

Kent
District
Library

2019

Information. Ideas. Excitement!

Annual Report



Kent District Library is a public library system operating 19 branch libraries that serve nearly 400,000 residents of 27 different municipalities throughout Kent County. KDL enriches lives by providing information, ideas and excitement. It is an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by millage dollars and private donations. KDL is a member of the Lakeland Library Cooperative.

For more information, visit kdl.org.



2019 was another big year for us and we have a lot to celebrate! We launched a new reading program, won awards, broke ground on a new branch and went fine-free. We constantly strive to remove barriers to access and expand services, building stronger communities while providing high value for tax payers.

These highlights tell a bit of the story, but the main narrative at KDL consists of daily interactions with our patrons. This is our biggest accomplishment – blessing people in small ways each and every day. Putting just the right book into the hands of a new reader. Teaching someone how to use the computer. Being a listening ear. Making an impact in the community and in the lives of the people we serve.

As we reflect on the past, we also look to the future. We will continue to find needs that we can meet. We won't stop working to further all people through a diverse and innovative collection, equitable learning opportunities, inclusive programming and community outreach. We are proud to challenge the notion of a "traditional library."

We hope you'll join us on the ride.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lance Werner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lance Werner, Executive Director

information

ideas

excitement!



2,882
Kids in K-3 registered for Mission: Read



Mission: Read launched in January

In January, KDL partnered with other Kent County libraries and organizations to launch Mission: Read, a reading program designed to help young and beginning readers develop strong reading habits and pass Michigan reading proficiency requirements. The mission is to read for 1,000 days before 6th grade. In just one year, nearly 3,000 children accepted the mission at KDL! They are on their way to earning their own reading tablet.

"I think the value of Mission: Read is rewarding consistent, long-term reading. If a child is able to fill in all of the circles and read for 1,000 days between Kindergarten and 5th grade, it helps cement reading in their day as a consistent habit that will hopefully stay with them for a lifetime."

LAURA JAKEL
CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP
BRANCH PATRON

No Fines. No Barriers.

Fines for overdue items became a thing of the past for Kent District Library patrons on June 1. This change removed a barrier for people who could not afford their fines and wished to use the library. The elimination of late fines sparked an increase in circulation of library materials and encouraged inactive patrons to return to the library.

Patron Spotlight



When Carol found out that KDL went fine-free, she was thrilled.

She had stopped her regular visits to the Kentwood Branch of KDL due to fines she accrued during a health challenge. With fines no longer an issue, Carol and her granddaughters are back. They check out books, hang out on rainy days, attend programs and chat with other patrons.

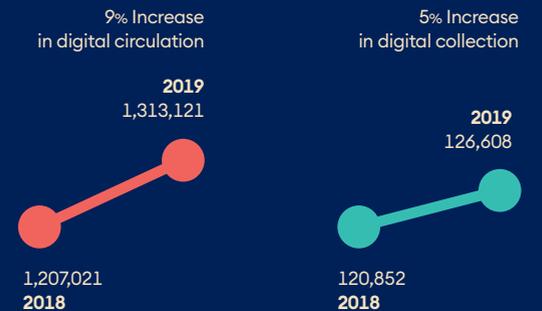
"KDL is more than just books," Carol said. "It's a great place to explore your life and interests."

Material return rates increased dramatically after going fine-free.



Historically, when people are billed for unreturned items, between 30 and 50 percent of the items are returned. Once KDL went fine-free, returns of charged items immediately rose to 74 percent. The most significant increase in returns of charged items occurred with minors returning 97 percent.

Digital Materials



Card Holders

7%
Increase in card holders
2019 - 174,795
2018 - 163,780

information

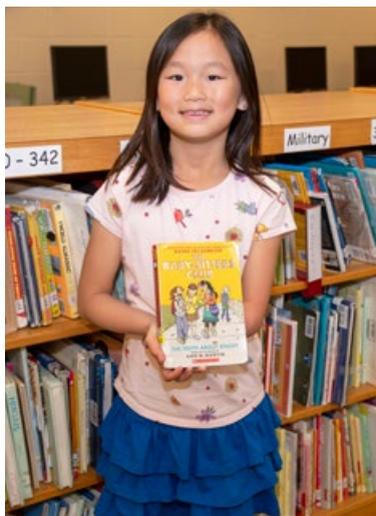
ideas

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Building Inclusivity

In May, KDL presented the **Next Nexus: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Summit**, an important event that offered valuable discussion and insights on equity, diversity and inclusion. A capacity crowd of professionals from across the region and various industries attended to learn best practices and practical tactics for making their organization as equitable, diverse and inclusive as possible.



“Thank you for offering this day! It gave me a lot to think about and take back to my library.”

Next Nexus feedback



First library in US to offer MagnusCards

We are proud to be the first library in the country to have introduced MagnusCards®, an initiative to assist patrons with cognitive special needs such as autism.

MagnusCards® offers digital “Card Decks” which provide step-by-step instructions that walk the user through a variety of activities. KDL’s custom app offers five different Card Decks to help individuals check out materials at the library and utilize other services.

Card Decks include:

1. Getting a library card
2. Using a self-checkout station
3. Using the KDL catalog and placing holds
4. Logging into a computer at the library
5. What to expect at the library

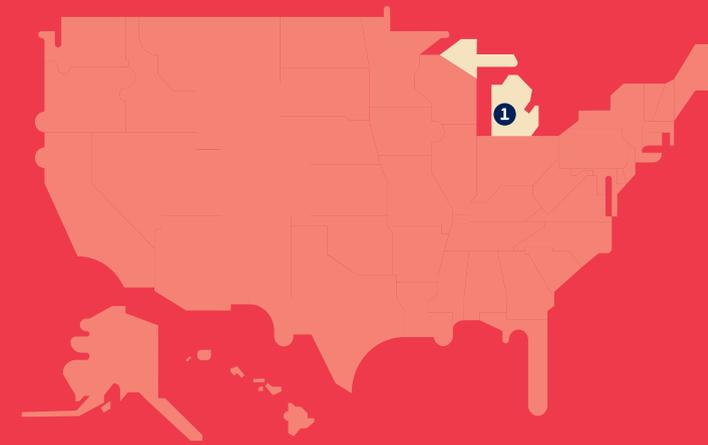
The cards include graphics, text and audio, so they can assist people with various disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments. They are available in both English and Spanish.

“It is important to us that all our patrons can effectively use the free services we have to offer,” said Michelle Roossien, Accessibility & Inclusion Specialist at KDL. “This is an important step to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and welcome at our branches.”

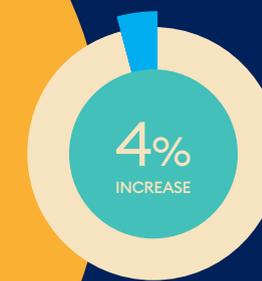
3.5 million+

items checked out with a total value of over \$73.5 million.

KDL is the first library in the country to introduce MagnusCards®



2019 WiFi logins



2019 Mobile access to kdl.org

information

ideas

excitement!



Largest and Final SuperPartyWonderDay

In August, KDL brought back **SuperPartyWonderDay**, a showcase of *all things KDL* with bands, brews, bikes and BBQ. Over 5,000 people joined in to celebrate all the different programs and offerings KDL provides all year long.

Record number of Summer Reading completers

Once again, Kent District Library offered people the chance to enhance their summer, learn something new and qualify for prizes in the process. Summer Reading at KDL returned with a wide range of books, programs and activities for children, teens and adults.

There were a record number of completers – over 19,000!

899 babies (younger than 2)

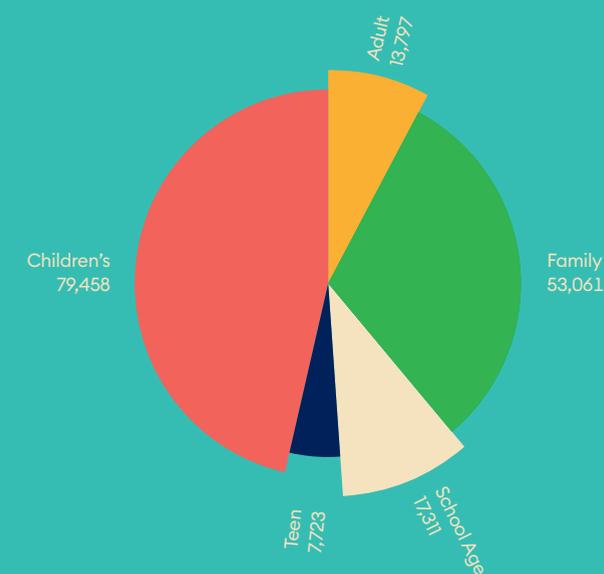
10,328 youth (ages 2-10)

3,196 teens (ages 11-17)

4,732 adults (ages 18 and older)

Perhaps the best result is how reading throughout the vacation months helps forestall the “summer slide” that negatively affects learning between traditional school years. Research shows that children involved in summertime reading programs sponsored by public libraries are more likely to maintain their academic skills, and in many cases do better on standardized tests.

In-Branch Program Attendance



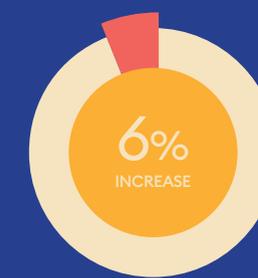
7,592

Programs* with

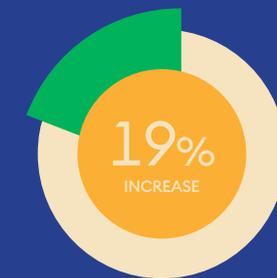
300,622

attendees

*In-branch and outreach programs combined



2019 Summer Reading Completers



2019 Lifelong Learning Attendance

People + Place



Broke ground for AVA/Ada Branch

We broke ground on our 20th branch, the Amy Van Andel Library Community Center in Ada. The branch is scheduled to open in early 2021.

New Branding

Kent District Library developed new branding that better conveys what we are about – *information, ideas and excitement.*



611

KDL introduced a new bill, Senate Bill No. 611, that gives greater power to Michigan libraries to protect themselves from criminal activity that may have occurred in the library.



Best and Brightest Workplace

Kent District Library was named a 2019 winner of the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® in West Michigan. The competition, presented by the National Association for Business Resources, identifies and honors organizations that display a commitment to excellence in their human resource practices and employee enrichment.

Bookmobile

The KDL Bookmobile brings library services to patrons in far or under-served communities, supports access to wide community resources and builds meaningful relationships that foster love for literacy and lifelong learning.



items borrowed



6,073
items in collection

180
community partnership visits

377
total public visits

57
early literacy visits

122
school partnership visits

18
senior citizen connections



Mover & Shaker

Lindsey Dorfman, Director of Branch Services and Operations at Kent District Library, was named a "Mover and Shaker" in the library

industry by the national publication, *Library Journal*. Dorfman was selected because of her commitment to the profession and her good work in shaping KDL's service model

and addressing Michigan's low third grade reading scores. "At KDL, we believe we can transform lives and further all people through kindness, empathy and love," Dorfman says. "These

qualities have become the backbone of building authentic relationships and removing barriers to library services."



visitors



KDL is the first public library in Michigan to offer the Career Online High School program

Thank you for your support

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Kent District Library staff and Board of Trustees, we extend our sincere gratitude to all the individuals, Friends of the Library, corporations and foundations who generously supported KDL with \$332,776 in donations, gifts to KDL's endowment, sponsorships and grants in 2019. Your gifts are the catalyst for expanding KDL's services and programming to those we serve, as well as increasing opportunities for meaningful community engagement!

In 2019, your gifts were used to fund programs like Career Online High School for adults who had never received a high school diploma; Mission: Read, an early literacy initiative that addresses the third grade literacy crisis in Kent County; and Summer Reading, which helps children retain critical literacy skills over the summer, while enjoying culturally enriching performances and programs.

Tens of thousands of lives are impacted by these programs, which are highlighted throughout this report. We would also like to thank the many volunteers who gave their time and talents throughout the year—from helping with our community-wide party, SuperPartyWonderDay, to assisting in the branches with Summer Reading and serving as judges for Write Michigan.

Thank you for your support. We couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,

Lance Werner
Executive Director

Claire Horlings
Fund Development Manager



Launched Career Online High School

Kent District Library became the first public library system in the state of Michigan to offer qualified residents the chance to earn a free, accredited high-school diploma. KDL launched Career Online High School and is offering a limited number of scholarships to qualified adults (21 and older) who are looking to advance their careers, prepare for workforce entry or continue their education.



