

Appleton Public Library



225 N ONEIDA ST
APPLETON, WI

2020

OUR MISSION

**Learn, know, gather,
grow – your center
of community life.**

OUR VISION

**Where potential
is transformed
into reality.**

“In addition to providing open access to information and knowledge to all people regardless of who they are, the library also provides the people with hope, a sense of belonging, and provide the people with a safe ‘place’, regardless of whether that ‘place’ is the actual library building or knowing that there are so many caring and good people at the library who are willing and able to help.”

- JENNIFER, LIBRARY PATRON

Library Trustees

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UMIKA SIVASAMY,
TEEN REPRESENTATIVE

Director's Message

As an institution, a library represents hope. A library contains things that seem incompatible. It's a place where people come for introspective pursuits like reading, studying, research and writing. It's a place where people come to interact and learn from each other. It's a place where people who have different belief systems and values interact every day.

Those of us who work in libraries are drawn to this work for a lot of reasons. One thing we have in common - we want to help people access information and resources to accomplish their goals.

Like many of you, the pandemic is the biggest challenge we have faced in the past year. Never in my life did I imagine that libraries across the country would stop offering in-person services and programs.

Our staff has risen to the challenge. Their creativity and resilience have resulted in the creation of many new services, while adjusting essential services to ensure that we are in alignment with public health priorities.

We continue our focus on leveraging resources to support those suffering from job loss, families struggling with educational needs, marginalized communities, individuals and families suffering from social isolation and those who rely on the library to mitigate the impact of the digital divide.

If you have a conversation with anyone who works at the library you'll learn that this is a team of helpers who are committed to serving the community they call home. As in past times of economic distress we know we're going to be relied on by our community as part of their physical, economic and emotional recovery from the pandemic. We are ready.

As COVID-19 rates improve and vaccinations are distributed this team of helpers is looking forward with great optimism. Looking forward to restoring the services and access that have been missing, while maintaining the innovations that have resulted from the pandemic.

I want to thank you for embracing the changes we needed to make as we worked through the pandemic. Thank you for your kindness throughout the past year. Thank you for taking the time to read this reflection on 2020.



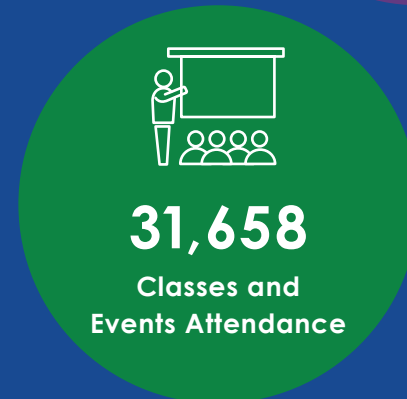
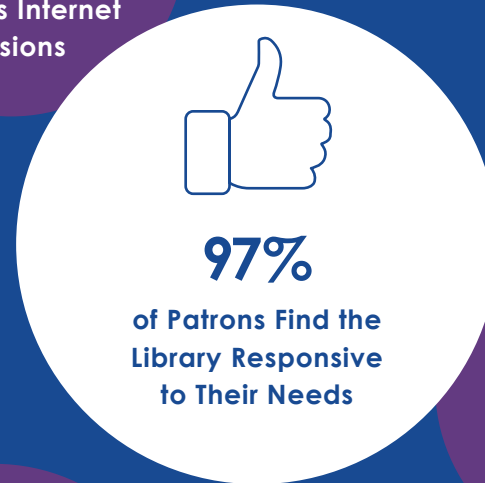
Colleen

COLLEEN RORTVEDT,
LIBRARY DIRECTOR

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

As we look back on 2020 it's important to note our accomplishments would not be possible without the support of our community and community partners, the Appleton Public Library Board of Trustees, the Friends of Appleton Public Library, City of Appleton leadership and departments, and our team of volunteers.

People are what make the library what it is. The last year may have had its challenges, but there were also many silver linings thanks to each and every person who believes in the mission of the library and supporting our community.



\$68k

in Grant Funds
for 2020

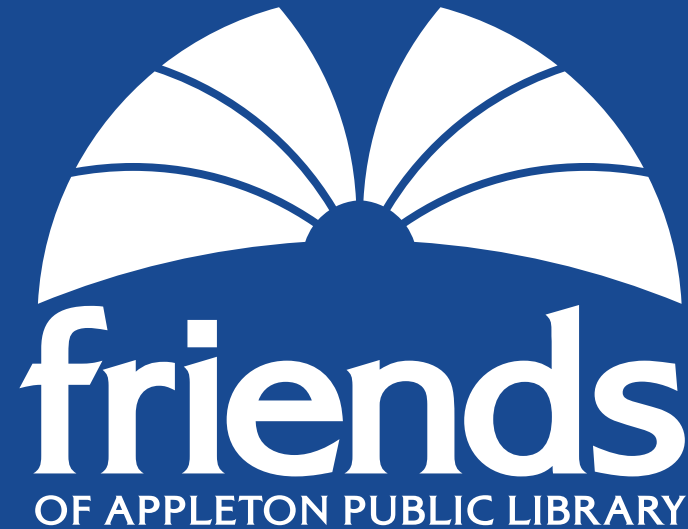


\$1.7M

in Grant Funds Received
Since 2000

80

Programs Funded
in 2020



We would like to extend a special thank you to the Friends of Appleton Public Library who take donations and grant funds to support library programs and services. The funds that were granted were essential in our ability to adapt this year.

EXPENSES AND
REVENUES

\$4,607,430.09

Program Expenses

\$260,002.64

Capital Expenses

\$1,388,385.69

Program Revenues

\$101,163.69

Grants

We support and sustain education for all ages.



5k+

Library Cards Updated

CONTACT-FREE CURBSIDE PICK-UP

Our materials support education, learning and literacy needs in our community. In addition, we embrace the important role materials can provide for leisure and their ability to enhance and enrich the lives of our community members. We maintain a collection of materials that cover the breadth of changing needs, interests and formats and every year we checkout hundreds of thousands of items.

When the Safer at Home Order was announced, we were no longer able to allow public access to the building and checking out physical materials

SUMMER LIBRARY PROGRAM

Helping to support the educational needs of our community was critical this year. Research shows children who do not engage in reading activities throughout the summer are susceptible to losing an average of three months of learning achievement. This loss is cumulative from one year to the next, regardless of the quality of the school. Our summer library program helped our youth fight summer learning loss by providing easy access to books and a fun and engaging virtual experience.

temporarily came to a stop. Getting library materials back into the hands of our community members was our top priority and we quickly began reinventing the way we would safely check out materials.

Within weeks of the governor permitting curbside library service, we had our new, homegrown system up and running. In the first two hours of offering curbside service 100 orders were submitted. Whether it was for educational or entertainment purposes, it was clear our community missed the access and the connection to physical materials.

There are other important benefits to participating in summer library programs, and they're not just for children. Summer library programs introduce goal setting, an important skill for teens to master as they age. Our programs also encouraged teens to engage with their community – helping them grow to become leaders. Our adult program offered all of the same benefits as the teen program, while also promoting lifelong learning opportunities which help lead to a more enriching and fulfilling life.



"My nephew has improved his reading so much this fall that he went from "very worried, might need extra help" to A- on his report card! Checking out books from here that he liked to read helped!"

- KATE, LIBRARY ASSISTANT



1,488

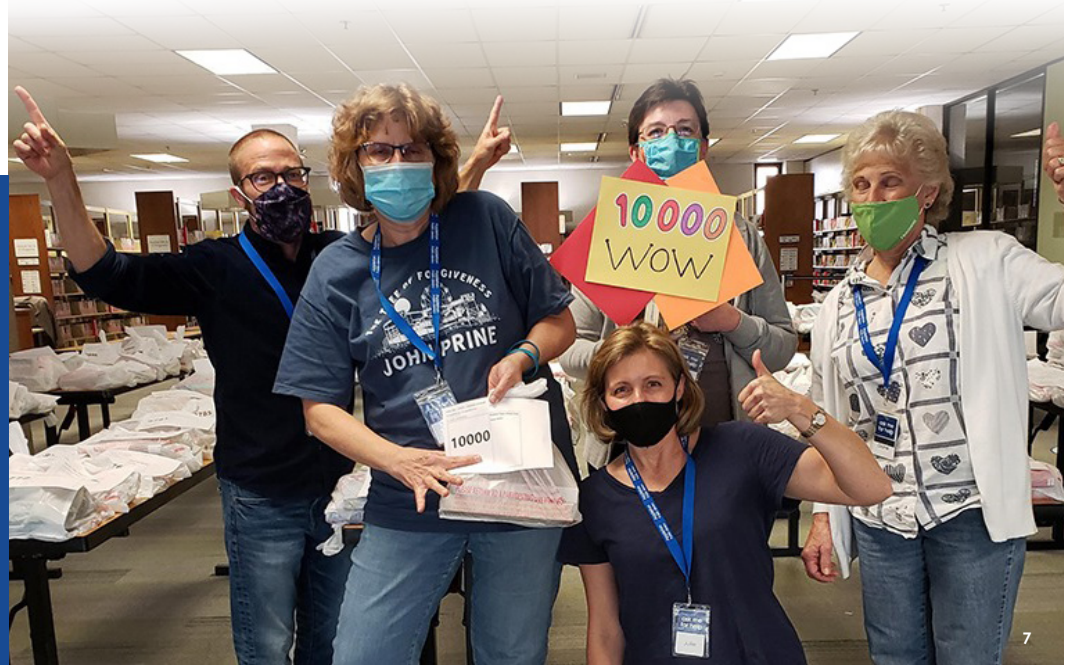
Summer Library Program Participants

215,542

Curbside Items Circulated

"You are my "most" essential worker, without you I would be locked into 2020 with no escape."

- LYNN, LIBRARY PATRON



600+

Library Cards Created

COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

We connect with partners to share knowledge and information.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our community engagement approach is rooted in “21st century librarianship,” which prioritizes community members, community issues, and local knowledge to inform library spaces, programs, services, collections, and partnerships. We address community needs and opportunities as they emerge and evolve. We are intentional about engaging our community through direct service, relationship building, and one-on-one learning conversations.

Community engagement enables us to understand individual and community aspirations, concerns, and opportunities. We pair this understanding with our professional expertise to ensure that the library is essential to every person and organization achieving their goals. We coordinate and work in partnership with individuals, agencies, and institutions to tackle pressing issues and achieve community goals. Every year we maintain hundreds of partnerships and on the following page are two examples from this last year.

BACKYARD GROOVE

We believe it's important to model unconditional welcoming and inclusive behavior for our youngest community members. This is why we partnered with Lawrence University to create Backyard Groove. Backyard Groove is a children's storytime featuring the music traditions of the Fox Valley including samba, mariachi, gamelan, music of Wisconsin tribes, and Ghanaian drumming and dancing. Backyard Groove creates space where people and cultural traditions are valued and uplifted. By partnering with Lawrence, we also provided developing educators an opportunity to use their music education skillset to help connect our Appleton families with a variety of music traditions in our area.

"The Backyard Groove is one way our students can engage in inclusive classroom creation, foster professional relationships, and serve the community; all skills needed for impactful teaching."

- LEILA PERTL, LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

JOB CONNECTION

We launched Job Connection in mid-2019 and continued the work in early 2020. Job Connection worked to address community job search needs and respond to United Way's ALICE Report's local data showing employed community members were still unable to afford basic needs. Before launching, we conducted an assessment of local agencies and services and consulted with WI Department of Workforce Development (DWD) leaders. Job Connection staff and volunteers provided assistance to nearly 70 community members primarily via one-on-one sessions for help with job searches, online applications, writing cover letters, writing resumes, and finding educational and training resources.

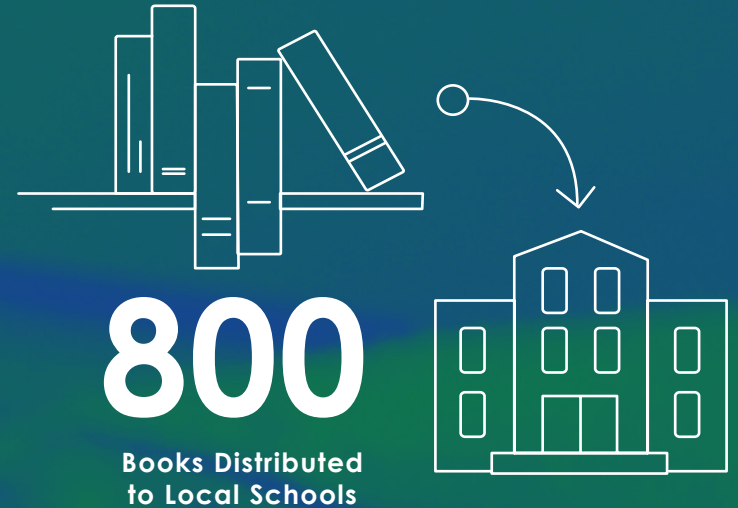


"[Looking] through the lens of community well-being, your ability to enjoy work you love or that you're good at and financially provide for your family - we're making that happen in our community. When we have any breaks in that, we're hurting as a community."

- ZEPHYR, PUBLIC SERVICES ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR,
ON THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF JOB CONNECTION

EDUCATE AND INSPIRE YOUTH

**We ensure that
children and teens
find a supportive
place for their futures.**



"Last March, I struggled to help my son get his 20-minutes of reading in each day while trying to balance full time work and keeping the kids entertained each day. The book packs and staff selections opened up a whole new world of material to him and he began to love reading. Fast forward less than a year later, and we have to remind him each night to put his book down and get to bed. I can't thank APL staff enough."

- REBECCA, LIBRARY BOARD PRESIDENT

VIRTUAL YOUTH SERVICES

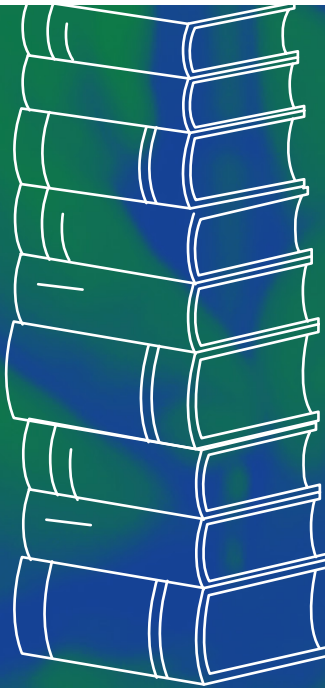
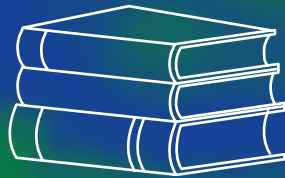
Nelson Mandela once said, "Children are our greatest treasure. They are our future." As a community organization, we believe in investing in our community's future.

The services we provide for children and teens are designed to educate, inspire, and empower. Over the last year our focus has been to help children of all ages flourish both academically and creatively by providing a consistent presence. When the pandemic hit, we looked at how we could continue to provide the same quality services our youngest community members rely on, in a safe environment.

Almost immediately we transitioned our in-person classes and events to virtual offerings through Facebook and YouTube. Popular programs included our virtual storytimes, Hmong language classes, Maker Quest for school-age kids, teen take and create packs and our teen photo expos. These programs offered children, teens and families much-needed educational and emotional support.


728

Personalized
Book Packs
Created

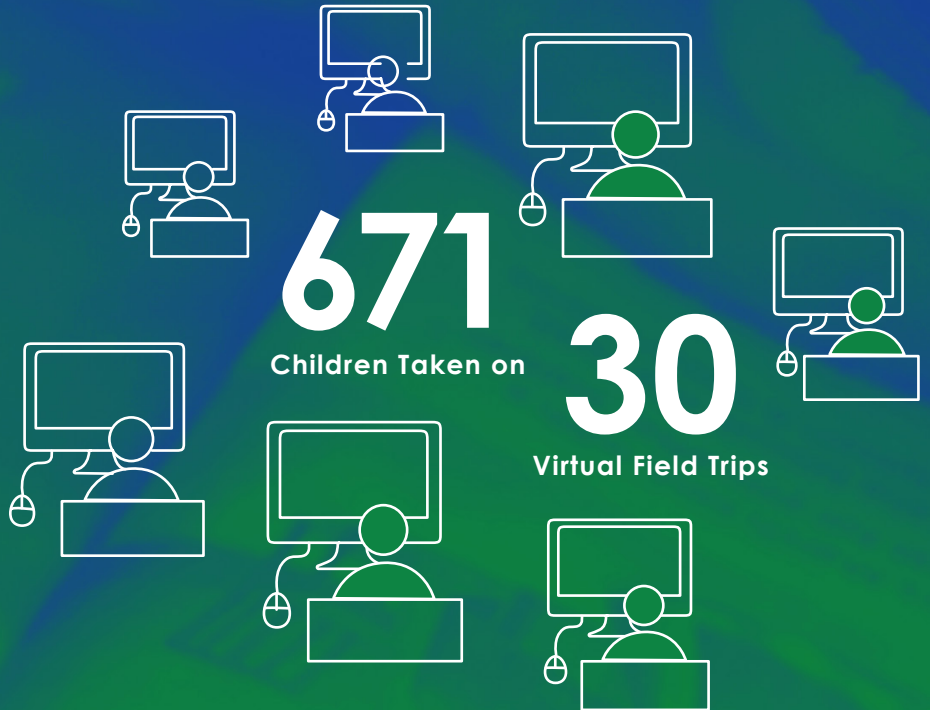


“My goal was to keep our teens grounded during a difficult time. It’s hard to be a teen, especially at this time - there’s so much going on in this world.”

- EMELY, TEEN LIBRARIAN

We understood parents and caregivers also were stretched thin. We looked at our services to see where we could break down barriers in order to continue to support caregivers in their educational journey. One of those services was Book Packs. Book Packs are collections of 15-30 books chosen by us and checked out to you. Parents and caregivers simply answer a few short questions about their child's reading preferences, and we take care of the rest. Getting books into the hands of children and building a love of reading is key to academic success.

Investing in services to support children, teens and families doesn't end with creating services directly aimed at them. We also looked for ways to support educators to help build a strong support system. After the building closed, we created virtual field trips and Book Bins – bringing book access to students through their teachers and schools.



CREATION AND INNOVATION

We are a platform that sparks discovery, development and originality.

88%

of Small Business – Big Impact participants were more aware of resources and services provided by the library

"I learned about several resources that [I] have at my disposal to assist in opening my own business. I am still very scared, but a lot of points were brought up that [I] will take to heart."

- SMALL BUSINESS – BIG IMPACT PARTICIPANT

LIBRARIES BUILD BUSINESS

Libraries have a huge impact on their local economy through their programs, services and resources. One example is our Small Business – Big Impact initiative.

In early 2020, the American Library Association awarded us a "Libraries Build Business" Google grant of nearly \$65,000 to expand services to small businesses and entrepreneurs. We were one of only 13 libraries across the country to receive funding to further this important work.

In working with our community partners and learning more about small business and entrepreneur needs, we came to understand that there are racial and ethnic disparities in the access of information and resources for business owners and entrepreneurs. In the midst of COVID-19 and continued racial discrimination, there is even greater urgency and significance for supporting people of color and immigrant small business owners and entrepreneurs in Appleton.

89%

of Small Business – Big Impact participants felt more knowledgeable about what it takes to establish a business

89%

of Small Business – Big Impact participants intend to apply what they learned

“Programs like this give us the courage to start our own business.”

- SMALL BUSINESS – BIG IMPACT PARTICIPANT

“Libraries Build Business is a great opportunity for BIPOC small business owners to engage in deeper understanding of what it takes to effectively manage and grow a business, especially during uncertain times.”

- DR. PAFOUA HER, LOCAL BUSINESS CONSULTANT

We saw the opportunity to create Small Business – Big Impact to address the disparities and create connection and access to resources and networks. Small Business – Big Impact supports business startup, retention, and expansion efforts for and with people of color and immigrants through informational workshops, one-on-one business consulting, business resource instruction and networking opportunities.

Supporting and empowering small businesses is key to our community's success. When our community members develop and thrive, the entire community succeeds.



ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

We focus on
how to make
a difference in
people's lives.

440+

Hours Worked by
Library Staff to Support
2020 Elections



29,212

Reference Transactions



CITY-WIDE PRIORITIES

When the pandemic set in, we pivoted to provide services in ways we never imagined. Suddenly, we were playing a role in responding to issues that extended far beyond our traditional mission.

Last year's elections were incredibly unique. They required an unprecedented number of staff hours and the ability to problem-solve both quickly and creatively. We helped stuff and mail a record number of absentee ballots. We also assisted with in-person absentee voting at city hall. Providing support to our city colleagues was crucial in

helping the city achieve accuracy, efficiency, and safety throughout the various election processes.

In addition to providing critical election support, we supported city-wide communication efforts. Communication during a crisis is key. We shifted to position ourselves as an extension of city-wide communication by participating in the city's emergency operations center and answering the city's general phone line. Our commitment to providing transparent and timely information to our community was unwavering.



"I am incredibly proud of how smoothly elections in 2020 went in the City of Appleton and this is directly attributed to teamwork across the various city departments. The assistance from the library staff was imperative to the success we had administering elections last year."

- KAMI LYNCH, CITY CLERK – CITY OF APPLETON

ENRICHED EXPERIENCES

**We provide
inclusive, timely,
and community
interest aligned
experiences.**

Last year was a year of change and creativity. New ideas and experiences didn't end with our curbside service or virtual programming. Our commitment to our community continued to expand through new and innovative services and programs.

STORY WALK®

The pandemic kept many of us stuck inside our homes in early 2020. This is one reason we partnered with Appleton Downtown Inc. and the Appleton Parks and Recreation Department to bring Story Walk® to the community. Story Walk® takes books and breaks them into chunks guiding families along a trail to complete the story. In this case, stories were spread throughout downtown Appleton and in Memorial Park. Story Walk® delivers a safe and socially responsible program that encourages literacy, community involvement, inclusivity and outdoor adventure to enhance the educational, social, cultural, and physical well-being of our community members.

500+

Families Participated
in Story Walk®



"I've already put holds on three of the books and can't wait to start reading! I really appreciate you offering this service. Being able to wander around the library, finding hidden gems, is what I miss most about not being able to visit the library. This service is the next best thing."

- ANGELA, LIBRARY PATRON



96

Book Matchmaker
Requests Fulfilled

LIBRARY CATALOG

Behind the scenes last year we were getting ready for a once-in-a-generation migration to a new library catalog. Our goal was to provide our community members with a seamless transition to a new and improved, user-friendly catalog. Typically catalog migrations take between two to three years. We were able to complete the migration in just under a year. We didn't skip a beat making sure our community members found the materials they were looking for, while also providing new opportunities to discover items they didn't know were available or didn't know they wanted.

BOOK MATCHMAKER

We believe in connecting community members with the materials they're seeking to achieve their goals. Often this happens in-person. When the Safer at Home order was enacted and we needed to restrict public access to the building, we brainstormed ways we could continue to connect our community with the materials they were seeking, while also providing a human connection. One of the services that was born from these needs was Book Matchmaker, our book matchmaking service for adults. Over the past year, we have stayed connected to our community and inspired them to continue reading by providing personalized book recommendations.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR ALL

We give our community opportunities for growth, self-instruction and inquiry.



790
Teen Program
Attendance

19,767
Children's Program
Attendance

VIRTUAL CLASSES AND EVENTS

Every year we welcome tens of thousands of patrons into the library for a variety of classes and events. While materials are our bread and butter, our programming is where we add an extra layer of engagement with our community.

With the Safer at Home Order, in-person classes and events came to a pause last March. Within days we were brainstorming ideas to continue providing these important opportunities for human connection. Taking favorites like our storytimes, College and Career Planning for teens, Artist-in-Residence seminars, and book clubs and translating them into virtual offerings.

One area of interest that caught the attention of people nation-wide during the pandemic was genealogy. The pandemic created an environment where people wanted to pursue their family histories. Our local history librarian shifted her popular in-person Find Your Ancestor Series to a virtual offering via Zoom. The shift enabled us to work with genealogy experts that might have been harder to book in-person. In addition, it created our highest participation numbers for the series by providing people across the state access to the events. Over the course of seven sessions we engaged 533 participants - becoming one of our most popular adult services.



11,101

Adult Program Attendance,
up 115%



794

Classes and Events

IMAGINE
FOX
CITIES

“APL is no longer just a place to look up materials, but also a place to fulfill the needs of individuals inside or outside the community, by reaching out and tuning in the patron’s voices, with a SMILE (to put anyone at ease)! I am glad to be part of APL, now and in the future.”

- IDA, LIBRARY VOLUNTEER

Belonging and well-being were also at the top of our minds during this difficult year. Amid the movement for racial equity and social justice, we re-examined how we could be a place that sparks a conversation to support our communities of color. We hosted five Imagine Fox Cities Community Conversations on Race, Racism and Anti-racism between September and October, engaging 100 participants. Participants were thankful that the library was the first to host these conversations publicly, planting the seed for more valuable conversations.

Appleton
Public Library

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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Appleton, WI 54911
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apl.org