

2024

REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY



Board Chair and CEO Message

It's once again my pleasure and honour to bring greetings and remarks on behalf of the South Shore Public Libraries Board of Directors.

I want to begin by acknowledging that our public libraries are located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded home of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all Treaty People and as we strive toward the goals of Truth and Reconciliation this year, next year, and for generations to come, it is important that we always remember this.

South Shore Public Libraries is continuing to thrive thanks to the strong partnership between the Board of Directors, our exemplary staff team, and our communities here in Lunenburg and Queens counties.

At the Board level, we are fortunate to have a robust group of municipal and provincial appointees working alongside citizen appointees who not only support the idea of the public library as an important pillar in our community, but who also truly understand the wide-ranging impacts our services and programming offer to an audience of all ages, backgrounds, and demographics in our region.

We live in a world where there is seemingly constant pressure to think with a narrowing mind, to be insular, and to close ourselves off to ideas or viewpoints different than our own -- the public library is the panacea to that mentality, providing a safe space for different cultures and perspectives to come together, share information, and learn about each other in genuine and meaningful ways.

If you're reading this message, odds are that you are already a library patron -- one who understands the importance of the marketplace of ideas we host in our branch spaces, through our collection, and through our programming.

As supporters of the public library, our responsibility for safeguarding and trumpeting the service the library provides does not stop at the checkout counter. It is our duty to ensure that we are strong, vocal, and visible advocates for the public library in our neighbourhoods, with our local political representatives, and, perhaps most importantly, with those who fail to understand the importance of being open-minded, inclusive, and willing to learn.

We all have a role to play in lifting each other up, and we cannot ever forget that.

Patrick (Pat) Hirtle
SSPL Chairman



This year has been an exciting one, for our organization and for me, personally. I am overjoyed to have returned to Nova Scotia in this role with this dynamic group of people.

South Shore Public Libraries is a learning organization. Our staff are passionate, eager, and excited to serve our communities with innovative programs, a diverse collection, and responsive information service. We believe in meeting people at their point of need, whether that's out in the community at a local farmer's market, on our bookmobile, or in-branch with our friendly staff and welcoming spaces.

Our organization is also growing. Did you know 55% of our current staff have joined SSPL since 2022? As our borrowing and in-person visit numbers continue to rise each year, we have focused on building our capacity by increasing frontline staff hours, improving processes for efficiency, such as the new holds wrapper, and providing support and training.

On a personal note, my family and I have settled in Lunenburg County and are excited by the opportunity before us to create intentional and welcoming communities. Nova Scotia's population is growing and I know our South Shore Public Libraries will be there to meet this growing need. Thank you to all our staff, Board members, and customers. I hope to see you soon!

Ashley Nunn-Smith
CEO, Chief Librarian

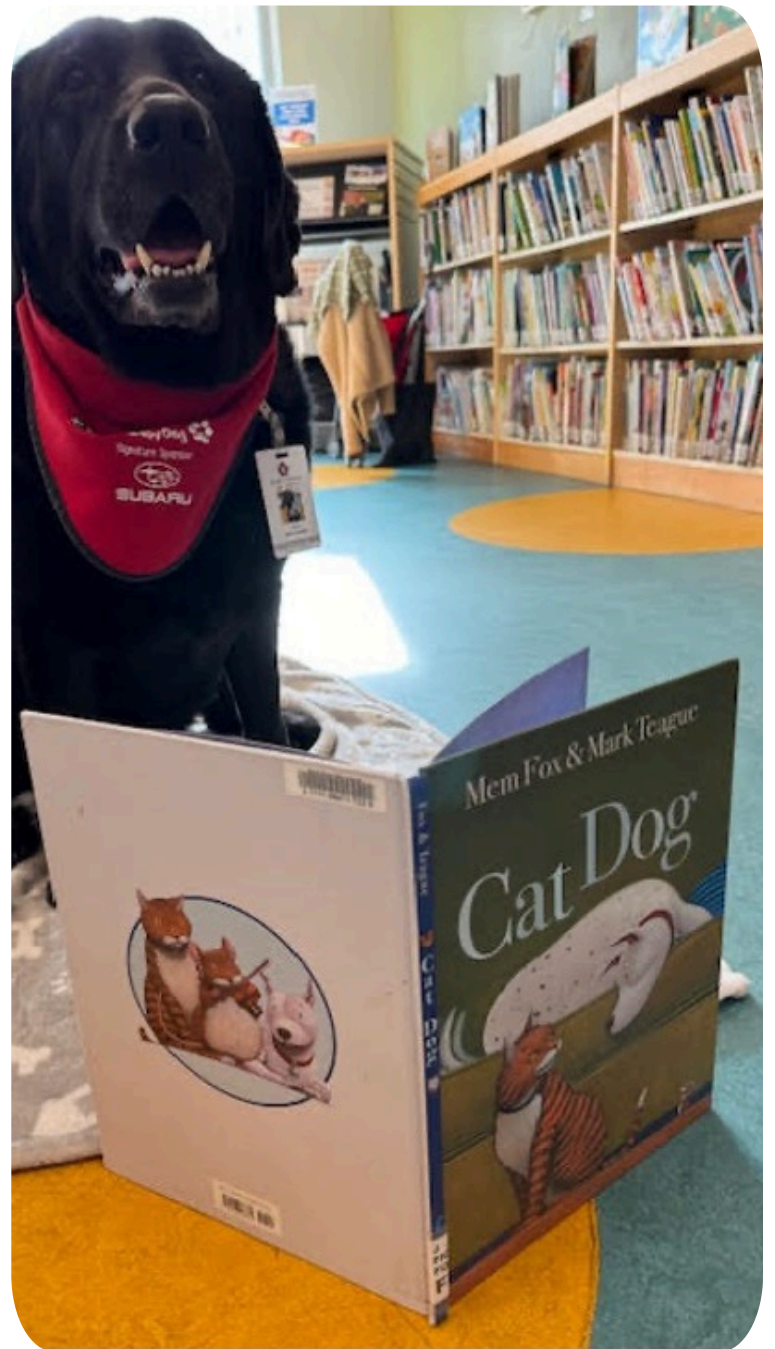


Mission

South Shore Public Libraries celebrates reading, discovering, learning, and sharing.

Vision

South Shore Public Libraries is a vital centre of the community, sharing a robust collection and innovative technology, that inspires life long learning and literacy in a positive welcoming environment.



New Service Highlights

Collections

South Shore Public Libraries launched Peace & Friendship Treaty Packs and a greatly expanded Mi'kmaq Language Collection in June. The Peace and Friendship Treaty Packs are backpacks filled with books written by Mi'kmaq authors and are about Mi'kmaq culture, people, stories, language, traditions, and more. Each pack contains six books by Mi'kmaq authors, the Mi'kmaq Collection Material List, Treaties in Mi'kma'ki Fact Sheet, Map of Mi'kmaq Communities in Nova Scotia, Peace and Friendship Treaties Pamphlet and a list of topic related online resources for kids.

The packs are designed to encourage all of us to learn about Mi'kmaq culture and explore how we can all be better treaty people. We are very excited to add these packs to our collection - the goal is to make treaty education and cultural awareness accessible to everyone and to increase awareness and engagement of Mi'kmaq materials available at South Shore Public Libraries.



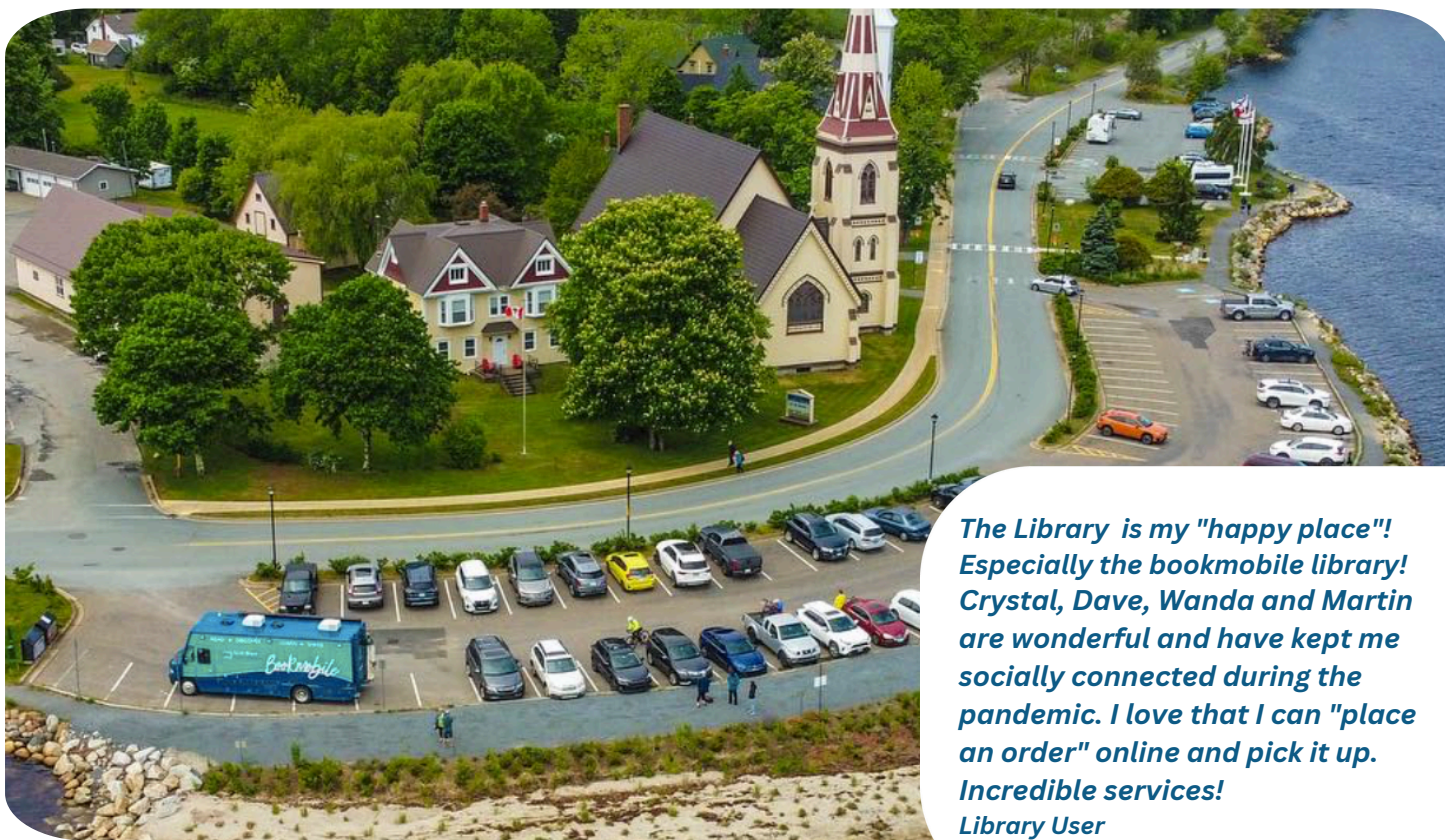
Community

We are thrilled to announce the extension of Bookmobile Library service to New Germany Elementary School.

In April 2023, in partnership with New Germany Elementary, the retired Bookmobile parked at the school to provide service two days a week to students and staff. The project, with amazing support from the Principal and staff, had all the students visit the Bookmobile several times. A whopping 72 % of the school population got library cards that month. With this kind of support from the kids and staff it was obvious to us that children in New Germany want to read and we want to put books in their hands. To respond to that kind of enthusiasm and support the Bookmobile added a new weekly stop to their rotation in September. We now visit New Germany Elementary one hour a week for the entire school year!



In partnership with SSPL Bluenose Academy piloted a Historical Reading Habit Program. The goal was to help instill a love of history & reading. Students selected topics of interest and staff at the Lunenburg Library tracked down books, graphic novels and historical fictions for students to read at the start of each class. Students generated reports and creative works inspired by what they read. It has been a great initiative.
Erin Seamone, Teacher, Bluenose Academy



The Library is my "happy place"! Especially the bookmobile library! Crystal, Dave, Wanda and Martin are wonderful and have kept me socially connected during the pandemic. I love that I can "place an order" online and pick it up. Incredible services!
Library User



By the Numbers



2,009

new library cards



165,282

in person visits



404,648

items checked out



43,782

**digital items
checked out**



102,002

hours of WiFi



143,965

website visits



2,014

programs hosted



13,535

attended a program



786

**attended
Babies & Books**



We're so thankful to our donors for being a part of our story and helping us to foster reading, discovering, learning and sharing on the South Shore.

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