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Message from the CEO

2025 was a year of growth and reinvention for the Library with a huge boom in programming success and foundations being laid for bigger, better spaces.

Thunder Bay's families flocked to the Library: program participation surged to nearly 67,000 visits, a 21% increase and an all-time high. Over 45,000 children and youth came out to programs, a nearly 26% increase. Adult programming grew by over 18% with more than 21,000 visits.

Brodie Library temporarily closed for ten weeks to allow for a comprehensive reorganization and security upgrades, reopening as a safer, more welcoming branch with more public computers, better research facilities, expanded children's spaces, and a dedicated security guard.

At County Park and Waverley, we laid foundations for major upgrades. County Park now has three dedicated programming rooms where it had none before. Architectural and engineering work at Waverley is preparing us for an exciting transformation ahead. The behind-the-scenes planning is becoming visible.

Partnerships brought new dimensions to what the Library offers: free access to conservation areas through borrowable Explore Passes, coding and AI workshops with Tecky Brains Canada, seniors' programming with Age Friendly Thunder Bay, and civic engagement support during both elections. The Friends of the Library had a landmark year, awarding more than \$300,000 through their 50/50 lottery and opening a new bookstore at Waverley in December.

Thank you to the staff, volunteers, donors, and community members who make this Library worth showing up for.



Richard Togman, CEO



**Charmaine McCraw,
Board Chair**



2025 WINNER

★ *Not for Profit Excellence*

★ *Equity, Diversity & Inclusion*



Library Board and Staff

Board of Directors

Directors are appointed from the community and City Council and proudly represent our patrons' interests until 2026.

Board Chair
Charmaine McCraw

Vice Chair
Jordan Hudyma

Roshni Antony (joined 2025)

Cory Bagdon (retired 2025)

Dayna DeBenedet (joined 2025)

Ian Dew (joined 2025)

Kelly Fettes

Councillor Trevor Giertuga

Carol Grieve

Syed Kabir (retired 2025)

Councillor Michael Zussino

Management Team

CEO

Richard Togman

Head Librarian

Ruth Hamlin-Douglas

Director of Resources

Cherri Braye

Director of Community Development

Raili Roy

Associate Director – Development

Meagan Ross

Facilities Manager

Chris Gratton

Human Resources Manager

Kim Gunn

Marketing Manager

Cody Angus

Administrative Assistant

Dely Goicochea



Remembering Robyn

Robyn Medicine passed away on February 9, 2025. She was Thunder Bay Public Library's first Indigenous Liaison and in that role (and others) contributed to the Library and City of Thunder Bay in many ways.

Robyn was a trained facilitator for the Walk a Mile film project, initiated the formation of what became the Library's Indigenous Advisory Council, and was instrumental in the development of the Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

Robyn dreamed of making things better for Indigenous people in Thunder Bay. Now that she is gone it is up to us to keep working towards making that a reality.

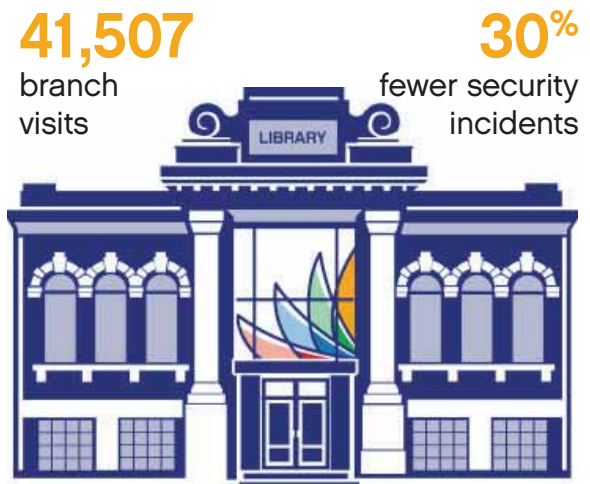
Branch Reports

Brodie Library

In summer 2025, Brodie Library temporarily closed to allow staff to complete a comprehensive reorganization and address safety concerns. The branch reopened in September as a more welcoming, easier-to-navigate, and safer environment designed to meet the demands of our community.

The Research Department relocated to a dedicated ground-floor space for local history, genealogy, and community inquiry. The children's area moved to the main floor with expanded play space and a larger kids' Indigenous Knowledge Centre. We increased the number of public computers to meet the demand and a Security Operations Assistant joined the team, providing a consistent presence inside the branch and on surrounding streets.

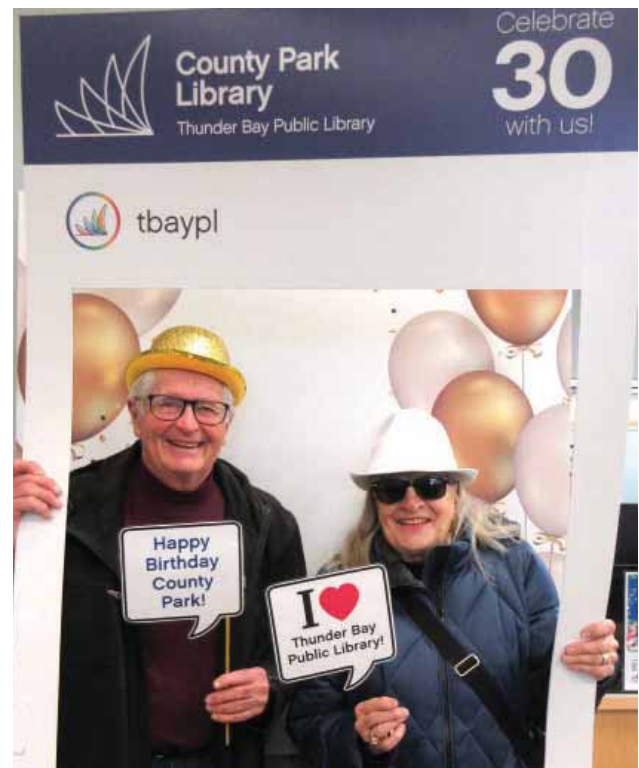
Despite its 10-week closure Brodie welcomed 41,507 visitors in 2025. Since reopening, security incidents have decreased by 30% and patrons have been vocal about how safe and inviting the branch feels.



County Park Library

In 2025 we more than doubled the space for County Park Library at no additional cost to the taxpayer. Renovations are now complete on two of the three new programming spaces we've acquired. This great growth allows the branch to host larger programs and events and offer amazing new spaces for all kinds of public use.

County Park celebrated its 30th anniversary in December with a community event that brought together current and longtime users. County Park Library has served the growing neighbourhoods of County Fair, Dawson Heights, Jumbo Gardens, Gemstone, Current River and our rural areas since 1995 and the expanded space will allow it to continue growing alongside the community it serves.



Mary JL Black Library

Mary JL Black Library was our programming lab in 2025. New program ideas like **Discovery Club**, a drop-in STEAM exploration space for children, and **Game On!** with the Obie interactive projector, were tested at the branch last year. Their huge success has resulted in plans to expand them system wide in 2026.

Thanks in part to the extended fall/winter hours which were introduced in January at both Mary JL Black and Waverley, visits to Mary JL Black grew by 27% in 2025, and program attendance for both adults and kids more than doubled.

114%

increase
in kids' program
attendance

100%

increase
in adult program
attendance



90,254
branch visits



+27%

Waverley Library

Waverley was the system's busiest branch in 2025, hosting 94,401 patron visits. It served families, seniors, teens, and adults through a full calendar of programming as well as special events including panel discussions, Chats with the Chief and Indigenous Author Series events.

Planning began in 2025 for a major expansion of the lower level children's area, a project that will more than double the existing space and create the largest

dedicated children's area in the Library's history. On December 1st, the Friends' Used Bookstore opened on Waverley's main floor, marking another milestone for the branch and for the Friends.

94,401
branch visits

+5%



Programming

Always-On Programming

Drop In, Join In

Some of the Library's most popular programs are designed for flexibility, offering families the freedom to participate when it works for them. These drop-in experiences remove the need to register in advance, creating welcoming, low-barrier opportunities for children and caregivers to explore, play, and connect at their own pace.

Discovery Club

Learning Through Exploration

Discovery Club invites children to explore, build, and experiment in a hands-on environment where curiosity leads the way. Through open-ended activities, kids engage their creativity, test ideas, and learn by doing, building confidence and problem-solving skills along the way.

Game On!

Active Play, Shared Space

Game On! transforms Library space into an interactive play environment using the Obie projector, where participants can move, jump, and play together. These sessions create opportunities for active, social play, offering a free and welcoming way for children and families to connect and have fun.



43,941
attended

1,476
kids' programs

+23%



Indigenous Author Series

The Indigenous Author Series brought two celebrated voices to Waverley Library in 2025. In June, Cree author and two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner David A. Robertson joined us for an evening reading and conversation. In November, Anishinaabe author, professor, and 2024 Governor General's Award winner Niigaan Sinclair shared his national bestseller *Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre*. The series, supported for the third consecutive year by the **K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation**, continues to connect Thunder Bay readers with Indigenous voices and stories.

2025 Guest Authors



David Robertson
June 2025

Niigaan Sinclair
November 2025

Indigenous Author Series
made possible thanks to



TBPL Confidential

True Crime at Your Library

The Research Department completed its first full year of drop-in True Crime programming in 2025, drawing 200 participants across seven sessions. The program digs into the District of Thunder Bay's criminal past: fraud, bootlegging, robberies, hijackings, and murder, all drawn from local history prior to 1970. It's proven to be one of the Library's most distinctive adult offerings, turning the Research Department into a destination for people who might not otherwise think to walk through its doors.

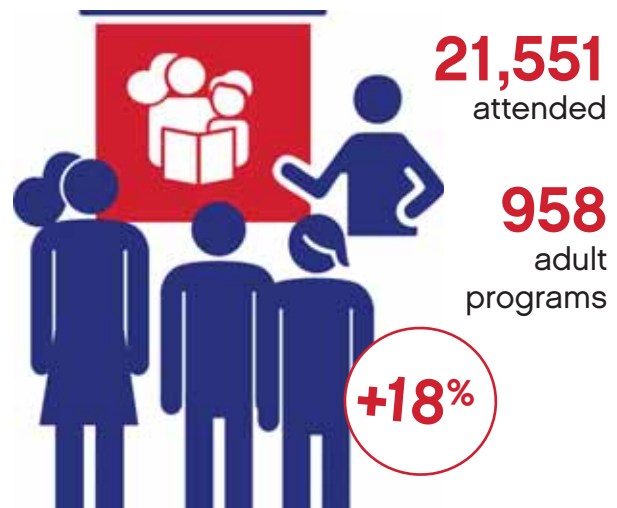


7
sessions
200
participants

Spice Club

Taste the World

Spice Club offers a simple, approachable way for members to explore new flavours in their own kitchens. Each month, participants pick up a package containing a featured spice, along with recipes and reading suggestions that connect cooking with culture and learning. In 2025, more than 1,200 participants took part, extending the Library beyond its walls.



Services

Home Service

Home Service keeps the Library accessible to those unable to visit a branch. In 2025 the program delivered 716 packages containing more than 5,300 items directly to patrons' homes.

Battery Recycling

Through a partnership with the City of Thunder Bay, the Library collected 5,799 lbs of used batteries in 2025, nearly 3 tonnes. Since the program launched in 2016, the Library has helped divert 38,997 lbs of hazardous waste from the landfill.

TBPL Coaches

Working in partnership, our Services and Research teams hosted 255 Coaches Appointments to provide patrons with digital literacy support.

Collections

Hoopla

In 2025, the Library transitioned from cloudLibrary to Hoopla, consolidating our digital media lending to a multi-media service where patrons can find movies, TV shows, music, audiobooks, eBooks, and comics, accessible with their Library card.



65,080
digital media
loans

+36%

Extended Fall-Winter Hours

*implemented January 2025
at Mary JL Black & Waverley Libraries*

Monday - Thursday | 9:30am - 8:00pm
Friday - Saturday | 9:30am - 5:00pm
Sunday | 12:30 - 5pm



Our collection continues to grow and diversify!

In 2025, Library Members enjoyed free access to...

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Hardcover books | DVDs |
| Paperback books | Streaming video |
| Large print books | Garden tools |
| Magazines | Passes for local attractions |
| Newspapers | ... and more. |
| Comics & manga | |
| Audiobooks | |
| Ebooks | |

Library Partnerships

Collaboration in Action

Collaboration is a core value of Thunder Bay Public Library and a strategic approach to the way we serve our community. By working alongside trusted organizations, the Library brings community expertise into shared public spaces, making it accessible to more people. Partnerships reduce barriers to participation, connect residents with existing knowledge and skills, and make better use of collective resources. In 2025, new collaborations expanded access to cultural, environmental, and educational experiences, supported lifelong learning, and strengthened the Library's role as a connector and convenor.

Expanding Access to the Outdoors

A new connection with the **Lakehead Region Conservation Authority** gave Library members free access to local conservation areas through borrowable Explore Passes, removing cost barriers and connecting individuals and families with outdoor recreation, wellness, and environmental learning across the region.

Hands-On Learning for Young Innovators

In partnership with **Tecky Brains Canada**, the Library introduced kids to coding and artificial intelligence through hands-on, age-appropriate workshops. These sessions make emerging technologies accessible and fun, sparking curiosity and building confidence.

Creating Space for Connection and Belonging

A new partnership with **Age Friendly Thunder Bay** launched Coffee Chats for seniors at Mary JL Black Library, supporting social connection and lifelong learning for older adults.



New to our Collection



New Kids' Programming



New Programming for Older Adults



Grants, Sponsors & Community Support

We're thrilled to welcome new local businesses who understand that investing locally makes a visible difference, including **BAY Credit Union**, whose generous sponsorship of our Member Appreciation Day was deeply appreciated, and **Warrior Supplies** for their sponsorship of our Drop In Beading Program.

Special thanks to the **K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation** for their third

consecutive year of supporting our Indigenous Authors Series. Community leaders **Jones Insurance** and **Lowerys** championed Library Giving Day with matching donations that inspired others to give, while longtime champions **Mario's Bowl**, **Thunder Bay Border Cats**, and **Boston Pizza** continued their decades-long commitment to Summer Reading Club, proving that sustained support builds lasting impact.

Thank You for Being a Friend

The Friends of the Thunder Bay Public Library continue to work wonders, awarding over \$340,000 through their 50/50 lottery in 2025 with proceeds supporting the Children's Library expansion at Waverley. From the wildly popular games projector at Mary J.L. Black to the new playhouse at Brodie, and the much-anticipated bookstore that opened December 1st at Waverley, the Friends' impact is everywhere.



Interested in joining the Friends volunteers to support your Library? Visit them at the Friends Used Bookstore or contact them at friends@tbpl.ca.

Our deepest gratitude to the Friends Executive Committee:

Fran Duke (President)

- Adrian DiGiuseppe (Vice President)
- Joanne Petrisano (Treasurer)
- and Pauline Parker (Secretary)

...and to every volunteer who makes this incredible work possible.

Thank You, 2025 Donors

We gratefully recognize donors who contributed \$250 or more between December 1, 2024 and November 30, 2025. Thanks to you, our libraries buzz with storytimes, workshops, quiet study moments, newcomer conversations, and the simple joy of discovery.

We strive for accuracy and sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions.

Platinum Level

Mr. Gerald Apperly	Susan Girardin	Ms. Janice Redden	Thunder Bay Truck Centre Inc
Mr & Mrs Maurice & Jacqueline Black	Mr & Mrs Bob & Carol Grieve	Rose N Crantz Roasting Co.	The Estate of John Wodchyc
Estate of Mary Denson	Ms. Karin Nietzschei		

Gold+ Level

George Cherwonick
Sarah Colquhoun
Carol Daniher
Mrs. Jean Engholm
Ms. Frances Harding
John & Janeen Mann
Mr. John & Virginia Mill
Mr. Dan Newton
Anonymous

Gold Level

Mrs. Georgina Adderley
Cory Bagdon
Ms. Dennis & Marissa Buset
Mr & Mrs Patrick & Dianne Fenlon
Joan Grassi
Gail Miller
Ms. Silvia Pedron
Mr & Mrs Don & Gail Rosengren

Silver Level

Ms. Kirsten Addison
Jonah Anderson
Sara Bannerman
Mr & Mrs Larry & Catherine Brigham
Dian Gracey
Laura & Scott Hurley
Margaret Wanlin
ITEC Equipment Inc.
Bruce LaBelle
Ms. Susan Lester
Nancy Oster
Sandy Stafford-Maepea
Linda Penner
The Wellness Warriors



Like a bookmark holding your place in a great story, our Bookmark Club monthly donors help the Library hold its place in the heart of the community. Their steady support keeps our spaces vibrant, our programs evolving, and our doors open to everyone, all year long.

Georgina Adderley	Brent Fuhr	Lynne Martin	Zephyrus Peace
Karen Arblaster	Gerry Law	Steven McAuley	Tyler Pyle
Kara Babcock	William Hodgson	Charmaine McCraw	Saara Rizzo
Therese Beaupre-Cerutti	Pam Hyvarinen	Sheila Miller	Meagan Ross
Cherri Braye	Nancy Jacobson	Catherine Mochrie	Raili Roy
Jennifer Dagsvik	Lucie Lavoie	Ana Mucklow	Nancy Saunders
Frances Doran-Bonk	Susan Lester	Jessie Myllyaho	Richard Togman
Genevieve Dorland	Bryan & Anne MacLeod	Rebekah Neckoway	Darrell Wright
Michael Dyck	Deb Maki	Sarah Nix	Lu Zhao
Wayne Fletcher	John & Janeen Mann	Karen Nystrom	Anonymous
Veronica Fummerton			

 **Leave your mark:** visit tbpl.ca/monthly.



Thunder Bay Public Library



www.tbpl.ca