

Year in Review 2020



Our Commitment to Strengthening Neighborhoods, Inspiring Learning, Keeping You Curious

In March 2020, our world changed rapidly. As we went from living our lives, out and about, to sheltering in place under stay-at-home orders, we all were faced with making hard decisions fast.

For Kenosha Public Library staff, closing our doors was particularly difficult. We believe a public library is a place of possibility. We eagerly welcome everyone. It quickly became clear that we had no choice if we wanted to keep our library staff and our community safe.

Nearly a year later, putting people and safety first has continued to guide our decisions and direction. It also has led us to creatively reinvent how we serve our community during this continuing pandemic. Read on to learn more about our work in 2020, a year like no other.



Putting People & Safety First

As COVID-19 began to spread rapidly in February and early March, library staff worked with a coalition of Kenosha organizations to determine how best to keep residents and employees safe. On March 16, in accordance with guidelines from local health departments and Governor Evers' Safer at Home directive, Kenosha Public Library closed indefinitely to help slow the spread of the virus.

With the library building closed, library staff immediately pivoted to providing virtual services. Utilizing tools like Zoom and Facebook Live, staff upped our communications, created new virtual-friendly programs, and provided robust over the phone reference services. Librarians were busy growing our online collections, ensuring that while the physical collection was unavailable, patrons would have access to thousands of ebooks and downloadable audiobooks for all ages and interests.

In April, we began offering some on-site services, including book returns, outdoor programming, and our new contact-free Curbside Pickup services. With guidance from federal agencies, we created quarantine models that helped to get books and movies safely into the hands of our community members. We continued to expand our services, reopening the Uptown and Simmons libraries in June with the Northside and Southwest libraries following in September. Our reduced service model prioritized patron and staff safety, while providing ways to access our collections and services in a variety of COVID-safe ways.





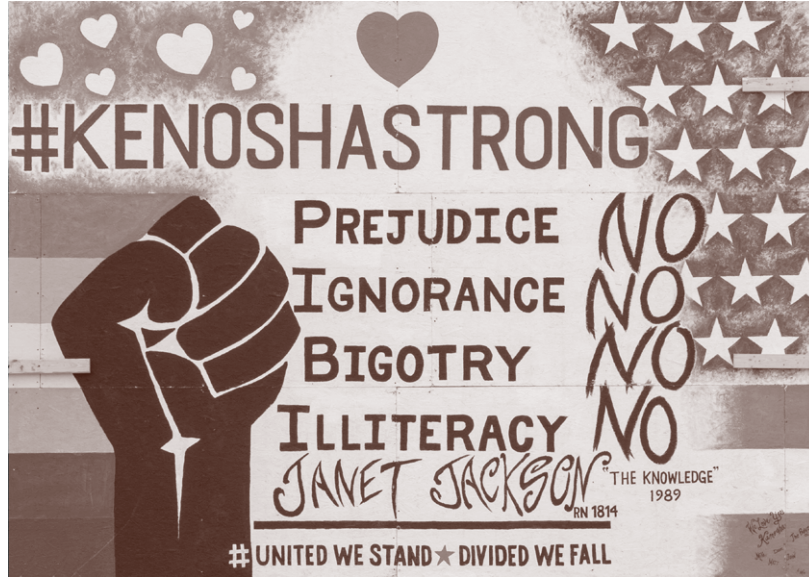
As Your Needs Changed, We Changed

Curbside Pickup, which debuted in April 2020, provides a safe, contact-free way for patrons to borrow items from our physical collection. Library staff have served more than 17,000 Curbside Pickup appointments.

Library staff created programs, activities, and experiences to help foster connections even while our community was largely staying home. With no in-person programming and reduced building access, staff nimbly created a diverse array of virtual options to keep patrons interested, active, and connected with each other and the library.

✦ “KPL Kids-to-Go!” provide STEAM-focused hands-on activities. Kits are available to be picked up at the library and completed at home with the help of a pre-recorded video from our librarians. The library offers KPL-to-Go! kits for kids and teens.

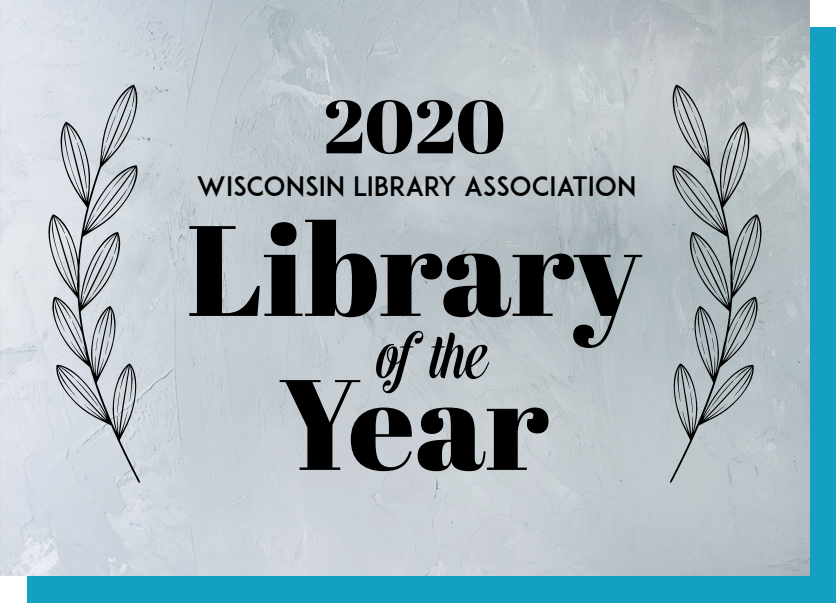
- ✦ The take home fun isn't just for our young friends! Our Adult and Digital Services team pivoted their popular crafting program “In the Making”, to provide take-home crafting kits for grownups paired with free tutorials from CreativeBug, an online crafting site.
- ✦ With most public schools moving to a virtual platform at some point throughout the year, KPL prepared to lead the charge in supporting student success with the addition of BrainFuse, an online tutoring and homework help platform.
- ✦ Book clubs for all ages moved online, keeping families and community members connected and engaging with shared experiences and each other, even when they were unable to be in the same spaces.
- ✦ Dedicated library team members created over 650 KPL “Bags of 10” providing community members the opportunity to still enjoy the sense of discovery found in browsing the stacks of their favorite neighborhood library. Each Bag of 10 was curated by our expert staff to fit the likes and dislikes of each participant.



A Commitment to Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity

As Americans grappled with racism and the Black Lives Matter movement protested in cities across the country and here at home, Kenosha Public Library shared our commitment to helping create a more equitable society. We have focused on promoting diversity in our collections and our programs; developed reading lists to help parents navigate conversations with their children, continued our commitment to Building Our Future, the Kenosha County StriveTogether Initiative, and created community conversations to engage our patrons in deliberate dialogue.





2020

WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Library
of the
Year

Wisconsin 2020 Library of the Year

2020 was a year of great challenges and uncertainty for the Kenosha community. The Kenosha Public Library has long prided itself on being a beacon of belonging, welcoming every community member with equitable and friendly service. When COVID-19 caused nationwide closures in March, we knew we had to act quickly to keep people connected to information, education, and each other.


We sprang into action to provide curbside service, accessible virtual programming, and take home programs for patrons of all ages. When August brought civil unrest to our front steps we courageously rose to the challenges of both COVID-19 and the riots that sent parts of our beloved city up in flames. Throughout the turmoil, the library staff remained undaunted. We were determined to deliver programs, collections, and wireless access to neighborhoods across the city. We opened library branches on streets that looked like war zones three days after the fires were extinguished and drove wireless hotspot vans into neighborhoods afflicted with high rates of child poverty. All of this was done to sustain some semblance of normalcy for children and the elderly by getting books into their hands and meeting them virtually face to face.




Even in the worst of times, We'll be here for you.

2020 By the Numbers

1,309 Programs 

44,240 Program Participants 

4,842 KPL Kids-to-Go & In the Making Participants 

43,2974 Questions Answered 

157 Virtual Storytimes 

163,178 Digital Circulation 

436,262 Physical Circulation 

81,219 Active Library Cards 

556,368 Website Visits 

