

2023 Annual Report



A REFLECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY

When we reflect on the highlights of our past year, one main theme underscores the story . . . that of our community and their stories – those who have come to PPL to pursue their goals and realize their dreams, acquire a skill and create something new, or simply to relax, read a good book, or learn more about what interests them.

As always, we recognize that we are here for them. Our mission is to meet our community where they are and provide what we can to help them write the story they seek. For their stories, experiences, and memories made and shared contribute to the collective narrative of our community.

And, therefore, our story truly is the story of our community.

As we have throughout our history, we continued to grow and evolve our library to meet our community's needs over the past year, focusing our values and services on supporting the aspirations of everyone in our community.

In our second full year since completely transforming our building, we welcomed an increasing flow of adults, young people, and children and families, once again surpassing the highest number of visitors ever to our library. They took part in fun and even life-changing classes, visited and played in our Children's Library, learned and created in our Workshop makerspace, joined their neighbors in building and mounting a truly magical library exhibition in our three-story Atrium staircase, and gathered with friends and strangers alike for countless community programs and events.

This year we concentrated on a number of initiatives to enhance the ways we share our resources and facilities.

In one exciting development, thanks to a Papitto Opportunity Connection grant and generous donors, we were able to increase access to and use of our spaces by a wide range of individuals and groups through a newly created Community Access Fund. From budding

filmmakers premiering their works to youth dance groups to students and artists engaging with the community to mount exhibits and deliver public programs, we witnessed firsthand the abundant creative energy within our community.

Sometimes all someone may require is a helping hand and the Library is in the position to provide a critical service or connection. Throughout the year, we committed to establishing and expanding a multitude of initiatives and partnerships with local social service agencies to meet consistently growing needs among those visiting PPL. These included relationships with organizations large and small and enabled us to be more responsive to people in the moment, as some of these partners were able to deliver services and resources right at the Library. Through a Basic Needs grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, we were even able to pilot an Essential Needs Pantry through which we and our partners could meet some of the basic resource needs of hundreds of community members as well as provide information and share referrals to other public agencies able to provide more comprehensive support. (Read more in our report about our community partners and our efforts together.)

As always, our successes are made possible through the continued generosity of our dedicated supporters. Just as PPL is a reflection of our community, so is it a living testament to you and your belief in this institution and the immeasurable impact it makes every day! *We thank you.*

Jack Martin, *PPL Executive Director*
Elizabeth Debs, *Chair*



PPL is a really important place to me. My time here as the Youth English-as-a-Second-Language Facilitator was my first adult job. It's felt like a very full-circle moment for me . . . it kind of felt like kismet. I grew up loving libraries and taking part in library programming. Being able to run a first-of-its-kind pilot program here to create ESL instruction for high school students has been a fun and fulfilling experience. PPL is such an important place in the community...it's invested in and really works with and for the community.

— Vivienne Diaz

A REFLECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY

Financial Report

July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 — July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023
Consolidated report of the PPL and PPL Foundation

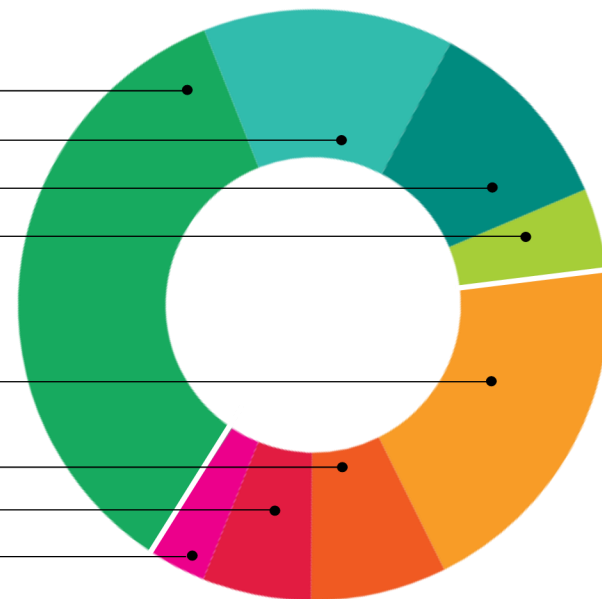
REVENUE — \$8,708,083

Private Funds

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Endowment | \$3,022,614 |
| Corporations/Private Funding | \$1,192,715 |
| Individuals/Family Foundations | \$952,497 |
| Earned Income | \$381,613 |

Public Funds

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Grants/Contracts and State/Federal Funds | \$1,712,217 |
| Rhode Island SRRRC | \$649,130 |
| State of Rhode Island - Grant in Aid | \$517,885 |
| City of Providence Building Lease | \$279,412 |



EXPENSES — \$8,851,212

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Personnel | \$4,674,182 |
| Debt Service | \$1,722,335 |
| Program Support | \$1,247,162 |
| Facilities | \$582,833 |
| Books and Library Materials | \$432,548 |
| Professional Fees | \$192,152 |



Focus on Community

Building Social Service Bridges; Meeting Basic Needs

With the Library's unprecedented growth over the two years since fully reopening, we experienced a parallel increase in the number of people of all ages visiting PPL in need of more than traditional library services. In response, we established and expanded a multitude of initiatives and partnerships with local social service agencies to help meet these growing needs. Often, we are able to facilitate a critical connection to an available service just by coordinating with varied organizations to be onsite on a predetermined schedule. Among key groups we work with is Better Lives Rhode Island, which staffs PPL with a social worker on a consistent basis to address the needs of our housing and food insecure patrons.

Efforts resulting from targeted grants have enabled us to provide needed resources and services directly to our more vulnerable patrons. Through a Basic Needs grant from the Rhode Island Foundation we piloted an **Essential Needs Pantry**, through which we met some of the basic resource needs of hundreds of individuals — providing backpacks filled with hygiene supplies, snacks, blankets and cold weather wear, as well as information and referrals to other public agencies that deliver more comprehensive support. Connecting with **Hope & Main's Nourish Our Neighbors** program, we established a freezer stocked with food donations for our food insecure patrons, delivering hundreds of meals to patrons of all ages. Working with PVD Period, we put feminine hygiene kits in our restrooms.

Other organizations we work with in varying degrees and for everything from direct services to staff training, include Anchor Recovery Rhode Island, Behavioral Health & Homelessness Prevention, City of Providence, Crossroads Rhode Island, Family Services of Rhode Island, Neighborworks Blackstone River Valley Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood, Project Weber RENEW, Rhode Island Department of Health, and United Way.

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2023 At-a-Glance

Total usage of resources and materials topped **2,048,362**, including use of AskRI offerings, while library users received information assistance from library staff a total of **43,077** times.

PPL had more than **98,000** in-person visitors and **154,079** website visits.

553 individuals received Digital & Career Navigation Services, including basic skills classes, in-person and virtual sessions.

RIFLI served **424** ESL students and **78** Citizenship students from **50+** countries.

PPL's RI Adult Education Professional Development team held **120** synchronous training sessions attended by **1,722** participants across **19** organizations.

1,352 youth and adults participated in Workshop Open Studio sessions, including **502** youth who participated in STEAM opportunities and **27** interns who gained work and mentorship experience leading hands-on creative projects.

The newly launched *Young Creators* program engaged **109** students aged 6 - 12 years old in sessions focused on music, theater, coding, art, and sewing.

5,120 children and parents visited the Children's Library while **2,335** attended **143** storytimes; and, Teen Loft youth services staff welcomed **5,052** teens.

PPL's Special Collections department hosted **1,600** class students, event attendees, and tour visitors.

More than **17,100** children, youth, and adults attended a multitude of PPL learning and enrichment programs, exhibitions, and events.

Bloodtide

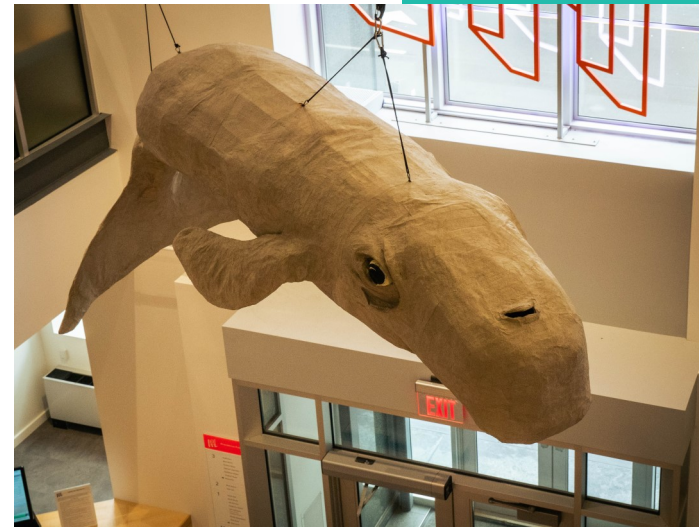
April 2022 - April 2023

Public Sculpture Project Takes Up Residence at PPL

Bloodtide, a forever incomplete public sculpture project led by artist Eli Nixon, transformed recyclables into a menagerie of organisms in an effort to grok (and make more visible) the vastness of the horseshoe crab's time on Earth, as well as the relative recentness of human existence. From April 2022 - January 2023, Eli worked with participants (ages nine weeks to 83 years) to sculpt and paper mache dozens of lifeforms, through an asynchronous yet collaborative process, in which each organism was created by multiple people.

Both the process and the product were an attempt to decentralize colonized notions of time and ownership, upset linearity, revel in impossibility, and reckon with our enmeshment with the more-than-human world. This project was part of activating Eli's illustrated proposal for a new holiday in homage to horseshoe crabs, **Bloodtide**, which is available for check-out at the Library.

The project culminated in a public "Organism Extravaganza" on April 15, 2023 when, in a raucous and thoughtful alternative to Tax Day, participants celebrated 450 million years of flora and fauna built by the hands of hundreds of Modern Humans with an afternoon of organism appreciation, land acknowledgment, poetry, music, 'crabaoke,' and crafting in homage to the enduring horseshoe crab and their primordial friends. The installation throughout PPL's three-story atrium stairway is viewable every day when PPL is open – the exhibition will remain through 2024. Many groups and organizations contributed to making this venture possible, including funding and support from the City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism and First Works.



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H. Jack Martin



The complete 2023 Annual Report can be viewed online at: prov.pub/2023annualreport. For best viewing experience, please open on a desktop browser.



Providence Public Library

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401-455-8000 | provlib.org