

Town of Limerick Limerick Public Librarian's Report 2024

Our annual report provides an overview of the Limerick Public Library's financial, statistical information, programs and much more. Our vision is to provide resources that deliver outstanding services, facilities, and programs which meet Limerick community needs.

Each year, we look back at Limerick Public Library's services, programs and connections and feel a deep sense of gratitude for all of the people who make this happen—our staff, board, volunteers, sponsors, elected officials and community members who show their support in so many ways. Limerick Public Library is here to serve you—our incredible community. Thank you to the 12 volunteers who donated 160 hours of service in 2024.

Libraries are changing and at the Limerick Public Library, you'll still find the items you'd expect: books, magazines, newspapers, computers, puzzles, DVDS's, etc. But increasingly, you'll find many nontraditional resources as well: birding/nature/backyard/night sky backpacks, park passes, board games, kill-a-watt energy detector, ukulele, metal detector, bubble machine, and much more. The same is true of programs. Newer initiatives reimagine how the library can serve the community. The reason for these changes is simple: Literacy is no longer just about being able to read. It takes many forms: cultural, social, civic, environmental, and digital, to name just a few. Working together we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, program and other resources. We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, and to discover.

The Limerick Public Library staff is flexible, dedicated, and creative. We always look forward to seeing our patrons and helping meet their library needs, whether it's entertainment, education, or enrichment. We have been able to continue offering "take and make" kits, expanding the number of eResources and book lists, and providing links to many free online resources. Our goal is to ensure that you find what you are looking for at the time you need it, and conversely, offer ideas, resources, and experiences that you might not even know were available. We have learned a lot about how to adapt library services to changing circumstances. We encourage you to think about things you wish the library would do and share those thoughts with us. While we can't solve every problem or know what's around the corner, together we have proven that not only can we continue to survive, but by working TOGETHER we continue to thrive.

In 2025, our goal is to become part of the Maine consortium of libraries using a new library system called Polaris. Our patrons will be able to request from the libraries in the consortium any book/item to check out, as well as, allowing patrons from other libraries to request our books/items to borrow. This will increase inventory usage for all libraries involved in this consortium. We have added the increased cost of the Polaris Library system, as well as, increased van delivery usage to our 2025 budget.

The following items were added to the collection in 2024: 427 adult books and 264 children's books. These additions to the collection were made possible through budgeted purchases and generous donations. Circulated in 2024, were 13,152 books and non-book materials. We are happy to continue providing curbside pickup service to our patrons in need. This was utilized 25 times. The library has 1,478 active patrons with library cards, some of those are family cards "one card used by multiple family members". Through the Inter-Library loan system, we borrowed 659 books for Library patrons from libraries throughout the United States and we loaned 56 books to other Maine Libraries. Patron visits for 2024 totaled 5,509. Our patrons borrowed 2,111 ebooks and audiobooks using our Bibliotheca/Cloud Library subscription that we purchased through the Maine State Library. The public computers were used by 645 patrons. In 2024, we gave 295 Maine Wildlife Park Passes for patrons to use – reduced park admission.

Friends of the Limerick Public Library play readings have returned this year with a full cast of characters. They have also generously paid for some of the summer reading supplies.

Fundraising: Through donations, book sales, DVD sales, and sponsors raised \$6,915. Our book/DVD sale had another successful year. This year we received funds from local business sponsors for our Lego Camp Week during Summer

Reading Program. These funds were raised to help families have their child(ren) attend the camp at a reduced cost. We received cash donations and book donations from some of our patrons. Income from these were used to purchase books and programming materials and to pay for each child who attended the Lego program. We will have another fundraiser in 2025 for the Lego Camp Week.

We continue to provide take and make kits for the children during most months. During 2024, we gave out 667 take & make kits and activities. The library continues to have book discussions for 2 adult groups in the morning and evening. The Kids Book Club, for ages 8-12, continues to be a fun program. They meet in the afternoon and we provide snacks for the attendees. We continue to have in-house programs during 2024 – we had authors, Shelly Burbank and Margaret Jones, at the library for an author talk. These were both well attended. Each month we continue to have an Art Exhibit showcasing local area artists. Other in-house programs: book discussions, artist receptions, painting, Halloween costume donation and give away, animal tracks, etc. We also had other programs including: Lego programs, Valentine crafts, “Take Your Child to the Library” craft, Star Wars craft, National Library Week, Earth Day, Lego day with Cody Wells, fall crafts, winter crafts, and other holiday take and make crafts, activities and worksheets, mitten/hat tree where we received many donations and had many items taken by families, adults and children. During summer reading program we had a stuffed animal sleepover. This was a huge success. The children were so excited to see what the little stuffies were up to at the library after closing hours. We added a Sourdough beginners’ class, Apothecary class and the following ongoing programs: “Cook the Book”, Creative Writing Group meeting twice a month, and Astronomy Club providing information to the children regarding the night sky. In February, we had a huge response for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Many families enjoyed counting the birds in their backyard and recording the results online. We also gave away 250 Eclipse glasses and had a group of adults/children at the library during the viewing of the eclipse.

We continue offer our “Library of Things” – a code reader for patrons having issues with their car, metal detector, 6 ukuleles, bubble machine, digital multi-reader, energy detector and voltage reader as well as our backpacks for night sky, nature trail, bird watch and backyard bugs, monopoly, scrabble, and many other games.

The annual Summer Reading Program had 75 children and 15 adults participate. We had great fun as we had activities each week and a passport marking their travel adventures. Thanks to the Masonic Freedom Lodge #42 for helping to sponsor the program by donating 6 bicycles and helmets to the kids through the Masonic Bikes for Books program. We thank them for this wonderful program. We would, also, like to thank the Limerick Sea Food Shack and Ice Cream and the Dough Boys Donut Shop for offering coupons to the children/teens who completed the Summer Reading Program.

We continue to help patrons with job searches, resume writing and job applications, and assistance with any technology questions. The library offers photocopying and faxing services. If needed, we train patrons on the Atrium Catalog system and how to access and utilize the full benefits of the system from home including reserving books, e-books, etc. We issue Portland Public Library cards to Limerick Public Library patrons, allowing them access to the many of Portland’s digital resources. Another service we provide is proctoring exams for adult students at no charge.

For current news, activities, and programming visit the Library’s Facebook page. The online catalog, monthly newsletter, and calendar are available on the Limerick web site at: www.limericklibrary.org.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with the Limerick Public Library. Powered by our dedicated staff we will continue to welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning. Our story wouldn’t be the same without the people of our community. Each of you has contributed in some meaningful way to help our library thrive. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia E. Smith, Library Director/Librarian