



Merrickville Public Library

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

## Strategic Plan Charts Course for the Future

Connecting Our Community to the World—and Each Other

2025 was another busy and successful year for the Library. Library use continued to grow, with more active members, increased visits, and greater use of our meeting space, e-collections, and internet services. The Board is pleased to report that the Library is providing services that Merrickville-Wolford and Montague residents value.

This fall, we launched our new Strategic Plan. Shaped by community input, the Plan centers on Connection — connecting with residents to ensure our collections, programs, and services reflect their needs, and deepening our community partnerships to offer more opportunities for the public.

The Library has a strong tradition of collaboration. In 2025, we partnered with local groups and individuals to deliver meaningful learning, wellness, and social engagement programs, including new initiatives (p. 2–3). A major focus was



youth: with new programs such as the Lions Reading Den, Literacy Kits, a teen group, Rideau Eco-Literacy workshops, and expanded school visits. We also continued long-standing programs with our partners (p. 4–5).

The Strategic Plan also outlines goals for enhancing our collection and technology to serve a growing population, refreshing our interior and infrastructure, and preparing for future staff changes. Work on these priorities will begin in 2026.

See our new Strategic Plan



The Board is confident that this Plan positions the Library to meet the evolving needs of our community and to support municipal goals by contributing to the well-being of Merrickville-Wolford and Montague residents.



“This is the nicest library in Ontario.” — MPP Steve Clark



MPP Steve Clark visited our hugely popular Eco-Literacy program to check out Canoe Day



### BY THE NUMBERS

#### 2025 Library Use

##### Library Visits

↑ 5% 15,400

##### Items Borrowed

TOTAL Circulation: 33,650

↓ 1% Library Materials: 20,400  
eBooks, etc: 10,770  
Kanopy Films: 2,480

InterLibrary Loans Borrowed: 675  
InterLibrary Loans Lent: 885

##### Programs & Meetings

↑ 15% # of: Programs: 300  
Class Visits: 120  
Meetings: 150

↑ 39% Total Participants: 6,570

##### Computer & Internet Use

Library Computers: 1,500

Wifi: 1,625

↑ 13% TOTAL: 3,125

##### Active Library Members

↑ 1% Individuals: 1,950

Households/Grps: 920

New in 2025: 105 Hhds

**Busiest Month: July**



# Merrickville Public Library

## New Library Programs & Services in 2025

### Connecting with Partners Enhances Community Well-Being

The Library is committed to staying relevant and responsive to our community. Each year our programs and services evolve — and 2025 was no exception.

None of this would be possible without our partners, who lead, fund, and support many programs with us. These collaborations allow our small library to offer a wider range of services, while also helping partner groups reach the community more efficiently and cost-effectively. “We work better when we work together.”



RIDEAU ECO-LITERACY CENTER

### Rideau Eco-Literacy

2024’s **Rideau Eco-Literacy** program — a partnership of the **Rideau Roundtable** and 6 area libraries — expanded in 2025 to include regular workshops for kids. These ran monthly in the spring and weekly through the summer. Program lead **Tina Bye** took advantage of our riverside location to bring a variety of engaging and educational workshops on the ecology, flora & fauna, and history of the Rideau River—including a Voyageur canoe ride (see photo p. 1).

Our library set a up a new Eco-Literacy collection on wetlands and related subjects to keep the learning going.

### New Literacy Support

We were excited to work with the **Merrickville Lions Club** this summer to host their very successful new literacy program: **The Lions Reading Den**. Local kids reading below grade level came to the Library daily for this free 3-week program led by a team of 3 elementary school teachers.

The Library also added customizable **Literacy Kits** with materials to help parents support young readers. This collection was created with funds donated in memory of **Liz Wallace**.



### Chill & Chat

Led by two local teens, **Chill & Chat** kicked off in 2025. This ongoing program is a place for teens to spend time together IRL for maker activities, games, and snacks!





# Connecting Our Community to the World – and Each Other



## Repair Café

The Library partners with Sustainable Merrickville-Wolford to host **Repair Cafés**, where skilled volunteers do free repairs on small appliances and other household items, as well as sewing repairs — and bicycle “spring tune-ups”. Repair Café is a great way to help community members save money and keep items out of the landfill.

## The Library Makes a Difference

*“I was at a Moms event and we were all talking about how great the Library is. The Saturday Play Days and the other programs. And how much we love what you do here.” – K.F.*

*Re: new Literacy Centre “I’ve never seen anything like this in a library. I like these decodable books for older kids. This is really impressive; you should be very proud of it.” – Visitor from Ottawa*

*“Christmas Off the Shelf is always magical” – M.H.*

*“The [Seniors] smartphone course was brilliant. Excellent instructor and very informative. My wife is excited to take it next time.” – R.S.*

*“The Seed Library was a blessing to me last year. I learned so much; the garden will be even better this year. My granddaughter will help me plant, then she can watch the seeds grow.” – C.W.*

*Repair Café: “This is great! I thought I’d have to trash this, but now it’s fixed!” – D.A.*

*Pride Day: “This was a nice event. We appreciate you having it.” – LGBTQ+ parent*

*“I was on a Sherlock Holmes kick and wanted to watch the 1930’s movies. I couldn’t find a service to stream them, then I saw they were on Kanopy. Now I check Kanopy first!” – C.G.*

*“The kids are always excited when you come to read [to the class].” – Mrs Allen, MPS teacher*

*“I just wanted to thank you for hosting our PEP Rally workshop! Your warm and welcoming environment helped create the safe, empowering space we aim for.” – Faith Clark, Girls Inc [email]*

## Craft Tool Library

In December, the Library launched a **Craft Tool Library**, with the help of local crafter Michelle Philp, that lends craft equipment to community members — for art projects, baking, fibre crafts, woodworking, scrapbooking and papercrafts, and more. The Library will also host craft workshops and knitting lessons to encourage connection and lifelong learning.



## Special Events

The Library welcomes new ways to connect with community members and to connect them with each other.

We partnered with the **Merrickville-Wolford & District Chamber of Commerce** to host an inclusive family-friendly **Pride Day** in June. Over **40** people attended.

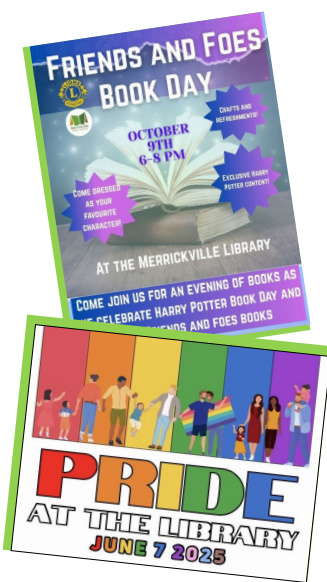
The Library joined with the **Lions Club** to host a **“Friends & Foes” Party** to celebrate *Harry Potter Book Day* (Oct 9), filling our space with themed activities. **50** youth participated.

The Library collaborated with local puzzle company, **The Occurrence**, and **The Pews** to run a successful **Puzzle Race** evening. **11** teams competed to be the first to finish the custom jigsaw.



And the Library worked with local artist **Graham Annable** and **Chris Chinkiwsky** from **Coba Studios** on their new **Find the Hidden People Contest** along two local trails in October.

We received over **50** entries from both kids and adults. Everyone loved counting the gnomes while enjoying the fall trails and hope to see them again in 2026.





# Merrickville Public Library

Library programs support community well-being by encouraging life-long learning, social connection, family engagement, and early literacy through play. In 2025, we offered both new and long-standing programs for adults and children — including the seniors' programs introduced in 2023–24 and StoryTime, which has run on Friday mornings for over 30 years. Our meeting room remains a valued community space. Increased program participation and meeting room use were key contributors to the rise in library visits in 2025.



Speaker Diana Beresford-Kroeger draws a crowd

**Seed Library**  
 Users: 170+  
 Seed Packs Taken: 1,100  
 Seedy Saturday: 150 participants

"Seedy Saturday" seed exchange

## Adult Learning & Engagement

**Off The Shelf:** literary readings for adult listeners hosted by **Charles Merredew** and **Gloria Stowell**.

**Fitness for Your Aging Brain:** seniors' fitness program focusing on brain health.

**Mobile Plus Smartphone Class:** seniors' smartphone classes led by staff from the **Adult Learning & Training Centre**.

**Guided Meditation:** weekly sessions led by staff from the **Merrickville & District Community Health Centre**.

**Book Clubs:** the Library hosts a monthly Book Club and supplies books for 6 others in the community.

The **Seed Library** saw increased use in 2025. Thank you to **West Coast Seeds, Ritchie Feed & Seed, the Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library,** and local growers for donating seeds to keep the Seed Library sustainable.

**Seedy Saturday** — our annual seed and seedling exchange — also continued to grow, featuring speakers such as environmentalist and plant expert **Diana Beresford-Kroeger**.

Thank you to the volunteer Steering Committee. The Seed Library is a joint project with **Sustainable Merrickville-Wolford**.



Mah Jong Club

**Meeting Room Use (by Groups)**  
 Meetings: 150  
 Participation: 960

## A Place to Meet

Use of the meeting room by community groups and hobby groups increased substantially in 2025. These groups included the new Mah Jong Club, Knitting Club, Photography Group, Agricultural Fair Board, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Theatre Night In Merrickville, Soccer Club, Run Merrickville, Scouting leaders, the Friends of the Library & more.

Remote meeting space is also available through the Library's Zoom account.

## Library Partnerships Connect our Community Thank you to our Partners

- Merrickville Lions Club
- Sustainable Merrickville-Wolford
- Trails Society (MDTS)
- Community Health Centre (RCHS)
- Historical Society (MDHS)
- École Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeois
- Merrickville Public School
- Montague Public School
- Merrickville Day Nursery School
- Merrickville Cooperative Playgroup
- Rideau Roundtable Eco-Literacy
- Adult Learning & Training Centre
- Chamber of Commerce
- North Grenville Early Years Centre
- The Occurrence & The Pews
- Merrickville Legion Branch 245



## Program Participation

Adult Programs:	107
Participants:	900
Kids/Youth Programs:	144
Participants:	1,830
Summer Reading Club:	117 kids
Class Visits (in Lib):	23
Class Visits (to Sch):	101
Total Participants:	2,280
Other Librarian Visits:	45
Participants:	620

# A Playground for your Mind ”

## Library Programs Entertain, Educate & Engage

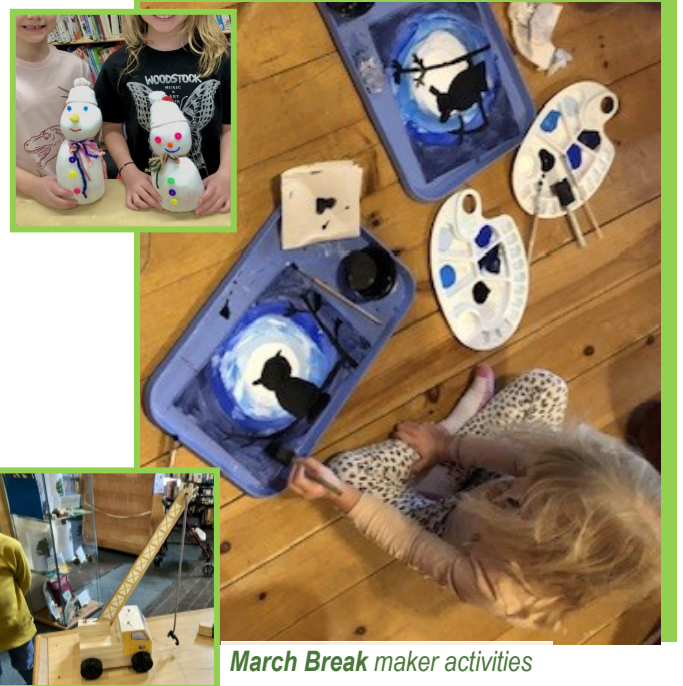
The Library's children's programs, include literacy-based programs and other "edu-tainment", as well as play opportunities for families. In addition to our new programs [see p. 2-3], the Library offered:

- Our weekly preschool/toddler **StoryTime** to develop pre-literacy and school readiness skills through stories, songs, & crafts.
- The **TD Summer Reading Club** for school-aged kids (sponsored by the **TD Financial Group**) combines our popular Prize Draw (kids earn tickets by reading books) with weekly activities. This year's theme was "Around the World" and included crafts and activities from other countries. Reading programs keep up literacy skills and prevent summer learning loss. Youth library visits sky-rocket during the summer and their circulation doubled.
- **Anya Perry (Maple Music Studios)** led a series of hands-on **Mini Music Makers** programs for preschoolers.
- The Library partners with the **Lions Club** and community members on the steering committee of the **ECO-Champions Contest** — an initiative to raise awareness about species at risk in Merrickville-Wolford. The Library was pleased to display the contest entries through the summer. See [www.ecochampions.ca](http://www.ecochampions.ca).
- **March Break** offers a variety of crafts and STEAM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math*) projects for school-aged youth.
- The Library welcomed staff from the **North Grenville EarlyON** for a **Baby Play & Learn** and a pre-school **Teddy Bear Picnic**.
- Our **Saturday PlayDays** make the Library a family destination — offering a variety of play opportunities and books to take home. Parents also get time to socialize and browse the Library.
- The Library continues to partner with the **Merrickville & District Trails Society** on the **Story Trail** — a great way for

See our [Story Trail video](#) here:



Thank you **Victoria Nichols School of Highland Dancing** for an introductory lesson as part of our Summer Reading Club



**March Break** maker activities

## Connecting with Classes

### Library Visits (to and from)

- École Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeois
- Merrickville Public School
- Montague Public School
- Merrickville Day Nursery School
- Merrickville PlayGroup
- Firefighters' Halloween Party

We were pleased to welcome more class visits from **École Ste-Marguerite-Bourgeois** to the Library this fall. Librarian visits to primary classes at **Merrickville Public School** continued bi-weekly in 2025 — and we were delighted to increase visits to **Montague Public School** this year. These visits raise the Library's profile with students and encourage them to visit. They are also a great way for the Library to better connect with Montague residents!

Mary Kate also makes regular visits to the local daycare and playgroup.





# Merrickville Public Library

## Popular Collections & Services

### New Materials

The Library continuously adds new materials to our collection. In 2025, over 1,000 new titles were added.

### Pools & ILLs

The Library collaborates with other Ontario libraries to keep collections fresh at a modest cost. We participate in **Large Print**, **DVD**, and **adult French book** pools, which switch materials several times a year. We are also active in the **InterLibrary Loan** network which lends titles between libraries.

### eCollections

Members love the convenience and wide selection of our eCollections — sponsored by the **Friends of the Library**. Use of our **OverDrive** collection of eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines, and of our **Kanopy** film streaming collection of indie, foreign and award-winning films, documentaries, and children's content increased in 2025 [see p. 1].

### Museum Passes & MAPsacks!

The Library partners with these area museums to lend family passes to the community.

- Agriculture
- History
- Nature
- National Gallery
- Space & Aviation
- Science & Technology
- War
- Upper Canada Village

The Library also lends **MAPsack** (Movement and Play) backpacks — with stories, nature guides, and a family park pass — to encourage family outdoor exploration. This award-winning program of the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Community Partnership **promotes healthy living**.

### Accessible Services

The Library partners with the **Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA)** to provide materials for members with print disabilities.

## @ Your Library

- Books — for all ages!
- eBooks & eAudiobooks
- Magazines & eMagazines
- DVDs
- Kanopy Film Streaming
- eResources
- Literacy Kits **\*NEW**
- AudioBooks
- Large Print Books
- CELA Talking Books
- Accessible Services
- Jigsaw Puzzles
- Genealogy & Local History
- InterLibrary Loan
- Meeting Space & Zoom
- Museum Passes
- MAPsacks
- High-speed Internet
- Computers & MS Office
- Wireless access 24/7
- Print / Scan / Copy / Fax
- Radon Detectors
- Craft Tool Library **\*NEW**

*The Board thanks the Friends & Volunteers for all they do for the Library*

## A Little Help from Our Friends



The **Friends of the Library** continued their fundraising efforts in 2025 with their popular plant sale, garage sale, and used book and DVD sales — as well as a new Adventure Hunt fundraiser.

The Friends contributed **over \$6,500** to the Library to sponsor our ebook collection, film streaming service, reference e-resources, DVD pool, adult programs, & more.



## Thank You Volunteers

A huge thank you to our dedicated volunteers who donate their time each week to support essential tasks such as processing, repairing and shelving books, packaging interlibrary loans, scanning genealogy records, and many other tasks.

Their contribution allows the Library to provide our current high level of service without additional staff.

### Our Volunteers

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Kathy Brown     | Alice Mills  |
| Kirsten Finstad | Brenda Reid  |
| Maureen Gross   | Liz Sinclair |
| Scott Luke      | Mary Small   |
| Diana McCavera  | Gyn Wylie    |



Thank You to the Merrickville & District (MaD) Gardeners for their dedicated plant care through the summer and fall.





# Working Together Lets Us Work Better

## Thank You Donors

The Board is very grateful to those who donate to the Library. These contributions support books, programs, equipment, and other administrative needs.

The Library has received significant gifts from a generous donor, with most of these funds — along with other direct donations — directed to the Library's endowment reserve fund, administered by the **Ottawa Community Foundation**, to provide supplementary funding for future needs.

*The Library Board sincerely thanks all our donors for their support.*

## Special thanks to :

**Merrickville Legion Branch 245** for donating \$1,000 towards youth programs! This donation sponsors **Mini Music Makers, Chill & Chat**, and new science workshops in 2026.

The **Merrickville Seniors Dance Club** for donating the proceeds of one of their dances.

## Spotlight on Lions

The Library is delighted to have collaborated with the Merrickville Lions Club on several recent projects, including the **Lions Reading Den**, and looks forward to growing this partnership in the years ahead.



## Provincial Funding

The Library appreciates this annual funding from the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming**.

Library Operating Grant	\$5,100
Internet Funding	\$2,040
InterLibrary Loan Postage	\$1,240

See what's new @ your Library: [merrickvillelibrary.ca](http://merrickvillelibrary.ca)



## Library Board Charts the Path Ahead

The Library Board devoted 2025 to strategic planning, including a community needs assessment, a public survey, and consultations with library partners. The Board was pleased with the strong positive feedback on current services and has developed a Strategic Plan to 2030 that strengthens valued programs while addressing upcoming organizational needs. An implementation plan has now been launched. In 2026, the Board will focus on updating the service agreement with Montague, which dates from the 1980s, and will conclude by preparing a legacy document for the next Board.

The Board has also been active in developing the 2026 budget and overseeing Library operations to ensure staff provide **excellent customer service** and quality library services to **support the well-being of the community**. A 2025 evaluation using the *Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit* (VOLT) determined that every dollar invested in the Merrickville Library generates a Social Return on Investment of \$11.50. This contributes to Merrickville-Wolford's strategic goal of **Efficient, Effective Services and Civic Engagement** and to Montague's mission to **work together to provide services to build and support the community**.

*The Library Board would like to thank the Councils of Merrickville-Wolford and Montague Township for their ongoing support.*



**Library Board 2025-2026**

- Kaitlyn Brady, Board Chair
- Jane Coghlan
- Cindi Delcorde
- Amelia Wilding
- Margaret Gural, Council Representative
- Olivia Enns, Montague Representative

### And Your Staff ...

- Mary Kate Laphen, CEO
- Linda Purvis-Carriveau

## The Library Makes a Difference

*"This library is WONDERFUL! Wow! I want to join!" – New resident*

*"I've never been to the Library before. It's a cool place" – Youth at Harry Potter Party.*

*"We use our library all the time. I don't know what we'd do without it." — H.G.*

### **The Library is a hit with Visitors**

*"This is such a beautiful little library. I'm going to bring my kids in, they'll love this."*

*"You have a very nice library. Whenever we come here, we drop by. It has such a nice atmosphere."*

*"This is the nicest library. Our library is good, but this one is so... cozy and cute."*

*"I love everything about this Library." — S.T.*



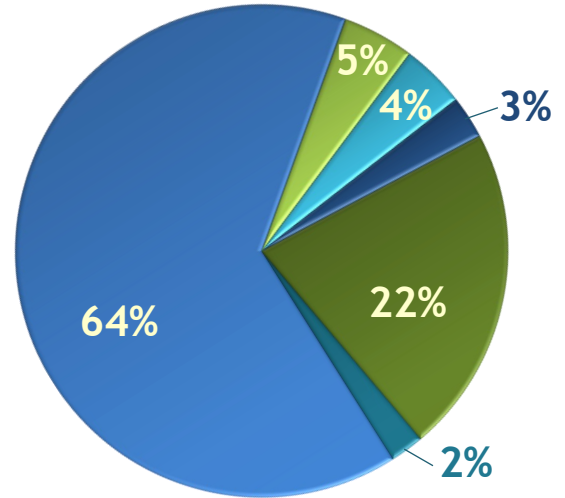
# Merrickville Public Library 2025 Financial Summary

Note: Financial data is not yet audited

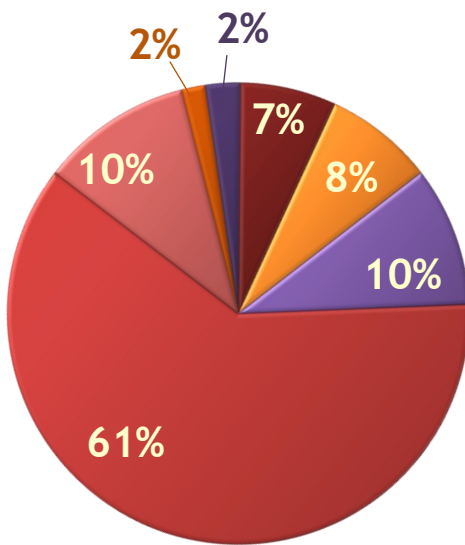
## Operating Revenue

Merrickville-Wolford Grant	\$128,300	(64%)
Montague Grant	\$ 9,400	( 5%)
Provincial Grants (see p7) (Operating grant, Internet & ILL funding)	\$ 8,400	( 4%)
Revenue from Endowment Fund (OCF)	\$ 5,600	( 3%)
Donations & Special Grants (incl Friends of Library)	\$ 42,900	(22%)
In-Library Revenue (incl bank interest)	\$ 4,400	( 2%)
<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	<b>\$199,000</b>	

Where the Money Comes From



Where the Money Goes



## Operating Expenses

Staffing (includes professional development)	\$115,000	(61%)
Facilities (utilities, cleaning, maintenance)	\$ 18,500	(10%)
Collections (books, e-resources, pools)	\$ 14,400	( 8%)
Administration, Supplies, etc.	\$ 12,650	( 7%)
Computer/Internet (includes equipment & IT support)	\$ 4,650	( 2%)
Programs (includes Seed Library & Story Trail)	\$ 3,100	( 2%)
Transferred to Term Endowment:	\$20,000	(10%)
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>\$188,300</b>	
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$10,700</b>	

### Municipal Contributions (In Kind)

Building Maintenance Work (Exterior)	\$3,430
Financial Services: (Payroll, Bookkeeping)	\$5,000
Public Works Services: (Snow/Grass, etc)	\$10,000
<b>Total Value</b>	<b>\$18,430</b>

### Term Endowment Reserve (OCF)

Balance January 2025	\$128,508
Transfer from Donations (from 2024)	\$12,000
Donations 2025 (Direct)	\$350
Transfer from Library Donations (2025)	\$20,000
Income & Gains	\$18,008
Less: Disbursements & Fees	<u>(\$7,962)</u>
<b>Year End Balance, 2025</b>	<b>\$170,904</b>