

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared For :

The Library Board of
Trustees

Prepared By :

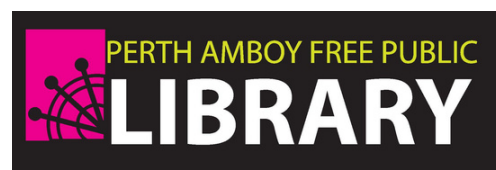
Joel Rosa
Library Director

Annual Report Summary

In our 2023 Annual Report, we are proud to share the journey of the Perth Amboy Free Public Library over the past year, reflecting our commitment to our mission. At the core of our mission is the aspiration to create a vibrant and welcoming space that provides equitable access to resources, knowledge, and technology for all members of our community. We remain dedicated to empowering individuals to explore their interests, pursue their passions, and develop the skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

As we reflect on the year's achievements, we see our mission come to life in numerous ways. The foundation of our success is rooted in our continuous efforts to expand and evolve. We have embraced the changing needs of our community and responded with agility and innovation, aiming to make a meaningful impact. Here are some of the key highlights from the past year:

1. **Enhanced Programming Space:** We have taken significant steps to create inviting spaces within our library, with a focus on new programming areas in both the adult and children's sections. These spaces are designed to foster collaboration, creativity, and community engagement.
2. **Expanding Resources:** Our commitment to providing access to knowledge is exemplified through the expansion of our research and support databases. We have introduced valuable resources like Brainfuse, Mango Languages, and Kanopy, ensuring that our patrons have the tools they need for learning and personal growth. These new resources are a part of the 40 educational and resource databases available to the Perth Amboy community.
3. **Strengthened Staff Capacity:** We recognize the importance of investing in our team. By expanding staff capacity and offering professional development opportunities, we aim to provide the best possible service to our community.
4. **Enriched Programs:** Our library has grown with an increased range of educational and cultural programs for both children and adults. We have also introduced new initiatives like ESL and Citizenship courses, and our first-ever 12-week summer program.



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Annual Report Summary Continued...

5. Volunteer Program: We are excited to announce the development of our volunteer program, which provides community members with the opportunity to engage actively in supporting our library's mission.

6. Technological Advancements and Security: We have made significant technological improvements to better serve our patrons while ensuring the security and privacy of their data.

7. Community Partnerships: Our commitment to community engagement is evident in our partnerships with the Perth Amboy Public Schools, local businesses, and community stakeholders. These collaborations enable us to extend our reach and impact.

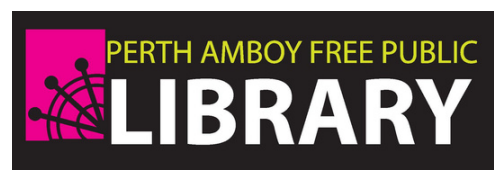
In this annual report, we invite you to explore the detailed accounts of these accomplishments and learn about the lives we've touched and the community bonds we've strengthened. The Perth Amboy Free Public Library is not just a place of books; it's a place where dreams take flight, curiosity thrives, and knowledge knows no bounds.

Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey, and we look forward to continuing to serve you and our community in the years to come.

Sincerely,



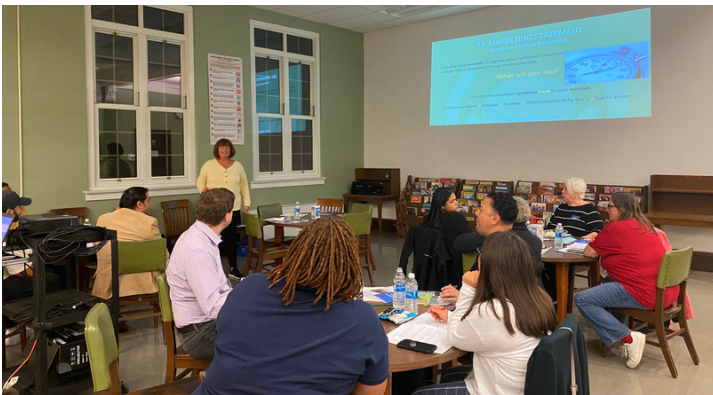
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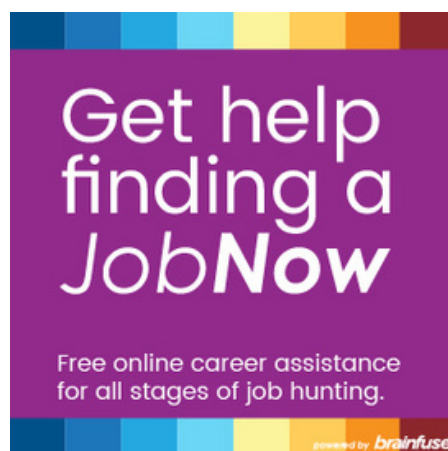
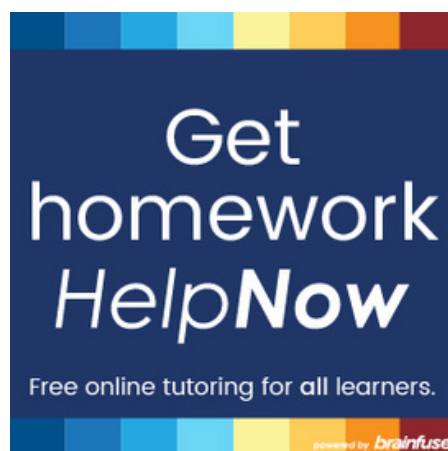
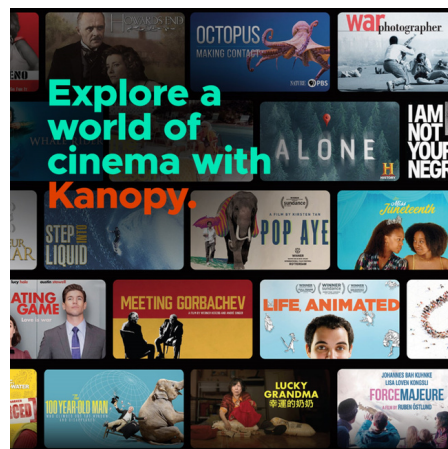
Enhanced Programming Space

Through strategic reorganization of books and extensive weeding process of outdated books, we've created inviting library spaces, particularly in new programming areas for adults and children. These spaces promote collaboration, creativity, and community engagement. Additionally, we've established a media space for digital presentations, social gatherings, and movie nights.



Supplemented Educational Databases

With the Library's dedication of empowering the community through resources that foster academic studies, language proficiency, and career development, we adopted online databases such as Mango Languages, Brainfuse, and Kanopy. Mango Languages supports language acquisition, Brainfuse facilitates academic support, and Kanopy provides a platform for educational videos. These initiatives reflect the library's commitment to enhancing individual growth and equipping community members with the tools needed for academic and professional success.



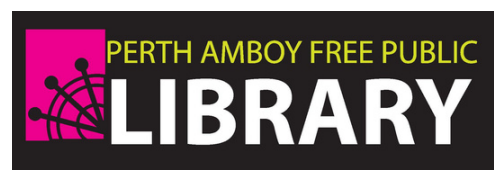
Find the veteran resources you need in:

- education,
- housing,
- healthcare,
- employment,
- and more



brainfuse VeiNow

Developed for veterans and their families
(available at your library or at home through your library's website - library card required)



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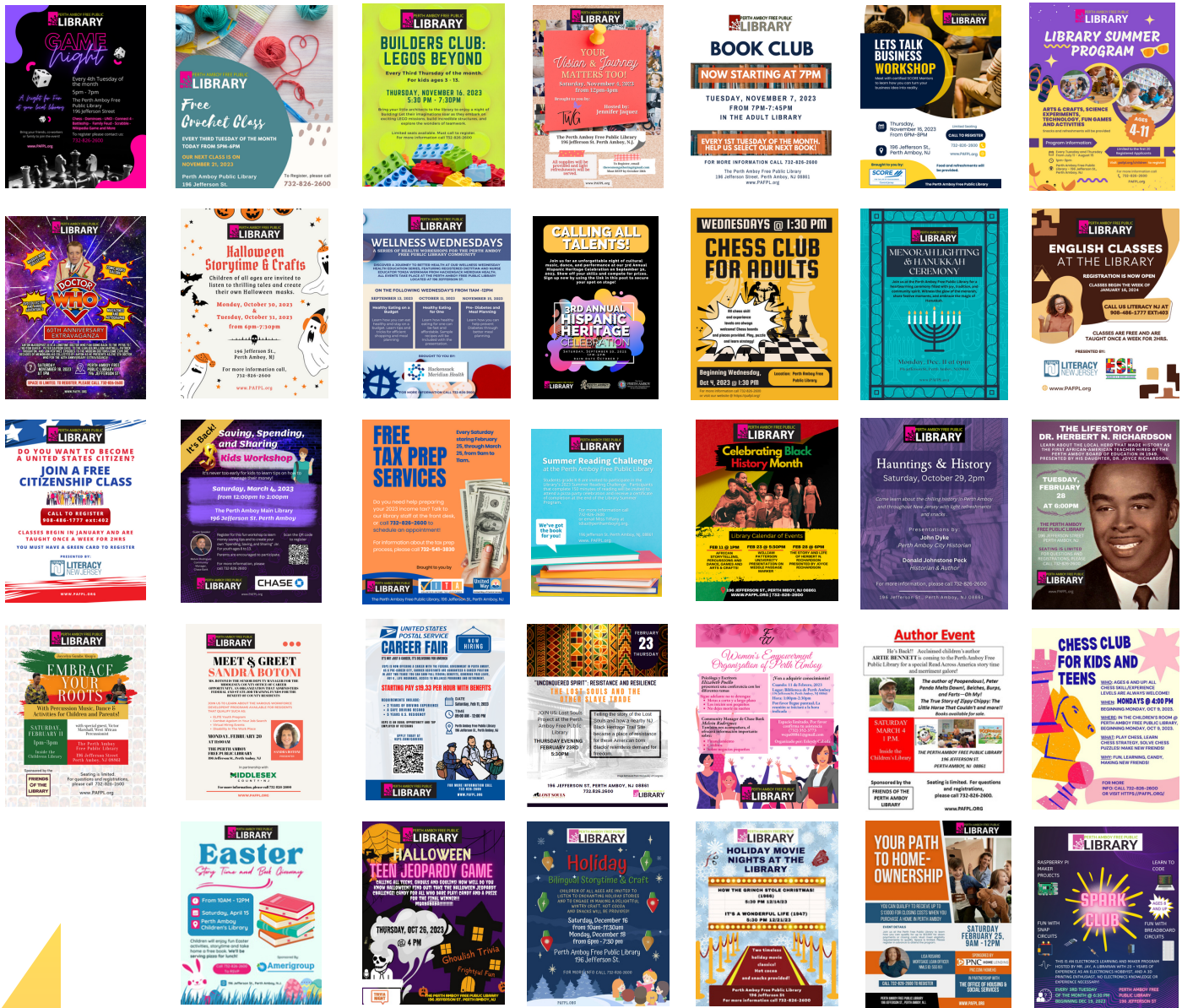
Strengthened Staff Capacity

The Perth Amboy Library strategically identified and welcomed skilled librarians, including Luke Vista and Jay Oliver, through a meticulous process. A staff selection committee coordinated the drafting of job postings, resume evaluations, and comprehensive interviews. Recognizing the importance of community understanding, the new staff underwent specialized training to align with local needs, contributing to effective program and resource development. Their fresh ideas, diverse experiences, and passion for community education enhance the library's capacity to serve and inspire.



Expanded Innovative Programs

This year we held 101 library events and programs for the entire community. In addition, through engaged patrons, we've been able to expand our list of subscribed patrons that assists the library to effectively communicate program opportunities.



Strengthened The Library's Volunteer Program

The library has significantly strengthened its volunteer program by introducing the role of a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator, emphasizing the engagement and development of volunteers. This strategic approach has resulted in a robust community of 117 registered volunteers who actively contribute to various library programs and initiatives. Volunteers have played integral roles in activities such as story time reading, crochet classes, book clubs, and events like the Hispanic Heritage celebration and Halloween Program. Their involvement extends to the reorganization of the library, including the relocation of books to new shelves, showcasing the impactful collaboration between volunteers and the Perth Amboy Library in enhancing community engagement and support.




Implemented Surveillance Cameras

The Perth Amboy Library has proactively addressed long-standing public safety concerns by implementing state-of-the-art security cameras in collaboration with the Perth Amboy Police Department. With strategic placement at 17 key locations throughout the library, these cameras have significantly enhanced public safety for both staff and patrons. Since their installation, the library has witnessed a substantial decrease in public safety concerns, marking a successful and impactful measure in creating a secure environment for everyone.



Curated Documents & Restored Historic Photo

The library, dedicated to preserving and promoting local history, curated periodicals for use in programs aimed at educating Perth Amboy residents. Curated documents encompass Black History, Latino History, and Urban Economic History. Additionally, the library successfully restored an original still shot of Thomas Mundy Peterson.



Passing By
By Peter Genovese

FEB. 10 1981

Mama's dream comes true

PERTH AMBOY — Mama would have loved her place.

Oh, she might have scolded her sons for not painting the walls and putting up nice curtains, but she would have understood what they went through just to get the place in decent shape, how much money they spent on new equipment.

It was Carmen Matias' dream to have a place like this, only she didn't live long enough to see the dream come true.

"We know she's up in heaven smiling," Benjamin Matias said.

The regulars at Mama's Dream restaurant are smiling, too — for the home-style cooking at the former International Diner on State Street.

Bacalao — codfish — the way Manuel Matias, Benjamin's brother, makes it, with onions, tomatoes, boiled eggs and olives, served with yucca and yams. Roast pork and arroz con gandules — rice with "pigeon" peas. Pastel, a tamale-like dish served with ground banana, plantain and meat. And rice and beans, and plenty of them; Mama's Dream goes through 250 pounds of rice and 75 pounds of beans every week.

"If we don't have rice and beans, we might as well close," Benjamin said, laughing.

The brothers' business cards make a bold claim — "La Mejor Comida Hispana de Perth Amboy" — the best Spanish food in Perth Amboy — but the two stand by it.

"We have people who come in five days a week," Benjamin said. "This is the only place they eat."


Manuel's background is in the restaurant field, his last job was bar manager of TGIF Friday's in Woodbridge, Benjamin's last job? Urology technician.

Union City.

NALGO, a non-profit and advocacy organization, stated that since 1985, the number of Hispanic elected officials in New Jersey grew 80 percent, that translates to just 45 Hispanic occupying elected offices in school board posts, legislative seat held by Mex.

"Certainly Hispanic representation in government has reached the numbers in the nation by any stretch of the imagination," said Menendez.

"Both political parties have created the opportunities in the state and nation," in "Some strides have been



Hispanics get more involved, seeking clout in Perth Amboy

Hispanics are getting more involved in the community, seeking clout in Perth Amboy.

As an example, City cited last year's Board of Education election in which the Hispanic community — then composed of some 10,000 residents — voted for four seats. Nine of them were elected.

"This year there are eight people, at least four Hispanic, competing for the same seats," said Mayor George J. Dowrick. "The bottom line is the Hispanic community is becoming more involved in the city's affairs. We have to do more. There is a lot of potential here, and we're going to get it out of them."

Community leaders believe, however, that Latinos probably are taking more of an interest in the affairs of the city by joining city organizations and participating in city events.

PERTH AMBOY — Maritza Alfaro, left in above photo, spends her days in the Perth Amboy Adult Citizenship Class. The students are preparing themselves to go through the process of becoming American citizens.

Indianborn Greg U.S. Army camp, praying the soon will be reunited with her sister. Perth old son Raul. Photo below is of Mrs. Romeo, in the living room of her home, which she is ready to turn into a bedroom for her refugee relatives. Mrs. Romeo lost \$2,000 of her life's savings.

PERTH AMBOY, N.J. — Mar. 18, 1985

Residents prepare to become citizens

By WAYNE F. YOUNG

PERTH AMBOY — Classes are being held at the city's adult school to help city residents to go through the process to become American citizens.

Classes are being conducted from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the city adult school, 178 Barcoke St., and from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, 160 First St.

Jose Correa, chairman of the mayor's citizenship committee here, said about a dozen other citizens are taking the classes at the Puerto Rican Association.

Another 10 or so city residents are taking the classes at the adult school, said Dr. Nicholas Rossi, director of the city adult school program. Rossi said those taking the class at night are mostly from South America, although there are some European immigrants as well.

"We want to emphasize the program is ongoing," said Correa. "The program will continue until the demand is met."

Correa said more and more people are moving to the city each year from other countries.

When he created the committee last December, Mayor George J. Dowrick said the purpose was to help city residents learn the importance of American citizenship and help them get started towards naturalization.

Angela Olivarez is coordinating the program at the Puerto Rican Association, while Rossi is directing the classes at night.

The citizenship drive has been moving forward since the Jan. 31 deadline for Cuban Mariel refugees who came to the U.S. — 1980 — to Jan. 31, 1985. At that time, there were about 180 Cuban Mariel refugees here. They had applied for the residency during that time.

Correa said that many prospective

Perth Amboy sees parade of Puerto Rican pride

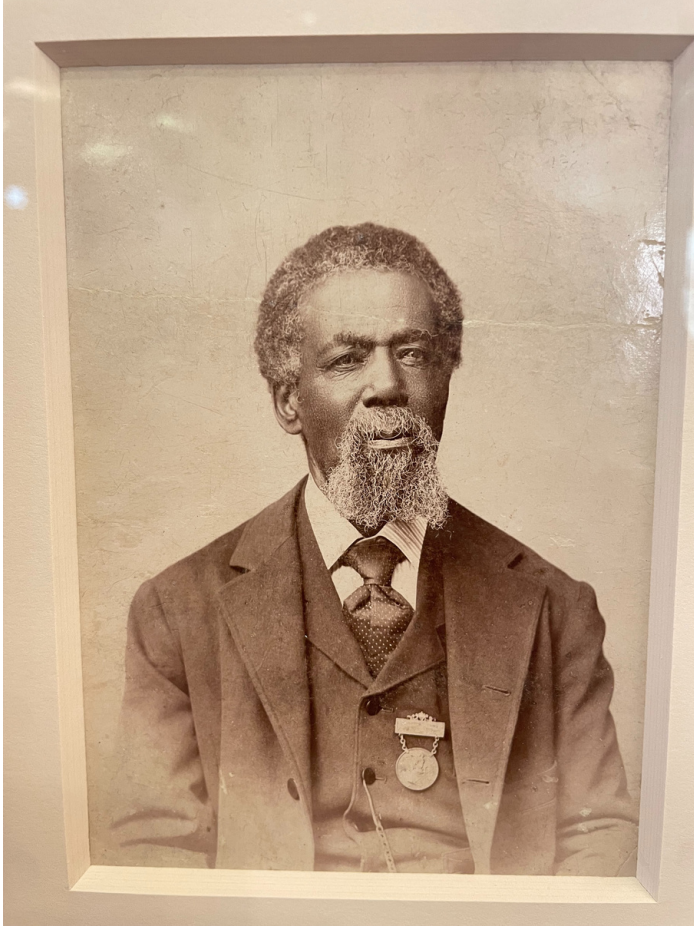
By DEBBIE PRANTE

PERTH AMBOY — A parade of Puerto Rican pride was held in Perth Amboy on Sunday, March 17, 1985.

The parade was held in honor of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the city of Perth Amboy.

The parade was led by the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, followed by the Puerto Rican Social Club, the Puerto Rican Youth Center, and the Puerto Rican Women's Association.

The parade was a great success, and the community was very proud to participate in it.



Old-timers berate the new violence

By DEBBIE PRANTE

PERTH AMBOY — Old-timers are berating the new violence in the city.

They say the new violence is a result of the influx of young people into the city, and they are tired of the old ways.

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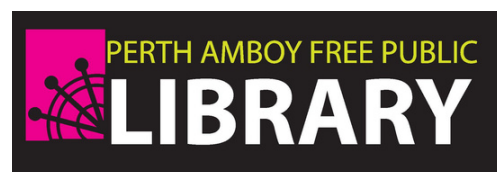
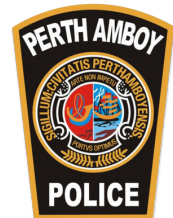
Enhanced Computer Accessibility

The Perth Amboy Library has expanded computer access for patrons through successful efforts, including a donation request to the Piscataway Library. Following a letter of interest submitted to Piscataway Library, we received a generous donation of 11 Dell Laptops, leveraging their recent computer upgrades. Additionally, we enhanced computer availability in the children's library by repurposing two desktop computers, previously used by staff and upgraded. These initiatives underscore our commitment to providing increased and improved technology resources for the benefit of our library patrons.



Established Collaborations With Local Organizations

The Perth Amboy Library has achieved significant success through collaborative efforts with various local organizations. This fruitful collaboration has focused on building awareness and developing workshops for the community. Partnerships have been established with notable entities such as Perth Amboy Public Schools, Middlesex College, YMCA, Hackensack Meridian Hospital, Alameda Healthcare Center, Spring Creek Healthcare Center, PNC Bank, Chase Bank, JJ Elek Realty, Petra Best Realty, and Perth Amboy USPS, among others.



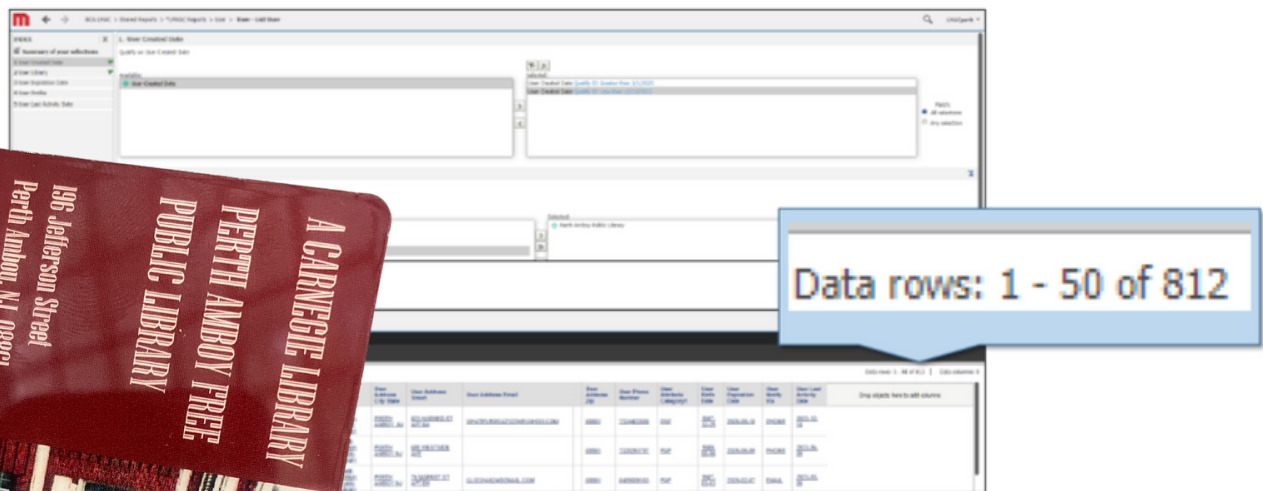
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Boosted Library Holder Memberships

Through various forms of engagement including promotional campaigns, community collaborations, social media marketing and our streamlined registration process, the library has registered 812 patrons as new cardholders in 2023. We look forward to serving our new patrons with library services, resources and support.

In 2023...

The Perth Amboy Library had **812** New Users across all patrons types (Adult, Juvenile, Municipal, etc.)



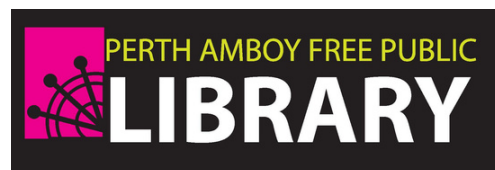
Source: [LMxAC SirsiDynix Database](https://noam-bca1.bc.sirsidyndynix.net/bcanalytics/asp/Main.aspx)
<https://noam-bca1.bc.sirsidyndynix.net/bcanalytics/asp/Main.aspx>

Charting the Library's Success into the future

In closing, the Perth Amboy Library is proud to reflect on the remarkable progress detailed in this Annual Report. From the expansion of programming spaces to the enhancement of educational programs and resources, our commitment to the community's growth is unwavering. Our strides in ensuring public safety, strengthening staff capacity, and fostering collaborations underscore our dedication to excellence.

Looking ahead, the library envisions an exciting future. Our goals include developing a history research center, initiating a transformative library construction project, onboarding a bilingual children's librarian to broaden accessibility, and establishing a creative space for media development. As we embark on this journey, we are inspired by the continuous support of our community and remain steadfast in our mission to provide a vibrant hub for learning, innovation, and cultural enrichment.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed to our achievements including the Library Staff, Library Board of Trustees, our volunteers, the Friends of the Perth Amboy Library, Mayor Helmin Caba and his Administration. We invite you to join us on this journey of growth and exploration. Together, we are shaping a dynamic future for the Perth Amboy Library, where knowledge knows no bounds, and possibilities are limitless.



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