

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

UPPER SADDLE RIVER  
PUBLIC LIBRARY



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## THE TEAM: WHO WE ARE

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dennis Schubert, President  
 Robin Friedman, Vice President  
 Maria-Elena DeGregorio, Treasurer  
 Miriam Bakal, Secretary  
 Dennis DeBenedetto, Trustee  
 Kerri Parelhoff, Superintendent's Alternate  
 Louisa Quarto, Mayor's Alternate

### LIBRARY STAFF

Kathryn Ennist, Director  
 Ann Witkowski, Head of Circulation  
 Erin Douglass, Children's Librarian  
 Debby Davidowitz, YA & Outreach Librarian  
 Molly McKenney, Adult Services Librarian  
 Linda Miko, Adult Programming Coordinator  
 Lisa Mihal, Graphics & Publicity Coordinator  
 Erin Myers, Webmaster  
 Sharon Suchora, Bookkeeper  
 Lauren Bough, Children's Library Assistant  
 Jamie Kasper, Library Assistant  
 Megan Saluga, Library Assistant  
 Diane Tsimis, Library Assistant  
 Soon Yi, Library Assistant  
 Sophia Guido, Library Assistant  
 Lynn Reiff, Weekend Reference Librarian  
 Julie Whitehead, Weekend Reference Librarian  
 Hayley Carrero, Page  
 Victoria Mueller, Page  
 Emily Pushnya, Page  
 Pragnya Rav, Page



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Upper Saddle River Library's 2024 Annual Review!

In this report you will find a summary of the Library's 2024 achievements. Some are bigger than others, but all speak to the Library's Mission - to inspire lifelong learning, create possibilities, and strengthen our community - and to the goals of the Library's Strategic Plan. From our increased programming to our new study rooms to our improved safety and accessibility, we have worked to fulfill the strategic plan goals that were set in 2023 - goals that were specifically created to address feedback received from the Upper Saddle River Community.

When you are down in the weeds of the everyday; steadily working through completing tasks, executing projects, and planning programming, it is easy to quickly forget everything that has been accomplished up to that point. Reaching the end of the year provides a wonderful opportunity to take time to reflect on everything that has been created and implemented by the Library's excellent staff, volunteers, and friends over the past twelve months. It provides the Library and the Community with the chance to realize the full extent of what was achieved in 2024. Perhaps, most importantly, it helps the Library to refocus on our goals and set our path for the new year ahead.

Please take some time to read over this annual review. Some of the Library's accomplishments over the past year may be familiar to you and others may surprise you. Hopefully all our efforts resonate positively with you and our commitment to fulfilling the strategic plan goals and mission is apparent. If the goals from our Strategic Plan are unfamiliar to you, I encourage you to go back and review the Library's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was put together after much research and data-gathering and is the Library's blueprint for the next few years.

The staff, volunteers, and friends of the Library are constantly working towards the best possible library experience for all. As we dive back into the everyday work of 2025, we want to remind our patrons and all Upper Saddle River Community members that your feedback is not only welcome, but encouraged. We hope to see you at the Library often in the year ahead!



**KATHRYN ENNIST**  
LIBRARY DIRECTOR



# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Our Vision:

The Upper Saddle River Library is the heart of the community

## Our Mission:

The Upper Saddle River Library inspires lifelong learning, creates possibilities and strengthens our community

## OUR SHARED VALUES:

We treat everyone respectfully and courteously

-

We believe in the free flow of information to enable people to learn and grow

-

We offer a safe, welcoming, fully accessible facility

-

We provide programs that inform, enlighten, inspire, and entertain all ages

-

We provide every visitor with knowledgeable and friendly service

-

We offer access to technology and digital resources so all can participate in the digital society

-

We are attentive stewards of public resources

# GOAL ONE

*“Provide full access to library services and resources that enable all residents to engage, enjoy, and benefit.”*



## **Objective 1:** *Implement new methods for delivering content, collections, & resources*

- New eContent purchase methods and an increase in monthly spending were implemented to maximize access to digital content.
- Outdated materials were removed from the Library’s Collection to make room for relevant and timely materials as well as to allow room for additional patron study and workspaces.
- The collection is in the process of being reorganized via genrefication to allow for a more accessible, user-friendly patron experience when looking for materials.

## **Objective 2:** *Provide easy access to resources & services that enable everyone to grow*

- Wireless printing services were implemented to allow patrons to print directly from phones and other devices. Patrons can now also send materials from home to be printed at the library.
- A new photocopier allows patrons to scan and send materials via email.

## **Objective 3:** *Establish the USR Library as the preferred destination for lifelong learning, enrichment, & entertainment*

- The Library partnered with many local organizations to celebrate the 130th Anniversary of Upper Saddle River at USR Day on September 28, 2024.
- The Library’s easily accessible Meeting Rooms and new Study Rooms are available for patron and outside organization use.

## **Objective 4:** *Review library policies to ensure their support of easy access to resources & services that enable everyone to grow*

- New policies, such as the Gift/Donation Policy and the Display Policy, address community interest and engagement.
- Methods were implemented to eliminate eContent waitlists and daily limits for book club titles and other popular offerings.

# GOAL TWO

*“Plan to repurpose library space to create an environment of discovery and learning, in response to people’s lifestyles.”*



**Objective 1:** *Renovate/modernize the library to accommodate community interests and needs.*

- Two new study rooms were constructed and the rooms on either side of the teen area were designated for additional quiet study during school hours.
- The shelving that housed the start of the new adult collection was removed and the collection was consolidated. This opened up the central area in front of the circulation desk and allowed for a clear sight-line to the new study rooms.
- The Rules of Conduct and Patron Policy was updated to allow for beverages in the library.
- A path and new picnic tables were added to the front outdoor space to allow patrons to enjoy working, studying, and relaxing outside. It also provides a space for patrons to eat food outside of the Library.

**Objective 2:** *Provide a dynamic and interactive Library experience for all*

- The children’s librarian desk was downsized substantially to create a more open space.
- A significant “Spring Cleaning” was started and is currently ongoing to clear up storage space, remove outdated/redundant/broken furniture, reconfigure various areas, and more.
- The entire interior of the library was repainted.
- The kitchenette area outside of the meeting rooms was completely renovated with new cabinets, countertop, and appliances.
- A pathway was put in to comply with fire codes. Along the path was relandscaped to allow space for additional picnic tables, which provide more outdoor seating for patrons.
- The overgrown tree by the reading statues was trimmed back to allows patrons to utilize the benches under the tree and see the reading statues.

# GOAL THREE

*“Position Upper Saddle River Library to promote the Library, collaborate with Library partners and allies, and secure sustainable funding”.*



## **Objective 1:** *Position and promote USRL as the place for discovery and personal growth*

- 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten is being promoted at the Library's Storytime Program.
- Large signage has been added to the Children's Solarium.
- The Library hosted its first Haunted Library event for all ages with over 250 participants.
- Daytime programming for adults has been increased and sees significant attendance.
- The Library hosts at least one family program a month, with several being held during the summer reading program.

## **Objective 2:** *Encourage people to think differently about the library*

- The Mayor has started a community leaders initiative to allow community organizations the opportunity to get to know each other, work together, and cross-promote programs and services across all organizations.
- Many community organizations promote the Library's programs and services to the demographics they work with.
- USR Schools distribute the Library's children's and teen program flyers to students and parents, and work with the Library to promote the Library's services and programs to students.
- Newsletter signup checkboxes are included on library card application forms.

## **Objective 3:** *Practice transparent and reliable governance through a review of Board of Trustees and administration policies*

- The Library Board of Trustee Members are listed on the Library's Website along with all Library Board Meeting dates.
- The Library's Department Heads and their contact information are listed on the Library's Website.
- The Board of Trustees By-Laws were revised and approved at the February 2024 Library Board Meeting



## 2024 BY THE NUMBERS: VISITS & PROGRAMMING

**85,000+**

Visitors to the  
USR Library

10,000 more  
than in 2023



**475+**

Library  
Programs

for Children,  
Teens,  
Families,  
& Adults!



**10,000+**

Library Program  
Participants of all ages!

**250+**

Community  
Organization  
Meetings & Programs



**3,175+**

Community  
Organization  
Attendees



## 2024 BY THE NUMBERS: COLLECTIONS & CIRCULATION

**77,450+**

Physical Items Checked Out

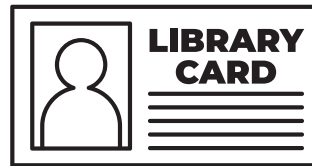


**23,775+**

Digital Items Checked Out

**4,335+**

Physical Items Added  
to the Library  
Collection



**5,045+**

USR Cardholders

Almost 60% of the  
USR Population

**15,700+**

USR Items Loaned to Other BCCLS Libraries



## 2024 BY THE NUMBERS: SERVICES

**145**

Notary  
Appointments



**9,100+**

Reference  
Questions  
Answered



**4,275+**

New York Times & Wall  
Street Journal Online Sessions



**4,050**

WiFi  
Sessions



**3,200+**

Computer  
Sessions

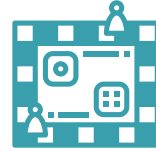
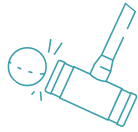


# DID YOU KNOW?

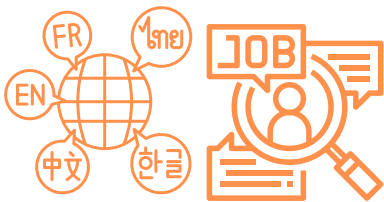


The Library has Hotspots, Kindles, and iPads available to checkout.

There is a Library of Things with boardgames, lawn games, TonieBoxes, and more available to checkout.

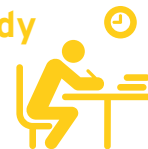


The Library's subscription to the Library Speakers Consortium allows patrons to watch famous authors & speakers live & submit questions.



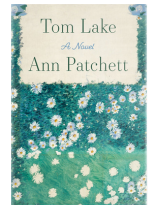
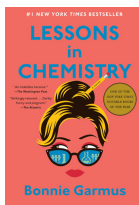
Patrons can learn a language, get tutoring help, or find job search assistance using the Library's online resources.

The Library has study rooms available for use.



The average value of materials borrowed on an USR Library Card in 2024 was \$670.00.

## The 5 most popular checkouts of 2024 were:



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS: SUMMER READING Summer Fun for all ages!



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS: UPPER SADDLE RIVER DAY Fun with Pete the Cat



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS: THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

1st ever Haunted Library Event



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS: HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE Return of the Ginger Bread House Competition!





# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS: CRAFTY PROGRAMS

Felted Friends, Pretty Paintings, Creative Cookies, and more!



## THANK YOU!!!

### We Couldn't Do It Without You!

To Wren DiGisi for her 10 years of service on the Library Board of Trustees. During her time on the board, Wren served as the Board Vice President and was part of the board's personnel committee. Wren was a calm and steady presence on the board. Her dedication to her role as a trustee and to the library was readily apparent. She exemplified an outstanding library trustee. We are so grateful for Wren's service and will miss her in our board meetings (although we know we will still see her around the library).



To the Friends of the Library for over 50 years of supporting the Library through fundraising and book sales. The Friends work tirelessly to raise funds for the Library's "Wish List" of programs, services, databases, and more. In 2024 the Friends provided over \$20,000.00 in funding for:



- Two Brand New Glass Study Rooms
- Museum Passes to the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, the Guggenheim, the Intrepid, the MOMA, the Museum of the Moving Image, the NY Historical Society, and the Storm King Arts Center.
- Online databases and resources including HelpNow, JobNow, Mango Languages, and Consumer Reports
- The Summer Reading Program: Adventure Begins at Your Library and Summer Reading events, activities, and programming for all ages
- Taking care of our Fish Friends in the Children's Area
- And so much more!

We are so grateful for the Friends of the Library - the officers, board members, book room volunteers, and members at large. Without the Friends, the Library would not be able to provide the community with the level of service and programming that we wish to.

To our volunteers for all of their help and support. Our dedicated group of volunteers helps the Library run programming and events and keeps the library neat and tidy. We know that carving out time to volunteer at the library is not easy and we are so grateful that our volunteers choose the Library as the place lend their support.

