



GREY HIGHLANDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT



2025





INTRODUCTION

2025 was a year of continued progress and focused delivery for Grey Highlands Public Library. Building on ongoing investment in facilities, technology, and services, 2025 emphasized expanded access, stronger engagement, and consistent service delivery across all library branches.

Library use remained strong, reflecting the community's continued reliance on both physical and digital services. Programming reached residents of all ages, with notable growth in children's participation and expanded engagement among teens. Outreach efforts extended the Library's presence beyond branch walls, strengthening visibility and connection across schools, neighbourhoods, and community spaces.

Guided by the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, the Library prioritized reliability, inclusiveness, and community connection. Investments in spaces, systems, and partnerships helped ensure that Library services remained welcoming, accessible, and responsive to the evolving needs of Grey Highlands residents.



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

As we reflect on the past year, I am pleased to once again recognize the dedication and enthusiasm of our library staff. Their commitment to literacy, technology, and community connection continues to strengthen the Grey Highlands Public Library as a vital and welcoming public space.

In 2025, the Library focused on building on recent improvements while ensuring consistent, dependable service across all branches. Overall usage remained strong, with circulation tracking ahead of 2024 and new memberships increasing system-wide. The Library continues to serve as a central, well-used community space for residents of all ages.

Children's and youth services saw notable growth this year. Participation in children's programming increased significantly, particularly during the summer, following adjustments that made programs easier for families to attend regularly. Ongoing school partnerships supported early literacy, while the introduction of Teen Drop-In programming responded to a clear community need and quickly established steady participation, supported through partnerships with Markdale Recreation and Chapman's Ice Cream.

Outreach efforts expanded through schools, seniors' services, and community events. The StoryWalk program was widely used for school and community outreach, reaching hundreds of students. Continued service to seniors, including partnerships with Grey Gables, remained an important focus.

Facility and technology improvements continued across the system. A refresh at the Kimberley Branch improved comfort and usability, while ongoing enhancements at Markdale and Flesherton supported accessibility and patron experience. The launch of the new library website, ghpl.ca, along with a full network upgrade, improved access, reliability, and long-term sustainability of services.

These successes would not be possible without the strong collaboration between Library staff, the Library Board, Friends groups, community partners, and the Municipality of Grey Highlands. Together, we continue to support a library system that enriches our community and looks confidently to the future.

PAUL MCQUEEN, MAYOR

02



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chair of the Grey Highlands Public Library Board, I am pleased to reflect on 2025 and the continued role the Library plays in the life of our community. Throughout the year, the Library remained a welcoming and active space for residents of all ages, supporting learning, creativity, and connection across Grey Highlands, as well as for residents of nearby communities such as Chatsworth and West Grey who access our services.

The Board's role is to provide governance, oversight, and long-term direction, and we are encouraged by the Library's continued growth in use and engagement. In particular, we were pleased to see strong participation from children and youth, alongside ongoing use by families, adults, and seniors. Continued investment in facilities, technology, outreach, and programming has helped ensure services are accessible, reliable, and responsive to the needs of residents both within Grey Highlands and in surrounding areas served by the Library.

The success of the Library is rooted in the dedication of its staff. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the entire team for their professionalism, commitment, and care for the communities they serve. I also wish to acknowledge the important contributions of the Friends groups, volunteers, and community partners who continue to enhance library services and strengthen local connections.

Finally, I thank the Municipality of Grey Highlands for its ongoing support of the Library, and my fellow Board members for their time and thoughtful stewardship. Together, we remain committed to ensuring that the Grey Highlands Public Library continues to provide meaningful, accessible service to the communities it serves.

STEWART HALLIDAY, BOARD CHAIR

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS



In 2025, Grey Highlands Public Library continued to advance all five Strategic Action Areas outlined in the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, with an emphasis on strengthening delivery and embedding long-term improvements.

Cultural leadership was reinforced through sustained arts programming, author events, and creative initiatives that positioned the Library as a space for storytelling and community expression. Social responsibility remained central, reflected in expanded youth engagement, ongoing seniors’ outreach, inclusive programming, and community-focused initiatives that supported equity and well-being.

A Community First approach guided service decisions, including strengthened partnerships with schools, recreation providers, and community organizations. Digital Inclusion efforts improved access and reliability through major system upgrades and improved online access, while Service Growth was supported through targeted facility improvements and continued investment in welcoming, functional library spaces.

BY THE NUMBERS



310 programs delivered



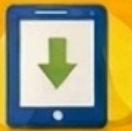
Approx. **3,500** program attendees



810 children participated in children's programming



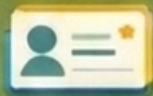
65,123 total physical item circulations



9,510 eBook downloads



4,545 e-audiobook downloads



275 new library members system-wide in 2025

The Library saw steady use throughout 2025, with programs running regularly and drawing strong participation from children, families, and the wider community. Physical and digital collections continued to be borrowed consistently, reflecting how people relied on the Library in different ways throughout the year. New memberships kept growing, reinforcing the Library's role as a familiar and frequently used part of everyday community life.

KIDS, CURIOSITY, AND A LOT GOING ON



POLICE DOG IN ACTION

A live police service dog demonstration quickly became a crowd favourite, drawing kids and families eager to see a working K9 up close. The dog, Ciebe, impressed the audience with a fast-paced demonstration that combined skill, movement, and real-world application, making the program both exciting and memorable.



UP CLOSE WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

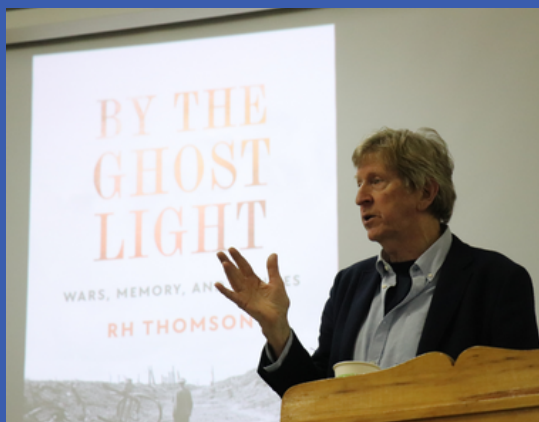
A visit from the Grey Highlands Fire Department gave children hands-on experience with firefighting equipment and fire safety education. Participants toured the fire truck and learned about emergency response directly from local firefighters.



ASTROGEO STARLAB PLANETARIUM

The AstroGeo StarLab Planetarium turned the space into a hands-on planetarium experience, guiding participants through the night sky, planets, and constellations. Who knows, a few future astronauts may have taken their first step toward the moon that day.

CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION



SPRING CAFÉ

The Spring Café welcomed the community for a well-attended evening with R.H. Thomson, who shared reflections from *By the Ghost Light*. The event reinforced the Library's role as a cultural gathering place and created space for thoughtful discussion and connection.



HARVEST CAFÉ

The Harvest Café brought the community together for an evening of storytelling and conversation in a relaxed, café-style setting. The event featured author Gwen Lamont, reading from *A Childhood Exhumed*, and drew a strong audience for an intimate and engaging cultural experience.



TEEN DROP-IN

Teen Drop-In created a relaxed, welcoming space where teens could spend time at the library on their own terms. Activities ranged from crafts and video games to karaoke, supported by Markdale Recreation, Beavercrest School, and Chapman's Ice Cream, making the Library a comfortable place for teens to connect and unwind.

DIGITAL ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT



FINDING THE LIBRARY ONLINE

The launch of the new ghpl.ca website made it easier for people to find programs, services, and information quickly and clearly. Improved navigation and a shorter web address reduced barriers to access, while the Library's growing social media presence helped extend program promotion and community awareness beyond the branch.



SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT SERVICE

A full network replacement across all branches improved reliability and enhanced security across Library systems. The upgraded network supports safe public computer access and day-to-day staff operations, helping protect systems and ensure technology works consistently for patrons and staff.

OUR PEOPLE

Grey Highlands Public Library's work in 2025 was made possible by the dedication and support of the people who contribute to the Library in many ways.

Our Team

Jeff Rosenburg, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Becky Hill, Branch Manager

Michelle Campbell, Coordinator of Children & Youth Services

Angela Mason, Coordinator of Programming & Outreach

Linda Weatherall, Coordinator of Acquisitions & Cataloguing

Maggie Murakami, Coordinator of Marketing and Communications

Angela Roberge, Public Services Assistant

Sharon Spencer, Public Services Assistant

Justine Gouveia, Public Services Assistant

Kathy Lavoie, Public Services Assistant



Library Board

Stewart Halliday, Chair

Nicole Martin, Vice-Chair

Deputy Mayor Dane Nielsen

Councillor Paul Allen

Janet Carson

David Clarke

Steve Maloney

Bo Penny

Cindy Van Wonderen



CEO REFLECTION

2025 was a year of strong delivery and visible impact for Grey Highlands Public Library. Building on work from previous years, the focus remained on providing consistent, dependable service while responding to areas of clear community demand. Continued strong use across branches confirmed the Library's role as a valued and well-used public service within Grey Highlands.

Engagement with children and youth stood out as a key area of growth. Participation in children's programming increased substantially, particularly during the summer months, and the introduction of Teen Drop-In programming responded to a clear need for welcoming, dedicated spaces for teens. These developments reflect both thoughtful service planning and the community's trust in the Library as a place to learn, gather, and connect.

None of this work happens without people. I would like to sincerely thank our library staff for their professionalism, flexibility, and commitment to serving the community each day. I am also grateful to our volunteers and Friends of the Library groups for their ongoing support, advocacy, and generosity, which continue to enhance what the Library is able to offer.

Thank you as well to the Library Board and the Municipality of Grey Highlands for their continued support. The Library benefits from strong, consistent support from Council and meaningful backing across municipal staff and departments, which has been essential to delivering reliable service and planning confidently for the future.

JEFF ROSENBERG, ACTING CEO