



Newmarket Library Report to the Community 2024

Anything and Everywhere

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newmarket
library

www.newmarketpl.ca

A year of growth & community connection

Newmarket Library Board



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This past year has been extraordinary for the Newmarket Library, marked by significant growth in membership and an expanded presence throughout our community. More than just a building, the Library is a dynamic and ever-present resource, anything, and everything, for all ages. And as our reach grows, so does the recognition of our bright and welcoming brand, reinforcing the Library as an essential part of daily life in Newmarket.

A key driver of this success has been our Outreach Services team, whose dedication to meeting people where they are have made a lasting impact. By fostering partnerships and increasing our presence at community events, they introduced more residents to the Library than ever before. These friendly one-on-one conversations often became the first step in discovering the wealth of resources we offer. Their efforts resulted in a remarkable surge in new members, including 300 youth from local schools. In fact, the number of people signing up for Library cards at outreach events tripled compared to 2023, a testament to the team's commitment.

New members quickly discovered the heart of our Library, our passionate and dedicated staff, who go above and beyond to create meaningful experiences. A shining example is Susan Hoffman, honored as the 2024 Children's Services Librarian of the Year by the Ontario Public Library Association. Susan's tireless advocacy for literacy has enriched the lives of countless children and teens, and her innovative programs continue to inspire young readers and their families.

Our commitment to inclusive programming remains at the core of our mission. This year, our Pixel Project initiative in the Maker Hub empowered seniors aged 55+ to digitize their cherished memories, photos, slides, Super 8 films, and more. Thanks to our dedicated Maker Hub staff, dozens of seniors were able to preserve their personal histories through programs held both at the Library and the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place.

Additionally, we expanded our Visiting Library Service, ensuring that those unable to visit due to illness or mobility issues have access to books, magazines, and movies. Our incredible community volunteers not only select and deliver materials but also return borrowed items, making this service a vital connection for many.

Beyond our own programs, the Library has become a true hub for the community, bringing people together in new and meaningful ways. Local charities, nonprofits, and community groups are using our spaces to connect, collaborate, and support those in need. Whether hosting workshops, support groups, cultural celebrations, or fundraising events, these organizations are making the most of the Library's welcoming and accessible environment. By opening our doors to a diverse range of initiatives, we are strengthening community ties and ensuring the Library remains a place where anything and everything is possible.

It has been a remarkable year, and we are thrilled to welcome so many new members to the Newmarket Library family. As we look ahead, one thing is clear, the Library is more than a place, it's a presence. Through outreach, innovative services, and meaningful partnerships, we will continue to expand beyond our walls, bringing knowledge, creativity, and connection to everyone in our community. And as we grow, so does the recognition of our bright and inclusive brand, a symbol of learning, engagement, and belonging for all.

Sincerely, Darryl Gray, Chair and Kelly Broome, Vice-Chair
Newmarket Public Library Board of Directors

Promoting literacy in our community

Storywalks® provide an outdoor reading adventure for families

Last summer Newmarket Library had three Storywalks® at Town parks. These outdoor reading activities were a great way for residents to get out and enjoy a stroll in the fresh air, while reading popular children's books with their family.

Organized by Newmarket resident Christian Wehrli in memory of his sister, The Fairy Trail Walk for Esther fundraising event was held at Fairy Lake Park, and funds raised were used to purchase 150 picture books for children.

Afro, No! by Amaya James, written when she was nine years old, explores the sometimes complicated relationship young Black girls can have with their hair.

Etty Darwin and the Four Pebble Problem by Lauren Solo imagines what Charles Darwin and daughter Etty would discuss on their daily walks. As Soloy says, "walking is a wonderful way to contemplate big questions."

The Storywalks proved to be a great success, combining a walk in nature with literacy. Look for more coming in 2025.



Left to right: the Library's Jennifer Leveridge, manager of collections and customer service, Susan Hoffman, supervisor collections, Tracy Munusami, CEO, and Christian Wehrli with a few of the 150 children's books bought with funds from the Fairytrail Walk for Esther event.



Cover of the *Afro, No!* book and one of the signs for the Storywalk that were along a scenic trail at Paul Semple Park from May to September.



Sparking imagination and innovation

Maker Hub launch a showcase of creativity and hands-on fun

Last year the Library held a launch party for the revamped Maker Hub, a dedicated area providing equipment such as 3D printers, a Cricut Maker and more.

The decision to move the Maker Hub to its new location on the main floor of the Library was made to accommodate all the new equipment and increase its visibility.

In it's new, larger space the Maker Hub has seen an increase in people coming in to discover all it has to offer. There are three 3D printers, Cricut Machine, button maker, an embroidery machine, knitting machine, melty beads and more accessible workstations where people can work on their creative projects.

At the launch party guest Makers were on hand to share their tips and advice and show the creative work they accomplish using the equipment available in the Maker Hub.

Clockwise from upper left. Onlookers watch a demonstration of the Cricut machine; visitors check out the 3D creations made in the Maker Hub; Sam, one of the makers in attendance, shows people how to use the crochet machine; and visitors dig into the melty beads to create their designs.



New soundproof study pod

Next time you're in the Library, take a look at our new soundproof study pod located on the main floor near the magazines. It seats up to four people comfortably, and provides a quiet place for private discussions, meetings and focused work.

Fun and engaging community events



Huge turnout for Summer Reading Club celebration

Over 550 children and teens joined the Clubs, which are designed to keep participants reading during the months when school is out. It was the largest number of young readers participating in the Library's clubs since before the Covid outbreak.

To celebrate, the Library held the Space Spectacular event, featuring space-themed activities, contests, crafts and two free shows put on by Mad Science, a company that puts on interactive science shows for children and families.

From top: the Library's main floor was packed with people attending the event; participants create space-themed crafts; the Mad Science show involved audience participation as a fun way to demonstrate aspects of science.



Backpack part of early literacy promotion

Last year free custom-made Newmarket Library backpacks with a book were given to parents when they registered their child for the reading challenge 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. The challenge is a fun way to build early literacy skills. Find the challenge at <https://bit.ly/sumclub24>



Expanding the Library's presence

Double the outreach, triple the member sign-ups

The Outreach Services team embodies the spirit of the Library's slogan, Anything and Everywhere, ensuring we expand our presence beyond our four walls and meet our community where they are.

In 2024, the Outreach Services team doubled the number of outreach events we attended compared to the prior year. With this increased presence across our community, it resulted in triple the number of outreach sign-ups for Library cards.

Through this work, we're able to see the impact of having consistent community presence in locations like Magna Centre and the Farmer's Market, while also showing up at special community events (like Midnight Movies and the HomeShow) as well as in schools across Newmarket.



Storytime at a back to school event at Upper Canada Mall, an outreach event last year.

In Fall of 2024, the Outreach Services team offered outreach tables at every local high school, signing up over 300 youth up for Library cards while strengthening our relationships with local teachers and principals. The feedback received from community partners has been overwhelmingly positive.

In 2025, we are launching a two-year Outreach Services Strategy with the goal of enhancing our presence, our partnerships, and our impact throughout the community.



Left to right: staff member Kathryn at the Home & Lifestyle Show; our partner station at Upper Canada Mall; a happy new Library member.



Choose from over 16,000 courses

Looking to upgrade your skills or learn something new? Your Library card is a passport to over 16,000 online courses available in LinkedIn Learning. Instructor-led professional courses in Business, Creative and Technology categories. Create your account today at <https://bit.ly/linkedinpl>

Empowering our community

Pixel Project preserves precious memories

Last year saw the launch of the Library's Pixel Project programs for seniors 55 and over to help them digitize their cherished memories. Several different programs taught seniors how to use the technology for converting, digitizing and scanning photos, slides, Super 8 films and more.

The new devices, now part of the Library's Maker Hub, were funded by the Ontario Government's Seniors Community Grant Program. Seniors attended the programs at the Library and the Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place, and learned how to create a digital record of their family history.

A total of 75 seniors participated in the programs. Maker Hub staff also held close to 100 one-on-one sessions with seniors to show them the new digital equipment.



Vineeta Jacob, the Library's Technology Services Coordinator, with the devices used to help seniors digitize vintage photos, films and more.

Some of the comments we heard from Library members and residents.

"Libraries are magical places, and the Newmarket Library continues that tradition. I'll admit that as I get older (I'm 72) I tend to prefer digital books, as I can easily expand the text size to make for easier reading."

Feedback on literacy backpack with book, part of 1,000 books before Kindergarten challenge: "My baby is 10 months old and he loves the book! I've been reading it four to five times every day. A wonderful initiative!"

Feedback from Pickering College teacher: "Students left with a wealth of new information. When we headed back to school, we felt bad pulling our students away from the archival articles. Several groups are eager to return to the Library to continue their research."

Customer visiting Maker Hub: "This place is so cool. Thank you for letting me use the space and taking the time to show me 3D printing and Cura. You're all awesome!"

"I just had to tell you that I took the Seniors Discovery Program to learn about eBooks and I just loved it. It is so convenient."

Return books when out and about

The Library now has book return bins in three locations around town: Magna Centre, the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, and near the food court in the Upper Canada Mall. They provide Library members with a convenient way to return items while enjoying their time out.



Creating engaging community events

Library events for all ages and interests

As a community hub, the Library holds many events throughout the year that bring people together to enjoy a wide variety of experiences.

Our NPL Unplugged concert series was a musical highlight. It featured local musical talent up close and personal, performing 30-minute sets in a variety of genres, including country, pop, ambient, and alternative.

Plenty of programs for children and families were held during the year. Along with our regular storytimes there were a number of special events featuring drag queen storytime, musician Russ, a magic show and more.

Plant lovers came to our annual Plant Swap to look for plants for their garden or houseplants for indoors.

Those were just a few of the dozens of programs and events enjoyed by the community in 2024.

From top: NPL unplugged concert series; author and firefighter Amanda reads her book Pickles on Pizza at a storytime; Bubble Show was a popular children's event; and Plant Swap was enjoyed by gardeners.



Lendery offers wide variety of items

The Library's library of things, The Lendery, grew in popularity last year with hundreds more items being borrowed, including puzzles, board games, a Pickleball set, a telescopic weed remover, and so much more. Located on the main floor, see all the items it has at <https://bit.ly/3Fi6xjy>



Building dynamic customer relations

Staff interactions with visitors to the Library a vital part of customer service

Front-line staff are invaluable in building relationships with Library patrons and the community. They are the face of the Library and are there to assist people and provide them with the support they need to find information, apply for a job, find community services, and much more.

Moments of meaningful connection with a patron can have a lasting impact, shaping lives in unexpected ways.

One patron came to the library seeking help to format her resume, which had to be submitted by 5:00 p.m. that day. With the guidance of Library staff, she was able to submit the resume just in time: at 4:58 p.m. A few weeks later, she returned teary-eyed to inform staff that she had landed the job. That moment of joy was a reminder that our Library is more than a space for books; it's a place where aspirations take shape.

For months, another patron sat quietly in one of the Library's study rooms doing coursework for an engineering degree. He would ask staff for help with printing. One day, he came into the Library smiling, with his diploma in hand. "This is what I've been working on here," he said. His perseverance paid off and he acknowledged the role the Library played in his achievement.



Library staff are always ready to help visitors by answering questions, helping them locate items to borrow, and find the information they need.

Patrons frequently share how grateful they are for a quiet, welcoming space where they can read, work, or reflect. Whether they are studying, searching for a job, or simply enjoying a peaceful moment away from the noise of daily life, the library provides an inclusive sanctuary open to all.

These stories remind us that the Library and its front-line staff play a vital role in our community by providing assistance, answering questions, pointing people in the right direction to gain more information, and sharing in their triumphs – one friendly interaction at a time.

Susan Hoffman receives OPLA award

Newmarket Library's Susan Hoffman was recognized by the Ontario Public Library Association with the 2024 Children's or Youth Services Librarian of the Year award. The award honours a children's librarian who has made a positive impact on children and youth, colleagues and the community. Susan promoted early literacy with successful initiatives at the Library.



2024

BY THE NUMBERS



\$4,297,983

amount saved by all residents borrowing items from the Library

453,786

Items borrowed from the Library (a 1.41% decrease from 2023)

9,476

Number of new Library members (a 43.47% increase over 2023)

180,933

In-person visits to the Library (a 13.28% increase over 2023)

169,791

number of eBooks borrowed (a 29.26% increase over 2023)

7,054

Reference questions answered (a -26.34% decrease over 2023)*

175,587

Visits to the Library website (a 8.36% increase over 2023)

9,947

People attending programs (a 5.94% increase over 2023)

2,604

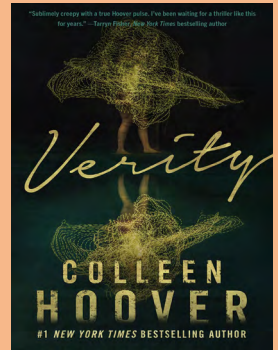
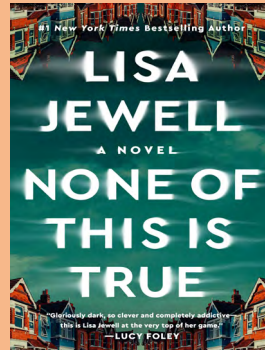
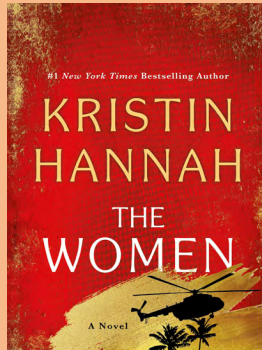
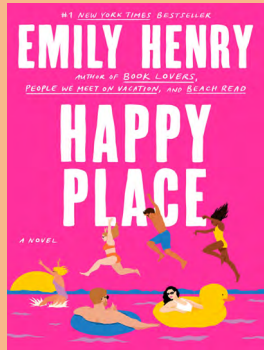
Items borrowed from The Lendery (a 15.32% increase over 2023)

* It is highly likely that this significant decrease is due to a technical error. We are monitoring this number closely and have noticed 2025 numbers trending more closely to 2023.

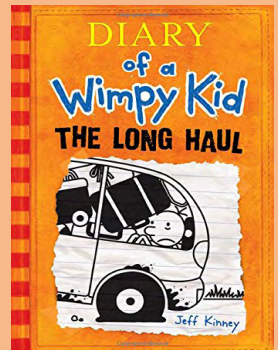
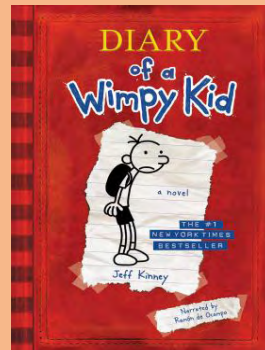
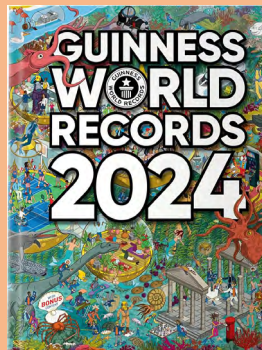
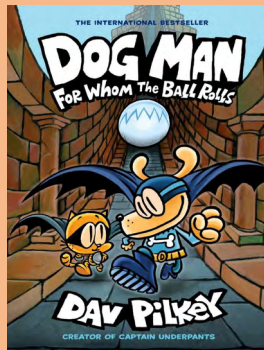
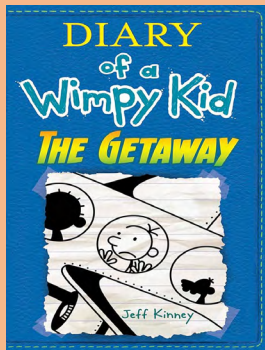
Top Checkouts In 2024

The most popular books and movies/TV series borrowed from the Library during the year.

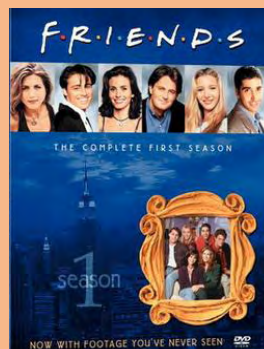
TOP ADULT BOOKS



TOP CHILDREN'S BOOKS



TOP TV SERIES & DVDS



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