



Annual Impact Report

2023

2023 Year in Review

DISRUPTION SPARKS INNOVATION AT THE IDEALAB

Innisfil ideaLAB & Library is a dynamic community hub that encourages discovery, growth, and community-led experiences. Adapting to the community's changing needs, the Library supports intellectual exploration, fostering learning, curiosity, and a sense of belonging.

The Library continues its mission by sparking ideas to ignite a creative and dynamic community in exciting ways.

The annual impact report serves to highlight some of our accomplishments over the past year, and reaffirms our dedication to serving our community with excellence, inclusivity and innovation.

From inspiring young authors and creating new friendships for seniors, to building social networks for newcomers - we are delighted that you, too, can see the ripples of transformation our Library creates.





187,168

Books, DVDs, technology & other materials borrowed



87,568

eBooks and eAudiobooks borrowed



124,228

Visits to the Library



16,066

Library Members



36,757

Questions Answered



1,722

Programs for all ages



29,075

Participants at programs and events



by the Numbers



Speak UP for Diversity & Inclusion

Here at the Library, our aim is to build a space that embraces everyone, and celebrates the richness and diversity of our unique lived experiences. We've been actively expanding our programs, forming partnerships with underrepresented communities, and continuously improving our skills to ensure that everyone feels respected, valued, and truly part of our community.

Love is Love at the ideaLAB & Library

To celebrate Pride Month, the Library launched a special edition Love is Love library card. The card represents another bold step towards inclusivity and affirmation for our 2SLGBTQ+ community members. This initiative symbolizes our unwavering commitment to creating a safe and welcoming space for all. The pride library card not only serves as a tangible expression of identity but also signifies our solidarity with marginalized communities.



Partnership Highlights

We have fostered enhanced partnerships with community groups, resulting in an increase in community-led programs and services. Notable examples include the Local Immigration Partnership's Week of Welcome, UPLift Black art wall, the Indigenous History Month mural, Making Change's Mosaic of Black Culture, and the Words Matter event. These collaborations have not only enriched our programming but have also strengthened our ties with diverse community stakeholders.

Responding to the 94 Calls to Action

The Library continues to seek meaningful ways to respond to and address the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Report. Our response is ongoing and shows up in programming, collection development, training, and education.

- Programming
 - Birch Bark Etching with Vanessa Kennedy of Red Quills
 - Indigenous History NOT Taught in School with Kelly Brownbill
 - Virtual Tours of Mohawk Residential School with the Woodland Cultural Centre
 - Screening of the Orange Shirt Day Phyllis Webstad Story
 - Mural painted by Indigenous artist, April Paul
- Training and Education
 - Cultural Competency Training with Kelly Brownbill for Library Board and members of Council
 - Beyond Land Acknowledgements: Activating Decolonization and Indigenization in Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums for Staff
 - Staff training on personalizing Land Acknowledgement Statements
- Policy
 - Established a standing committee of the Board on Truth & Reconciliation
- Collections
 - Conducting ongoing reviews to ensure that the Library's collections are accurate and reflect Indigenous voices and experiences
 - Development of resources online and addition of resources to the physical collection to assist individuals with tracing their Indigenous ancestry





Open UP opportunities to strengthen connection & engagement with our community

As a valued part of our community, the Library increases our reach and impact by teaming up with strategic partners and working together on important projects. Our branches are vibrant centres where people come together, forging strong connections and accessing essential resources that reflect the diversity of our community. Whether it's organizing local events or collaborating on larger initiatives across the County, we're dedicated to creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels involved and supported.

We put the community first, allowing them to take ownership of our spaces and adopt them as their own. We actively partner with a number of community groups and services, offering spaces for partner programming, drop-in mental health services, youth justice and court diversion programs, tutoring, adult literacy programming, Newcomer services, and more. Local groups and service clubs rent meeting space, host gatherings and workshops in the library and seek to broaden their membership base, clients, and services. Community-led groups are encouraged to grow in the space, celebrate their passions and find their niche.



Expanded Partnerships offer New Opportunities

We have deepened our existing relationships and forged new partnerships within the community and beyond to ensure Innisfil residents can access the services and resources they need to thrive. Some examples include:

- EarlyON programs out of all three branches, bringing in over 8000 participants to the Library
- Community-led song circle sees up to 60 participants per week, and has been an important community activity for day visits from Empower Simcoe's Community Support Services, finding meaningful engagement opportunities for adults with learning disabilities
- The Library hosted the County of Simcoe's Week of Welcome event and partnered with Economic Development to host the Innisfil Business Support Showcase
- Co-delivered regional programs with neighbouring library systems
- S.H.I.F.T. (Support and Hope for Individuals and Families Today) and Contact Community Services regularly support clients and residents with housing, food security, and accessing other social services

These partnerships have allowed us to broaden our reach and impact, fostering mutual support and collaboration.



Build UP our reputation as a trusted community asset

Introducing the Book Sanctuary

The Library introduced a new Book Sanctuary Collection in 2023. The collection features more than fifty adult, teen, and children's books, in a combination of physical and digital formats, that have been challenged, censored, or removed from a public library or school in North America. The Book Sanctuary, an initiative launched by the Chicago Public Library in 2022, raises awareness around ongoing challenges to freedom of information.

Through this program, the Library is committed to highlighting the importance of preserving diverse voices and perspectives. The collection includes fiction, non-fiction, picture books, and graphic novels. Visitors to the Library now have the opportunity to explore these titles and learn more about the reasons behind the challenges. By providing access to a wide range of materials, resources, and programs the library supports intellectual freedom. The initiative aims to foster a deeper understanding of the value of open access to information.

Find the Book Sanctuary display at the Lakeshore Branch or view a selection of the collection online.



What is Intellectual Freedom?

Your public library protects your right to choose for yourself what to read, what programs to attend, and what services to use. This allows everyone to explore and learn about a variety of topics, even controversial or unpopular ones. The Innisfil idealAB & Library protects your Intellectual Freedom by providing access to a wide range of materials, resources, and programs, and by upholding the individuals' right to read and think freely.

Raise UP the Library's identity as an innovative hub

At the forefront of innovation, we have embraced change and pushed the boundaries of traditional Library services. Through a combination of forward-thinking programming, staff empowerment initiatives, and a commitment to lifelong learning, we have positioned ourselves as a beacon of innovation within our industry. From the introduction of cutting-edge digital literacy programs to the revitalization of public art projects, we continue to inspire transformation and growth within our community.



Digital Confidence and Community Engagement

From basic computing skills, to creating something new in the HackLAB or MediaLAB, the Library seeks to not only improve digital literacy but build digital and technological confidence within our community. Data insights reveal how our digital learning programs are supporting community needs:

- After participating in Confidently Computing or Tech Help sessions 90% of participants felt more knowledgeable about using digital resources and 91% felt more confident, while 100% of participants agreed they could apply what they learned.
- For adults and seniors, library programs offer the opportunity to become more engaged in the community. 70% of participants were more aware of community issues, 82% felt more confident about becoming involved in the community, and 86% intend to become more involved and engaged in community activities after attending library programs.



Light UP pathways to personal & professional growth

Reading Readiness Begins Early

Our preschool programs are developed using the research-based *Every Child Ready to Read* parent education initiative. We highlight the importance of pre-literacy skills and offer programs, workshops and supporting materials that help caregivers understand the vital role they play in getting children ready to read. Incorporating simple tips in accessible language gives parents and caregivers the means to prepare children for learning to read, write, and succeed in school and life.

Early intervention, getting children ready to read in their preschool years, has been proven to improve childhood literacy outcomes. When kids learn to read, they become adults who love to read. In 2023, we delivered **497** preschool programs to support early literacy for **9271** participants.



Expanded Programming for Seniors and Older Adults

In response to community needs, we have deepened our offerings for seniors and older adults, and now provide a suite of options for participants to engage socially through technology, literacy, and the arts. Our expanded programming for seniors is designed to combat social isolation and enrich the lives of our elder community members. Through tailored workshops, events, and gatherings, we've created a vibrant space where seniors can cultivate new skills, forge meaningful connections, and reignite their passion for lifelong learning. The impact is a renewed sense of purpose and belonging radiating from our senior patrons.

“The Library has saved me these last two years... I love the programs they offer!”

In addition to increasing attendance in programs, outreach to Sandycove Acres and community retirement and assisted living homes were increased, thanks to funding support from the Province of Ontario's Senior Community Grant and the federally funded New Horizons for Seniors program. A *Sociable Seniors* session uses a shared hobby to bond Seniors within and outside of their existing communities; a *Confidently Computing or Tech Help* session makes sure customers can overcome barriers to digital communication & inclusion; and outreach visits bring us where these communities already congregate.

Award Winning Library Service

In 2023, the Library was the honoured recipient of two prestigious awards: the Angus Mowat Award of Excellence for the Library's Pollinator Gardens & Butterfly Rearing Program and the W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors.

Angus Mowat Award of Excellence

The Angus Mowat Award of Excellence recognizes a commitment to excellence in the delivery of public library service. The Library began a Monarch Butterfly Rearing Program in 2019, after planting pollinator gardens at its Cookstown and Lakeshore branches. Both gardens are registered as official Monarch Waystations. The response from the public was overwhelming, and reinforced the need for hands-on engagement around nature and conservation issues. In recent years, many public libraries throughout Ontario have recognized their outdoor spaces as assets that can be used to engage the public with nature and science. We have developed a comprehensive training system including videos and a staff guide for other libraries interested in starting a similar program.

W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors

The Library was awarded the W. Kaye Lamb Award for its ongoing project *Kits and Community: Activity Kits for Older Adults*. The award recognizes outstanding library service to seniors. Co-sponsored by Ex Libris Association (ELA) and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA), the award acknowledged Innisfil's innovative approach to creating opportunities for social inclusion and skill-building with our senior residents. The project has connected seniors with each other through their shared interests, keeping them active and engaged in the community. Since the project began in 2020, over 9000 activity kits have been completed by Innisfil's senior residents.



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