

Annual Report to the Community

2020 was a year like no other. While we mourned the loss of so many, we watched the world change before our very eyes. Personal lives, schools, businesses and community organizations were forced to make rapid changes. The Shelter Rock Public Library was certainly no exception. On March 15, 2020 we closed our doors to the public and quickly learned to serve our community without the use of a brick and mortar facility.

While the Library's physical doors were closed, the staff worked diligently from their homes to arrange a wide variety of virtual programs for our 27,188 residents of all ages. A total of 5,611 residents participated in 458 virtual programs offered by the Library. Virtual programs allowed everyone to feel connected in a time of forced isolation.

Over the years, technology has continuously transformed the way libraries operate. During the closure, we were dependent upon that technology as the only way to deliver materials to our 12,196 cardholders. E-books and downloadable services became a mainstay for so many people. Shelter Rock patrons had access to 127, 246 e-books (2019 - 103,847), 22,322 e-audio books (2019 - 17,591) and 2,430 downloadable videos (2019 - 1,832). Increasing the number of materials in our virtual collection allowed us to reduce the wait times for some items.

Downloadable music through Freegal and magazines from RB Digital were also extremely popular services. The usage of Freegal in 2020 increased to 17,602 from 12,200 in 2019. Digital magazine stats soared to 6,221 uses from 2,867 in 2019.

While theaters were closed, the Library was able to offer Kanopy and Acorn TV, giving patrons an opportunity to watch movies and TV programs from the safety and comfort of their homes. The use of these streaming services increased from 2,013 in 2019 to 4630 in 2020.

As the restrictions were decreased, we continuously changed our mode of operations. At first, patrons were not permitted in the building so we offered lobby door pickup service. By the middle of July the Library was allowed to open for browsing only. Since the fall we have allowed patrons to use the public computers or sit at a table for up to one hour, while still offering lobby door pick-up service.

The Library is always open 24/7 via the Library's website and the Nassau Public Libraries Mobile App, providing access to our digital services. The Library experienced 409,368 website and App visits in 2020 as compared to 368,743 in 2019. As you can see, more patrons relied on virtual resources in 2020 than ever before. We view this as trend that will most likely continue.

Even though we were closed for part of the year, the staff continued to purchase new materials. A total of 35,532 items were purchased so patrons could return to an updated collection.

Libraries continuously evolve as the world and all it has to offer changes. Offering new types of services and ways to access those services allows us to stay relevant in an ever-changing world.