



GALESBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOUNDATION

# CHAPTERS OF IMPACT 2024



264 W Main St

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[thegplf.org](http://thegplf.org)

# Our mission

The Galesburg Public Library Foundation supports and strengthens the Galesburg Public Library by connecting community generosity with library innovation. We believe **a strong library creates a strong community.** By working closely with the Library to identify needs and fund impactful projects, we ensure it has the resources to thrive today and into the future—through strong relationships with donors, community partners, and local leaders.



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## Celebrating 150 Years of Service



The Galesburg Public Library traces its roots to 1858, when a reading room opened above a Main Street bank. **Officially established in 1874**, the library has grown through generations of community support, including a \$50,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie that funded the iconic 1902 building. Though fire destroyed the Carnegie library in 1958, a new facility rose in its place, serving the community for more than 60 years. In April 2024, a new library building was constructed and opened to meet the growing needs of the community, offering more space, expanded services, and new opportunities for learning and connection. Today, the Galesburg Public Library proudly celebrates 150 years of service, continuing its mission to provide resources, inspiration, and opportunity to every citizen.



150<sup>TH</sup> GALESBURG PUBLIC  
**LIBRARY**  
ANNIVERSARY



# Saying goodbye

On February 29, 2024, we said goodbye to 40 East Simmons Street. The building served the community for over 62 years.

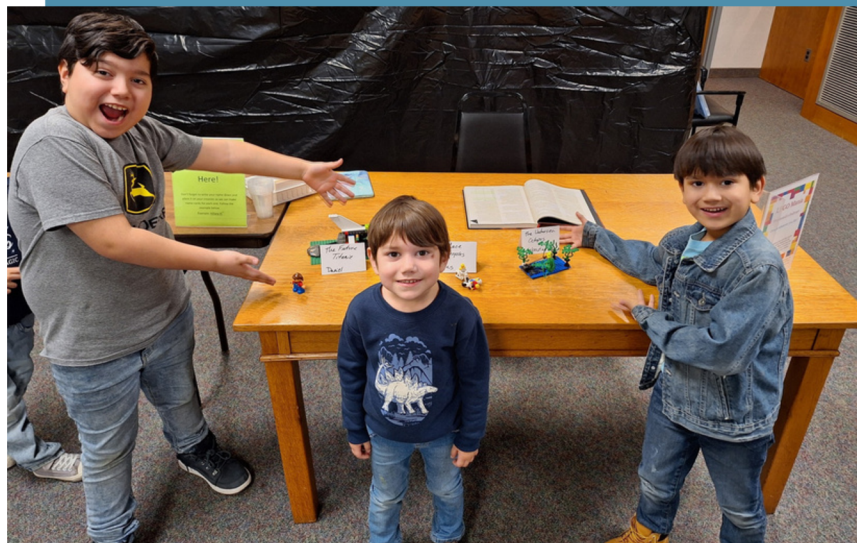


## From our patrons:

"So grateful for memories in this building."

"My whole life was this library and I'm going to miss the places I would go with my mom and dad."

"This has been mine AND my children's beloved library!"



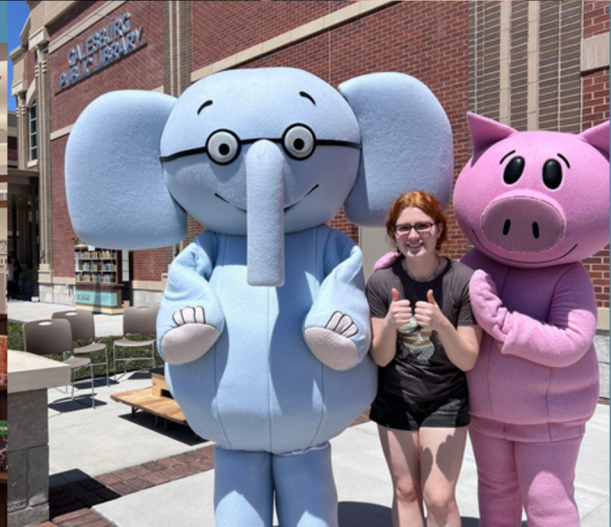


# Planning, packing, moving...





# ...opening!



"To this building we invite you all, without distinction of any kind. It is yours and all the books that it contains, and we trust and believe that it contains something beneficial to every citizen of this city."  
-Albert Perry, library board president, at the 1902 dedication of the Carnegie Library.



# By the Numbers



The statistics from 2024 cannot be compared to other years. The library closed for **54** days to move **135,000** books, thanks in part to over **500** Lombard Middle School students, before opening its doors to over **1,300** visitors on the first day at the new building. The Library staff grew from **29** employees at the start of the year to **35** employees by the end. We held the ribbon cutting for the new building after **3** years of fundraising, **18** years of dreaming, and **150** years of serving our community.

## LIBRARY USERS

Total Visitors  
**118,645**

Children's Library Visitors  
**36,863**

## ITEMS BORROWED

All materials  
**171,434**

Physical items  
**144,580**

Digital Items  
**26,854**

## SERVICES

Questions Answered  
**33,953**

Program Attendance  
**15,794**

## INTERNET USE

Public Computer Sessions  
**13,173**

WiFi Sessions  
**32,549**

## ROOM RESERVATIONS

Meeting Rooms Reservations  
**278**

Study Room Reservations  
**904**



# By the Numbers

**2,296**

new library card holders

**69**

students under 18 living outside of Galesburg received a GPL card for FREE in 2024 thanks to the Cards for Kids Act.

**40**

adults experiencing homelessness in Galesburg registered for a library card in 2024.

**144**

Knox and Sandburg students received GPL cards in 2024.

**11,945**

total card holders by the end of the year.



# What our patrons are saying

"Everything is AWESOME! So much thought went into planning this awesome library. Thank you for all you did."



"This new library is AMAZING! Thank you for your hard work setting this up for all of us!"



"I am a former resident of the 'BURG - This new library is fantastic. I will visit every time I come to visit my boyhood home."



"Everything looks great! So happy we have this big nice library for our community. Thank you!"



"I'm happy that we have a bigger location for our books. It only goes stronger and better with love."



# Everything You Made Possible in 2024



## LANDSCAPING

Including the Outdoor Reading Area, pollinator and sensory gardens, and new tree plantings to enhance the library grounds.



## SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Sponsored the Summer Reading Program: entertainers, prizes, and the finale celebration at Skate Palace.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Two library employees are advancing their education through Foundation-supported scholarships, strengthening the library's ability to serve the community.



## STAFF APPRECIATION

hosted several staff appreciation events throughout the year, recognizing the library team's hard work and dedication to creating a welcoming community space.



## TECH LAB

Funded Tech Lab assistants to help patrons navigate new technology and provide hands-on learning support.



## STAFFING NEEDS

helped meet immediate staffing needs by funding new positions that ensure continued excellent service for library patrons.



## EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST

Funded position to provide free job search assistance, resume support, and digital skill-building for the community.

# Honoring Outstanding Community Impact



Heather Sipes  
Executive Director

At the Galesburg Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner, Heather Sipes, Executive Director of the Galesburg Public Library Foundation, was honored with the prestigious "5 Over 40" Award. This recognition celebrates outstanding individuals over the age of 40 who demonstrate exceptional leadership, community involvement, and a commitment to making a positive impact. Heather's dedication to strengthening the Galesburg Public Library and enhancing community resources through innovative fundraising, partnerships, and outreach was recognized as a driving force behind the Foundation's recent successes. Her passion for the library and its vital role in serving the community continues to drive meaningful growth and connection in Galesburg.

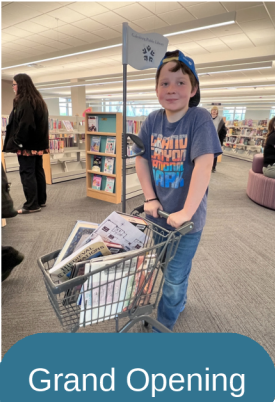
At the Galesburg Chamber of Commerce annual Thanksgiving Luncheon, **Susan Dutell**, a dedicated Galesburg Public Library Foundation **board member**, was **honored with the Thomas B. Herring Community Service Award**. This prestigious recognition celebrates individuals who have made significant, lasting contributions to the Galesburg community through leadership, volunteerism, and service. Susan's commitment to strengthening local organizations, including her thoughtful service to the Library Foundation, exemplifies her deep investment in the future of Galesburg. Her tireless efforts continue to inspire others and create a stronger, more connected community.



Susan Dutell  
Board President



# Highlights



Grand Opening



Recording in the sound booth



Tree Planting



Tech Lab  
now open



Summer Reading:  
Read, Renew, Repeat



150th anniversary  
proclamation



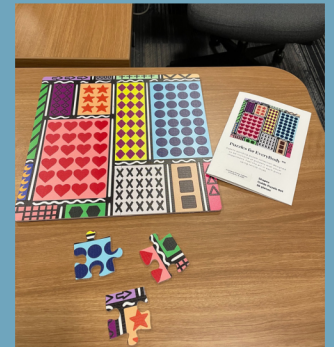
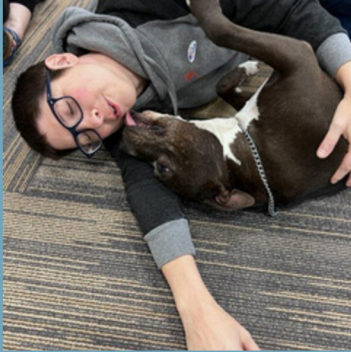
Ribbon Cutting  
DBS & Family Reading Park



Blessing box built and installed by  
Girl Scout Troops 2755 and 4441

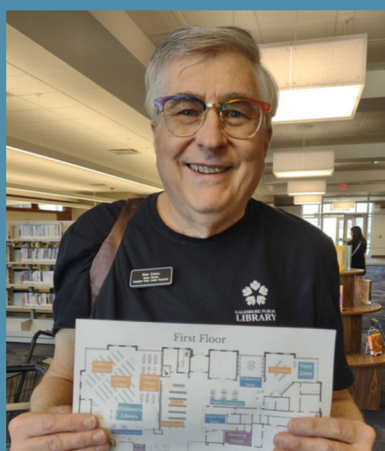


# You made this possible!





# THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!





# WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN!

Many times throughout the construction, I would stop and wonder what it would feel like when the building was finished and we were finally open to the public. Now, a year after opening those doors, **the library is full of activity**. We see children attending storytime, students studying, job seekers working with the Employment Specialist, and community members connecting at events. Every day, the space buzzes with energy and purpose. It's everything we hoped for and more. And it's all **because of the community that helped build it**.

This past year has been nothing short of extraordinary. The beautiful new library is a dynamic hub of opportunities and experiences. Because of you, more people than ever are accessing free resources available at the library.

**The impact is everywhere:** in the young readers picking out their first books, in the seniors learning to navigate new technology, in the artists showcasing their work, and in the families making memories in spaces designed just for them.

**We couldn't have done it without you.** Your generosity, your belief in this project, and your commitment to something greater than yourself made this happen. You've contributed to a legacy for the future of Galesburg.

It has been an honor to be on this journey with you. As we look ahead, we're filled with excitement for the new ideas and opportunities taking shape. And thanks to the commitment and generosity of people like you, the next chapter promises to be just as meaningful.

**Thank you for making this such a memorable year.**



Executive Director

