



# 2021

## Community Report



**We are champions of community, guardians of social equity, and defenders of diverse perspectives. We're committed to changing the lives of people in Richmond Hill.**



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & Board Chair

2021, what a year. We could not have predicted the level of uncertainty that the pandemic would continue to bring into our lives, and, despite it all, we're proud of the resilience that our team has shown and the creativity they've injected into how we've helped our community to adapt to our changing world.

This year was our sandbox. We brainstormed, prototyped and piloted a variety of new initiatives and modified services. We focused on being able to provide you with curated experiences and content – whether you were at home, in a classroom, in a library branch or online. Some of our achievements include the launch of live chat support on our website, expanding our collections through lendable video games and Ontario Parks passes, introducing hybrid activities like our Take & Make kits, and providing curated borrowing recommendations through our Grab N' Go service.

**Darren Solomon, RHPL CEO**  
**Greg Beros, RHPL Board Chair**

Together with our community, we designed a new and transformational strategic path that ensures we're constantly adapting to your needs for years to come. Our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was created in collaboration and consultation with residents, community organizations, City and external stakeholders, and our team members. It paints an ambitious and exciting vision for services and resources that help improve your quality of life. The Richmond Hill Public Library Board also joined libraries across North America by permanently removing existing overdue fines and the collection of overdue fines going forward. Removing barriers like fines allow us to fulfill our promise of being a cultural institution that welcomes everyone while equitably improving society.

It's been a year of change, and on behalf of the RHPL Board and entire staff team, we want to thank you for continuing to trust and use Richmond Hill Public Library.

We're here for you, see you soon.

# connecting

WITH YOU, WHEREVER YOU ARE.

Whether you were at home, in your community or in a library, our team remained committed to providing you with a safe space to improve your life and adapt in an ever-changing world.

**IN THIS PHOTO:** Parents and children alike enjoy songs, stories and more during a Storytime Outside at Richmond Green Sports Centre and Park.



## your favourite programs.

In addition to our April Break programs (496 attendees), Summer Reading Club (1,215 registrants) and Visiting Authors for classrooms (1,610 attendees from 72 classes), our most popular programs from 2021 included:

1. Superstar Storytellers (in partnership with the York & Durham Libraries)
2. Summer Series
3. Magic Mel
4. Mad Science
5. Muggle Magic

- We launched our digital readers' advisory service, **Grab N' Go**, which allowed our team to provide bags of **customized reading selections to over 450 adults, teens and children** while our doors were closed.
- We pushed the envelope by developing hundreds of unique programs offered in a variety of formats, including **virtual, in our branches, outside at nearby greenspaces, and with take-home craft kits.**
- We launched our **virtual chat service, which saw over 2,400 inquiries in 2021 and a satisfactory rating of 3.92 out of 4.** Our team remained a vital community service that can connect you with the information you need, when you need it the most.
- The numbers don't lie: our physical collection of books, DVDs and more remained important to our community, which is why we saw **nearly 26,600 curbside pickup requests** across all four RHPL branches.

# diversifying

## OUR COLLECTIONS.

### by the numbers.

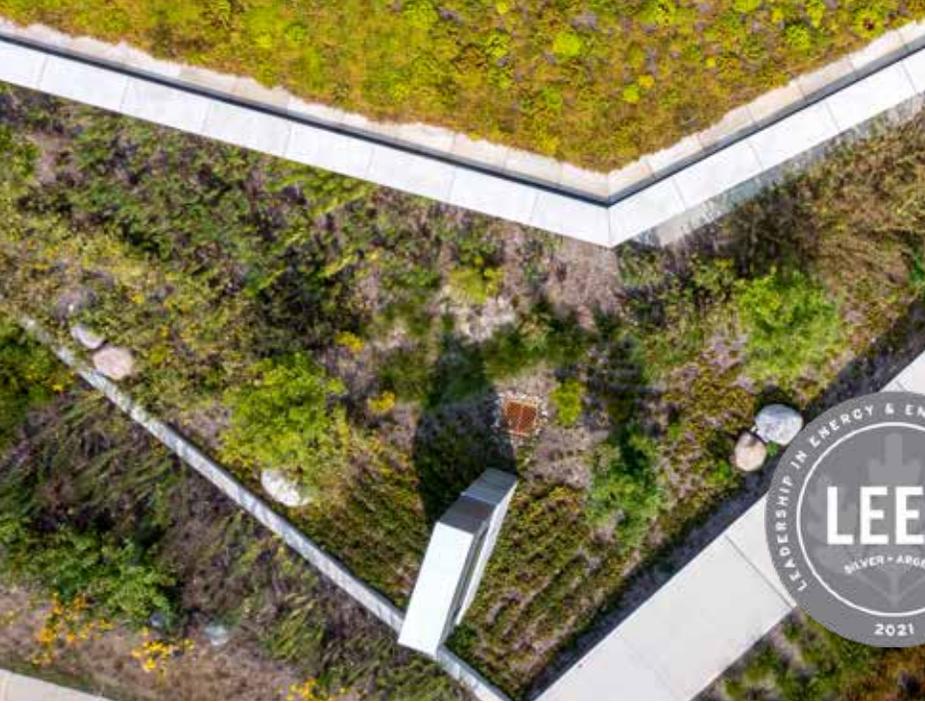
With so many digital and physical items that you can borrow, it's hard to choose favourites! Here's a selection of our most popular items as checked out by you in 2021.

	2020	2021
<b>CHECKOUTS</b>		
eBooks	254,280	240,285
eAudioBooks	45,119	48,666
ePeriodicals	124,267	130,445
Print	651,770	847,570
STEAM Kits	268	629
<b>DOWNLOADS</b>		
PressReader	20,304	27,201
Music		85,580

Your RHPL card provides you with a trusted and personalized collection of ideas, resources and experiences. In 2021, we began to reimagine what you could borrow with your library card.

- Game on! We added **Nintendo Switch, Playstation 4 and XboxOne** games to our collection, and saw almost 2,500 checkouts of this pilot collection available at Central Library.
- Explore the great outdoors. We partnered with **Ontario Parks** to offer day-use vehicle permits that provide free access to over **100 provincial parks**.
- We introduced **CreativeBug**, which provides access to thousands of online arts and crafts classes. Cardholders watched over 2,400 on-demand tutorials on the platform. Other electronic resources, like **eBooks and eAudioBooks through OverDrive**, saw an average increase of nearly 500 downloads per month when compared to 2020.
- Just in time for I Read Canadian Day in February, we provided our community with **over 250 I Read Canadian kits**, which were filled with activities, stickers and a selection of children's books by Canadian authors and illustrators.





# going green.

In April 2021, Oak Ridges Library received Silver LEED® certification. LEED® certification shows our City's commitment to addressing climate change, creating resource-efficient buildings, and developing healthy, resilient communities inspired by our natural surroundings. Oak Ridges Library contains many sustainable design features (including its green roof, pictured to the left), and also demonstrates our commitment to the environment in materials selection, water and energy efficiency and its reduction in energy consumption.

## IMPROVING YOUR experience.

Motivated by the desire to help, we provide connection, community and learning through the myriad of affordable opportunities we present to our community. But we can't do it alone. We rely on the voices of our community and meaningful partnerships as we work to equitably improve our community.

- This year, we embarked on the journey of building our **2021-25 Strategic Plan**. Through virtual town halls, online surveys (over 650 participants), social media polls (nearly 1,300 respondents), and meetings with stakeholders in our community, we heard what matters most to you and built a plan that will carry us to 2025 and beyond.
- In June, our Board made the decision to go **fine free permanently** and remove all existing and future collection of overdue fines. We also expanded our library card membership to a **renewal period of 2 years** and created various card types including **Visitor and Ease of Access cards**. In 2021, we welcomed 5,877 new cardholders, and in the fall months, we created eight Visitor cards and 56 Ease of Access cards.
- We joined the **Urban Libraries Council**, an association of more than 160 library systems from major urban areas across North America.
- We collaborated with libraries across the GTA as one of the founding members of the **York & Durham Libraries group**. This group continues to create synergies through a variety of programming opportunities that are offered by up to 17 libraries in the GTA.
- We also participated in **Stanford University's d.leadership program**. Through this program, a small team from RHPL was immersed in design thinking and worked collaboratively with Stanford students to learn innovation techniques and processes.
- We continued to develop meaningful partnerships with our colleagues at the **City of Richmond Hill**.



# 2021 Library Board

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Councillor Greg Beros

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Regional and Local  
Councillor Joe DiPaola

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Frank DiPede, York Catholic  
District School Board

Bram Kivenko

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Regional and Local Councillor  
Carmine Perrelli

Mahnaz Shahbazi

Rona Wang

### Central

1 Atkinson St.  
Richmond Hill, ON  
L4C 0H5

### Oak Ridges

34 Regatta Ave.  
Richmond Hill, ON  
L4E 4R1

### Richmond Green

1 William F. Bell Pkwy.  
Richmond Hill, ON  
L4S 2T9

### Richvale

40 Pearson Ave.  
Richmond Hill, ON  
L4C 6T7



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