



Hamilton  
Public  
Library



20  
20

Annual Report 2020

**RESILIENCE**

## WITH THANKS FROM HPL'S LEADERS

The pandemic created a vocabulary of new phrases and acronyms: 'COVID-19', 'social distancing', 'PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and 'stay-at-home orders'; as well as a slate of colour-coded lockdowns that limited our interactions. Change was constant. Donning masks became normal. But throughout the upheaval, HPL Staff adapted to each circumstance with resilience, innovation and a can-do attitude.

HPL Staff balanced delivery of services with public health directives to ensure the safety of everyone. We reached out over the phone, online and in person, when it was possible. Helping people and the community get through the pandemic was our focus.

Through 2020, HPL remained true to its core values: nurture a love of reading, advance literacy, preserve the past, support lifelong learning, reduce social isolation, advance intellectual freedom and provide equitable access to information.

**The pandemic forced us to  
find new ways to do these.  
And we did.**

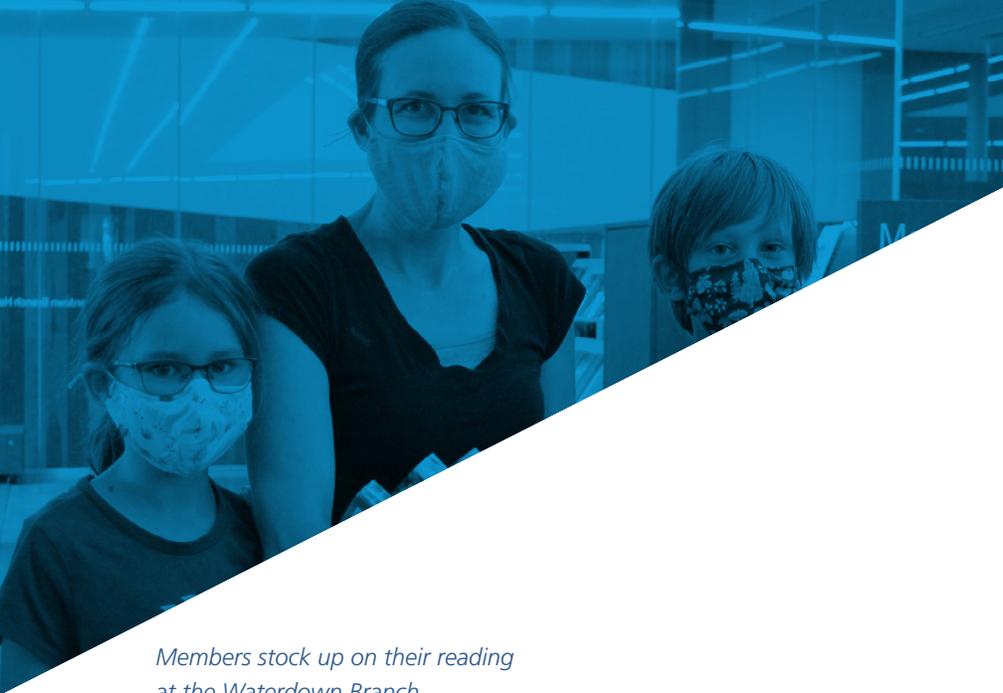
We are here for you.

#InThisTogether



Our virtual branch is always open.

[hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)



*Members stock up on their reading at the Waterdown Branch.*

We added more digital resources, made it easier to access eBooks and eAudiobooks, Staff checked in on elderly Members with friendly calls, improved access to WiFi, introduced new services such as remote printing, eliminated fines and persevered with building projects.

**Our mandate is to increase our positive impact on the city, one person at a time. To do this, we are building and strengthening community partnerships, to ensure recovery from the pandemic creates a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for all.**



**Paul Takala**  
Chief Librarian and CEO



**Nick van Velzen**  
Board Chair

## SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

# Staff pivoted through the year to support the community. The pandemic forced HPL to move all in-person programs online in March.

Audiences enjoyed watching shows on our virtual branch including Noon Hour Concerts and Staff-led storytimes and puppet shows.

We launched Hamilton Reads two months early in April, to engage readers during the citywide shutdown. By coincidence, the fictional storyline in *Moon of the Crusted Snow* mirrored life in a pandemic. The Indigenous themes of Waubgeshig Rice's novel sparked a cooking show series called In the Kitchen with Esh, tours of artists' studios and a live interview with the author, all of which aired on HPL's YouTube channel and Cable 14. The book also prompted plenty of discussion in online bookclubs at HPL and among neighbouring library systems.

To help students, caregivers and educators, Staff put together book lists, activity sheets,



*Nouha was one of 38 Google IT Support Certificate graduates.*

links to tutoring, educational resources and more on Learning at HPL and Discover at Home. The TD Summer Reading Club featured videos about gardening, local creatures great and small, museums, musicians, magicians and more.

To reach people who had difficulty getting to HPL, especially during the pandemic, Borrow by Mail was created. It delivered library materials to Members through the postal service. To make it easy to pick up books when the pandemic halted browsing at branches, Takeout was added. To reach Staff, Members only had to dial one phone number (905-546-3200) or use a newly created chat feature on [hpl.ca](https://www.hpl.ca).

Students in the Google IT Support Certificate program at HPL also switched to online learning. By year-end, 38 students, or 76 per cent, graduated. The CISCO Learning Academy also found a home on [hpl.ca](https://www.hpl.ca), giving access to a series of free courses for those interested in an IT career. Coding classes for kids was also a popular draw.

SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

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"I am very excited to read all the suggestions you have sent me. They are all very interesting and I wanted to thank you for taking the time choosing the books!"

Jana, who used our *Which Book Next* reading recommendations service

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"I'm curious about everything. Even subjects that don't interest me."

Alex Trebek (1940-2020),  
Game show host of Jeopardy! since 1984

Read and watch more about this famous Canadian in HPL's catalogue at [hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

*Team HPL's Shannon holds Takeout bags at a Bookmobile stop.*



NOTABLE NUMBERS

**18,097**

New Library Cards Issued

**1,543**

Virtual Programs

**1M+**

eBooks and eAudiobooks Borrowed

*Team HPL's Sarah welcomes Members at the Saltfleet Branch.*



## ENCOURAGING LITERACY AND DIGITAL LITERACY

### Hamiltonians love to read. This became evident in October when HPL reached a record-breaking one million digital book checkouts.

HPL was one of 75 public library systems worldwide to reach this milestone. Among the top titles was our Hamilton Reads book, *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, which was downloaded by more than 1,000 Members just one month after it was announced. Borrowing through our Virtual Branch increased 300 per cent.

Demand for our Which Book Next service is further proof of this city's love of reading.

Staff provided personalized recommendations for more than 315 Members in 2020.

When eBooks and eAudiobooks were the only way to read because of shutdowns, HPL staff were ready to help residents figure out how to borrow and use their tablets and ereaders. More than 440 people booked an appointment through our web form.

Working with Internet Archives — a non-profit, digital library advocating for free access for everyone — HPL launched its Open Library collection. In 2020, more than 43,560 items were added to the Archive.

Staff connected the community with additional resources and services including online tutoring and job-search skills, loaning devices to school boards and facilitating virtual court sessions and interviews.

*Team HPL's Lisa, left, meets with our one-millionth eBook borrower, Konnie, at Terryberry Branch in October.*





Phillip and Max browse at the Dundas Branch in February.

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“LOVE MY LIBRARY!! I love the downloadable audiobooks and e-pub books. Saved my life during the pandemic. So valuable to ALL Hamiltonians.”

Donor to HPL's *Pay It Forward* campaign

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“Part of the great wonder of reading is that it has the ability to make human beings feel more connected to one another, which is a great good, if not from a pedagogical point of view, at least from a psychological one.”

**Anna Quindlen**, novelist, journalist, Pulitzer Prize winner

More books by Anna Quindlen at [hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

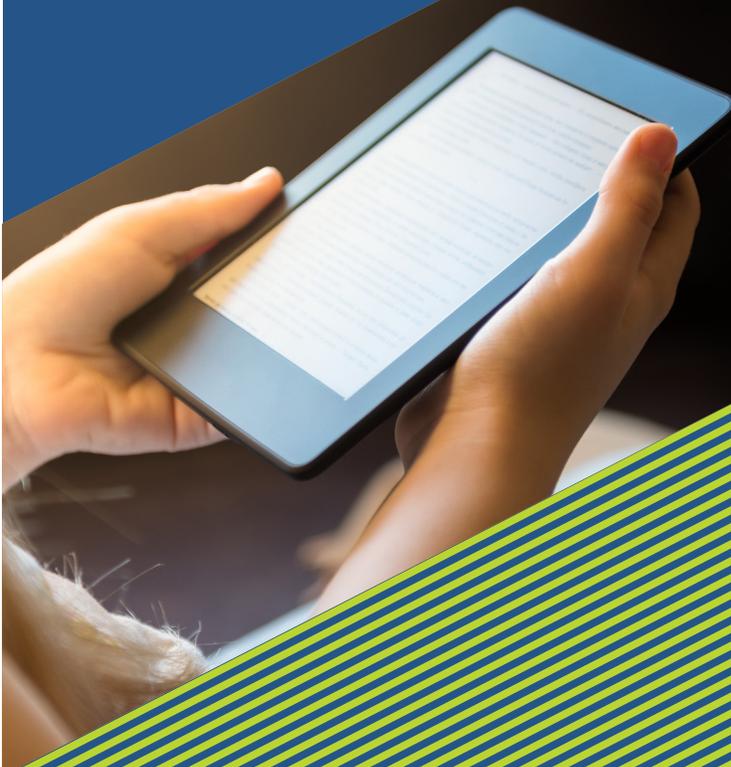
## NOTABLE NUMBERS

# 2.4M

Items Circulated

# 1.3M

Hours of Wi-Fi Used



## MAKING CONNECTIONS IN BRANCH AND IN THE COMMUNITY

# Nurturing established partnerships and forging new ones is at the forefront of HPL's mandate.

HPL Staff rose to the occasion in many ways in 2020. Waiving all fines and fees until December 31, 2021 — and permanently for children and teens — was a welcome relief for Hamilton residents. It signalled a fresh start for everyone.

Whether it's Winterfest, Telling Tales, Fringe Festival, Black History Month, Supercrawl, United Way, Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Cable 14, Wesley Urban Ministries, McMaster University, Mohawk College or myriad other events, services and organizations, HPL works collaboratively for the benefit of the community. From tax clinics to Noon Hour Concerts and author visits to code clubs, collective effort bodes well for us all.

Staff helped the City through the pandemic in many ways, from beautifying landscapes to assisting public health and delivering supplies where needed. Staff also made 8,734 calls to socially isolated seniors, sewed then donated thousands of fabric masks and manufactured



*Team HPL's Julia welcomes Members to the Cooling Centre at Central Library in July.*

hundreds of shields for frontline workers using 3D printers. Our volunteers also did their part by tutoring Newcomers online, writing reviews for Teen Members, and knitting hats and mitts for Hamilton Out of the Cold and Wesley Urban Ministries.

HPL opened its spaces to charity-minded knitters whose creations are given to babies and breast cancer patients; paramedics who offered flu shot clinics on eight Saturdays in Fall and private space to conduct Ontario Court sessions.

Valley Park's temporary branch opened in January and HPL managed to forge ahead with construction projects including Valley Park, Parkdale, Greensville and Carlisle.

HPL extended Wi-Fi hours and added remote printing, which allows Members to send jobs from home for pickup at a branch.

HPL donated school supplies and headphones to community agencies such as Kiwanis Boys and Girls Clubs and Ronald McDonald House. Also, gently used library materials found new homes with community partners.

**MAKING CONNECTIONS IN BRANCH  
AND IN THE COMMUNITY**



*Top: HPL Staff made 2,669 PPE items using 3D printers at Central in May.  
Bottom: Hillary at Ronald McDonald House accepts headphones  
donated by HPL in September.*



*Right: Knitters meet at Turner Park and donate their finished work to community charities.*

**NOTABLE NUMBERS**

**8,734**

**Friendly Calls From Staff to  
Isolated Seniors**

**8,048**

**Volunteer Hours Logged**

**21,355**

**YouTube Views**



## PRESERVING HAMILTON'S IMPORTANT STORIES

The community has long looked to HPL to preserve and share its stories. It's an important role we take very seriously.

Early in the year, HPL stepped up to the task of housing the Canadian Children's Book Centre's regional collection of 18,000 titles — including classic titles such as *Alligator Pie*, *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Paper Bag Princess*. More than 800 books are added annually to the collection, which preserves Canadian culture for future generations of aspiring authors, students, academics, educators and families. Work is underway to launch the CCBC collection in 2022.

Documenting the experiences of Hamilton residents during the COVID-19 pandemic was launched in June 2020. It's part of the Love Your City, Share Your Stories digital project that started in 2015. Over the years, the project has documented local stories about music, libraries, Gore Park, Tim Horton's, immigration and water.



Add your COVID story to our collection by visiting [hamiltonstories.ca/covid19-submissions](https://hamiltonstories.ca/covid19-submissions)

During lockdown, history-seekers used their time well by accessing Ancestry.ca through our website for free. More than 7,750 searches were undertaken by keen sleuths searching to find out more about their family.

Our stalwart and popular writing competitions — the 26th annual Power of the Pen and the Short Works Prize — were unmoved by a mere global pandemic. More than 210 entries poured in for both competitions. Our new Writer-in-eResidence, Janet Marie Rogers, also worked with aspiring authors electronically.

*Bottom: HPL's first  
Writer-in-eResidence  
Janet Marie Rogers*



PRESERVING HAMILTON'S  
IMPORTANT STORIES



“Preserve your memories, keep them well, what you forget you can never retell.”

**Louisa May Alcott**, American author and poet, best known for writing *Little Women*. Available in all formats on [hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

“YISSS. I was literally just looking into this. Thank you!”

**Samantha Adams**, HPL Member responding to a social media post offering free access to Ancestry Library through [hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

NOTABLE NUMBERS

7,752

Ancestry Online Searches

225,000

Views on LH&A's Flickr Commons, a Treasure Trove of Archived Digital Photos

210

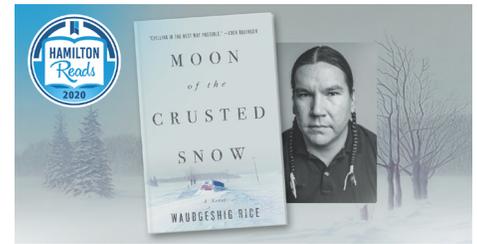
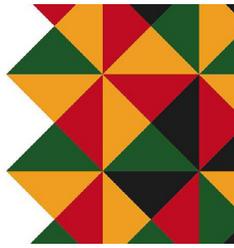
Writing Competition Entries

*Bottom: Some of the Canadian Children's Book Centre's 18,000 titles housed at LH&A.*



# HPL 2020 TIMELINE

FEBRUARY IS  
**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**



## January

The annual Power of the Pen writing competition for youth celebrates its 25th year.

Valley Park branch's temporary site opens.

## March

HPL hosts Open Data Day because information is power.

### March 14

COVID-19 forces the first province-wide shutdown, including the closure of all HPL branches. WiFi hours expanded at all branches.

HPL Staff become video stars as our Virtual Branch offers programs online.

## May

HPL Staff log more than 8,734 Friendly Calls to local seniors within a month. Partnership with Cable 14 to air HPL programs.

### May 25

TD Summer Reading Club launches.

**Take**  
Hamilton Pu



## February

Programs, books, talks, movies and more celebrate the achievers and achievements of Black Canadians during Black History Month.

## April

More to Borrow. HPL card holders can now access eBooks from Mississauga and Burlington public libraries too.

### April 16

Hamilton Reads title announced: *Moon of the Crusted Snow* and Scout's Book Club titles.

## June

Pride Month, Indigenous History and Black Lives Matter are all cause to celebrate, mend, educate, appreciate and create a better future. HPL Staff's curated book lists help start these important conversations.





**Flu shots at Central**  
 8 Saturdays OCT 24 - DEC 12  
 10am - 12pm • 55 York Blvd.  
*\*16+, no appointment needed*

hamilton.ca/flu

# 2020

## Checkout

Public Library



hpl.ca/takeout

### August

HPL launches a kids fine free and Pay-it-Forward donation program. Staff record telephone stories for little listeners.

### October

HPL reaches a record-breaking one million digital book checkouts in 2020. Staff filled hundreds of Welcome Baby bags with a book, reading lists and resources to donate to Hamilton Public Health and Wesley Urban Ministries.

### December

HPL's Print on the Go, which gives Members the power to print from anywhere, is launched. The Short Works Prize winners are announced.

### July

HPL Staff pivot again and branches reopen. HPL reopens offering a by-appointment Takeout service for residents and access to computers again.

### September

Bookmobile is back on the road. HPL donates books, journals, pens, pencils and headphones to Wesley Urban Ministries, Ronald McDonald House, Kiwanis Boys and Girls Clubs and Rotary Club of Hamilton's Christmas celebration at Cathy Wever School. Members can browse in HPL branches again.

### November

Flu shot clinics offered on eight consecutive Saturdays with Hamilton paramedics. HPL and McMaster University host the Hamilton Reads finale with Waubgeshig Rice, Janet Marie Rogers and Cherie Dimaline.





## The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in March resulted in a significant priority shift for 2020.

HPL's response to the pandemic was shaped by our commitment to support Hamilton's emergency response and maximize the safe delivery of library services. Staff worked tirelessly throughout the year to respond to the crisis and support the community. Service innovation ensured continuity through shutdown periods; investment in these enhancements will continue to serve us through the pandemic and strengthen our support of Hamilton's recovery.

### Circulation Highlights

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**1M+**

eBooks and  
eAudiobooks  
Borrowed

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**1.3M**

Hours of Wi-Fi Use

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**1,000**

Loans in First Month  
of Hamilton Reads  
Book Launch

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**43,560**

Items Added to HPL's  
Internet Archive

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**305,910 GB**

Wireless  
Network Used

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**18,097**

New Library  
Cards Issued

## Staff Flexibility

**25**

Staff Seconded to Help  
City of Hamilton Deliver  
Pandemic Services

**8**

Community Flu Clinics Hosted  
with Hamilton Paramedics

**8,734**

Friendly Calls to  
Hamilton Seniors

**2,669**

PPE Shields and 3-D Printed  
Straps Assembled in Makerspace

**8,048**

Volunteer Hours Logged

**18,000**

Canadian Children's Books  
Received for Archiving

## Member Services

**7,752**

Ancestry Online Searches

**225,000**

Archived Digital Photos Viewed  
on LH&A's PreView

**21,355**

YouTube Views

**315**

Recommendations for Readers  
Through Which Book Next

**441**

Tech Problems Solved with  
Book an Appointment

**70**

Online student/tutor pairs for  
Newcomer Learning Centre

**38**

Google Tech Grads

**300**

Welcome Baby Bags for  
New Moms

**3,768**

Programs Offered

**210**

Power of the Pen and the Short  
Works Prize entries

**100+**

How-To Tech Courses

**46,417**

Quick Answers by Phone, Email  
or Instant Chat on [hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

HPL closed March 14, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Reopened in June for limited service at select branches.  
By July 23 all branches reopened with limited services.



The Flamborough Archives  
↑ Computer Lab  
← Children's Area





Annual Report 2020

# RESILIENCE

[hpl.ca](http://hpl.ca)

