



**2025**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**I.B. SCOTT FREE LIBRARY**

# OUR IMPACT

## A QUICK LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Total Physical Items Checked Out: 104,534



Outside of WVLS:  
1,530  
1.46%



Other WVLS  
Libraries:  
8,882  
8.5%



County: 46,604  
44.58%



City: 47,518  
45.46%

Digital  
Items  
Checked  
Out  
27,956

kanopy



Visits made to the  
Library: 67,258

Wireless Sessions  
15,415



Computer Sessions  
Adult: 5,559 Youth: 5,519

MEETINGS HELD:  
291  
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:  
1,429

Self-Directed  
Activity  
Participants

Adults  
4871  
Youth  
666

Class Visits: 79  
Children: 1,570

### PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

Teen  
138

Youth  
3,701

Adult  
1,274

General  
Interest  
453



Registered Borrowers: 7,463  
New Card Registrations: 590

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

# LIFELONG LEARNING

## Arts in the Community

The community spoke, the library listened, and the library has continued to add more hands-on project programming for our adult patrons. From



book recycling projects to beginning watercolor instruction, there is certain to be something for everyone. In 2025, these projects included paperback pumpkins and striking watercolor landscapes.



## STEAM Exploration @the Library

STEAM exploration comes in all shapes, sizes, and formats. To some, the wafer house may just be something to eat but to the person that built it, there was a bit of math, science, and engineering involved to provide the support for it to remain upright. This and other library events throughout



2025 provided opportunities for adult and youth patrons to experience a bit of science, technology, engineering, art, and math, referred to as STEAM.

## Helping Our Community Thrive in a Digital World

Grant application success in 2025 through the Public Library Association and AT&T brought valuable digital literacy resources to the library that was shared with community members in the form of workshops and updated computer equipment and instructional software.



### Digital Literacy Workshops

Each workshop will last approximately 2 hours  
Pre-registration is mandatory for all workshops  
Refreshments will be provided.  
Attendees will be eligible for door prizes and giveaways

**iOS 101**

Join Chris Sprague and learn how to use iPhones or iPads

4/1 @ 10:30am  
4/12 @ 2:00pm  
4/14 @ 12:00pm

**WINDOWS 11 BASICS**

5/6 @ 11:00am  
5/12 @ 2:00pm

**android 101**

Join Maria Pregler and learn how to use Android based smartphones and tablets

4/3 @ 10:30am  
4/19 @ 11:00am  
4/25 @ 1:00pm

**CYBER SECURITY**

3/13 @ 1:00pm  
5/31 @ 10:30am

**EMAIL BASICS**

5/1 @ 10:15am

Workshops made possible via PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentives

Please stop in or call the library for more information, or to register.  
106 W. 1st Street, Merrill, WI 715-536-7191

## Summer Reading Fun



## BINGO

**Adult Readers**

136 adults stopped at the Library for their Summer Read BINGO Card

**Youth Readers**  
**TOTAL 427**  
 375 Readers  
 Ages 0-11 and  
 52 Teen Readers  
 enjoyed the  
 Library's Summer  
 Reading  
 Adventures



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

# AWARENESS

## 60+ Dining : Gather at the Table

In collaboration with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin (ADRC-CW), the library began offering an in-house dining opportunity for our 60+ community members on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month during the Fall of 2025. The dining experience includes an educational/informational/entertainment component from 11AM-12PM with lunch served at 12PM. It's a time for our 60+ community members to learn, lunch, and laugh with each other in the comfort of their community library.



## Family Fun Night

The library's coveted Family Fun Night returned in 2025 with families from Washington Elementary School. The event included some great hands-on activities--a craft and scavenger hunt, and a chance for students to pick out a free book compliments of monetary donations from local businesses. Fun was had by all in attendance as can be seen from the photos to the left. It is important to point out that the table of books was very popular and it was empty by the end of the evening. Watch for more Family Fun Nights to be scheduled in the future.

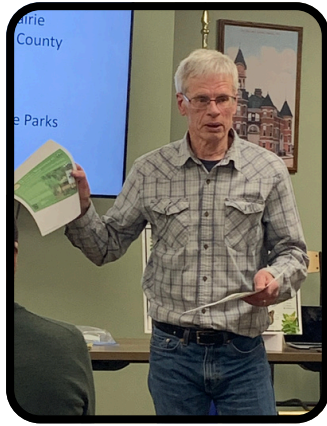
## Getting the Word Out

The library has been working closely with the Wisconsin Valley Library Service technology team to ensure that the library's website is in compliance with all things related to accessibility. It is a two-year project that will continue into 2026. You may have already noticed some of the changes that have been made. In order to communicate this project, library events, and important announcements, the library developed a quarterly newsletter. For individuals interested in receiving the quarterly newsletter via email, a form was created to signup at <https://www.tbscottlibrary.org/library-newsletter/>.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

# PROGRAMMING



## Monarch Butterflies & More

Area naturalist Don Evans shared an informative presentation about monarchs, milk weed, and other endangered species in early 2025. In the end, attendees took back home their very own milkweed seeds to draw in their own monarch butterflies on their next trek to the area. It is presentations like this and more that library patrons enjoyed throughout the year.

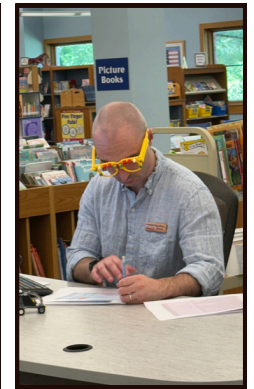


## Some Sweet Building Going on @the Library

Oh, how sweet it is to bring programming to the library that both the young and old enjoy. The art of gingerbread house building with wonderfully sweet components is truly an enjoyable feat to observe. The library has spent years hosting this event and it never seems to get old. The creations of 2025 were wonderful and you simply cannot miss the smiles that these creations bring to the attendees.

## LEGO Day @the Library

What library exists without a LEGO Day? Certainly not this one. And, this library's bonus to patrons is that there is a LEGO duo team, Tim and Dawn Dunbar, in the community's midst that graciously share their talents both in display and education. The 2025 event was a hit. Both patrons and staff had their sights on making it an astutely fun event. And, that it was with LEGO glasses and all.



## Memory Café Moments

In a collaborative effort with Compassus Home Health Care, the library brought the comfort of Memory Cafés to the community in 2025. Compassus and its model of care that focuses on a person as an individual and each family as a cherished entity, set the groundwork for the library's endeavor in providing an inviting and educational space for both those experiencing memory loss and for those that provide support and care.

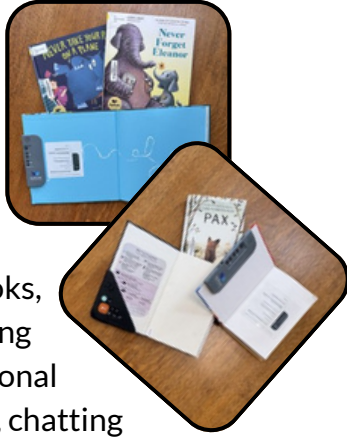


# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

# COLLECTIONS

## Love to Read? We've Got You Covered

From magazines to read-along books that include VOXBooks and WonderBooks, the library's collection development team spends hours reading

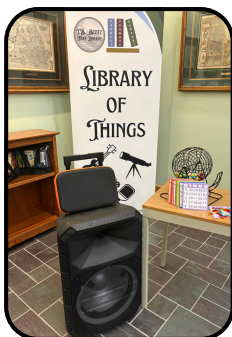


new books, evaluating professional reviews, chatting with, and collaborating with authors and book vendors to ensure that there is something for everyone to read.



## Beyond Books

In 2025, the library saw a growth in items added to the Library of Things collection. While books will remain an important part of this library, we continually look for ways to provide resources and services for everyone. Wisconsin State Park Passes have been a huge hit and that "experience" offering will continue for as long as the State Park Service offers it to public libraries. And for our patrons that organize family gatherings and host parties, there is a speaker system and a BIG BINGO Game Kit just waiting to be checked out.



## Movie Selection Expansion

While some believe DVDs are on their way out, they continue to be checked out on a regular basis. New titles are added monthly to the collection. With the growth of online movie networks like Netflix, Hulu, and more, the collection development team began to evaluate the resources available to public



libraries for patron resources. The library collection team was pleased to add kanopy to the library's collection. This online resource is FREE to anyone that holds a T.B. Scott Free Library patron card



## Collection Highlights

To our readers, check out the numerous book displays that were added in 2025. While the one display has existed for some time, it has a new vibe that library staff think you will enjoy. And the other new displays have been added so that new books are right at your fingertips.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

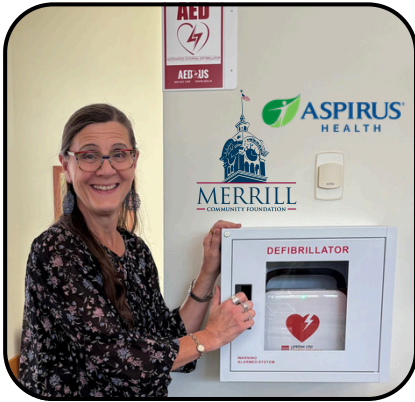
# FACILITIES

## “The Pioneer Room” The NEW Youth Services Activity Room



In an effort to better serve the needs of the community and determine how the library fits, a space needs study and an evaluation of the library’s strategic plan took place with community and staff input. Through this process it was determined that access to a comfortable activity and meeting space would significantly enhance the services the library could provide to its community members. “The Pioneer Room” became a reality in 2025 to serve that need.

## Building Safety & Improvements



In an effort to elevate safety features in the library, grants were applied for and received from Aspirus and the Merrill Community Foundation for the upgrade and new

placement of AED machines in the library. Shown here is the unit that was added to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Adult Services Department. The library is appreciative of the grants that are available to provide a more safe environment for both patrons and staff.

## Youth Services Transformation

There were a number of noticeable improvements in the Youth Services Department in 2025. As the library team evaluated the new floor plan, it became obvious that this



would be a the perfect opportunity to change how patrons searched for books in the youth services collection. The decision was made that the current non-fiction section would mimic the transformation that had taken place in the fiction picture book section. A great deal of behind the scenes work took place and what you see here takes you from the old to the new.

## Trained Staff = A More Comfortable Environment

In order to provide quality service to the community and the patrons the library serves, it is crucial for the library team to be adequately trained to help them meet the needs of patrons. Training topics in 2025 included TECH Days, self-care, team building, and neurodiversity in the workplace.





@TBScottFreeLibrary



@tbscottlibrary\_merrill

106 W. 1st Street  
Merrill, WI 54452  
715.536.7191  
tbscottlibrary.org

## LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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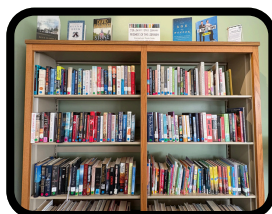
## MISSION STATEMENT

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.



**2025 Fundraiser  
&  
Subsequent  
Fulfillment of  
Funding Requests**



Photo credit: Voss Studio

Laurie A. Ollhoff  
Library Director