



**GREY HIGHLANDS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

*The place to connect, explore and learn*

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# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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**Flesherton**  
519-924-2241

**Markdale**  
519-986-3436

**Kimberley**  
519-599-6990

[www.greyhighlandspubliclibrary.com](http://www.greyhighlandspubliclibrary.com)

**Flesherton****Walter Harris  
(Markdale)****Kimberley**

## VISION

Your place to connect, explore, and learn.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To engage and empower through innovative and integrated library and cultural programs, service, and information.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Continue our role as a municipal cultural leader; be a model for cultural leadership; be recognized as community hubs where culture happens

### CUSTOMER FIRST

Be a model for responsive and innovative service

### TECH FRIENDLY

Respond proactively to technology needs and opportunities

### SERVICE GROWTH

Strengthen the current service provisions and resources based on the needs identified in our 2017 community survey and ongoing surveys and focus groups



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2021 was another extraordinary year for the Grey Highlands Public Library as our community, province, and the nation continued to grapple with the global pandemic. But despite the uncertainty and challenges, it was also a year of celebration and new beginnings! Not surprisingly, our dedicated library staff successfully mitigated the impact of Covid-19 to provide exemplary - and essential - public library service.

We were thrilled with successful grant applications, totaling more than \$115,000 towards expansion and improved safety of meeting spaces, enhanced programming, and Internet and Wifi access for the community. We welcomed new staff, who bring energy, creativity, and expertise to our Library team and congratulate and thank Michelle Campbell and Linda Weatherall, for their respective 20 and 15 years of dedicated service.

As the outgoing (retiring) CEO, I am filled with gratitude and consider it a privilege to have served this community for 41 years. What an exciting journey it has been! While I am humbled by the many gifts and tributes that I have received, I must emphasize that the success of the Library is not an accomplishment of the CEO alone- without the support and expertise of Library staff, the vision and dedication of many Library Boards, and the help of devoted volunteers, many projects, programs, and services would not have come to fruition.

Finally, I am so very delighted to welcome Jennifer Murley, the next CEO of the Grey Highlands Public Library! It was a pleasure and privilege to work closely with her in December. I welcome her into our community, this beloved workspace- our library branches, and the world of library services. I am confident that she will lead staff to even greater accomplishments and continue to provide excellent library service to this community. With my warm regards and best wishes always.

**Wilda Allen**  
**CEO/Chief Librarian**





## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

There is something to be said for change, especially when it comes at a time when most of us on the Grey Highlands Public Library Board weren't expecting it. The year 2021 ended with the retirement of our long-term CEO Wilda Allen, whose passion and dedication stemmed all the way back to when the Library was the main floor of a house on Elizabeth Street 42 years ago. Although her final year was notable for its numerous challenges, not the least of which was continuing to deliver quality service during the second year of a global pandemic, Wilda was undaunted and approached them with her characteristic diligence. We know we will miss her, but we also know that the library system is safe under the guidance of our new CEO, Jennifer Murley.

Expect more of the same in terms of commitment for 2022, with perhaps a little more emphasis on community engagement. The questions we ask ourselves as a library board are "What are we not doing that we might for our community?" and "How can we deliver what we already do even better?" I look forward to seeing the responses to these questions in the upcoming year.



**Kevin Land**  
**Chair, Grey Highlands Public Library Board**

## OUR LIBRARY BOARD

Kevin Land (Chair)  
Lynn Silverton (Vice-Chair)  
Deputy Mayor Aakash Desai (Council Rep)  
Danielle Valiquette (Council Rep) - Dane Nielsen (Council Rep)  
Janet Carson - Gillian Griffin - Catherine Plener  
Stewart Halliday - Kim McArthur  
Wilda Allen (CEO)





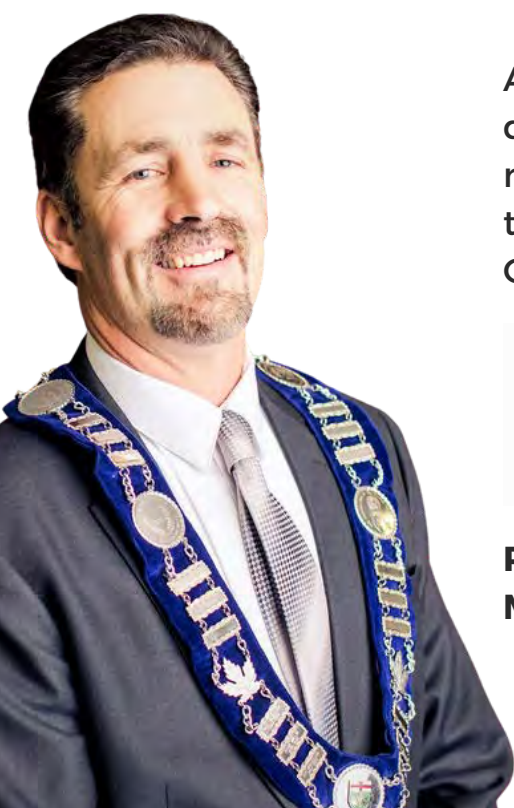
# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Congratulations to the Library's CEO Wilda Allen, on another successful year of operating and maintaining the Grey Highlands Public Library. The past 2 years have been full of challenges for the families and patrons of Grey Highlands. The Library Team has had to work harder than ever at finding creative and innovative ways to continue to safely offer resources and services to residents.

Not only did they rise to the challenge, but they have also successfully implemented new ways to engage and support their patrons that included online storytime, additional digital services, curbside pick up, material quarantining and cleaning, Wi-Fi smart spot rentals, and an increase in available online resources.

As we look ahead and transition to reopening the library doors to in-person service, I want to thank every member of the Grey Highlands Public Library Team for their, arduous work, dedication, and commitment to the Grey Highlands Community.

**Paul McQueen,**  
**Mayor, Municipality of Grey Highlands**





## OUR STAFF



Jennifer Murley - Incoming CEO

Linda Weatherall— Branch Head, Selective Services

Michelle Campbell—Library Assistant, Children's & Youth Services

Jessica Hammond—Digital Services Branch Manager

Nicole He - Library Assistant, Digital & Public Services

Becky Hill—Casual/Relief & Admin Assistant

Sherry Brown—Permanent Part-time Casual/Relief

Greg Haug—Media Production Coordinator

Summer Student - Emma-Jane Hill

Co-Op Students - Kingsley Dobson, Ryder Keirstead





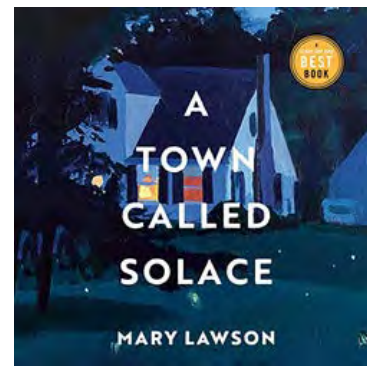
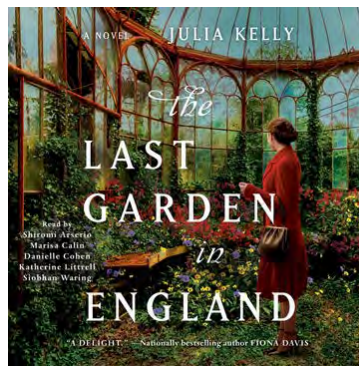
## 2021 AT A GLANCE

**40,000 physical and digital materials circulated**, and **over 25,000 people visited the Library's webpage** to access services and authoritative information.

Over **5500 residents accessed the Library's free Wi-Fi** and hundreds of residents used public computers to stay informed and connected.

We **ran 81 programs that reached over 1300 people**. In total, **641 children's craft bags were distributed**, keeping residents and their families active, entertained, and inspired throughout the year!

## TOP CIRCULATING ITEMS







# CUSTOMER FIRST



700+ Rapid Test Kits Distributed

Celebrating staff Service Awards

3000+ Curbside Pickups Filled

Throughout 2021, the Library pivoted its services in response to the pandemic, continuing to provide patrons with curbside services, expanding digital services, and updating health and safety procedures to open our doors when restrictions would allow.

From January-July, the physical building was closed, but staff shifted their day-to-day to support the library and information needs of the community through curbside pickup. Whether that was continuing to connect residents with their next perfect read, assisting with vaccine passport printing, or keeping up with a long hold's list, accessible and excellent customer service remained a priority. Toward the end of the year, staff assembled and **distributed over 700 free rapid test kits** just before the holidays to help keep staff and residents safe!

We also celebrated the **15 and 20 year work anniversaries** of two of our team members, Linda Weatherall and Michelle Campbell, demonstrating their longstanding commitment to the Library and community. Likewise, the Library Team congratulated Wilda Allen, CEO/Chief Librarian on her retirement, celebrating **over 40 years** of serving the community.





## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CURBSIDE SERVICE

**9:00 a.m.:** Arrived and sanitized all areas.

**9:15 a.m.:** Checked the phone messages.

**9:30 a.m.:** Patron called requesting 5 books. I provided readers' advisory and fulfilled her request by 10:00 a.m.!

**10:15 a.m.:** Patron called and said she had called on Saturday and requested several books be pulled for her to read to her granddaughter who reads at level 3. The staff didn't get the message but managed to pull the books for her to pick up before 11:00 a.m.

**10:30 a.m.:** Another patron calls to have books pulled and pickup time for 1:00 p.m. Despite the short notice, the request was filled.





# CURBSIDE CONTINUED

## Customer First Spotlight

**10:45 a.m.** Called a patron who had left a message about how curbside works. She requested 2 books and requested to pick them up at 11:00 a.m.

**10:00 - 11:00 a.m.:** Several patrons called to set pickup times for today.

**11:00 a.m.:** A little breathing space so I faxed the timesheets.

**11:15 a.m.:** Emptied the dropbox and checked the books in. These books are in isolation for 3 days.

**12:30 p.m.:** Watered the flowers as staff won't be back until next Tuesday.

**12:45 p.m.:** Patron called wanting 2 books that we didn't have. She asked what I would suggest for her to read, after some input, I read inserts from a couple of books I thought she would like. She happily picked them up at 1:10 p.m.


**12:50 p.m.:** Patron called requesting books to be picked up on Saturday. I pulled 3 large print books for her with input from her as to what she likes.

**12:50 p.m.:** Put a few holds on books for a homebound patron who will probably call next week for books.

**1:00 p.m.:** Waiting for pickup customers so cataloguing 5 magazines that came in the mail.

**1:15 p.m.:** Linda has arrived with books from Kimberley and Flesherton, so I have to check them in and set up any calls that need to be made for pickups on Saturday.

**1:25p.m.:** Shelled a few books as I shelve most of the returned books on Tuesdays which gives them 3 days in isolation.



"Curbside was much more than booking appointments. We isolated materials, accommodated last minute requests, checked in with residents, shelved books, and helped connect patrons to their next great read."  
- Sherry Brown  
(Grey Highlands Public Library)



## SERVICE GROWTH



133 new memberships



1856 new items added to the physical collection



4,167 holds filled across 3 branches

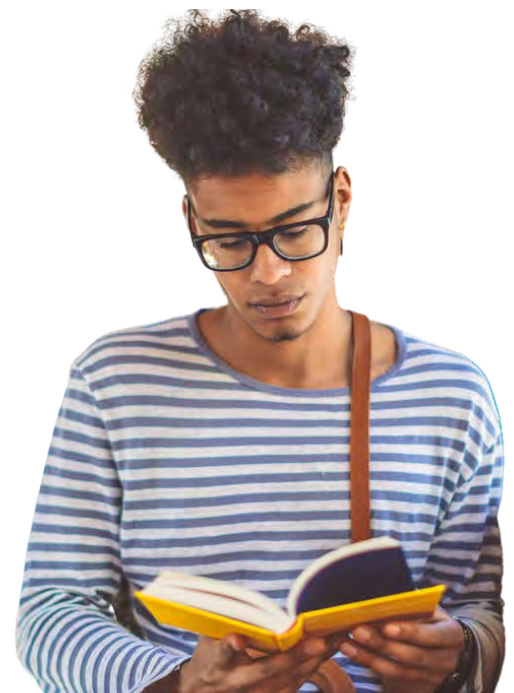


51 activity items circulated, including STEAM activity kits, PLAY kits, and Kajeet Wi-Fi Smart Spots



\$115,000+ Awarded in Grants

No matter what restrictions were in place, we continued to grow and update our collections, explore new opportunities for partnerships, secure grant funding to support the growth of spaces and services, fill holds requests, and register new patrons for library memberships.







# TECH FRIENDLY

The pandemic continued to place more of a demand on virtual resources and the support required to use those services in a meaningful way. Our staff worked with the public to help them navigate online resources, troubleshoot their own devices, and access virtual library programs to keep residents engaged. We provided 4 virtual April Break programs with over **90+ views** of the recorded sessions alone.

Through the Grey Bruce Community Foundation, the Library was able to purchase STEAM kits to keep children and families busy. Through funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Library purchase 10 Kajeet Wi-Fi hot spots for families to "borrow" the Internet for free.

Virtual April Break  
100+ Children  
Reached



10 Kajeet  
Wi-Fi Hotspots  
Purchased



30+ STEAM Kits  
Added to the  
Collection



We love the STEAM kits! Our family had so much fun making currant buns with the cooking kits.  
- Library Patron



# VIRTUAL STORYTIME

Staff took virtual storytime to a whole new level in 2021. Storytimes were prerecorded with support from the Grey Highlands Cultural Channel staff, using the Library's green screen and film production equipment. Combined with a free craft activity, we offered a diversity of storytime themes celebrating seasons and observances. In total, the Library created and distributed over **600 craft bags** to children and families in Grey Highlands!

44 virtual storytimes  
1000+ views  
600 craft bags  
distributed





# CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

## Channel Highlights

8225 YouTube Views (2021)

28,208 Lifetime YouTube Views  
(2016-2021)

575 Hours Played (2021)

## Events Covered



Our Library remained a cultural leader, with Grey Highlands Cultural Channel (GHCC) staff capturing community stories, historical moments, and cultural celebrations. Throughout the year, GHCC staff supported the development of virtual storytime, ensuring that children and families could still access fun, creative library programs from the comfort of their own homes. The Library also continued its relationship with the Grey Highlands Secondary School supporting two co-op students, whose stories are highlighted in this report.

As restrictions eased, demand for content grew, and so did the Library's team of media production staff. In August, a Media Production Assistant was hired to assist with content development. Toward the end of the year, the Cultural Channel Directorate was formed to encourage direct community participation in the development of the Channel.







# GHCC CO-OP: KINGSLEY DOBSON

"Co-oping at the Grey Highlands Cultural Channel was a wonderful experience where I was able to learn new and useful skills while putting them to practical use."



CULTURAL LEADERSHIP  
SPOTLIGHT



# GHCC CO-OP: RYDER KIERSTEAD

I had such an amazing time working with the people at the Library, I learned so much from every person I met there. Greg was the person I mainly worked with, and he helped me remember the skills I had in video editing along with new skills in also filming, planning and production management. I've wanted to have a career in the field that Greg works in for a while now, so I am more than grateful for the time I had working alongside him and everyone else at the Grey Highlands Public Library.





# 2021 WRAP UP



As 2021 came to an end, the Library congratulated their CEO, Wilda Allen on her retirement and welcomed Jennifer Murley as the Incoming CEO. Jennifer is excited to continue to position the Library as a cultural and community hub in Grey Highlands and to work with the incredible team that made 2021 another year to remember.