

# Cambridge Public Library IDEA|EXCHANGE®



**2024 COMMUNITY REPORT**



# FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Inspire, Connect, Empower: we hope that as you read this report, you are filled with the same sense of delight and pride as we enjoyed in supporting our staff to deliver exceptional service and experiences to the Cambridge community.

We are moving forward with greater clarity and understanding of who we are and what we do as we reestablish our brand as Cambridge Public Library. Our gratitude extends to everyone who participated in the library's first-ever Strategic Plan Community Survey, where we heard loud and clear from you, our community, regarding our former name. Alongside the change in name, we were delighted to announce and share our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The plan will guide Cambridge Public Library's development, direction, and focus over the next several years. Our **Year One** accomplishments are highlighted within these pages.



Cambridge Art Galleries continues to flourish, delivering exhibitions that provide members with access to fibre arts experiences through its signature event, Fibreworks, that celebrated its 20th Anniversary.

Cambridge Public Library continues to partner with hundreds of organizations across the city and the region, to ensure that we grow with you. We are committed to positioning ourselves (and what we do best) by harnessing community talent and working with subject matter experts to address barriers to services.

We also made improvements to our service delivery models and physical spaces. Most importantly, our new Southeast Galt location within the new Cambridge Recreation Complex broke ground in October; we look forward to this important, collaborative community project moving forward to completion in 2026.

Thank you to all of you who visited, volunteered, and supported Cambridge Public Library in 2024.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Colleen Bulla

Kirk Oliver

Helen Shwery

Yasmine Kashefi

Robert Oswald

Sarah Wilbur-Collins

Jose de Lima

Thomas Sandor

Janice Woynarski

# 2024 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN: YEAR ONE

It's clear to us that we're just getting started! Year One of our current strategic plan was a resounding success; here are a few ways that staff took action to deliver on our key strategic priorities.



## INSPIRE THROUGH EXPERIENCES

**Creating opportunities to explore and learn together.**

- Launched a user-friendly mobile app to make our collections more accessible.
- Implemented recommendations from the 2023 Multi-Sensory Room project to create scaled versions for our other locations across the city.
- Developed a Programmer Training Guide to enhance member experience.
- Conducted location aesthetic assessments and signage audits to improve facility usability.



## CONNECT THROUGH COMMUNITY

**Inviting people and partners to create positive change.**

- Assessed our Community Desk program to expand partners and hours of service across all locations.
- Sharing our story: our multi-year action to re-establishing our identity as Cambridge Public Library.
- Began examination of our volunteer program to expand opportunities for community members to participate in meaningful ways.



## EMPOWER THROUGH LEARNING

**Embracing knowledge that inspires people to unlock their potential.**

- Developed guiding principles and best practices for land acknowledgement statements at the library.
- Hosted a living library event to foster rich and rewarding conversations among community members.
- Expanded and promoted use of various spaces for additional study rooms.
- Held an all staff professional development day of learning to better meet the needs of our community.

# BORROWING AND MEMBERSHIP



52,968 ACTIVE  
CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC  
LIBRARY MEMBERSHIPS



8,267 NEW MEMBERSHIPS  
(MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND  
ONLINE MEMBERSHIPS), AN  
INCREASE OF 5% OVER 2023



899,696 TOTAL MATERIAL  
CHECKOUTS (INCREASE OF 5%)  
WITH 271,647 CHECKOUTS  
FROM THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY  
(INCREASE OF 12%)



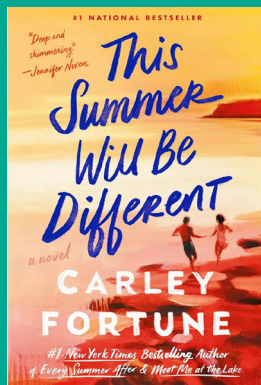
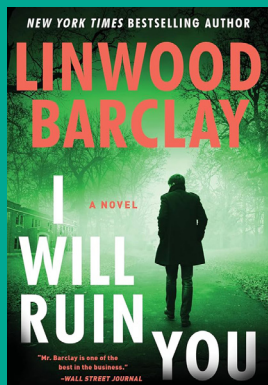
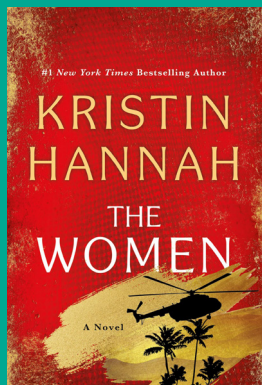
## VIRTUAL LIBRARY

In 2024, Cambridge Public Library offered several new and exciting online resources through the Virtual Library. **Creativebug** inspires the makers, creators, and crafters in our community with online lessons on how to paint, knit, sew, and crochet, and more. **Transparent Language** helped many members learn a new language, from English or French to American Sign Language and hundreds more. The Virtual Library provides members with access to online learning, magazines, newspapers, eBooks, and eAudiobooks at any time and from anywhere.

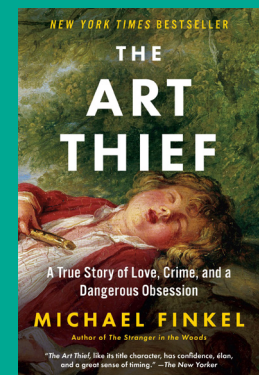
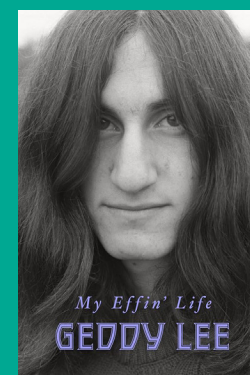
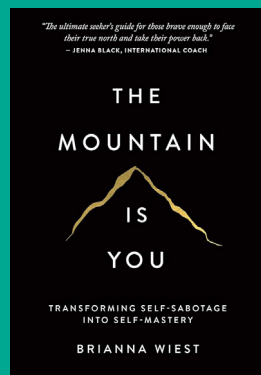
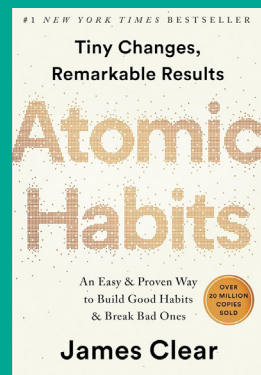
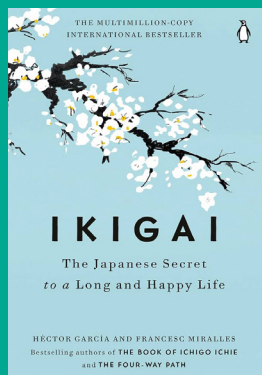


# 2024 TOP BORROWS

## TOP FICTION BOOKS BORROWED IN 2024



## TOP NON-FICTION BOOKS BORROWED IN 2024



## TOP UNUSUAL THINGS BORROWED IN 2024

1. Museums and Parks Passes (various selection)
2. Garden Tools
3. STEAMboxes (various themes)
4. Nintendo Switch and Nintendo Switch Lite
5. Bird Watching Kit



# EXCITING NEW PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

## CAMBRIDGE ART GALLERIES

In 2024, Cambridge Art Galleries' studio education programs continued to bring people together, build friendships, and create spaces for personal and collective growth through a variety of program offerings such as Art + Wellness, Bad Art Nights, and Queer Craft Circle. In connection with the year's exhibitions, special events were also held to open discussion and highlight the unique themes of each show.

**115 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND 10 SPECIAL EVENTS WERE HOSTED BY CAMBRIDGE ART GALLERIES IN 2024**

**4,862 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH 798 ATTENDEES AT SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2024**



## FOR ADULTS

This year, Cambridge Public Library delivered outstanding programming and events for our community. Connections 50+, an older adult-focused series, expanded from Queen's Square to Hespeler, giving participants a chance to come together while enjoying concerts, presentations, and more. From a special Planting Day Extravaganza and Harvest Day at Preston, to the Human Library event, Life's a Story at Queen's Square and Hespeler, the year was filled with interactive events and interesting discussions. The year also featured an Indigenous poetry event, NFB film screenings, the Time of Remembrance series, speakers and authors sharing current issues and hot topics, maker programs, performances by local musicians, and more! The goal of these programs and events was to remove barriers while creating connections and spaces for belonging.

**1,086 ADULT PROGRAMS (SPECIAL EVENTS, BOOK CLUBS, LECTURES, CONCERTS, AND MORE) WERE PRESENTED TO THE COMMUNITY IN 2024**

**20,355 ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN ADULT PROGRAMS IN 2024. AN INCREASE OF 41%**







## FOR KIDS

This year, the libraries were a vibrant space for children, youth, and families, offering engaging programs and expanding the collections. March Break was the busiest ever, with **12,636 attendees** enjoying hands-on activities, entertainers, and art experiences. There was also a 55% increase in Summer Reading Club registrations, with **12,439 visits** to Summer Reading Club desks. Responding to Ontario curriculum changes, the Decodable Book collection was expanded, supported by the IDAO Library Project Grant. The Youth Advisory Committee returned this year after a short hiatus, engaging **7,391 teens** through exciting programs such as Nerf nights, murder mystery evenings, and trivia events. 2024 was truly a year of growth, learning, and community connection for Youth Services.

**104,482** TEENS, CHILDREN, AND CAREGIVERS ATTENDED YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMS IN 2024

**9,984** CHILDREN ATTENDED SCHOOL TOURS AND OUTREACH EVENTS, A 4% INCREASE OVER 2023





## YOUR TECH SPOT

We offer our members and community many services including Wi-Fi, public computers, study spaces, 3D printers, and much, much, more!

**179,038** WI-FI SESSIONS IN 2024, AN INCREASE OF 152% FROM 2023

**26,223** SESSIONS ON PUBLIC COMPUTERS ACROSS ALL LOCATIONS



In July 2024, Cambridge Public Library was excited to launch a new library app so members can check out their library on the go. The app is easy to use with great features: store your digital membership card on your device, add multiple cards for family members, or scan an ISBN to discover if the library has the title you are searching for.

**5,094 members** downloaded and used the app in the first six months.

Cambridge Public Library also expanded the lending laptops to include all five locations for on-site use. Members can check one out and sit at a study table or comfortable seating as they do their work. A second laser cutter machine was added to the Old Post Office Makerspace to help meet demand for use in our community.

**9,306** MAKERSPACE AND CREATIVE STUDIOS EQUIPMENT USE SESSIONS IN 2024, AN INCREASE OF 35%







# PART OF THE COMMUNITY

## VOLUNTEERS

**263 VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED 6,052 HOURS TO CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN 2024**

We can't thank our volunteers enough for their continued dedication and support in bringing our mission to life. Sharing their skills, expertise, time, and energy with the library, gallery, and their community allows us to extend services, resources, and learning even further.

“ I have really enjoyed volunteering at the Cambridge Public Library. They have a wide variety of fun and engaging opportunities to participate in. Through this organization, I feel like I've really made a difference in my community.”

**Kaitlynn a Teen Volunteer Team Member**

## COMMUNITY DESKS

This year, guided by the goals of the Strategic Plan, Cambridge Public Library expanded the Community Desk program, bringing more local not-for-profit organizations into libraries to connect with community members and share more information about the services and programs available to Cambridge. Focusing on meeting the needs of the community, the Community Desk program expanded from the YMCA Immigrant and Employment Services Library Settlement Partnership program to also feature the John Howard Society's Cambridge Career Connections, Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, and Kinbridge's Newcomer Employment Outreach. By supporting non-profits with space to connect with the community and share their resources, the library becomes the place our community visits to find the connections they seek.

# CAMBRIDGE ART GALLERIES

This past year, Cambridge Art Galleries proudly and intentionally deepened its connection to the community through bold exhibitions, innovative education programs, and new partnerships with organizations aligned with our values. Together, we sparked conversations about belonging and mental well-being, and embodied creative expression.

QUEEN'S SQUARE GALLERY AND PRESTON GALLERY EXHIBITIONS: 7

SATELLITE EXHIBITIONS: 7

EXHIBITION TAKE AND MAKE KITS GIVEN: 1,737

NUMBER OF ARTISTS EXHIBITED: 41

NUMBER OF LOCAL / REGIONAL ARTISTS: 17

## HIGHLIGHTS

- This year the galleries piloted the first community juried exhibition, **Belonging**. There was an overwhelming response to the call and it was thrilling to showcase the immense talent of local makers and the powerful visual stories of connection, disconnection, and finding community.
- Cambridge Art Galleries celebrated 20 years of **Fibreworks**, a biannual juried exhibition of fibre-based artworks. Through this exhibition anniversary, the permanent collection grew with the addition of Olivia Mae Sinclair's **It Takes Two**. This special acquisition, selected by jury, not only celebrated 20 years of **Fibreworks**, it also honoured former gallery director, Mary Misner and her 27 years of dedicated service.



**Photo Credit:** Right: Chrissy Hodgins, CEO, Cambridge Public Library; Thomas Sandor, Board Chair, Cambridge Public Library; Alix Voz, Director & Curator, Cambridge Art Galleries; Mary Misner, former Director, Cambridge Art Galleries; and Olivia Mae Sinclair, Artist, at Next In Fibre: 20th Anniversary of Fibreworks celebration.

Thank you to  
our funders:



Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario





## OUR MISSION

**Cambridge Public Library** supports and inspires our community in the exploration of reading, arts, innovation, and learning.

## OUR VISION

We will create an environment of curiosity and discovery through the exploration of the arts and new technologies. This will foster creativity, spark innovation, develop human capital, and support lifelong learning.

## OUR VALUES

**PERSONALIZED SERVICE:** Serving people with care.

**RESPECT:** Our members' needs and rights matter.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Open to everyone.

**INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM:** Opening the world to our members.

## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY, THE SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS **\$8.79**

THE OVERALL ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY TO THE COMMUNITY IS **\$67,187,623**

THE OVERALL BENEFIT FROM VISITS TO SPECIAL PURPOSE SPACES, SUCH AS MAKERSPACES AND THE GALLERIES, IS **\$1,641,943**

FOR EACH RESIDENT OF CAMBRIDGE, THE BENEFIT OF CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY IS EQUAL TO **\$485**



# DISCOVER CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

IN 2024, THERE WERE **758,763** IN PERSON VISITS ACROSS ALL FIVE OF OUR LOCATIONS,  
3% INCREASE OVER 2023.

IN 2024, **220,560** PEOPLE EXPERIENCED CAMBRIDGE ART GALLERIES EXHIBITIONS.



“A new perspective on public libraries described us as being for communities, not just community. Going one step further, it isn't a reach to say that the Cambridge Public Library should reflect who we can be when we are at our best. Cambridge Public Library is a vibrant gathering place where everyone is welcomed and supported. Guided by our core values and mandate, we strive to create an inclusive space where people of all ages, abilities, and identities feel a sense of belonging, see themselves reflected, and are empowered to explore new possibilities and reach their full potential.” **Chrissy Hodgins, CEO, Cambridge Public Library**

<b>Queen's Square</b>	1 North Square
<b>Clemens Mill</b>	50 Saginaw Parkway
<b>Hespeler</b>	5 Tannery Street East
<b>Old Post Office</b>	12 Water Street South
<b>Preston</b>	435 King Street East

Cambridge Public Library acknowledges that our services and facilities are located on lands that are part of the Haldimand Tract. We recognize the complex history of the Haldimand Tract, the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chonnonton. We honour the enduring connection between our shared past, collective present, and collective future through listening, reflecting, and learning.

[ideaexchange.org](https://ideaexchange.org)