

# SCHERTZ PUBLIC LIBRARY



Schertz Public Library is an award-winning, State-accredited public library, and a department of the City of Schertz, operating under City ordinances, policies, and guidelines. The Library also looks to and participates in a broader network of public, school and academic libraries, and library-focused organizations that spark ideas and vision for the future, and provide guidance and feedback on usage policies, best-practices and benchmarking.



The Library and its Advisory Board were established by Council resolution in 1978 in response to a petition by a group of concerned citizens who decried the lack of library services in the City and the western end of Guadalupe County. The original library opened in June of that year in a 1,500 sq. ft. facility on Main St. with approximately 5,000 donated books and a small crew of dedicated volunteers. It outgrew the location quickly, and by 1983 had moved to a newly-built facility (the current site of the Senior Center). Explosive growth in the 1990s/early 2000s drove the need for a new facility, resulting in the approval of a bond proposal in 2006. Construction of the current 30,000+ sq. ft. facility was completed in 2009, with move-in in August of that year.

## FISCAL YEAR 19-20 RECAP

2020 has been the year of profound disruptions to everyone's life. From the moment COVID-19 appeared, it changed everything. From the tragic loss of life to the absurdity of toilet paper shortages, no aspect of life has been left untouched by its impact.

The Library's primary goals are to be a community hub, and to provide life-long recreational and educational opportunities for everyone in our service population. Much of the Library's regular operation is at odds with the best practices required to limit the spread of COVID. That, along with the facts that people of all ages and vulnerabilities are regular users of the Library, and the Library often sees more than 1,000 people per day, required staff to regroup and re-design operations to keep customers and staff as safe as possible.

The following pages provide a re-cap of the operational changes implemented by the Library in the last fiscal year, statistics, and what can be expected as we move forward.

## FAST FACTS

Cardholders.....	31,296
Number of Items.....	139,477
Employees.....	21
FY21 Budget.....	\$1,062,442
Service Population.....	108,117

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS

The Library has a long history of partnering with other entities. Currently, in addition to Schertz, the Library provides services to the residents of Cibolo, Selma and Guadalupe County through inter-local agreements. Our service population is more than 108,000 people, which is the second largest service population in the area. San Antonio Public and Bexar County Bibliotech Libraries share the largest. Funding through these ILAs provides a little over 1/4 of our budget.

## THE LIBRARY DURING COVID

### Shut-down

The pandemic hit just at the time of year the Library is deep in preparation for Summer Reading programming and events. All in-building public services were shut down on March 16, 2020 for a 6-week period. Most staff members worked at home during that time where they answered customer email inquiries, managed online resources and social media platforms, completed individualized staff training, performed database maintenance, performed collection development duties, and re-worked all in-person programming to become virtual programming. Some staff members still reported daily for on-site duty in order to empty the book return, disinfect and quarantine library materials, shelve materials, and issue digital-access library cards to customers. The Library's online resources continued to be available as was the public Wi-Fi. Some of our materials budget was reallocated to purchase additional e-books to meet the increased demand for digital product. Virtual programs were added to our website beginning March 22. Even though the building was closed, library services never completely shut down.

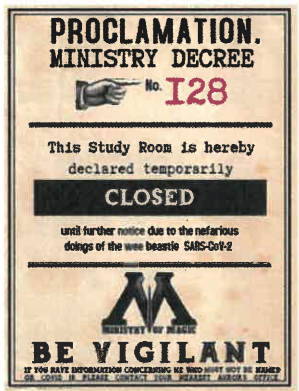
### Curbside Service

The Library re-opened for additional limited services on May 4, 2020. We began delivering library materials to customers through curbside service, quickly following with curbside delivery of print jobs. The building remained closed to the public and all programming continued to be delivered via the web. Staff worked steadily throughout May, creating and prepping for the library's first ever all-virtual Summer Reading Event. Staff delivered more than 16,500 items outside to customers between May 4 and October 3.

### Summer Programming

Traditionally, the Library's busiest time of the year falls between the first week of June and the first week of August. As the building remained closed, staff were unsure of what to expect, but we launched our adult and youth Summer Reading programs at the beginning of June. All programs were either recorded and then posted to the web, or streamed live as in the case of our musical guest performers, Will Parker and Lucas Miller. Another guest performer, Hideout Kids, provided an interactive, online improvisational theatre experience for viewers. Other programming included story times for toddlers and preschoolers, science programming for school-age youth, and poetry, scrapbooking and book club programming for adults. Virtual programming had participation, but, overall, attendance was much lower than what we see for in-person programs. Two hundred sixty-seven adults and children participated in the reading portion of our summer program and two hundred forty people participated in virtual programming during the summer event.

The most successful element of the Summer Reading program was our weekly Take-and-Make kits and Science kits for youth, and our Craft kits for teens and adults. The Take-and-Make kits were created for toddlers and preschoolers and included all supplies necessary to create a craft complimentary to the week's story time theme. The Science kits were similar, but included supplies to carry out a science experiment or science-related craft. These, too, matched the week's program theme. Adults and teens enjoyed craft kits, including Paint-chip calendars, suncatchers, and Scrabble



*"I am so happy you are offering this service!" — Feedback comment from a print-job curbside customer*

## THE LIBRARY DURING COVID

tile coasters. In all, close to 950 craft and science kits were given out. Staff also created themed “book bundles” and “movie bundles” that could be reserved and picked up through curbside service.

### ***Community Outreach***

In addition to summer programming, staff came up with ways to continue engaging with the community (in a safe manner!) over the summer. Youth Services staff worked with HOAs to set up on-site visits in Crossvine, Laura Heights, and Homestead. They took books for check-out, summer activity kits, and offered on-site library card registration. Staff also delivered book bundles and picture books to Primrose. Adult Services staff continued to deliver books to Forest Ridge Memory Care Unit and created and delivered summer reading program bags to the Schertz Senior Center for dispersal through the Meals on Wheels program. Additionally, library donations not earmarked for specific projects were used to obtain new books for our Storywalk located at the Playscape as a way to provide a family-friendly outdoor reading activity.

### ***Re-Opening***

Beginning on August 4, we added appointment-based, in-person services such as library card updates and computer usage. On October 6, the building re-opened to the public for all services except in-person programming, meeting room use and study room use. Some furniture has been removed to help with social distancing, infrared temperature scanning equipment was installed, as well as sneeze guards at all point-of-service desks. Masks are required in the building to help us protect the vulnerable populations that use the library daily and to help protect staff who often cannot maintain social distance during transactions. In addition to in-building services, curbside delivery continues. Library operation hours have changed to Tuesday-Saturday, 11 am-6 pm so weekend and evening staff hours can be reassigned to handle both circulation desk duties and curbside duties. Curbside continues to account for approximately 1/3 of circulation.

### ***Moving Forward***

As the Library is a community hub and a place where people of all ages and abilities interact, the Library’s goal is to continue to remain open and provide as many services as possible without endangering vulnerable persons. Modifications to our operations are temporary and we consider our responses to be fluid, meaning that what we do may change depending on current state and local government recommendations, service demands and our capacity to fulfill them, the prevalence of COVID-19, and hospitalization rates. We will continue to provide curbside service as long as necessary.

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*“Thank you for all the effort you go through to make books available. It can't be easy, but it is definitely appreciated.” — Email comment from a 5th grader*

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*(Right) One of our Summer Reading participants with her completed “Jack & the Beanstalk” Make-and-Take craft kit.*

*(Far Right) Another participant enjoys “Unicorn Slime,” one of the science kits available for elementary students.*



## PROJECT UPDATES

Even though COVID disrupted the Library's usual operations, several projects were completed or remain underway.

### ***Partnership with Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA)***

Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) is the governing board for a 13-county regional workforce system—a network of service providers and contractors that brings people and jobs together. At the beginning of FY19-20, WSA approached the Library about housing one of their computer kiosks to make it easier for people in the immediate area to apply for jobs, receive mentoring and set up childcare. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in July 2020, modifications to one of the Library's rooms was completed in September, and Internet service is scheduled to be installed the first week in December. The kiosk should be installed shortly thereafter, with the kiosk available to the public at the beginning of 2021.

### ***Partnership with Bexar County's BiblioTech Library***

As part of the Federal government's response to the COVID emergency, CARES grant funds were made available to state and local governments to help manage the effects of the pandemic. Because of the shift to remote work, schooling, health and other services, Internet access has become a necessity in this crisis. At the same time, the digital divide has worsened due to the loss of income from furloughs and business closures. Libraries traditionally fill the gap with public Internet access but all libraries in the area were closed. To help fill the need, BiblioTech Library applied for and received funds to purchase mobile

*"I'm writing because although I didn't discover it until the summer, we've been enjoying all of the virtual storytime programming. I just want to THANK YOU for all of your efforts and hard work! We've watched the new fall youtube videos, she really enjoys the Fox rhyme. I'm sure it's a lot of work to put these together but it has been a big comfort to see and hear from Ms. Michelle especially from the familiar storytime area. It gives me hope that things are slowly turning around and we look forward to seeing you all again when things improve." —From a customer's email*



## PROJECT UPDATES

hotspots to make Internet service available to all in Bexar County who needed it. To help distribute the hotspots, Bibliotech partnered with other local public libraries. The Schertz Public Library entered into an agreement with Bibliotech to circulate hotspots in August. The Library received 100 hot spots, processed them and made them available for circulation to any library card holder, just in time for the return to school.

### ***TSLAC CARES Grant***

In April 2020, Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) received a portion of Texas' CARES funds to help Texas public libraries manage the effects of the pandemic. Two million dollars was made available to libraries through two rounds of reimbursement grants. Schertz Public Library applied for funds during the first round of grants in May 2020. In August, the Library received word that we would receive \$24,702 in grant funds, one of only 38 libraries to receive funds in the first round. The funds are to be expended by July 1, 2021. The grant request included different projects to help the Library provide services during the pandemic, including:

- Equipment to create videos for virtual programming and to help staff share computer desktops with customers in order to provide technology help
- A new educational online service called Niche Academy which provides tutorials and online learning tools
- A new online tool for the business community and job-seekers called AtoZ Databases
- A new online crafting database called CreativeBug
- New e-books and e-audiobooks for our cloudLibrary and Overdrive platforms
- The addition of a mobile check-out module to our circulation system for easy, contactless check-out for customers who need to limit their exposure to people and surfaces

The first four projects in the bulleted list have been completed. The equipment has been installed and staff are using it to provide computer help from a distance rather than stand next to the customer. The video equipment is being used to create online content. AtoZ Databases, Niche Academy and Creativebug are all available on our electronic resources web page as of November 25.

The first round of reimbursement requests was submitted October 1; the second round on December 1.

The purchase of additional digital content is scheduled for February 2021. Work has begun on the mobile check-out module, but is not scheduled for completion until after the beginning of 2021. All grant projects are on schedule and should be completed well before the grant deadline.

### ***ESC Fiber20 Project***

In April 2020, the City of Schertz entered into an Interlocal Agreement with Educational Service Center Region 20 to participate in the Fiber20 consortium. The consortium was created to build a new fiber ring network in order to provide high speed Internet access to public schools and libraries across 20 counties.

New fiber was installed by the contractor in front of the Library along Schertz Parkway in April. The connection to the Library was completed in May. The Internet service provider began providing service in late July/early August. The City's IT department tested the new network during September before completely switching over to it in late October/early November.

Participation in this consortium provides us with Internet speeds between 1-10 Gbps, depending on our equipment capabilities, while lowering our monthly service costs from \$515/month to only \$170/month. Previous Internet service from Spectrum was for a much slower 50 Mbps connection.

## CIRCULATION



• **Print/AV Materials**  
190,648 items



• **Digital Materials**  
48,540 items



• **Computers**  
15,455 uses

**Total Circulation 254,643**

## IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING

**# of Youth Programs 178**  
**# of Attendees 5,065**



**# of Adult Programs 110**  
**# of Attendees 965**

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

**# of Youth Programs 72**  
**# of Attendees 447**



**# of Adult Programs 12**  
**# of Attendees 47**

## TECHNOLOGY

**168,191**  
**WiFi Sessions**



**43,414**  
**Webpage Sessions**

## USERS



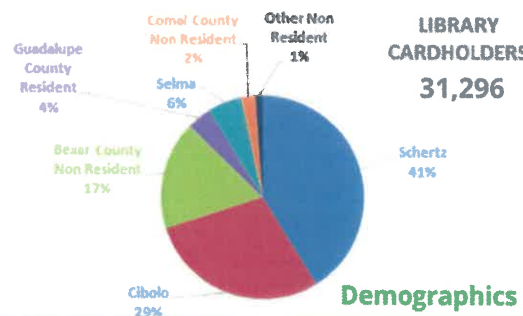
**Visitor Count**  
**102,297**

**New Cards**  
**2,700**



**Renewed Cards**  
**2,329**

**LIBRARY  
CARDHOLDERS**  
**31,296**



## COLLECTION



**Titles**  
**128,303**

**Items**  
**139,477**

## VOLUNTEERS

**# of  
Volunteers**

**288**



**# of  
Hours**

**2,158**

## BUILDING USAGE



**Meeting Room  
Usage**  
**421**



**Food Truck  
Vendors**  
**44**



**Hours  
Open**  
**2,192**