



Glen Carbon Library Reports Successful Past Year, Future Projects

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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GLEN CARBON - The Glen Carbon Centennial Library has had a successful past year according to Director Christine Gerrish, who presented an overview of the library's past fiscal year and upcoming projects to village trustees on Tuesday, including some impressive statistics.

Library visits are up overall compared to last year, though they haven't quite reached pre-pandemic levels. However, Gerrish noted this isn't due to people not using the library, as the number of books checked out and e-resources used both exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

Checked out books totaled 99,350 over the past year - substantially more than 85,928 books the year prior and just over the pre-pandemic total of 98,008. E-resources (including electronic journals, books, online databases, and more) were used substantially more this past year at a total of 26,029, a steady increase from 21,281 the year prior and 14,616 before the pandemic.

The total number of library cards was also much higher than last year. This past year saw 5,308 library cards distributed - nearly double the 2,863 cards from 2021-2022. Gerrish credited this to an agreement local libraries have with Edwardsville Community District 7 schools.

"A lot of that is because through an intergovernmental agreement with District 7 Schools, every kid in those schools has a library card - and that is not only through Glen Carbon and Edwardsville, but some of the other libraries," Gerrish said. "There's about six or seven libraries that District 7 goes to, so that increased our numbers greatly for the library cards."

Programming across age groups has also proven popular over the past year, but Gerrish said their teen programs have particularly exploded in popularity. This past year saw a whopping 608 teen participants, compared to just 90 teens the year prior and 361 before the pandemic.

“We’ve had amazing growth in our teen outreach. You can see there, it’s almost doubled since the pre-COVID levels,” Gerrish said. “We have some great success with doing art programs with the teens that have really started to draw them in, giving them space to hang out.”

New teen programs are also on their way to the library this October and in January of next year with focuses on coding and graphic design, thanks to a “Project Next Generation” grant from the Illinois State Library. Gerrish added that the library’s Teen Study Room also features new murals with characters from popular teen books.

Adult Programs offered by the library saw 1,868 participants this past year, significantly higher than 1,366 participants the year prior and just over the previous peak of 1,862 participants from 2019-2020. Children’s programs also proved immensely popular, totaling 5,928 participants over the past year compared to just 1,781 the year prior and 5,083 before the pandemic.

As far as future projects go, Gireesh said renovations will be made to the library’s flooring and part of its roof. Nearly all of the library’s flooring will be replaced, and the library will be closed from Nov. 6 to 17 to facilitate the project. The flat portion of the building’s roof will also be replaced sometime next year.

Gireesh concluded by saying the library is “really excited about the way the community has been supporting us” before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and beyond.

A full recording of the presentation and the rest of the August 9 Village Board meeting can be watched at the top of this story or on the [Village of Glen Carbon Facebook page](#).

