



DAYTON  
METRO  
LIBRARY

# 2015 DAYTON METRO LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

The Dayton Metro Library  
***informs, inspires  
 and enriches***  
 our community.

Thank you to the  
**Dayton Metro  
 Library Board of  
 Trustees** whose  
 oversight helped ensure  
 fiscal responsibility while the  
 Library expanded and enhanced  
 programming, and upgraded facilities  
 to meet the needs of the community.

Jeanne Holihan, *President*

Glenn Bower  
 Annesa Cheek  
 Barbara Hayde  
 Elaine Zimmers Johnson

Carl Kennebrew  
 Margot Merz  
 Joseph Oehlers



While 2014 was a year of transition for the Dayton Metro Library, 2015 was a year of new beginnings. In January, the beautifully remodeled Electra C. Doren Branch re-opened. In June, Technical Services and other administrative departments moved into the new Operations Center. The expanded and renovated Miami Township Branch celebrated its grand re-opening in November. In addition to these completed projects, construction continued or began at five other Libraries, and plans took shape for more. It's exciting to watch the progress as the *Libraries for a Smarter Future* project unfolds.

Along with new facilities, 2015 brought opportunities for innovative programs and services. Library patrons could print their own 3D items, and wireless printing technology was added at every location. Maker Kits and Finch Robots provided hands-on experimentation for all ages. For our youngest patrons, the new *Toddler Text Tips* service offered convenient suggestions for simple, everyday teaching experiences. And for the young at heart, the Creative Aging classes gave seniors the chance to pursue artistic outlets with a trained teaching artist.

In 2015, the Summer Reading Club became the Summer Challenge to reflect our commitment to experiential learning that keeps youth engaged while they're out of school. Then, in the fall, we invited all ages to "Check Out the Arts," partnering with many quality arts organizations in the Miami Valley to offer an unprecedented variety of arts experiences at our neighborhood Branches.

In 2015, our goals from the previous strategic plan were coming to fruition, and it was time to begin planning for the future of the Library. The Board of Trustees hosted many conversations to determine the changing role of the Library and to validate our mission. Hours of discussion and committee work helped lead to a new strategic plan, *Strategies for Impact: 2016-2018*.

The Board of Trustees and I are proud of these innovations, as we remain steadfast in our long-standing focus to inform, inspire and enrich the community. Thank you for being a part of the Dayton Metro Library – as a visitor, a supporter, a volunteer, a leader, a partner – we are grateful for all you do.

Tim Kambitsch





## ELECTRA C. DOREN

The newly-remodeled Electra C. Doren Branch opened in January in the Old North Dayton community.

Bilingual storytimes are popular for Turkish-speaking parents and their American-born children who want to experience learning together at this Library.



## MIAMI TOWNSHIP

In November, our Miami Township Branch – extensively renovated and expanded to almost twice its original size – opened to the public.

The Miami Township Branch is home to the DML Job Seekers program, which provides valuable connections, professional development and career coaching. Area professionals gather to utilize the meeting space, technology and online resources.

## REIMAGINING

*Works*

Thanks to an anonymous bequest, the Dayton Metro Library, in partnership with the Dayton Art Institute, launched *Reimagining Works*, an initiative to install original art, commissioned from local artists, in each new or newly remodeled Library. Darren Kall designed beautiful metalwork panels celebrating the heritage of Old North Dayton for the fenced reading patio at the Electra C. Doren Branch Library.

Stefan Chinov's sculptures are both visually interesting and practical; he installed an artistic cluster of benches for patrons at the Miami Township Branch to enjoy and admire.



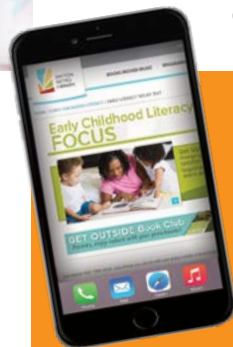




## LAUNCH OF FELIX AND FIONA

In first grade, children are learning to read, gaining independence, taking on new responsibilities and exploring the broader world - it is an ideal age to get a Library Card. DML's *First Club* introduced characters Felix and Fiona, "first graders" who experience the same "firsts" many children that age experience: going to school, riding a bike, making choices - and getting a Library Card! Felix and Fiona are the faces of *First Club*, appearing on an interactive display board for classroom presentations and starring in their own picture book, *The Awesome, Amazing, Wonderful Book of First Grade Firsts*.

- First Club enrollment ended in December 2015 with 3,182 Library Cards issued. **Now, 64% of all first graders in the Dayton Metro Library service area have their own Library Card.**
- **51 of the 240 classes in the Library service area had 100% participation** - up from 31 classes in 2014 - earning a classroom party with their local librarian.



Sometimes it's the simple things that can make a difference. *Toddler Text Tips*, launched in the summer, offer easy suggestions for parents to incorporate early learning activities into daily routines with their child. These tips by text can help prepare a child for a lifetime of learning. **Hundreds of parents signed up to participate.**

## SUMMER CHALLENGE BY THE NUMBERS:

In 2015, Dayton Metro Library raised participation in the Summer Challenge by 15%.

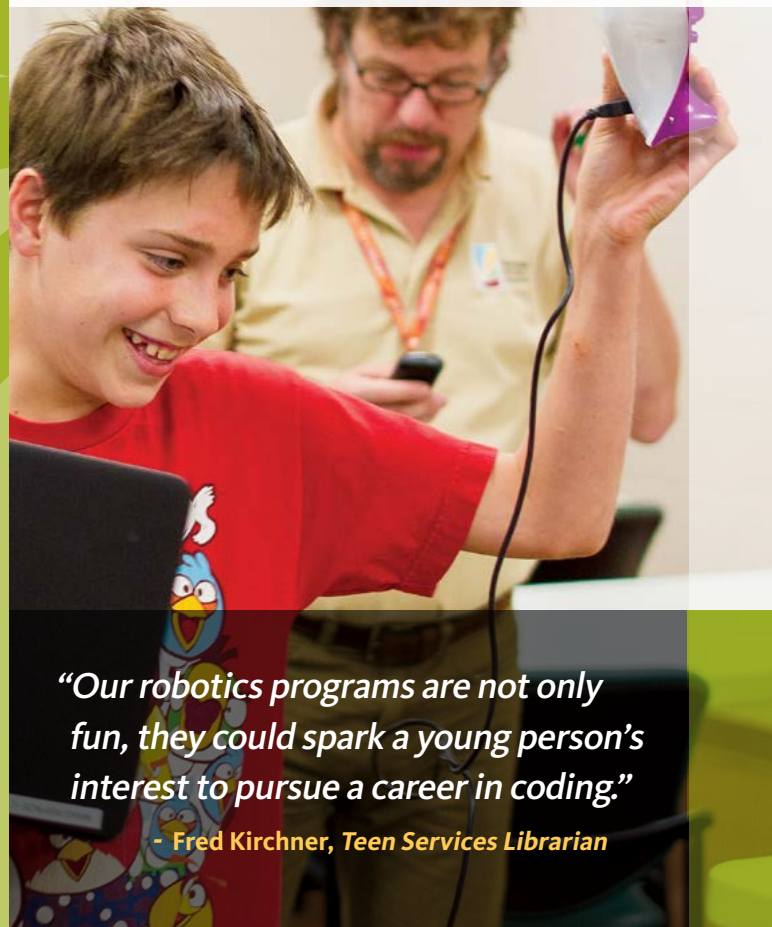
- **Little Sidekicks**, our infant/toddler program that encouraged parents and caregivers to complete activities and stories with children birth to age 3, had 1,295 youth completing 23,531 activities, including reading.
- **Every Hero Has a Story** taught children in preschool through 6th grade to be the hero of their own story. The Library welcomed 12,768 children who read 184,609 hours.
- **UnMask!**, the teen challenge, enrolled 1,487 youth participants who logged 37,366 hours of reading.
- Adults weren't left out of the Summer Challenge; 2,701 participants ages 18 and up got in on the action with **Escape the Ordinary**.
- Special Outreach: YMCA site participation more than doubled with librarians visiting 681 readers who logged more than 9,000 hours.

In 2015, our Summer Reading Club grew into the **Summer Challenge** - encouraging both reading and program participation for a full learning experience. More than **15,500 children** from all across the county spent their summer learning and having fun at their Dayton Metro Library. At the Party in the Park - an opportunity to celebrate reading success - our reading superheros met the new Library mascot, Cosmo, and his sidekick, Pip.





# NEW TECHNOLOGY



*"Our robotics programs are not only fun, they could spark a young person's interest to pursue a career in coding."*

- Fred Kirchner, Teen Services Librarian



Teens had a blast learning to code and honing their skills with **FINCH ROBOTS**. BirdBrain Technologies made 40 of the small

robots available for Library programs through 2015. Students could practice writing code on a laptop to instruct the robot in various tasks. With light, temperature and obstacle sensors, accelerometers, motors and buzzers, the little robots offered both skill building and fun for 375 engaged teens.

## 3D PRINTERS

A gentle new hum could be heard at the Ft. McKinley, Huber Heights, Miamisburg, Vandalia and Wilmington-Stroop Branch Libraries with the arrival of 3D printers. 3D printing is being used in innovative ways in the fields of medicine, manufacturing, automotive and so much more. Patrons design their own creations and print them in hard plastic at their Library.

# AT YOUR LIBRARY

The "maker" movement arrived at DML in the form of nine **MAKER KITS**, each with all the tools and materials needed to experiment and create in a wide variety of



subject areas. All ages enjoyed getting hands-on, with approximately 70 guided programs, open "make times" for families, and "Hang Out and Make" clubs for teens. From circuits to lasers to textiles, Maker Kits offered new learning opportunities for all ages. The themed kits were made possible by Time Warner Cable's Connect A Million Minds.

## WIRELESS PRINTING

In 2015, convenient wireless printing was introduced at all DML locations. Patrons could print on the go directly from their tablet, laptop or smartphone, inside the Library or remotely from virtually anywhere.



*"With Dayton's rich history of invention, our Library is the perfect place to grow a new generation of makers."*

- Cara Kouse, Manager, Wilmington-Stroop Branch





## CHECK OUT the ARTS

Over **100 free programs**, productions and performances were offered at Dayton Metro Libraries by **30 partnering artists and arts organizations** through the Check Out the Arts initiative in September - December. With support from the George B. Quatman Fund of Fifth-Third Bank and the Ohio Arts Council, the Library ensured access to arts and cultural experiences for the whole community.

*“The Library is a great place to connect people with the arts, because we strive to encourage discovery, learning, collaboration and experimentation. It’s all possible with Check Out the Arts.”*

*- Chuck Duritsch, External Relations Manager*



Working with **Learn to Earn Dayton** and many area schools, DML enhanced outreach to middle and high-school students. Teen Specialists visited schools during “power lunches” to promote the eCard, homework help resources and **Career Cruising** - new software that encourages teens to explore their own potential and career interests.

The Rosie Project was the **Big Read** title for 2015. The Big Read brings together 13 area libraries in a partnership to encourage reading and community discussions. Building on the themes of *The Rosie Project*, the Library joined **Autism Speaks** and multiple community-based organizations to host conversations about autism. At the same time, the Library launched our **Sensory Kits** – filled with helpful tools to help children (and adults) on the spectrum enjoy a healthy, happy time at the Library.



The Urban Libraries Council recognized Dayton Metro Library as the **Top Innovator of 2015** in the Collections Division for its work supporting and celebrating local authors. The DML Local Author collection includes mainstream fiction, bestsellers by local authors, books as classroom assignments, poetry, music and film. The Local Author and Artist Event continues to celebrate the collective creativity in Montgomery County. Congratulations to Jean Gaffney and Jennifer Spillman who accepted the honor at the Innovations Celebration as part of the ULC Annual Forum.





# CREATIVE AGING

Dayton Metro Library encourages discovery and creativity at every age, and you're never too old to explore new opportunities. Beyond the 500 DML programs that served the interests of diverse adults across the community, dozens of classes and workshops in 2015 were designed specifically to serve adults 55+.

In partnership with the Ohio Arts Council, DML hosted **"Drawn Together by Art,"** a Creative Aging Workshop at our Trotwood Branch Library. Participants, led by teaching artist Teresa Olivarria, learned the basics of drawing in various media, then exhibited their work. Creative Aging in America's Libraries is supported by a National Leadership Grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, in collaboration with Lifetime Arts, Inc., AARP Foundation, American Library Association and Westchester Library System.

*"Participants have the opportunity to learn from a professional teaching artist while also collaborating with fellow participants who share a passion for lifelong learning."*

— Julie Buchanan, Older Adult Services Librarian



## Expanding Connectivity,

a program for older adults through our Outreach Services Department, tackled social isolation and cognitive decline among older adults unable to utilize traditional Library services. By making 80 internet-enabled iPads available for checkout to seniors in residential facilities, and providing one-on-one and group training classes, seniors were empowered to connect to each other, their families and Library resources.

The Library provided homebound seniors 4G connectivity with built-in data, equipment and training, and we saw an increase in Library Card registrations and greater access to online resources. Seniors learned how to set up email accounts, take selfies and create Facebook pages. Participants noted that they felt more comfortable using technology independently after training, but beyond that – they felt more engaged and connected to their family and friends. Expanding Connectivity was supported by the Del Mar Healthcare Fund of The Dayton Foundation.





**2,722,985** VISITORS CAME THROUGH OUR DOORS



Even as the Dayton Metro Library adds services to meet the most critical needs of the Miami Valley, **literacy**, in-branch **programming** and computer **access** will always be central to our mission. In 2015, the numbers demonstrated why the Library's core mission remains relevant and vital.



### COMPUTER ACCESS

DML provided 346 public computers, 618 computer classes (spanning topics from Mouse Basics and Adult GED Preparation to Advanced Photoshop) and 493,250 sessions of independent online access.

REGISTERED CARDHOLDERS: **283,938** adults & **70,493** youth

### CIRCULATION STATISTICS

Over 6 million items borrowed, a 10% increase from 2014

#### PHYSICAL COLLECTION

- Adult: 3,616,847
- Children's: 1,773,662
- Young Adult: 184,675

#### DIGITAL COLLECTION

Providing access from any location

- OverDrive (books): 450,776
- Zinio (magazines): 21,838
- Hoopla (music/video): 33,156



**221,892** patrons of all ages  
attended nearly **9,000** programs





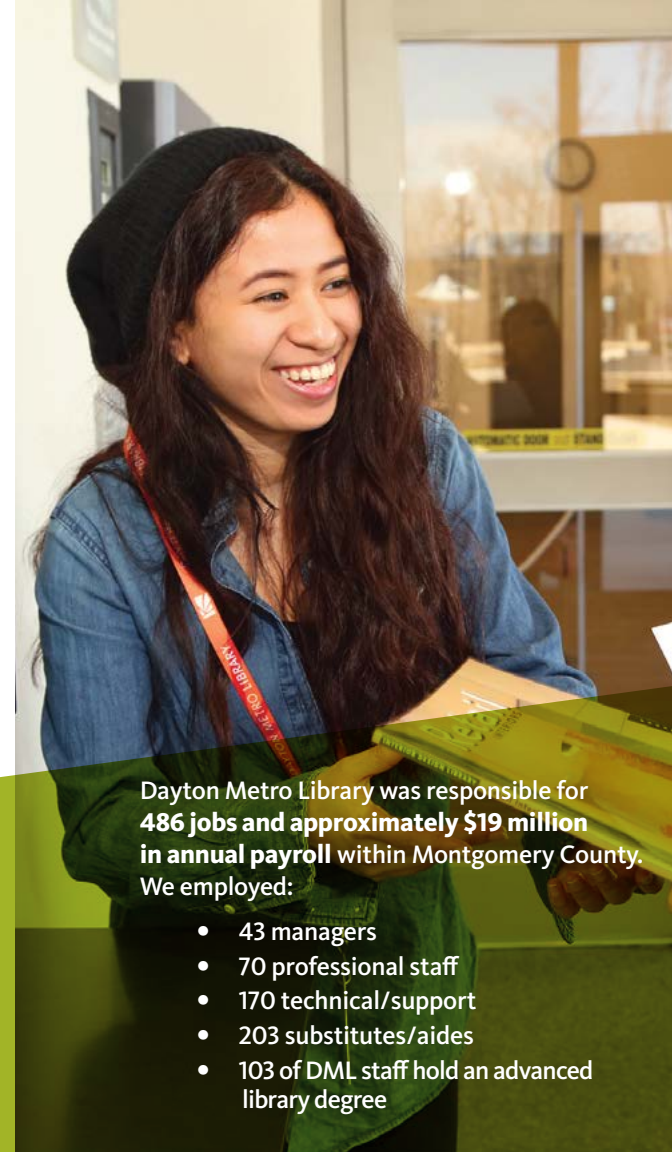
## ONE-ON-ONE A FOCUS ON PERSONAL SERVICE

In 2015, Dayton Metro Library staff shared their professional expertise with more than 5,700 personalized, one-on-one sessions. Sessions are at least 20 minutes and offer in-depth support on a topic. Sessions may cover (but are not limited to):

- General Internet Searching
- Setting Up an Email Account
- Using Microsoft Office
- Searching for a Job
- Searching the Library Catalog
- Learning About Maker Kits
- Exploring Local History or Family Genealogy
- Setting Up Personal Electronic Devices

*“The strength is in our wide reach... but the heart of the Library is revealed in the personal connections developed.”*

- Tim Kambitsch, Executive Director



Dayton Metro Library was responsible for **486 jobs and approximately \$19 million in annual payroll** within Montgomery County. We employed:

- 43 managers
- 70 professional staff
- 170 technical/support
- 203 substitutes/aides
- 103 of DML staff hold an advanced library degree

## NEW BEGINNINGS ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

As the role of the Library in the community continues to evolve, so does Dayton Metro Library's organizational structure. Three big changes in 2015 empowered the Library team to work together more effectively:

- The position of Deputy Director was filled by Rachel Gut, long-time DML librarian who most recently served as the Outreach Services Manager. In this role, Ms. Gut ensures that the public service staff delivers on the promise of the Library's strategic plan, mission and vision.
- Staff members and community leaders dedicated significant time in 2015 to conversations, work sessions and feedback forums as we worked together to determine the future of the Library in the creation of the 2016 strategic plan. While we're excited for the completion of the *Libraries for a Smarter Future* construction plan, we know that the Library is about more than buildings. To better leverage these fantastic new spaces, new staff-led committees focused on programming, customer service, workforce and diversity to help guide DML into the future.
- By creating a Volunteer Services Manager position, DML was able to more effectively provide opportunities for community members to share their time and talents. Volunteers are serving as greeters, computer helpers, homebound delivery helpers, mascots, Maker Kit tutors, homework helpers, bilingual Talk Table partners and Reading Buddies, among many other opportunities. Since the expanded program launched in September 2015, 145 volunteers contributed 3,596 hours of service.



GENERAL FUND	2014	2015
Cash Reserves from Preceding Year	\$10,545,277	\$10,739,310
Obligated Funds from Preceding Year	939,975	1,142,860
<b>Receipts</b>		
Public Library Fund	\$14,118,987	\$15,514,620
Property and Other Local Taxes	10,662,141	10,261,783
Other Governmental Grants-In-Aid	1,976,677	1,783,558
Fees & Patron Fines	538,793	401,679
Earnings on Investments	52,896	50,471
Services Provided to Other Entities	115,059	134,460
Contributions, Gifts, Donations	197,487	281,949
Other Miscellaneous Receipts	133,928	94,134
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$27,795,968</b>	<b>\$28,522,654</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	\$18,921,440	\$19,039,802
Supplies	418,413	781,920
Purchased and Contracted Services	4,422,715	4,439,742
Books	2,348,553	2,217,551
Magazines and Newspapers	206,445	206,126
Audio Visual Materials	985,617	1,025,631
Online Databases	411,512	345,795
Capital Outlay	513,135	1,358,263
Other Expenses	133,003	128,154
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$28,360,833</b>	<b>\$29,542,984</b>
Transfers from Other Funds	-	410,807
Transfers to Other Funds	181,077	53,961
Cash Reserves at End of Year	\$10,739,310	\$11,218,686

BUILDING & REPAIR FUND	2014	2015
Cash Reserves from Preceding Year	\$10,889,820	\$11,021,099
Obligated Funds from Previous Year	87,162	1,151
<b>Receipts</b>		
Earnings on Investments	\$96,110	\$88,892
Other Miscellaneous Receipts	-	634
Transfers from Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$96,110</b>	<b>\$89,526</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Professional Services	\$51,993	\$64,403
Capital Outlay	-	-
Transfer to Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$51,993</b>	<b>\$64,403</b>
Cash Reserves at End of Year	\$11,021,099	\$11,047,373



DEBT SERVICE FUND	2014	2015
Cash Reserves from Preceding Year	\$8,846,659	\$8,120,420
Obligated Funds from Previous Year	794	-
<b>Receipts</b>		
Property and Other Local Taxes	\$9,559,913	9,148,442
Other Governmental Grants-In-Aid	1,446,612	1,367,280
Earnings on Investments	56,309	43,747
Premium on Bond Sale	-	-
Transfers from Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$11,062,834</b>	<b>\$10,559,469</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Professional Services	\$168,403	\$150,749
Principal Retirement	5,170,000	5,200,000
Interest & Financing Fees	6,451,464	6,429,281
Transfer to Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$11,789,867</b>	<b>\$11,780,030</b>
Cash Reserves at End of Year	\$8,120,420	\$6,899,859

The Dayton Metro Library received an unqualified audit for the year ending December 31, 2015, from the Ohio Auditor of State, prepared by Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co.

*“Montgomery County citizens put their trust in the Dayton Metro Library to be fiscally responsible, forward-thinking and accessible, even as the needs of the community evolve and change.”*

- Jeanne Holihan, President of the DML Board of Trustees

CONSTRUCTION FUNDS	2014	2015
Cash Reserves from Preceding Year	\$177,768,784	\$154,574,889
Obligated Funds from Previous Year	7,174,138	20,136,775
<b>Receipts</b>		
Earnings on Investments	\$715,918	\$535,531
Other Receipts	1,000	(1,000)
Sale of Bonds	-	-
Transfers from Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$716,918</b>	<b>\$534,531</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Professional Services	\$16,163,021	\$9,998,489
Capital Outlay	14,921,930	72,257,957
Transfer to Other Funds	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$31,084,951</b>	<b>\$82,256,446</b>
Cash Reserves at End of Year	\$154,574,889	\$92,989,749



# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

## ADOPT A BOOK

### *In Memory of Rosalie Burt*

Annette and James Arnold

Marcia Gulley

Maryrita and Howard Knachel

Anonymous, in memory

of Mr. John Blodgett

Sheryl and David Olmstead,

in memory of Eric Olmstead

10 Wilmington Place, in memory of

Margaret Mary Haverland

The Dayton Woman's Literary Club

The Monday Night Club,

in memory of Martha Colson

Gwen Crockford

Catherine Schoenharl

## KEYSER FUND FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Autumn Baccellia

Steve Cariddi

Carol Costa

D.M. Foote

Mary Giera

Ellen Hayes

Theresa Kettle

Mary Meese

William Norman

William H. Shay

Dorothy Van Oss

Anna Weaver

## SPECIAL PROJECTS & GENERAL LIBRARY SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous

Dr. and Mrs. H. Brent Bamberger

Audrey and William Dybvad

George Holt

Donna and Curtis Hunt

Margit Lieberman

Mary Jo Pfander

Willie Sledge

Cyrus Spurlino

Angela Timpson,

AMT Sewing Solutions

Dave Triwush

## ORGANIZATIONS/ FOUNDATIONS

3M

AFP: Greater Dayton Region Chapter

Autism Speaks

John E. and Jean M. Coleman Fund

Community Foundation of Miami Township

Dayton Children's

The Dayton Foundation

The Jack W. and Sally D. Eichelberger  
Foundation

Fraternal Order of Eagles

Charles E. Hoffman Fund of

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J. Edward and Jennie B. Hoffman Fund

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PNC Foundation

George B. Quatman Foundation

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Jean Barger Rice Trust

State Library of Ohio, IMLS

Time Warner Cable, Connect A Million Minds

Vectren Foundation

*The Dayton Metro Library makes every effort to correctly reflect the names of our generous donors. If any errors have been made, please accept our apologies and help us correct our records by calling the Dayton Metro Library Foundation at 937-496-8516.*



DAYTON METRO LIBRARY  
**Friends**

The Friends of the Dayton Metro Library continued its support of DML and its mission, hosting two successful booksales in 2015, and using the funds raised to support the Summer Challenge, the *First Club* campaign, Citizens for Good Libraries and a variety of Library activities throughout the year.

More than eight semi-trucks full of weeded Library materials and donations were offered at the sales in April and October. The October sale featured a big-screen projection of the OSU football game, with special incentives tied to the team's performance. The April sale was one of the largest and most successful to date.

# 2015 FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chris Birch, *President*

Nita Lovell, *Vice President*

Ellen Rohmiller, *Secretary*

Luke Lovell, *Treasurer*

Vaughn Ridgel, *Past President*





## DAYTON METRO LIBRARY Foundation

In 2014, the **DML Foundation** was registered as a nonprofit and began accepting donations to **support the mission** and **strategic vision** of the Library. As its first full year of operations, 2015 saw increased donor involvement and the opportunity to enhance the Library's excellence.

## THANK YOU TO THE DONORS WHO SUPPORT THE DAYTON METRO LIBRARY FOUNDATION

### FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE 1888 SOCIETY

Anonymous  
The Berry Family Foundation  
Chuck Duritsch and Don Yeazell  
Diane and John Farrell and Family  
The Gaffney Family  
Chester P. and Rachel A. Gut  
Ron Budzik and Barbara Hayde  
David and Jennifer Hicks  
Mr. Leo and Mrs. Jeanne Holihan & Family  
Julie Beall and Timothy Kambitsch  
Jayne and Kevin Klose  
Barbara Kuhns  
Noland Lester  
Karri and Kenneth Marshall  
Brielle Maynor

Michael and Margot Merz, In Celebration  
of Libraries for a Smarter Future  
Joseph C. Oehlers  
Richard Pavlak, Heapy Engineering  
Darla and Marc Reynolds  
David Schnee and Cynthia Stone  
for Group 4 Architecture  
Letitia A. Wilson and Dale R. Bickley  
Penny and Bill Wolff  
Burgess and Burgess Strategists  
CareSource Foundation  
Dayton Design Collaborative: John Poe  
Architects, Levin Porter Architects,  
LWC Inc., Ruetschle Architects  
LWC, Incorporated  
Shook Construction Company  
SKANSKA and ATCS

## 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Michael Merz, *President*  
Susan Elliott, *Vice President*  
Penny Wolff, *Treasurer*  
Timothy Kambitsch,  
*Secretary*

Angela Clements  
Kjirsten Frank Hoppe  
Thomas Lasley  
Lucious Plant  
Cathy Ponitz

Marc Reynolds  
Holley Thompson  
Katherine Thornburg  
Merle Wilberding  
Paul Woodie

2015 DONATIONS TO THE FOUNDATION = **\$67,128**

2015 DONATIONS FROM THE FOUNDATION TO THE DAYTON METRO LIBRARY = **\$20,000**

2015 ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES = **\$5,099**

### FOUNDATION DONORS

Rebecca Baer  
Paul Baltzer  
Premier Health on behalf of Angela R. Clements  
Jonathan Cline  
Enterprise Roofing and Sheet Metal Co.  
Thomas Fitton  
Barry Fought  
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Dr. Thomas Lasley  
Tony Nowikowski  
Perry Nystrom  
The Pitman Family  
Cherie Rosenstein

Scott Sloan  
Holley and Lawrence Thompson  
Katherine and Hugh Thornburg

### GIFTS, IN MEMORIAM

#### *In Memory of William Benjamin Disher*

Teresa Leopold  
Marina Kay and James B. Trochelman  
John Wilcox  
Anonymous

#### *In Memory of Margaret Mary Haverland*

Resident Council, 10 Wilmington Place

#### *In Memory of Philip Harwood*

Gail Harwood, Harwood Revocable  
Living Trust  
Kimberly and Patrick Butler

### ADOPT A BOOK

Henry Baust, Thanks to the generosity  
of Alpha Delta Kappa  
Pamela Dunson, in Memory of  
Ruth Richards  
Jane Gilliam, in Memory of  
Ashton Tyler Carley-Trent

*The Dayton Metro Library makes every effort to correctly reflect the names of our generous donors. If any errors have been made, please accept our apologies and help us correct our records by calling the Dayton Metro Library Foundation at 937-496-8516.*





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DaytonMetroLibrary.org

215 E. Third Street | Dayton, OH 45402



ASK ME  
937.463.BOOK

## OUR PROMISE:

The Dayton Metro Library brings people of all ages and backgrounds together to discover new things about the world, themselves, and each other.

Within our branches and beyond our walls, we are advocates for exploration, champions of literacy, and active facilitators of empowerment, inclusion, and positive change.