



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



T.B. SCOTT FREE LIBRARY

OUR IMPACT

A Quick Look at the Numbers

Total Physical Items Checked Out: 104,807

*Outside of WVLS:
556
.53%

*Other WVLS Libraries:
7,883
7.52%

*County: 47,540
45.36%

*City: 48,828
46.59%

Digital Items Checked Out
28,519

Registered Borrowers: 8,740
New Card Registrations: 568

Visits
Made to the
Website
45,334

Visits
Made to the
Library
60,375

Wireless Sessions
17,033

Meetings Held: 283
Total Attendance: 1,362

Program Attendance

Class Visits: 80
Children: 1,628

Adult
1,425

Teen
128

General Interest
323

Youth
4,110

*WVLS = Wisconsin Valley Library System in which T.B. Scott Free Library is a collaborative member. Membership provides opportunities for resource sharing and economy of scale purchasing. The number and percentage designates the breakdown related to patron location and the materials checked out.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

LIFELONG LEARNING

Reaching All Readers

Nothing like a great book to get you all settled in to rock and read.



Really! Reading a comic book is a great way to grab the attention of a reluctant reader. The Library joined in on the FREE Comic Book Day promotion to offer a free Comic Book to every interested young patron.

Readers Become Writers

There is no better place for aspiring authors to meet than at the library. The Real Writers Group has opened up opportunities for writers to connect with published authors and work together to critique and support each other's work.



Spicing Up Your Learning @the Library

How do you encourage reading in adults? Well, you combine it with food to spice up their lives and that's all there is to it. Our initial supply of 30 "Spice of the Month" bags quickly increased to 50 as featured spices gained popularity.

Another Great Summer of Reading

Adult Readers
162 adults stopped at the Library for their Summer Read BINGO Card

SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB

September Edition feat. Lavender

LAVENDER HISTORY
Tracing back 2,500 years, lavender has been utilized by many civilizations. In ancient Egypt, lavender was popular for mummification. Lavender was also reported as a cure for insomnia and back pain in ancient Greece.

BOOKS FEATURING LAVENDER

- "Lavender morning" by Jude Deveroux
- "Lavender: 50 self-care recipes and projects for natural wellness" by Bonnie Louise Gillis
- "Lavender blue" by Donna Kaufman
- "Living wreaths : 30 beautiful projects for gifts and décor" by Natalie Bernhisei Robinson

[Read More](#)

RECIPES WITH LAVENDER

LEMON AND LAVENDER CHICKEN

Ingredients

- 10 pieces chicken (3 whole chicken, cut up or 10 boneless chicken breasts)
- 1/2 cup lavender, dried
- 4 tbsp olive oil, extra virgin
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup large lemon zest (or to taste)

Method

- Crust the lavender in a mortar and pestle (if you don't have one, place lavender in a bag and crush with rolling pin or heavy pestle). Put the crushed lavender into a large bowl along with the remaining marinade ingredients.
- Drizzle or whisk well to combine. Add the chicken pieces and toss well to coat. Cover and allow to marinate for 30 minutes (all rooms term) or up to four hours (in the fridge).
- When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 400°F (325°F). Place the chicken pieces in a roasting pan in a single layer, skin side up. Pour the marinade over the top. Roast for 30 minutes.
- Remove pan from oven. Flip pieces over and bake the chicken pieces with the pan juices. Roast for 30 minutes.
- Remove pan from oven. Flip pieces over and bake the chicken pieces with the pan juices. Roast for 30 minutes.
- Allow chicken to rest for 5 minutes. Serve chicken with pan juices spooned over.
- Over broiling in spots can occur because of the honey. Watch it carefully after the 30 minute mark.

HONEY LAVENDER CUPCAKES

Ingredients

- 1 cup dairy-free soft butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup lavender, dried
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup large lemon zest (or to taste)
- 1/2 cup large lemon juice
- 1/2 cup large lemon zest (or to taste)

Method

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and place 12 cupcakes in a parchment-lined pan. In the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, combine the butter and lavender. Beat for 2 minutes on high (about 30 seconds).
- Add in the egg whites, vanilla extract, and sugar and mix on high for 1 minute.
- Add in the flour, baking powder, and salt and begin to mix on low.
- With the mixer on low, slowly pour in the lavender milk and the oil and just combined. Be careful not to overmix the batter or it will cause the cupcakes to become too dense.
- Fill each cupcake liner approximately 3/4 full with the cupcake batter and bake for 12 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
- Remove the cupcakes from the pan and allow them to cool for 5 minutes. Gently remove each cupcake from the pan and place them in a cooling rack to fully cool.

Youth Readers
TOTAL 527
471 Readers
Ages 0-11 and
56 Teen Readers
enjoyed the
Library's Summer
Reading
Adventures

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

AWARENESS

What We Do ... Bringing It to You

The Community Baby Shower held at the Merrill Enrichment Center was the perfect opportunity for the library to highlight resources available to parents in Lincoln County. In August, the Library team attended Community Night Out, where free books were given to young readers and puzzles were handed out to puzzlers of all ages.



Community Read

In collaboration with the Merrill Active and Aware Citizens organization, the Library offered community members an opportunity to discuss volunteerism and the benefits it can bring to a community.



Community Collaboration

In an effort to highlight all of the resources available in the community, the Library facilitates programming with community partners. In 2024, we worked in tandem with the Friends of the Council Grounds. The Friends provided funding for snowshoes that are available for checkout at the library, which can then be used on the trails of the Council Grounds by checking out one-day State Park Passes at the Library along with all of the other Library material available for checkout. During the summer months the Youth Services Department collaborated with the 4-H Club and AmeriCorps to bring lots of Berry, Beary Fun and exciting programs to the library facilitated by AmeriCorps student workers..



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

PROGRAMMING



YOUTH SERVICES. . . IT'S LITERALLY ALL ABOUT LITERACY FUN!

Whether it's indoors or outdoors, the Library always has something to do . . . either tinker on your own or enjoy a bit of magic with your friends.



READ TO A DOG!

One of the library's most popular and satisfying programs in Youth Services is, by far, "Read to a Dog." It is always guaranteed to have a waiting list! It is quite obvious that this pup was enjoying it too!



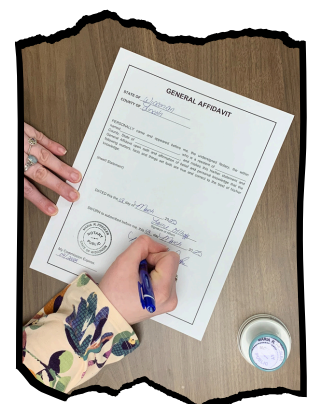
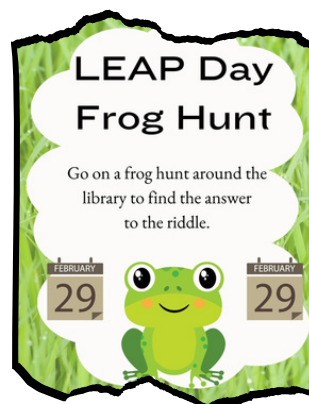
IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS ANYMORE!

The library continues to expand opportunities for adults who just wanna have fun and demonstrate their artistic abilities. The Peep House event was a favorite!



PERPETUAL PROGRAMMING

Programming takes on all forms at the Library. Passive or perpetual programming has become quite popular. It provides opportunities for patrons to enjoy an activity at the library that works with their schedule. You will always find a Scavenger Hunt somewhere in the library. Patrons jumped at the chance to complete the most sought-after Scavenger Hunt in 2024 . . . the Leap Frog Scavenger Hunt. In 2024, the Library began offering Notary Public Service recognizing the need in the community. It is a program service that is available at all times during Library hours.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

COLLECTIONS

It's More Than Just the Books

The Library of Things collection continues to expand; so much, that additional shelving units were built in order to better display all the great games, gadgets, tools, and more that can be checked out from the library with a T.B. Scott Free Library patron card.



Library STEM Collection Expanded

It's like being a kid in a candy store, when it comes to adding interactive kits to the Youth Services collection. Of course, we need our youngest patrons to try some of these kits out. The Crunch Lab event in 2024 demonstrated how important it was for the library to expand the STEM collection.



Inclusive and Connected Collection Development

Wonderbook

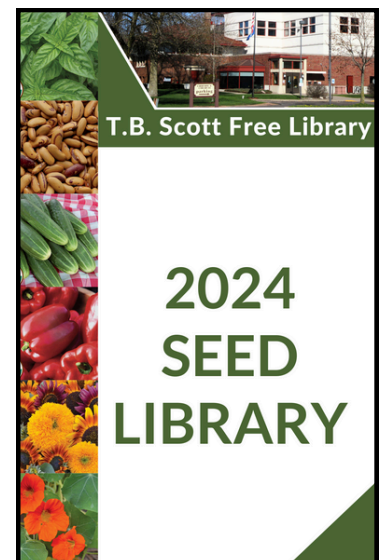
Chapter Books are a great resource for our emerging middle grade patrons. The audio component is constructed into the book itself.



Keeping patrons connected virtually through the expansion of the library's **Hotspot** collection was made possible through grant funding.

Seed Library Collection

While a Seed Library may seem like an odd item for a library collection, it truly is not. It provides patrons an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors as they tend to their tiny little garden and check out new titles about gardening that are added to the library's book collection as we continue to make material availability grow. The seeds offered for checkout change every year.





Space Needs Study Finale

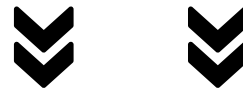
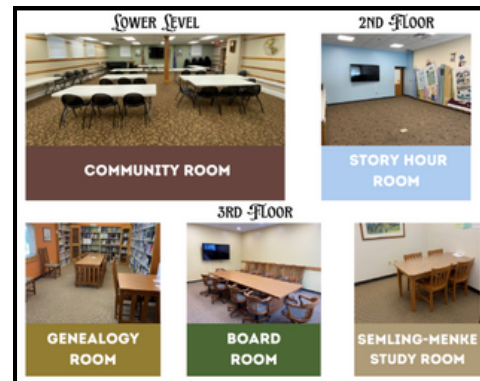
In 2023 the Library hit “Restart” and began the process of assessing the library and its space and how those spaces were meeting the needs of the community. Fast forward to 2024 and the Library administration team presented a proposal to renovate underutilized space in the Youth Services Department to create an activity room that would provide expanded programming opportunities for the Youth Services and Adult Services Departments.

Family Workspace

For parents with infants and toddlers, working from home has great appeal. With that decision, however a social disconnect often results. Knowing that the library can provide a comfortable work environment, it was recognized that a designated work space would benefit the library’s patron parents. With that realization came the decision to invest in a family work pod made possible through the Library’s endowment fund.



More Meeting Spaces Leads to More Collaboration



Recognizing the need for more collaborative workspace and meeting rooms, an evaluation of the library’s floor plan on all levels took place resulting in designating underutilized spaces into dual function spaces. This has led to increased collaboration with non-profits like the ADRC, which resulted in the creation of the Library’s Memory Cafe program.

Warm Up & Read

In an effort to revitalize the historic Carnegie Wing of the library, an investment was made to have an electric fireplace insert placed into the wood burning fireplace that was no longer functional creating a warm and welcoming environment for readers and puzzlers.





@TBScottFreeLibrary



@tbscottlibrary_merrill

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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.



**2024 Fundraiser
 &
 Subsequent
 Fulfillment of
 Funding Requests**



Photo credit: Voss Studio

Laurie A. Ollhoff
 Library Director