

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN.



CALS
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS
LIBRARY
SYSTEM

THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN.

2022 TOUR SCHEDULE

JANUARY: MILLIE BROOKS RECEIVES GRANT from Libraries Transforming Communities

JANUARY 11: CALS receives and distributes COVID-19 tests to patrons

JANUARY 12: CALS brings back streaming service Hoopla

JANUARY 13: In-person programming is temporarily suspended due to COVID surges

JANUARY 18: CALS honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with virtual Racial Healing Program Series

JANUARY 27: Naturally Arkansas webinar series kicks off

FEBRUARY 1-28: Black History Month

FEBRUARY 2: Lynda.com becomes LinkedIn Learning

MARCH 10: Friends of CALS book sale returns after two-year hiatus

MARCH 1-7: Will Eisner Week events

MARCH 1: Ron Robinson Theater reopens to the public after COVID-induced break

MARCH 5: Ron Robinson Theater hosts "An Evening with the Legends of Radio – Live and Unscripted"

MARCH 11: Be Mighty launches a new and improved website

MARCH 16: Six Bridges and WordsWorth Books present Stephen Pastis of *Pearls Before Swine*

MARCH 26: The Rock It! Lab begins hosting the River Shop Pop-up Market

APRIL 1-30: Earth Month

APRIL 1-2: WellRED Comedy trio presents "Out the House" at Ron Robinson Theater

APRIL 7: Screening of *First River: How Arkansas Saved a National Treasure* at Ron Robinson Theater

APRIL 11: CALS is named finalist for 2022 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service

APRIL 17-23: Volunteer Appreciation Week

APRIL 22: CALS introduces the second seed library, housed at Main

APRIL 26: CALS Women's Suffrage Book Club launches

APRIL 30: Arkansas Sounds Presents: Cate Brothers at Ron Robinson Theater

MAY: Digital Literacy Specialists join CALS team

MAY 17: Roberts Library opens the DIY Memory Lab

MAY 17: Butler Center names first Stricklin Fellowship Recipient, Arkansas Tech student Kimberly Green

MAY 24: A millage decrease approved, allowing CALS to refinance bonds to access capital for renovations in 2023

MAY 26: Dr. Imani Perry reads from her book *South to America* at Ron Robinson Theater

MAY 28: Saturdays at the Galleries kicks off

JUNE 4: Summer Reading Club, "Oceans of Possibility," kicks off

JUNE 2: Inaugural class of students graduates from the Rock It! Lab

JUNE 6: Jonathan Martin discusses his book *This Will Not Pass* at Ron Robinson Theater (partnership with Political Animals Club)

JUNE 14: Block party at Williams Library to celebrate the 25th anniversary

JUNE 17: Juneteenth events held

JULY 12: Lawyers in the Library returns

JULY 16: Bobby Rush presents intimate solo concert at Ron Robinson Theater

JULY 27: Backpack Bonanza at Bates Elementary School

JULY 28: Photojournalists Hidalgo and Rivas present virtually in CALS Speakers Series

CALS JOINS THE LIBRARY SPEAKER CONSORTIUM and offers more author talks

AUGUST 18: Six Bridges Book Festival author list released

AUGUST 29: *Imagine Peace* sculpture at Children's Library removed due to decay

AUGUST 29: The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas (EOA) launches redesigned website

SEPTEMBER 1: CALS hosts an event to kick off Hunger Action Month with Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

SEPTEMBER 1-14: 9th Annual Banned Books Writing Contest

SEPTEMBER 14: The 2022 Booker Worthen Literary Prize is presented to Kenneth C. Barnes

SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15: Hispanic Heritage Month events

SEPTEMBER 18-24: Banned Books Week; CALS chooses the book *Melissa* by Alex Gino

OCTOBER 1: CALS adds Kanopy to the streaming services available

OCTOBER 6: The new CALS app launches and offers self-check-out

OCTOBER 8: Rodney Crowell reads from his book *Word for Word* at Ron Robinson Theater

OCTOBER 10: Ron Robinson Theater hosts Little Rock mayoral debate

OCTOBER 20-30: Six Bridges Book Festival

OCTOBER 22: *False Negative: An Evening with John Waters* sells out at Ron Robinson Theater

OCTOBER 20: Oliver Jeffers exhibition *Oliver Jeffers: 15 Years of Picturing Books* calls Children's Library home for the rest of the year

NOVEMBER 1: NANOWRIMO starts, CALS hosts multiple writing sessions throughout the month

NOVEMBER 5-30: CALS joins 45 libraries in hosting a Mister Rogers Neighborhood Sweater Drive with PBS

NOVEMBER 11: Hoopla begins offering MasterClass videos

NOVEMBER 14: "Eclipse Across America" with Dr. Phil Plait at Ron Robinson Theater

NOVEMBER 17: PJ Storytime at Children's Library celebrating the artwork of Oliver Jeffers

NOVEMBER 26: The Rock It! Lab and the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square hold Small Business Saturday sales

DECEMBER 1: Screening of *Johnny Cash: The Redemption of an American Icon* at Ron Robinson Theater

DECEMBER 11-17: Patrons offset fines by donating nonperishable food items

DECEMBER 30: The EOA uploads its 7,000th entry

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Every year when it comes time to wrap up, most businesses look to their board of directors and stockholders to see if they met the expectations set forth for the year. At CALS, we look to our patrons to let us know how we are doing. Based on the numbers and smiling faces on the next pages, I can confidently say that 2022 was a successful year for us.

This year at CALS, we were back to the books, back to the library, and back in action. After the disruptions due to COVID-19, it was so nice to have a full year where things felt like we were finally back to normal (or some version of normal).

We provided access to thousands of books, magazines, and movies; we served almost 50,000 meals to kids through Be Mighty; and we had nearly 15,000 people experience the big screen (and stage) at Ron Robinson Theater through a variety of programs. Our outreach team logged around 2,000 miles while helping almost 3,600 people.

The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas hit 7,000 entries, plus 13,000 photos and other media. As a public library system, we are all about accessibility, making available the information and tools people need to get by and succeed in our world. The EOA web resource is a measure of our ability to achieve that goal. In the past, Arkansas history was a niche subject, but that's no longer the case. The EOA makes Arkansas available to the whole world.

Through the Six Bridges Book Festival, we were able to introduce Little Rock to many nationally and internationally acclaimed authors; our staff, volunteers, and patrons rolled out the red carpet and made them feel welcome as they shared their books and ideas in panel discussions and other events.

We celebrated milestones and anniversaries – and held events that will later become anniversaries! We wrapped up the four-year strategic plan with more goals accomplished than not, and the ones we didn't wrap up are already underway. CALS continues to touch lives in a multitude of ways, reaching far beyond the pages of a book. We continue to be the Library, Rewritten.



CALS executive director Nate Coulter (right) enjoying the Six Bridges Book Festival Rooftop Kickoff Party with former CALS executive director Bobby Roberts.

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BACK TO THE LIBRARY

STEREO

2022 RPM

★ ★ **SIDE 1** ★ ★

Singing a Familiar Chorus
DIY Memory Lab
Be Mighty

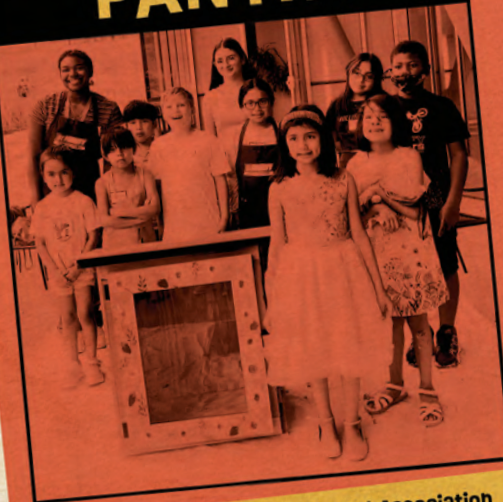
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**NOW PLAYING:
LITTLE FREE
PANTRY**



FORTNITE
WILLIAMS 25TH
JUNE 14 BLOCK PARTY
SUE COWAN WILLIAMS LIBRARY

**FRIENDS OF CALS USED
BOOK SALE IS BACK!**

Forest Park's Student Government Association hosted a Be Mighty food drive in December 2023. The SGA donated over 6,000 items to Be Mighty to go toward the Little Free Pantry program.

Because CALS has branches in all areas of town, it is accessible for people who may have difficulty with transportation. Also, the online presence reaches out to people of all economic and educational levels. The Be Mighty meals as well as the little free pantry enable patrons to maintain dignity while also receiving a much-needed resource in populations where food scarcity is a constant struggle. The garden at the [C]hildren's [L]ibrary sets a good example for patrons and neighbors regarding the adaptability of urban gardening.

Thoma, M.E. (2022). Customer Survey Insights
Central Arkansas Library System



It was nice to sing a familiar chorus. Getting back to the library was a crucial part of 2022, and we found new (and old) ways to bring the public to CALS, including everyone's favorite Friends of CALS Used Book Sale, food-distribution efforts from Be Mighty, help from Lawyers in the Library, and even something as simple as the return of wine and snacks at Second Friday Art Night (2FAN) in the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square. The Roberts Library created the DIY Memory Lab so patrons can digitize their family mementos, we celebrated 25 years at Williams Library, and we dedicated a meeting room in Main to Senator David Pryor. Our branches were bustling with activity.

Grants

The Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock received a \$2.5 million grant from the Small Business Administration to engage in targeted outreach to small businesses in under-served communities. Under the Community Navigator approach, trusted community partners, including CALS, act as "spokes" on a wheel. As a "spoke," **CALS received a \$250,000 grant to support the Rock It! Lab**, our center for entrepreneurs. In 2022, thanks to funding from this grant, the Rock It! Lab was able to host two cohorts of its Business Incubator program.

CALS and the CALS Foundation received more than 20 grants in 2022. Highlights include:

\$293,697 from the Arkansas Department of Health to purchase COVID-19 test kits, host vaccination clinics, and connect library patrons with resources that help mitigate unemployment and loss of health insurance, food insecurity, housing instability, and disruptions in preventive health care services that have occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

\$225,000 from the Windgate Foundation to fund two digital literacy guides, support visual arts programming at all branches, and increase community outreach.

\$150,000 from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund to support the Count UP math tutoring program and other youth programs.

\$90,000 from National Recreation and Parks Association to support Be Mighty Little Rock and Be Mighty METRO.

\$75,000 from the City of Little Rock to support Be Mighty Little Rock.

\$40,000 from the Arkansas LGBTQ+ Advancement Fund to support Teens 4 InQlusion.

\$20,000 from the Sturgis Charitable Trust to support Little Free Pantries and meals for adults distributed through Be Mighty Little Rock.

\$15,000 from the John and Robyn Horn Foundation to support the Six Bridges Book Festival.

In 2022, CALS received other grants from the Arkansas Humanities Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Fred K. Darragh Foundation, Kum & Go, Arkansas Space Grant Consortium, Tyson, Inc., Whole Kids Foundation, National Alliance on Mental Illness Arkansas Chapter, Pride Network, Garver, Entergy Charitable Foundation, and American Library Association. We are grateful for ALL our funders who invest in the public library!

Millage

CALS has a huge plan that has been underway for a while now; in November 2021, we asked for the public to increase our millage rate from 1.3 to 1.8. That was passed with 71%. Then in May 2022, we asked for the public to decrease our capital improvement millage rate to 1.3, making a net zero change to our overall rate. This was also approved. Doing these two moves has helped us access our bond money and allows us to undergo a major renovation at Main Library as well as minor renovations on several other branches.

CALS GENERAL FUND 2022

(Unaudited)

Revenue

Property Taxes	\$21,696,511.00
Capital Bond Property Taxes	\$2,881,992.98
State of Arkansas	\$574,390.00
Fines, Fees, Parking & Rental	\$666,853.00
Friends, CALS Foundation & Other Grant Income	\$1,128,483.00
Other Revenue	\$279,909.00
TOTAL	\$27,228,138.98

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$14,860,993.00
Operating Expenses	\$6,277,665.00
Library Materials	\$2,032,732.00
Capital Expenses	\$719,308.00
2022 Bond Fund Expenses	\$72,474.00
TOTAL	\$23,963,172.00

Be Mighty

Be Mighty is a partnership between CALS and the City of Little Rock aimed at reducing food insecurity citywide, with an emphasis on kids and teens. In 2022, Be Mighty served 49,195 USDA meals for children, with 11 of the 14 branches serving as meal sites. Through grant funding, Be Mighty distributed 1,740 meal backpacks to caregivers and adults. In the summer of 2022, Be Mighty installed seven Little Free Pantries where patrons are encouraged to donate shelf-stable goods and to take what they need. Thanks to a grant from the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, in December 2022, Be Mighty installed a community fridge at the Sidney S. McMath Library. A donation from Raymond James and an ongoing partnership with Potluck Food Rescue ensure the fridge is restocked weekly.

Youth-centered efforts were a primary focus for Be Mighty in the fall of 2022. Rides to Reads was relaunched as Be Mighty Metro and since September, ridership has tripled. The inaugural meeting of the Be Mighty Youth Task Force took place in November. Throughout the year, the task force will participate in service projects and learn skills to combat food insecurity in their communities.

Nutrition education for the whole family remains a priority for Be Mighty. In 2022, the program hosted eight cook-alongs and distributed 149 recipe kits.



Seed Library

The Seed Library is a free program committed to increasing our ability to feed ourselves wholesome food by offering seeds and education. Through the time-honored tradition of seed saving we celebrate biodiversity, nurture locally adapted plant varieties, and foster community resilience, self-reliance, and a culture of sharing. CALS launched the first seed library at McMath Library in July of 2020. In 2022, a second location was added at Main. More than 400 packs of seeds were checked out at both locations; additionally, 500 packs of seeds changed hands at the Spring Seed Swap at McMath.



Gardens at Children's

The Children's Library shared over 1,000 pounds of produce in 2022 and distributed over 700 free plants to patrons for their home gardens, and over 400 plants for other CALS library and community gardens in 2022. Additionally, a total of 97 pounds of honey was harvested from the library bees.



FOOD DRIVES

Forest Park's Student Government Association hosted a Be Mighty food drive in December 2022. The SGA donated over 6,000 items to Be Mighty to go toward the Little Free Pantry program.

UAMS College of Health Professions donated hygiene and food safety products in December 2022.

More Chances Period donates period products and other health products monthly to the Be Mighty Little Free Pantries.

The National League of Charities donated 211 food items, 788 diapers, 2,474 baby wipes, 31 pairs of socks, 999 pads & tampons, and 92 toothbrushes and toothpastes to Be Mighty in November 2022.

During the annual Food for Fines program held December 11-17, patrons were invited to bring non-perishable food items to any CALS library to offset overdue fines on their accounts. In years past, the collected food was given to the Arkansas Foodbank, but this year, it was distributed via CALS's own Little Free Pantries.



Williams 25th

On June 14, the Sue Cowan Williams Library held a block party celebration! This hour-and-a-half-long celebration brought in more than one hundred individuals of all ages from within the Dunbar community and even farther away. The celebration was two-fold: a late birthday party for the branch's namesake and to celebrate 25 years of library service to the community, as this building was opened in March 1997 and became the 10th CALS location.



Book Sale

The Friends of CALS Used Book Sale returned after a pandemic-forced hiatus. Community members spent almost \$60,000 at three sales, held in March, July, and November. (Considering that most books at the sale cost \$1 or \$2, that's a whole lot of books!) Proceeds from the sales supported book club kits, the Six Bridges Book Festival, Summer Reading Club, grants to all CALS branches – and more!



Inclusion at CALS

In the beginning of 2022, CALS launched Teens 4 InQlusion: a community-based GSA (genders and sexualities alliance) focusing on LGBTQ+ teens. Funded by the Arkansas LGBTQ+ Advancement Fund, this program series kicked off in March 2022 with an instantly popular DIY Pronoun Pin program. Following that, LGBTQ+ Teen Programmer Jet Butler brought Teens 4 InQlusion programming across the library system, from Sherwood to Jacksonville and throughout Little Rock!



In 2022, CALS opened the DIY Memory Lab on the 3rd floor of the CALS Roberts Library. The workstation includes a flatbed scanner for digitizing photographs, slides, and other two-dimensional materials as well as equipment to convert VHS, Beta, and audio cassettes from analog to digital. Roberts Library staff created programming to show patrons how to organize their personal archival materials before starting the digitizing process. These programs are available virtually or in-person and have also been recorded. CALS also offers Oral History Toolkits for patrons to record their own oral histories. These toolkits can be borrowed from any CALS branch.



69 appointments Flatbed Scanner
164 hours total usage by patrons
26 hours of VHS tapes digitized
205 patrons attended personal archiving classes

Collaborations

Some collaborations were working with Barbara Pryor to turn a meeting room on the 5th floor of the Main Library into the Senator David Pryor Conference Room, collaborating with manager Audrey Taylor at the Rooker Library to commission the artist Adaja Cooper to create a painting for their YA area, and working with the Clinton Foundation, CALS staff, and the artist to secure the loan of a large outdoor globe sculpture that was moved from the Clinton Presidential Library to the Children's Library.

Naturally Arkansas

Naturalist Lynn Foster moderated a series of virtual programs on environmental issues in Arkansas that ranged from recycling to making yards welcoming for birds and bees to the dark skies movement. More than 600 CALS patrons watched the live virtual programs, and hundreds of others have watched them on the CALS YouTube Channel.



Lawyers in the Library

CALS hosted programs by "the other CALS," Center for Arkansas Legal Services, at the Williams, McMath, and Milam libraries during 2022, culminating in a record-sealing clinic at the Dee Brown Library.



Jonathan Martin

On June 6, CALS partnered with the Political Animals Club and former Clinton School of Public Service dean Skip Rutherford to bring *New York Times* reporter Jonathan Martin to the Ron Robinson Theater to discuss his book *This Will Not Pass: Trump, Biden, and the Battle for America's Future*. CALS Executive Director Nate Coulter moderated the session, which was attended by 204 people; more than 100 others have watched it on the CALS YouTube channel.

PRYOR ROOM DEDICATION

Former U.S. Senator David Pryor (left) is seen with Arkansas State Senator Clarke Tucker during the dedication of the Senator David H. Pryor Conference Room on June 3.



I moved here a year ago from Oklahoma and am very impressed with CALS and all the services it offers. One of the first things I did was to get a library card.

Thoma, M.E. (2022). Customer Survey Insights
Central Arkansas Library System

Extended Hours

In January 2022, evening hours were added across the system, ensuring that at least one branch was open until 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, just in case of a last-minute homework assignment or much-needed DVD checkout and to accommodate patrons with varying work or school schedules.



Back to the Books

STEREO

2022
RPM

SIDE 2

Six Bridges Book Festival
Summer Reading Club
Banned Books!

**THIS YEAR,
CAL S HIT THE
BOOKS. HARD.**

NOW PERFORMING!
mömandpöp



**DRUMMIN' WITH
STEPHIN BOOTH**



**SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL
COMES ROARING BACK!**

11 DAYS OF FUN FOR ALL!
BOOK SIGNINGS! ART EXHIBITIONS! MAGIC!
ROOFTOP PARTY! WORKSHOPS! PUB OR PERISH!



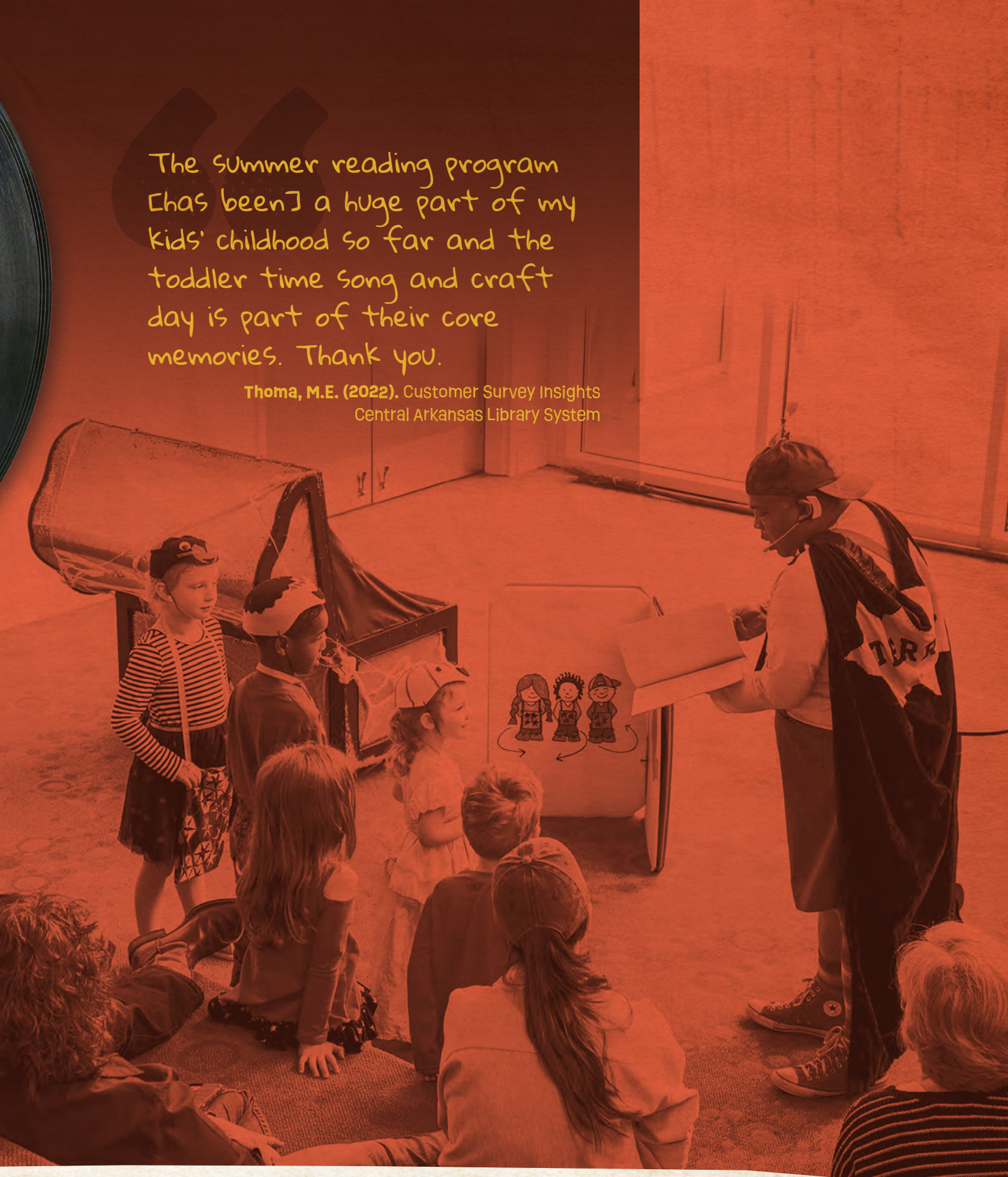
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The summer reading program [has been] a huge part of my kids' childhood so far and the toddler time song and craft day is part of their core memories. Thank you.

Thoma, M.E. (2022). Customer Survey Insights
Central Arkansas Library System



We never really got away from the books; they have been and always will be at the core of everything a library does. But this year, we hit the books. Hard. From a successful Six Bridges Book Festival; to book clubs; to tutoring, banned books, and Summer Reading Club, everyone at CALS had their noses in books, just the way we like it.

Six Bridges Book Festival

After two years of mostly virtual programming, the Fest roared back with an 11-day event, featuring approximately 90 programs. Eighteen were virtual and the rest were in person, with overall engagement of more than 7,500 and counting. (Several Fest sessions and panels were recorded and are posted on the CALS YouTube page, and the art exhibitions were displayed through December.) Fest highlights included John Waters, Ann Patchett, Khentrul Lodrö Thayé, Charly Palmer, Kimberly Wehle, GennaRose Nethercott, Xochitl Gonzales, Sam Quinones, Emma Kennedy, Shilpa Ravella, Jorge L. Contreras, Brandy Colbert, Richard Gallagher, Maud Newton, Vishwesh Bhatt, Geoff Dyer, Ayana Gray, Zain Khalid, Sean Thor Conroe, and many more. Additional fun events included the *Oliver Jeffers: 15 Years of Picturing Books* exhibition, “George Michael Reborn,” the rooftop kick-off party, cooking workshops, a book cover design workshop, Six Bridges Market, Pub or Perish, a pie contest, Little Readers Rock, the Classic in Context discussion, three films, a magic show, a puppet show, and the Writers in the Schools (WITS) program, which reached 13 area schools. Through WITS, the Jeffers programming, and Little Readers Rock, more than 1,000 books were given away. A total of 115 volunteers helped with the event, logging more than 750 hours. In December, several Fest authors’ books could be found on various Best of 2022 lists.

Engaging Speakers All Year

In addition to the annual Six Bridges Book Festival, CALS brings in speakers virtually and in person throughout the year during Six Bridges Presents and the CALS Speaker Series. Speakers included: Brad Taylor, *End of Days*; Chip Taylor, *The Organ Thieves*; Stephan Pastis, *Pearls Before Swine* and *Timmy Failure* series; Sonya Singh, *Sari, Not Sari*; Imani Perry, *South to America* (honoring Maurice Smith); Sloane Crosley, *Cult Classic*; photojournalists Sebastián Hidalgo and Josué Rivas (honoring J.N. Heiskell); and Phong Nguyen, *Bronze Drum*.



Dr. Imani Perry (right) spoke to a crowd at Ron Robinson Theater on May 26. Perry went on to win the National Book Award for *South to America*.





Summer Reading Club

In 2022, our Summer Reading Club celebrated the theme “Oceans of Possibilities,” and our branches embraced this aquatic theme through amazing displays and creative programs and events. With 7,462 registrants this year, we saw a 44% increase in the number of people registering to participate in SRC over 2021. Our branches could host much more in-person programming than they had been able to do for the past couple of summers, and patrons and staff alike were thrilled to return to our more usual summer routine. We hosted performers and presenters such as magicians Tommy Terrific and Scott Davis; musical acts the Kinders, mömandpöp, and drummer Stephin Booth; and puppet shows by Bloomin’ Puppets.



Count UP

Count UP served over 100 students this year with over 2,500 hours of instruction. We doubled the number of paid tutors from two to four in October, and several new and returning volunteers made up the rest of our wonderful team. The program operates with the assistance of ESSER III Grant funds, and we’ve also been able to start purchasing math manipulatives to build up a resource library for our tutors and students thanks to the generosity of the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium and a GarverGives grant.



Arkansas Out of School Network

In 2022, through ESSER III Grant funding from the Arkansas Out of School Network, we hosted several day-long learning camps for youth, including five-day Spring Break camps at four library locations on topics such as art and puppetry, STEM, gardening and nutrition, and entrepreneurship. The funding also allowed us to host several series of after-school classes at many of our branches. Through this program, our young patrons have been able to have classes on cooking, yoga, fitness, art, photography, STEM, and more!



I'm a DAV. I'm mostly homebound. Reading has been an important part of my life. I appreciate the fact that you offer online checkouts. It's a blessing to me and I'm sure many others who are homebound. Thanks.

Thoma, M.E. (2022). Customer Survey Insights
Central Arkansas Library System

The Library Online

Behind the scenes, the CALS website was undergoing some changes almost the entire year, mostly relating to “the catalog,” the system that CALS uses to search for available media; since 2015, BiblioCommons was the catalog we used. In February 2022, a beta version of Vega Discover was launched, and patrons were invited to try it out and let us know what they thought. In September, Discover became the only catalog available. By the end of the year, however, CALS had decided to return to BiblioCommons, as Vega was not far enough along in its development to give staff and patrons what they needed.

When the millage rate was increased in 2021, CALS promised several things, one of which was bringing back the popular app Hoopla. Hoopla is a streaming service that offers movies, TV shows, and graphic novels, and it returned to CALS patrons in January 2022. In October, Kanopy was added to the offerings as well, giving patrons access to thoughtful and thought-provoking films.

Library Speaker Consortium

CALS joined the Library Speaker Consortium, a network of more than 400 libraries large and small across the country that pool their funds to finance virtual appearances by award-winning authors who would often be beyond the budget of most libraries. In 2022, the consortium provided appearances by 19 authors that were viewed by 1,867 CALS patrons.

Banned Books Week

Banned Books Week focused on *Melissa*. The week included a riveting hybrid discussion with author Alex Gino and Dr. LuAnn Racher from UAMS, screenings of *Transhood* and *Charlotte's Web*, a Gender Euphoria workshop, a readathon of *Melissa*, and CALS's most popular Banned Books Week writing contest yet. The Crazy Free Books program gave away 100 total copies of *Melissa* and *Charlotte's Web*.

Women's Suffrage Book Club

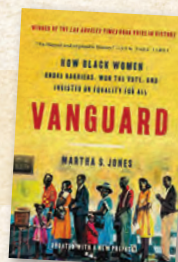
Between April and August 2022, the CALS Roberts Library hosted a monthly book club discussion on women's suffrage. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through a

grant from the American Library Association, the book club was held virtually via Zoom and participants explored four nonfiction and one fiction title related to women's voting rights as well as a monthly presentation by a local women's history scholar.



The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote, Elaine Weiss, with scholar Stephanie Haught Wade, Historic Arkansas Museum

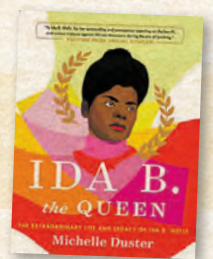
Women Making History: The 19th Amendment, with scholar Kelly Houston Jones, Arkansas Tech University



Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All, Martha S. Jones, with scholar Courtney Bradford, Mosaic Templars Cultural Center



Ida B. the Queen, Michelle Duster, with scholar Cherisse Jones-Branch, Arkansas State University



The Once and Future Witches, Alix E. Harrow, with scholar Wendy Lucas, University of Central Arkansas

Encyclopedia of Arkansas

The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas—a free, authoritative online source of information about the rich history, geography, and culture of Arkansas—began a new phase of its life with a website redesign that improved the user experience for students, researchers, and the general public. Launched in 2006 with 700 entries and 900 pieces of media, at the end of 2022, the EOA included 7,000 entries and 13,000 pieces of media. The site had 1.6 million users with 3.3 million page views for the year.

The redesign upgraded the look and functionality of the site, improving the search function, media appearance, and homepage. The site also became more accessible for those with visual impairments and for non-English speakers. In addition, an updated comments feature was included, by which users can submit their own thoughts and experiences to be posted with entries. Staff have also been going back to older entries to do extensive updates and revisions, most notably on the seventy-five county entries.

The projects undertaken in 2022 were funded in part by a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan grant award designed to stabilize cultural institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and funds from the Dolores Bruce Endowment from the Arkansas Community Foundation.

Butler Center

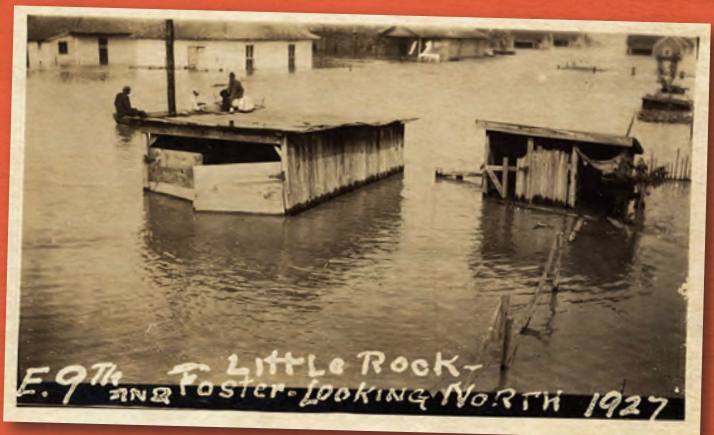
The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in the CALS Roberts Library continues to make great progress in processing and digitizing its collections and making them available online—with new material added almost daily. Nearly 3,000 photographs and over 30,000 pages of material were added to the online catalog in 2022, including a German-language newspaper published in Little Rock, dozens of catalogs from Vestal's Nursery, and several photograph albums. Over 100 yearbooks from local high schools were digitized, and over 130 AV recordings were added, including twenty audio tapes of oral histories related to Little Rock newspaper publisher and civil rights activist Daisy Bates. Butler Center staff also created three new online exhibits, including one on the historic 1927 Flood, using historical photographs and materials coupled with Google Street View technology.

Butler Center digitized material was viewed 371,769 times, and its manuscript items in the Roberts Library Research Room were accessed 9,636 times.

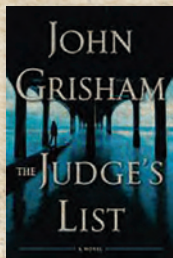
1927 Flood

The 1927 Flood was one of the largest natural disasters to impact Arkansas. Large swaths of the state were inundated. The eastern half of the state was most affected by the flood, but the devastation stretched to the state's western border. Over 2,000,000 acres of farmland were flooded, and more than 100 people died; thousands of Arkansans became refugees while fleeing the rising water. The economic costs for the state were staggering. The flood had a profound impact on how Arkansans viewed their government, and the resulting political and social changes altered the state's history. The CALS Butler Center's new interactive web exhibit allows patrons to see and hear how this event affected Arkansas.

View at: <https://robertslibrary.org/1927flood>

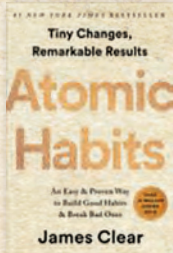


Greatest Hits of 2022



Top 5 Adult Fiction Print Titles

The Judge's List, John Grisham
Run, Rose, Run,
Dolly Parton and James Patterson
Sparring Partners, John Grisham
Verity, Colleen Hoover
It Ends With Us, Colleen Hoover



Top 5 Adult Nonfiction Print Titles

Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones, James Clear
I'm Glad My Mom Died, Jennette McCurdy
Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection & the Language of Human Experience, Brené Brown
The Defense Lawyer: The Barry Slotnick Story, James Patterson
The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story, Nikole Hannah-Jones



Top 5 Adult eBook Titles

The Last Thing He Told Me, Laura Dave
Verity, Colleen Hoover
The Judge's List, John Grisham
The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo: A Novel, Taylor Jenkins Reid
It Ends With Us: A Novel, Colleen Hoover



Top 5 Adult Audio Book Titles

The Last Thing He Told Me, Laura Dave
Where the Crawdads Sing, Delia Owens
The Silent Patient, Alex Michaelides
Pride and Prejudice, (unabridged), Jane Austen
The Judge's List: A Novel, (unabridged), John Grisham



Top 5 Adult DVD Titles

Spider-Man: No Way Home
Dune (2021 version)
The Batman
No Time To Die
Ghostbusters: Afterlife



Top 5 Adult Graphic Novel Titles

Attack on Titan, Hajime Isayama
Maus: a Survivor's Tale, Art Spiegelman
One-Punch Man, ONE
Invincible : Ultimate Collection, Robert Kirkman
Paper Girls, Brian K. Vaughan



Top 5 Young Adult Fiction Titles

A Court of Thorns and Roses, Sarah J. Maas
The Summer I Turned Pretty, Jenny Han
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder, Holly Jackson
The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins
The Ballad Of Songbirds and Snakes, Suzanne Collins



Top 5 Juvenile Fiction Titles

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Greg Heffley's Journal, Jeff Kinney
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Jeff Kinney
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, Jeff Kinney
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul, Jeff Kinney
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel, Jeff Kinney

CIRCULATION



2,230,803
TOTAL
CIRCULATION



862,307

TOTAL DIGITAL
CIRCULATION



375,416

eBooks
Comics



311,603

Audiobooks



561/1,600
Video Licenses
Videos Watched



144,346

Songs



245

Albums



28,536

Magazines



1,368,496

TOTAL PHYSICAL
CIRCULATION



1,035,589

Books



292,439

DVDs



10,480

Music CDs



15,329

Books on CD



7,570

MOBIUS/
Interlibrary Loan/
Mockingbird



7,089

Library
of Things*

*Includes Puzzles, Tools, Telescopes, Hotspots/Chromebooks, Hotspot Kits, Fishing Poles, Birdwatching Kits, Toys



199,171

TOTAL LIBRARY CARD
HOLDERS AT CALS



12,787
Library Cards
Issued in 2022

55,351
Tech Cards



4,655,918

ELECTRONIC
RESOURCES/WIFI



573,463
Wifi Sessions



1,287,381
Website Visits



2,047,934
EOA Visits



375,371

Research Database Visits



371,769

Butler Center Digital Files



6,391

TOTAL #
PROGRAMS

185,409

**ATTENDANCE/VIEWS/
KITS DISTRIBUTED**
FOR ALL PROGRAMS



Programming # Programs

In-Person	4,166
Live Virtual	532
Recorded	76
Passive	546
Grab & Go Kits	1,071



**Attendance/Views/
Kits Distributed**

104,256
8,055
12,664
17,568
42,866



Miscellaneous

Reference Questions/ Instructional Help	169,173
All Other Staff Assistance Excluding Notary	70,134
Notary	17,609
Faxes	11,681
Computer Uses (desktop/laptop/ tablets/DVD players)	125,104



BACK IN ACTION

2022
RPM

STEREO

SIDE 2

CALS is Rocking & Rolling!
Happening in the Streets
Rock It! Lab

CALS IS ROCKIN' AND ROLLIN'!

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY



CALS BRINGS ART TO THE COMMUNITY

LOCAL ARTISTS! EXHIBITIONS!



THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN.



CENTRAL
ARKANSAS
LIBRARY
SYSTEM

My family loves the library. It has been a tremendous resource and support for our family, especially since having children. We use the library weekly and some weeks, daily. The staff is amazing, the resources and support are amazing, and it's inspiring to me personally that the library remains such a vital resource for all people and all the communities throughout the city. Thank you, CALS!

Thoma, M.E. (2022). Customer Survey Insights
Central Arkansas Library System



Whether that action was on the big screen or happening in the streets with our Outreach Team, CALS was rocking and rolling! The Ron Robinson Theater reopened in March and hit the ground running, hosting CALS programming as well as many non-CALS events. The Rock It! Lab took on their second group of entrepreneurs, volunteers clocked some serious hours, and CALS hosted a variety of amazing art exhibitions.

Digital Literacy

In May, CALS added two Digital Literacy Guides to the Digital Literacy Team with funds provided through a grant from the Windgate Foundation. They are each based out of different branches but visit many branches across the system. They are available for one-on-one tech counseling as well as teaching classes, ensuring that no patron is left behind as the library moves further and further into technology-based offerings. In 2022, they served over 1,000 people.

Rock It! Lab

While 2021 was a year of grand openings and laying foundations, 2022 was about the people. The River Shop was full of new vendors and graduates of the program. The inaugural class that began in November 2021 graduated in June 2022. After the graduation ceremony, the winner of the Demo Day contest was announced. Demo Day is a pitch project where the graduates all pitched their business ideas to a panel of judges. One stood out above the others, despite the lack of a formal PowerPoint presentation, and the judges were overcome by Hezekiah Pierce and his company, Hezekiah Lawn Care, LLC, and the passion he had for it. It was then announced that a zero-turn lawnmower, trimmer, blower, and trailer had been purchased for Pierce's business.



Ron Robinson Theater

In March, public events returned to the Ron Robinson Theater and throughout the season, it saw major acts including Bobby Rush, Rodney Crowell, and the Cate Brothers grace the stage as well as



welcomed over 15,000 people through the doors for events.

The popular Terror Tuesday series (while normally a summer series, a "we're back!" exception was made) kicked off events at RRT. In April, the WellRed Comedy tour made a stop at RRT and became one of the highest grossing and most popular events of the year. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* returned and was established as a monthly showing. Historically, this is also one of the most popular (highest attendance) events at RRT. The event has been expanded to include a pre-show, with fun events, trivia, costume contest, and more.

We are also host for the Made in Arkansas Film Festival, which is a great partnership for CALS. The focus is on Arkansas and regional films and the people who make them.

Ozark Society

In a new partnership, CALS worked with the Ozark Society to sponsor a viewing of a new documentary on the Buffalo River and a lecture by Arlette Laan, who is the only woman who has hiked the entire length of all 11 National Scenic Trails, more than 17,000 miles. Both events were held at the Ron Robinson Theater.

Johnny Cash

On December 1, CALS joined Arkansas State University Heritage Sites to host the world premiere of a new documentary, *Johnny Cash: Redemption of an American Idol*, at the Ron Robinson Theater. ASU's Heritage Sites include the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home at Dyess in Mississippi County.



MAYORAL DEBATE

On October 10, CALS, KUAR, and the League of Women Voters of Pulaski County hosted a debate for the four candidates running for Little Rock mayor. Two hundred people attended the event at the Ron Robinson Theater while 292 watched via livestream. More than 2,800 additional people have viewed the debate on the CALS YouTube channel.

Outreach

The Outreach Team worked hard year-round with events that varied as greatly as our patrons. Hispanic-focused outreach events reached more than 3,600 individuals. Programs included bringing in a Spanish-speaking tax consultant, facilitating a Spanish book club, and offering presentations from Ballet Folklórico Quetzalli. “Breakfast and Libros” at Dee Brown Library and “Dia de Ninos” at Children’s Library were both at capacity, with 40 children participating in each event. In May, bilingual yoga brought patrons to the Library Square rooftop parking deck for mind and body relaxation. Hispanic Heritage Month garnered a multitude of well-attended events, followed by a successful partnership with the Mexican Consulate for a Dia de Muertos celebration that took over the alleyway by the Ron Robinson Theater.

Butler Center/Roberts Library community outreach archivist Danielle Afsordeh worked to reach underrepresented communities to build trust for libraries as a whole and CALS specifically. Through outreach in 2022, the Butler Center built connections in the LGBTQ+ community; the Hispanic and Latinx communities; the Polish community in Marche, Arkansas; and the historically Black communities of Little Rock.

Five new collections were acquired that help diversify representation in Butler Center collections, and a Zine collection was created to help document subculture movements in Little Rock. Additionally, two oral history projects were launched to document Hispanic heritage and Drag culture in Arkansas. Afsordeh conducted programs in CALS branches and virtually, covering historic property research and historical topics to increase visibility and use of the Butler Center’s collections and to encourage robust collaboration between the Butler Center and CALS branches.

Programming attendees: 97

Outreach contacts: 465

Sanders Reaches Out to Gravel Ridge

Sanders Library manager Ginann Swindle has been eager to work with the Gravel Ridge community for some time now. After winning Sherwood Woman of the Year, she found the opportunity through community member Shena Maxwell. Shena expressed an interest in creating a community garden. The Sanders Library bought some plants, seeds, and dirt, and provided muscle. Patrice O’Donoghue, the teaching garden coordinator at Children’s Library, pitched in with more plants and seeds. The garden beds are now built, the garden has big barrels to catch rainwater, and the Fire Department has graciously offered to keep the beds watered. The Sanders team will also be taking over a small pop-up library on the Cato Elementary school property, near the new community garden. Ginann is excited to continue working with this community and has big plans in the works for next year.



CALS Art Program

The year 2022 was a busy one for the CALS Art Program supporting local artists with the help of CALS departments and other organizations to bring art to the community. Thanks to a grant from the Windgate Foundation, CALS spent more than \$50,000 providing art programs to patrons of all ages system-wide.

CALS art administrator Colin Thompson hosted ten exhibitions of contemporary artwork in the galleries in the Roberts Library, and ten new artworks in a variety of media and styles were added to the CALS Art Collection. In collaboration with Brad Mooy, as part of the



Garbo Hearne (back left) and Rep. Denise Jones Ennett look on as artist Wade Hampton unveils his oil painting, "Scipio Africanus Jones, Moore vs. Dempsey," at the Scipio A. Jones Post Office on February 24.

Six Bridges Book Festival, Thompson installed an exhibition of artwork by noted illustrator Oliver Jeffers at the Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library & Learning Center. An exhibition of photographs of Little Rock's Historic Ninth Street was also displayed in the mezzanine

gallery at the Ron Robinson Theater in collaboration with the Butler Center's Lost West Ninth Street digital project.

Outside the CALS footprint, Thompson worked with John Gill, Garbo Hearne of Hearne Fine Arts, and others to plan the creation and installation of a larger-than-life-sized portrait of renowned Black attorney Scipio Africanus Jones in the Scipio Jones Post Office on Little Rock's Main Street. This painting is now part of the CALS Art Collection.



Photo: Michael Hibblen, KUAR News

STEPHAN PASTIS

Cartoonist Stephan Pastis, whose *Pearls Before Swine* appears daily in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, spoke to a sold-out audience in the Ron Robinson Theater on March 16, sharing stories about his comic strip and his inspiration from *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz.

Galleries & Bookstore

Steady growth continued in 2022 for the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square, which increased its capacity to display Arkansas art and went from representing 57 artists in 2021 to 75 artists in 2022. The area dedicated to local authors increased in 2022, with Janis F. Kearney (a 2022 Six Bridges Book Festival author) as the highest seller. A new venture, Saturdays at the Galleries, was added; every Saturday in the summer, artists and makers came in at their own expense for three hours, providing demonstrations and education about their craft.



2nd Friday Art Night (2FAN) was finally able to start up again and continue each month without interruption, allowing visitors to visit with artists and purchase their work, listen to live music, and meet authors, getting a chance to learn more about their writing processes and to purchase signed copies of their books. With COVID restrictions lifting, we were also finally able to start going back out into the community to promote the library. In 2022, we attended Hillcrest HarvestFest, Central Arkansas Pride Fest, and several events at the Ron Robinson Theater and around the CALS system, plus the Argenta Reading Series. With the planned renovations to Main in the coming year, it was decided that the Galleries & Bookstore would close, with the space being used as a temporary library for Main patrons. CALS will revisit the idea of a retail space after the renovations are complete.

Volunteers

At the time of publication, there were 964 total volunteers on file at CALS. In 2022, we had 818 volunteers donate 15,870 hours, for a cost savings of \$475,292 to the library.

Many of the outreach opportunities were in partnership with other organizations or citywide programs, and volunteers came back in force to work at the three used book sales and the Six Bridges Book Festival.

Volunteers as young as 14 years old provided service at our branch locations, and volunteers 16 and older provided support at branches and for special events and programs, such as outreach activities, Be Mighty Little Rock, Summer Reading Club, Count UP, Galleries & Bookstore, Ron Robinson Theater, Roberts Library lobby desk, EOA, and the Butler Center.

THE CREW

Executive Team

Nate Coulter, *Executive Director*

Lisa Donovan, *Deputy Executive Director of Library Operations and Director of Literacy & Learning*

Jo Spencer, *Deputy Executive Director of Finance*

Eliza Borné, *Director of Development*

Lance Ivy, *Director of Operations*

Tameka Lee, *Director of Communications*

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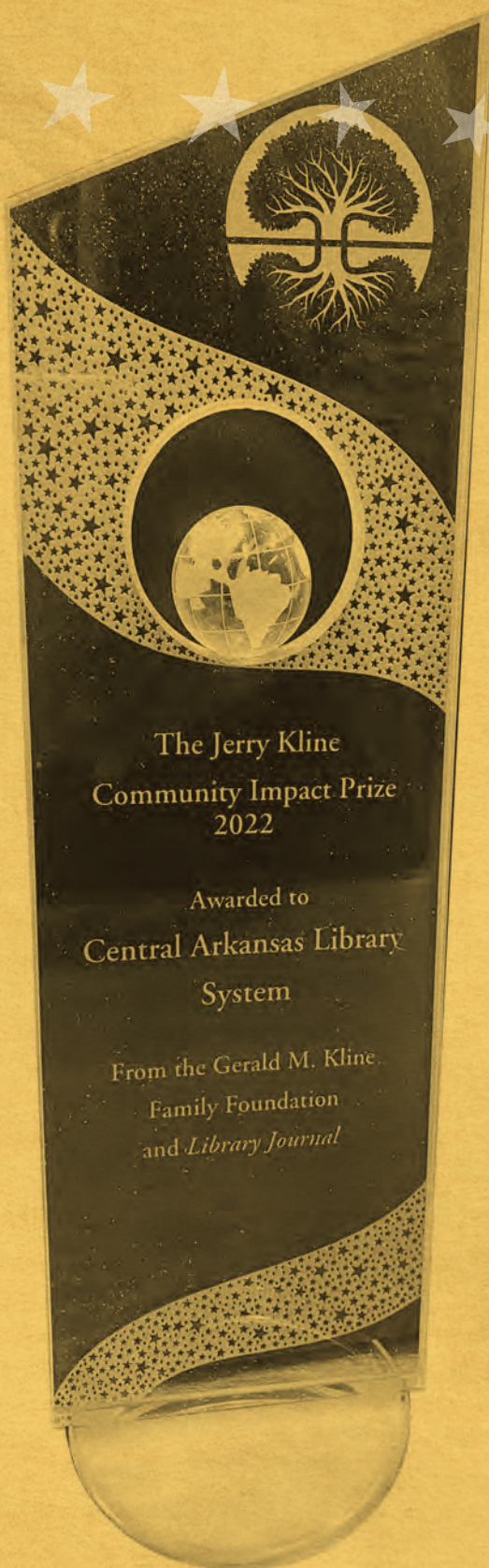
Roadies

ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

Kelli Marks, *Writer*

Robin Stauffer, *Graphic Designer*

Ali Welky, *Editor*



THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN.

TOUR STOPS

LIBRARY SQUARE

100 Rock Street | Little Rock | 72201

Main Library

(501) 918-3000
Mon-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM

Ron Robinson Theater

Call for availability | (501) 320-5748

Rock It! Lab

(501) 320-5748
501 Makers & The Village | Mon-Fri | 9 AM-6 PM
The River Shop | Sat | 10 AM-4 PM

Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art

Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
Roberts Library Research Room | (501) 320-5700
Tue-Fri | 10 AM-5 PM | Sat | 12-4 PM

The Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square

(inside Roberts Library)
(501) 320-5790
Tue-Sat | 10 AM-5 PM

CALS BRANCHES

Millie M. Brooks MicroLibrary

13024 Highway 365 South
Wrightsville | 72183 | (501) 537-3186
Tue/Thu | 9 AM-4:30 PM | Wed | 11:30 AM-4:30 PM

Dee Brown Library

6325 Baseline Road
Little Rock | 72209 | (501) 568-7494
Mon | 9 AM-8 PM | Tue-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Sun | 1-5 PM

Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library & Learning Center

4800 West 10th Street
Little Rock | 72204 | (501) 978-3870
Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Thu | 9 AM-8 PM

John Gould Fletcher Library

823 North Buchanan Street
Little Rock | 72205 | (501) 663-5457
Mon/Wed | 9 AM-8 PM | Tue/Thu/Fri/Sat | 9 AM-6 PM

Maumelle Library

10 Lake Pointe Drive
Maumelle | 72113 | (501) 851-2551
Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Thu | 9 AM-8 PM

Sidney S. McMath Library

2100 John Barrow Road
Little Rock | 72204 | (501) 225-0066
Mon | 9 AM-8 PM | Tue-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Sun | 1-5 PM

Max Milam Library

609 Aplin Avenue
Perryville | 72126 | (501) 889-2554
Mon/Wed-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Tue | 9 AM-8 PM

Esther Dewitt Nixon Library

703 West Main Street
Jacksonville | 72076 | (501) 457-5038
Mon/Wed-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Tue | 9 AM-8 PM

Oley E. Rooker Library

11 Otter Creek Court
Little Rock | 72210 | (501) 907-5991
Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Thu | 9 AM-8 PM

Amy Sanders Library

10200 Johnson Drive
Sherwood | 72120 | (501) 835-7756
Mon | 9 AM-8 PM | Tue-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Sun | 1-5 PM

Adolphine Fletcher Terry Library

2015 Napa Valley Drive
Little Rock | 72212 | (501) 228-0129
Mon | 9 AM-8 PM | Tue-Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Sun | 1-5 PM

Roosevelt Thompson Library

38 Rahling Circle
Little Rock | 72223 | (501) 821-3060
Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Tue/Thu | 9 AM-8 PM

Sue Cowan Williams Library

1800 Chester Street
Little Rock | 72206 | (501) 376-4282
Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat | 9 AM-6 PM | Tue/Thu | 9 AM-8 PM

CALS.ORG | 501.918.3000

THE LIBRARY, REWRITTEN

**C
A
L
S** CENTRAL
ARKANSAS
LIBRARY
SYSTEM