



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# 20 / 20 VISION



# FROM THE LIBRARY

T.B. SCOTT FREE LIBRARY

# OUR IMPACT

The T. B. Scott Free Library continued to provide valued services and programming to the Merrill area community utilizing innovative technology throughout the pandemic in 2020. We remained committed to these core objectives during the pandemic: the promotion of reading, providing reliable information, encouraging life-long learning, and networking with the community to provide programs and services.

MARCH 16



T.B. Scott Closed to the Public

APRIL 27



Curbside Pickup Only

JUNE 1



Open to Public with COVID-19 Precautions

NOVEMBER 12



Curbside Pickup Only

10,830

Registered Borrowers

Physical Items Checked Out

94,144

24,937

Digital Items Checked Out

Program Attendance  
118 in-person/virtual programs

1,828

47,006

Wireless Internet Use



Tech Help & Study Rooms Available by Appointment

## Library Circulation

Based on Check Outs by Patron Residence

Total Physical Items Checked Out  
**94,144**

Outside of V-Cat  
**198**

Other V-Cat Libraries  
**8,096**

County  
**43,410**

City  
**42,440**

90%  
80%  
70%  
60%  
50%  
40%  
30%  
20%  
10%



45,207  
visits made to  
T.B. Scott Library\*



42,123  
visits made to  
tbscottlibrary.org

Total Library Visits  
**87,330**

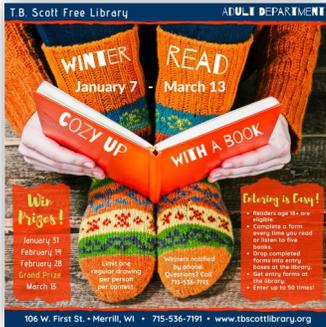
\*open to the public for 34 weeks due to Covid-19

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

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

## GET READING! : SEASONAL READING PROGRAMS

There is no better time to cozy up with a great book than during the Winter months. Our adult readers



enjoyed being a part of the challenge with opportunities to win Merrill Area Chamber Bucks along the way made possible through a donation from the Friends of the Library.

Winter 2020  
Readers



Adults = 78  
Books read = 1670

## EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

T. B. Scott Free Library partners with the Merrill Area Public School System as well as Trinity School to support teachers and youth through class visits and material curation for classroom and student use. This partnership continued during the pandemic and was enhanced to allow for availability of resources during the library's limited hours:

- When possible, classroom visits resumed for book checkout with safety protocols in place.
- Youth Services staff gathered books for classroom teachers to share with their students in lieu of student checkout.
- Pre-K teachers viewed Storytime presentations from their classrooms and received complimentary activity bags to use with their students in the classroom or to send home to support their families.



Themed Book Bag  
Requests

Teachers = 151  
Items Requested = 2,476

The Library Summer Reading Program took on a whole new look in 2020. The Library launched an online reading program with Beanstack, a subscription library tool, primarily used as a digital reading program management system. Readers were invited to visit: <https://www.beanstack.com> and register for the reading program. New for the 2020 summer, the Adult Read and the Youth Read were combined. Readers were challenged to read ten hours by August 7, 2020. A mobile app was offered for families on the go. "We were excited to be able to offer a free, fun online summer reading program for the first time," said Carolyn Forde, Youth Librarian. "With Beanstack we were able to enjoy reading together from the safety of home. That made everybody a winner!"



Summer 2020  
Readers



Youth = 199  
Teens = 20  
Adults = 56

## WHAT'S NEW : BROWSING FROM HOME

Virtual Browsing clips and Virtual Browsing shelves were shared through the Library website and social media to encourage patrons to check out NEW titles for their reading enjoyment in the safety of their homes.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 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 the importance of democracy.

## DEMOCRACY @ THE LIBRARY

Whether in person or via virtual platforms, the Library continued to develop programming in 2020 that fostered civic discourse and the importance of democracy for all ages. Collaborative efforts were sought from outside the community to bring depth and breadth to the discussions.

## YOUTH OPPORTUNITY TO GET OUT & VOTE!

Youth under age 18 were offered the opportunity to vote for their favorite ticket in this very pretend election! In the days running up to the 2020 presidential election, youth cast their ballot on the second floor of the Library for The Lorax or The Pigeon after meeting their running mates and learning more about their party platforms. This mock election gave young children an opportunity to experience one of the cornerstones of our democracy. Participants received a Pete the Cat "Vote for Books" bookmark.



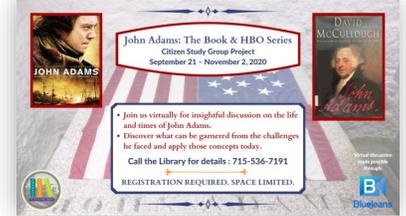
## LET'S TALK

Throughout 2020, the Kettering Foundation, an American non-partisan research foundation, played an integral role in the continuation of the Building Merrill Together Initiative, to help develop an awareness in government, business entities, and the general public to positively change Merrill through information, transparency and open discussion. This ambitious initiative continued with new topics, moderator training workshops, and public forums supported by concerned citizen groups. Moving forward, staff will continue using National Issues Forum materials to promote deliberative dialogues in the community and work towards developing Issue Guides focused on local concerns.



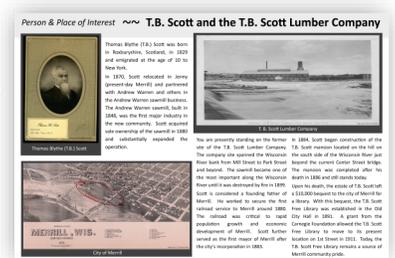
## CIVIL DISCOURSE DEMONSTRATED

Throughout 2020, members of the Merrill Aware & Active Citizens Group focused their discussion on John Adams and the book written by Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough. Major events provided multiple challenges to the nation including a world pandemic, social injustice, economic instability, and a deeply polarized political climate. These concerns resulted in the development of a study group to explore the life and times of John Adams focusing on the book and the movie of the same name. Community members enhanced their understanding of the American Revolution and the implications this momentous event may have for today's geo-political challenges.



## GRANT OPPORTUNITY REALIZED

The Building Merrill Together Initiative was awarded in June with a second Wisconsin Humanities Grant for "Expansion of the River Bend Trail." The Library and its partners were able to continue work on enhancing Merrill's cultural heritage, regenerating the natural landscape, and promoting Merrill as a vibrant, collaborative community in which to live, work and play. Three historical signs were developed by dedicated community members, program contractor John Greenwood and library staff with the ultimate goal of creating a River Bend Trail Story Map Walking Tour. This Walking Tour will include oral histories of area residents integrated into the signs to provide a multimedia experience for the public to celebrate Merrill's rich history. The grant sponsored workshops which were conducted to acquire techniques to enhance oral history interviewing by local students and community members.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

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

## PROGRAMMING : MEETING THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY



Meeting the needs of the community's diverse demographics has been and continues to be a primary focus of the Library. A great deal of time was spent in 2020 working to create programming that would fulfil the needs of the community—from the very young to the most seasoned. Here you see just a few of the offerings. The year began with the usual fun and informative in-person programming and quickly shifted to virtual and curbside delivery. The Library staff was up for the challenge and continued with:

- Programming that was peppered with both technology-rich opportunities and hands-on, informational kits.
- Staff working diligently to assist with the preparation needed to successfully distribute materials curbside and facilitate activities in person and on line.

## ~ YOUTH SERVICES ~



## COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES



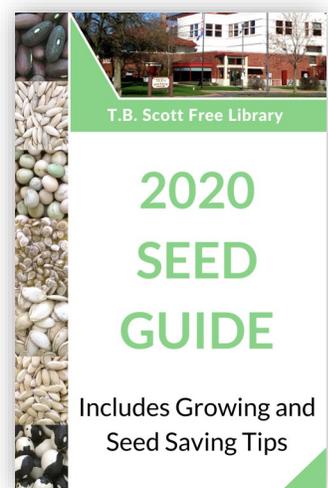
As time passed into summer, it became apparent to the local non-profits that the health and well-being of housebound and quarantined community members needed to be addressed during this very unusual time. The Library Outreach Department joined forces with other Lincoln County agencies, which pooled together resources and developed "Lifting Lincoln County".



The Youth Services Department also partnered with local agencies to provide "Project Packs" for youth and their families.



## ~ OUTREACH SERVICES ~



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

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

## TECHNOLOGY REVISITED



In order to provide patrons with an expanded digital resource, T.B. Scott Free Library designated additional funds to be applied towards the purchase of eBooks and audiobooks through Wisconsin's Digital Library. In addition to this support, vendors throughout the United States evaluated offerings and expanded the use of online materials to better serve area libraries, school systems, educators, parents and community members.



**ACCESS  
ANCESTRY  
FROM HOME**

## VIRTUAL LIBRARY VIA GOOGLE SLIDES



Carolyn Forde, Youth Services Librarian, collaborated with area schools to create a Virtual Library for students through the Google platform using Google Slides:

Pictures of the Youth Services Department and book covers give a visual representation of the Library. Youth were able to browse, click and request titles from the Library Catalog using the link provided. Carolyn followed up with an online BookTalk. Kristen, 5th Grade teacher at Washington Elementary, appreciative of this initiative stated, "Thanks for your efforts in helping us get great books into our student's hands. I am liking this bridge between us. It is great for the kids to "see" you."

## MUSIC LIVE FROM THE LIBRARY

Plans for great music at the Library took on an entirely new look this year.



The Library brought the music into patron homes through Facebook Live and YouTube recordings.

## CHECK OUT TO TECH OUT

The Library ramped up their STEAM offerings with numerous new items being added to the Adult Department Library of Things and the Youth Services Hands-On collection. Two of particular interest were:

- Orion StarBlast 4.5 Telescope
- Youth Services Coding Pack

These items offered patrons the opportunity to take home a bit of the Library when "Closed to the Public" for the health and well-being of community members and staff.



## VIRTUAL TRAVEL

Travel was limited in 2020 and patrons found themselves at home a great deal more. The Library through collaboration with other state libraries brought into patron homes places to visit virtually all over the world.

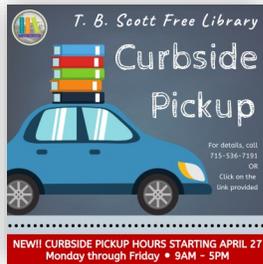


# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

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

## 2020 : A YEAR OF COVID-19 ACCOMMODATIONS

### CONNECTING PATRONS TO RESOURCES



While taking the necessary precautions as directed by the WI Department of Public Instruction and the CDC, the Library staff worked diligently to provide area residents with continued services.

### STAYING HEALTHY PROVIDING SERVICES



### SUMMER FOOD SUMMER FUN : OUTDOOR STYLE



The Library served as a USDA Summer Food Service Program site during the summer of 2020. Lunch was served curbside at the Library @11:30a – 12:30p Monday – Tuesday beginning June 15 and ending July 14. In addition to a grab-n-go lunch, youth were offered a free book to keep them reading and learning all summer. “This program fills a void created when school lunches are not available,” said Youth Services Librarian Carolyn Forde. “Helping parents meet the nutritional needs of their children is the strength of this program.” “We invite youth to make the Library their place to go on Mondays and Tuesdays this summer for reading fun and a delicious and nutritional meal.”

### MASKED READS

Patrons were given the opportunity to request books from selected genres to be randomly pulled by staff members. Staff enjoyed knowing the element of surprise this offered to patrons.



### VIRTUAL MEET ANYWHERE



BlueJeans meeting platform provided opportunities for online meetings and activities, a service made possible through the Wisconsin Valley Library Service.

### FAMILY STORYTIME TAKES TO THE ROAD

With summer travel curtailed due to the pandemic, and with a view to supporting area businesses also impacted by COVID-19, the Library developed the idea for "Family Storytime Takes to the Road." Virtual field trips were planned to area businesses while following recommended practices for safely filming. We visited Red Door Family Farm, the Grand Stand, Golden Harvest, and the Humane Society. We showcased these area businesses and something special that children would be interested in at each business: on the farm it was strawberry growing. We turned our travels into a contest for adults and offered a Merrill Area Chamber Gift Certificate to the first person to guess where our weekly travels would take us. This initiative turned out to be loads of fun for youth and adults alike who awaited our weekly clue as to where we would be traveling next.





 @TBSScottFreeLibrary  
 @tbscottlibrary\_merrill  
 @TBLibrary

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**715.536.7191**  
**tbscottlibrary.org**

## LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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City Appointee

## 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.

### 2020 Fundraiser



ON SALE NOW THROUGH NOVEMBER 11TH

 Purchase a red, florist quality, 6 ½ inch potted poinsettia for only \$15! 

Prepaid Poinsettia Curbside Pickup is Saturday, December 5th from 10am to 1pm.

