacy play center is so much fun that it is sometimes difficult for even staff to get things done . . . just kidding.

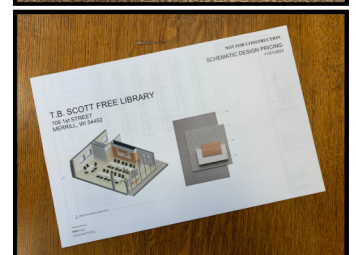


Youth Services staff modeled for this image just for this report. No real marshmallows were consumed.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

Space Needs Study

After being rescheduled numerous times since 2018, for reasons beyond Library control, the Library's contracted Space Needs Study with MSR Design, Architecture firm from Minneapolis, MN, began in January 2023. The Library administration team met numerous times with the MSR Design Team. A Plan was put in place and focus group meetings were scheduled and held in February 2023. The Final Report, which is available for public viewing, stressed numerous areas of concern, one of which was the need for additional meeting & activity spaces. Libraries have transformed over the years along with the needs of community members. A recommendation was made by Library administration to the Library Board of Trustees that the addition of a meeting/activity room in the Youth Services Department be made to allow for increased programming and greater support of community needs. The decision was made to pursue the addition in 2024. Stay tuned for more in 2024.





@TBScottFreeLibrary



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MISSION STATEMENT

Serving the Merrill area through traditional and innovative services, T.B. Scott Free Library connects people to their community and the world, promotes literacy and civic engagement, encourages and supports life-long learning, ensures free and open access to ideas, and provides opportunities for recreation.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Friends Purpose:

- To support the T.B. Scott Free Library in developing its facilities and services for the community.
- To encourage gifts and bequests to the Library.
- To stimulate support and use of the Library.
- To promote knowledge of the functions, services, resources and needs of the Library.
- To enjoy the fellowship of Library friends.

2023 Fundraiser

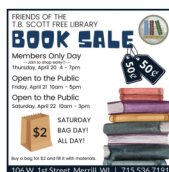


Photo credit:
Voss Studio

Laurie A. Ollhoff
Library Director