

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Dothan Houston County Library System Board of Trustees, it is indeed an honor to present the System's FY 2023 Annual Report.

This last year has been an amazing journey not only for the Library System but also for our patrons, volunteers, staff, and board. We are excited to share that DHCLS continues to grow our programs and services through the dedication and effort of so many. These incredible individuals work collectively to achieve the goal of having the best public library system in our state—a goal that enhances the quality of life for all of us who call Dothan and Houston County home.

As an avid reader, an educator, and a parent, I believe that one of a community's greatest strengths is its public library. We are certainly fortunate in that regard and in that our civic, community, and elected leaders support the mission of DHCLS. We appreciate each financial investment you have made to ensure our libraries exceed expectations for our citizens. You have made a difference!

It is a privilege to work with our gifted Director Chris Warren, the talented DHCLS staff, and the dedicated Board as we build on the successes of the past to create an even better and brighter future for our library system. The Board is truly grateful to everyone who has strengthened and continues to strengthen DHCLS through gifts of your time, your resources, your advocacy, and your patronage.



1-Joher Wilkins

Dr. Ashli Wilkins *Chair*DHCLS Board of Trustees

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am proud to present the Dothan Houston County Library System's FY 2023 Annual Report.

This document celebrates the innovative and impactful resources, programs, and services that we make available for our entire community throughout the year. From ebooks to leaf blowers, passports to yoga, we offer more than just books, and we go above and beyond to help make our community a great place to call home.

This isn't to say that books are unimportant. In fact, last year alone, our patrons borrowed more than 184,000 books, audiobooks, and ebooks. And activities like Bouncing Babies, *¡Hora de Cuentos!*, and our Summer Reading Program promote early literacy skills, student success, and lifelong learning. None of this would be possible without the leadership of our trustees, the hard work of our staff, and the support of our local government agencies, Friends, and donors.

I believe that a community that values its public library is one that believes in the power of hope and possibility. We are fortunate to have such an outstanding public library system here in Dothan and Houston County. Looking ahead, I'm excited about what's next – indeed, what's possible – for our awesome public library and the wonderful community we serve.



Christopher S. Warren

Christopher S. Warren

Director

Dothan Houston County Library System

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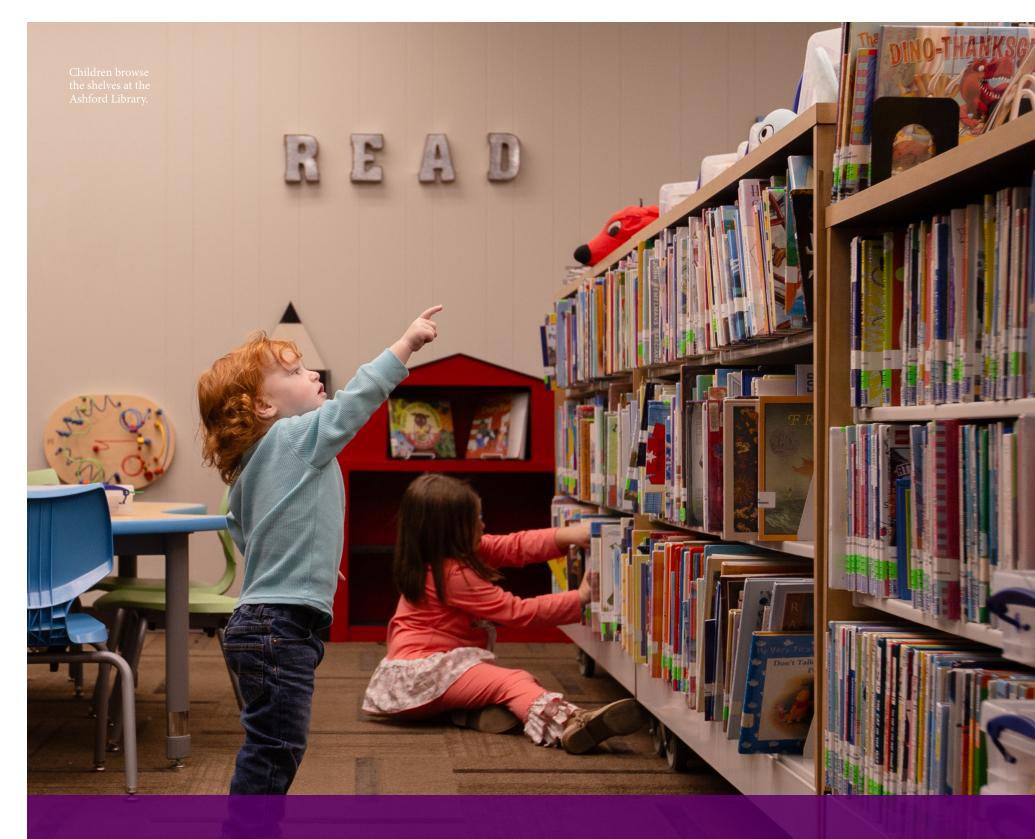
Terah Harris

Deputy Director

Kaitlyn McAnulty

Westgate Branch Manager

Kristin North Youth Services Manager



"There are so many programs that dovetail with education. Reading to children, doing a craft that ties in with that book... It all sparks that joy of reading and language that's critical to keeping children engaged with learning."

 ASHLEY CARROLL, LIBRARY TRUSTEE

There's no better place than your local public library to help your kids fall in love with reading.

Last year, we hosted 229 programs for children (and their favorite grown-ups), including Bouncing Babies, *¡Hora de Cuentos!*, and all kinds of story times and craft activities. We had fun (Who doesn't love parachute time?), but we also read some of our favorite books, children got to practice their early literacy skills, and families got to spend valuable time together.

Not sure where to start? Stop by any of our locations to find books for even the youngest readers, or visit **dhcls.org** for our online catalog and event calendar.

MY LIBRARY DOES EARLY LITERACY.

229

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN 7,007

ATTENDEES

83,838

CHILDREN'S ITEMS BORROWED



"We've got a lot of kids to educate... Our library partnering with our schools adds such a new layer. Our children are learning and falling in love with reading. It's just crucial to their well-being overall and to their development as they continue to grow."

MELANIE HILL,LIBRARY TRUSTEE

In 2023, we had one of our most successful Summer Reading Programs *ever*.

A total 1,855 children, teens, and adults registered and read a total of 22,732 books. And those kids who participated had a great time during the summer *and* returned to the classroom better prepared to learn in the fall.

During the school year, our Youth Services staff visited local classrooms nearly 30 times to provide a variety of STEAM enrichment activities. Elementary-age students got hands-on experience with mathematics, coding, robotics, and other 21st-century skills. Beginning in the fall of 2023, we will have entered our third year of these classroom visits, a partnership made possible thanks to the generous support provided by many of our donors.

Our Youth Services staff are already hard at work on next year's Summer Reading Program. In the meantime, be sure to check **dhcls.org** for the latest information about all of our programs for children, teens, and young adults.

MY LIBRARY DOES STUDENT SUCCESS.

1,855

SRP REGISTRANTS 22,732

BOOKS READ 3,609

INCENTIVES AWARDED



"This library has something that every single person in our county can use or needs or wants. We are an invaluable resource to our community, and we can help every single person in some way."

EVERLIE BOLTON,
 LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Throughout the year, the Dothan Houston County Library System offers programs and activities that bring together people from all walks of life.

During our monthly Lego Club, families build amazing creations. During Teen Recharge, young people have a safe place to gather with friends after school. We even learned about high tea and ballroom dancing during our Bridgerton-themed events.

And of course, we have books, audiobooks, ebooks, and audiovisual materials that support a lifelong love of reading and learning.

- Looking for books? Visit **dhcls.org/catalog** to search across all of our locations.
- Want to get started with ebooks? Check out the Southeast Alabama Digital Library at libbyapp.com/ library/seadl.
- Want to know more about programs? Visit dhcls.org and click "Calendar."

MY LIBRARY DOES CONNECTION.

201,826

ITEMS BORROWED 130,883

PRINT BOOKS 14,670

51,594

4,679

DVDS & AUDIOBOOKS **EBOOKS**

OTHER ITEMS



"This resource in our community... lends itself for individuals to not only dream, but to help them see their dreams come true. That's the lifeblood, the energy, the motivation that we have to impact one person at a time."

- DELVICK MCKAY, LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Great public libraries make our communities stronger.

While the books and the buildings are important, none of our great work would be possible without our people: the people who are eager to help you find a book, the people who lead the story times and facilitate the programs, the people who maintain our collections, and the people who make sure that our facilities are clean, safe, and welcoming spaces.

Through supporting literacy, advancing economic development, and improving quality of life, we help make Houston County an even better place to live, work, learn, and play. Whether you need help finding just the right book, navigating an online job application, applying for a passport, or getting started with a new hobby, we're here to help! Visit **dhcls.org** for more information about the services that we offer and the resources we provide.

MY LIBRARY DOES COMMUNITY.

312,885

TOTAL **VISITORS** 641

PROGRAMS

15,464

ATTENDEES

9 | Dothan Houston County Library System FY 2023 Annual Report | 10

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY





The Friends of the Library support the Dothan Houston County Library System financially, through volunteer service, and through advocacy.

The past year has been a great one for the Friends. In January, the Friends presented a check for \$50,000 to the library to support a wide range of staff-identified needs and projects. In April and August, the Friends hosted two incredibly successful Big Book Sales, and throughout the year, the Friends hosted a number of author events to celebrate literature and history.

If you'd like to know more about the Friends, including how to join, please visit **dhcls.org/friends.** And be sure to mark your calendars for our 2024 Big Book Sales at the Westgate Recreation Center:

April 18* - 28, 2024 August 15* - 25, 2024

These dates are subject to change, so please check **dhcls.org/friends** for the latest information on our book sales and other Friends-hosted events.

* The first day of each sale is a "members-only" event exclusively for members of the Friends of the Library. Not a member? That's ok – you can join at the door! The book sale will open to the general public beginning the next day.



FY 2023 OPERATING BUDGET

Revenue

TOTAL	\$ 1,847,944
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 2,210
Endowment Investment Income	\$ 75,510
Estate Revenue	\$ 39,203
Donations & Grants	\$ 181,477
Fines, Fees, & Services	\$ 148,489
Friends of the Library	\$ 50,000
State & Local Appropriations	\$ 1,351,056

Expenditures

TOTAL	\$ 1,828,611
Facilities	\$ 182,818
Personnel	\$ 983,722
Technology	\$ 101,766
Operations	\$ 266,566
Programs	\$ 58,134
Materials	\$ 235,603



DHCLS conducts an official comprehensive audit of its yearly financials. The FY 2023 audit is in process and will be completed in early 2024.

WHAT'S NEXT?

FY 2024 promises to be another exciting year for DHCLS and the community we serve:

- Thanks to a grant from the Wiregrass Foundation, we plan to acquire a **vehicle for delivering requested materials from one library to another**, allowing patrons to access what they want to read faster and more conveniently.
- Thanks to a grant provided through the Library Services and Technology Act, we plan to upgrade and expand our use of **self-checkout and RFID technology**.
- We plan to relaunch **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten**, so that parents and caregivers can help babies, toddlers, and preschoolers acquire essential early literacy skills before they enter the classroom.
- In partnership with the City of Dothan and thanks to support from a number of funders, we plan to launch **Wi-Fi** in the **Park**, providing public Wi-Fi access across all 200+ acres of Westgate Park.
- We will continue our **Ashford Library Capital Campaign** to renovate the former MidSouth Bank IT/Data Center as the new location of our Ashford Branch.

Additionally, in 2024, DHCLS celebrates **75 years of service to residents of Dothan and Houston County**. From our humble beginnings with a \$75 donation from the Dothan Library Association to the three facilities and the Bookmobile we have today, we hope you're inspired by how we've adapted, grown, and innovated during that time. Here's to an amazing year ahead!





MAIN LIBRARY

445 N. Oates Street Dothan, AL 36303 **WESTGATE BRANCH**

535 Recreation Road Dothan, AL 36303 **ASHFORD BRANCH**

305 6th Avenue Ashford, AL 36312 **BOOKMOBILE**

dhcls.org/bookmobile 334.791.0160