

2025

Annual Report



A Message from our Chief Librarian



Reflecting on 2025, we had a roller coaster year. From opening the NovelBranch Vending Machine at Ajax Community Centre, launching new passes, and record-breaking visits and checkouts, we've been busier than ever! Inversely, we had our highest number of incidents, including a horrific attack on a Muslim customer. It is incredible to know that our community came together in both challenging and exciting moments, and the Library looks forward to building an even stronger community in 2026.

Sarah Vaisler, Chief Librarian and Executive Officer

2025 Library Board



Piyali Correya
Chair



Deborah McDougall
Vice-Chair



Sterling Lee
Deputy Mayor,
Ward 2



Voytek Bialkowski



Sepelene Deonarine



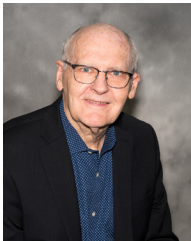
Mallik Fernando



Rebecca Hayes



Pia Kaukoranta Vahabi



Douglas Miller

Learn more about our Library Board online:
ajaxlibrary.ca/boardmembers

In This Report: Library Board Ends

The Ajax Public Library Board sets “Ends” which outline the reason for the existence of the Library and guide the design and provision of service. Board Ends are identified throughout this report, showcasing how the Library has supported our residents.

Services to Support: The Library exists to further the leisure, educational, and professional endeavours of Ajax’s communities.

Safe and Welcoming Spaces: The Library exists to foster a sense of safety and inclusion in its diverse community through programs, services, and collections.

Create and Grow: The Library exists so that customers will have a hub for their creative, innovative, and technological pursuits.

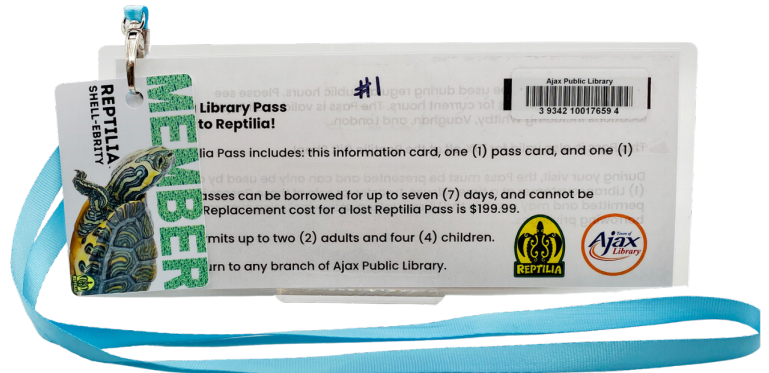
Engaging Together: The Library exists so that customers have community for connections, civic engagement, and belonging.

Free to Read: The Library exists so that there is equitable access to information and resources for its customers, upholding intellectual freedom, enabling an informed citizenry.

Launched in 2025

From new programs, museum passes, and services to support our community, the Library launched a variety of initiatives in 2025, including:

- ROM Museum Passes
- Multi-faith Prayer Space
- Reptilia Zoo Passes ▶
- Library Digitization Kits
- Play & Learn Kits



On the cover: Sisters admire their craft from Drag Queen Storytime, June 2025.

2025 Showcase



NovelBranch Vending Machine opened at ACC!

In July, Ajax Public Library launched its new self-service book vending machine, NovelBranch, located at the Ajax Community Centre. NovelBranch makes it easier for busy families to access Library materials on the go. This exciting initiative was made possible through the generous financial support of the Rotary Club of Ajax.



World Homeless Day Art Exhibition!

The Library hosted an inspiring art exhibition centered on the theme of hope in October. The show featured 35 community artists and members of the unsheltered community, in partnership with the GAP Committee and the LivingRoom Community Art Studio.



Louise Ashton Archives Visit!

Louise Ashton, granddaughter of Vice Admiral Sir Charles Henry Lawrence Woodhouse, visited the Archives in September. Woodhouse captained the HMS Ajax, the Town's namesake ship, during the Battle of the River Plate in 1939.



Town of Ajax's National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

On September 30, The Town of Ajax and its newly formed Ajax Indigenous Advisory Group hosted an Indigenous Arts and Wellness Vendor Market at Pat Bayly Square. The Library hosted a booth as part of the market, encouraging the exploration of Indigenous voices through stories and resources available at the Library.



Pride Parade and Rainbow Market

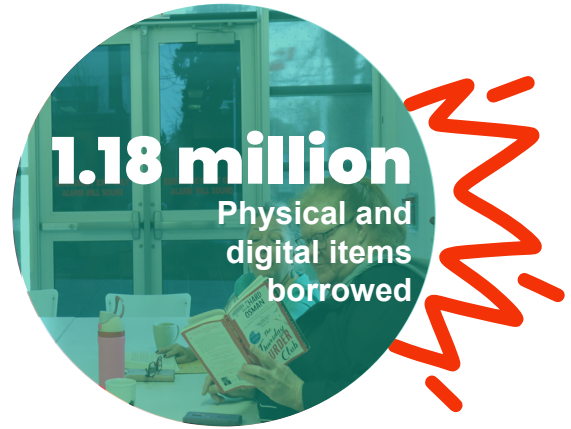
Immediately after Drag Queen Storytime in June, the Regional Pride Parade left from the Library and Town Hall, ending at the Rainbow Market at the Ajax Community Centre. The Library met 215 community members to share crafts and books celebrating Pride.



Ajax-Pickering Science Fair

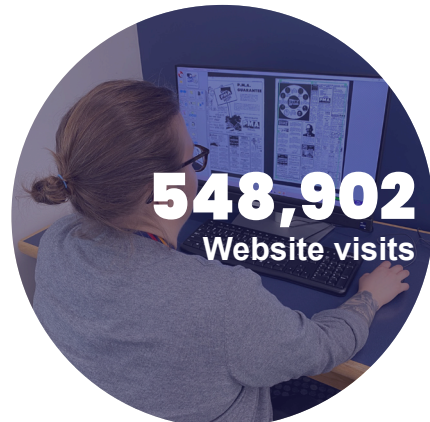
The Annual Science Fair was hosted in partnership with Pickering Public Library in March. After how-to workshops in January, young scientists exhibited their experiments to judges, including Board members Pia Kaukoranta Vahabi and Mallik Fernando. Winning entries were announced with CLEO Sarah Vaisler.

By the Numbers



“Absolutely stunning customer service. I could rate them 100/100 for their interaction with visitors. Keep doing great work.”

- Himunshu Patel



Reflections & Together in Peace

On March 22, 2025, a horrific event occurred at our Main Branch. A woman wearing a hijab was the subject of an unprovoked attack. Library staff and security intervened quickly ensuring that the Muslim woman had no physical injuries.

Due to the severity and horror of this incident, events were organized to help rebuild trust with the Muslim community and to demonstrate support for them.

The Town of Ajax hosted Together in Peace, a community healing Town Hall, featuring speakers and community members. There were open discussions on the impact of hateful acts. This recognition and shared community support helped create a sense of unity and understanding.

The week following, Trent University hosted a panel discussion on Islamophobia in Public Spaces. Participants joined panelists both in-person and online for an in-depth discussion. Panelists included: Dr. Nadia Hasan, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies professor at York University, Marycarmen Lara-Villanueva, Town of Ajax Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator, Rizwan Mohammad from the National Council of Canadian Muslims, Areena Rahman, a student at Trent University, Ginella Massa, a Broadcast Journalist and Media Expert, and Dr. Nadia Nur Ali, a professor of Sociology at Trent University who also moderated the discussion. ▼



Services to Support

Book Club Kit Demand Increases

Book Club Kits continued to be a popular resource for customers in 2025. Over 100 reservations were fulfilled, and new kits were added to the collection. The Kits provide meaningful opportunities to connect with others through a shared reading experience.

Environmental Literacy: Bring Back the Salmon!

Bring Back the Salmon returned to the Library in 2025. Visitors watched as eggs hatched and developed into fry (baby salmon). On May 30, the tiny fish were released into the Duffin's Creek Headwaters at Greenwood Conservation Area by students from Bolton C. Falby Public School grade 2 students.



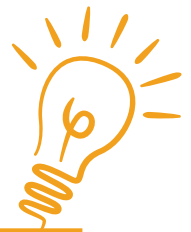
Small Business Workshop ►

In October, the Library hosted a Small Business breakfast event at Main Branch, in partnership with the Town of Ajax. The workshop included a panel discussion on how to build a team without a Human Resource department, showcased resources, and offered networking opportunities.



Student Authors

In May, Grade 3 students from Terry Fox Public School worked with children's author Ted Staunton to create their very own stories. These stories were turned into books which were on display at McLean Branch, and students were encouraged to visit the branch to see their works on display and pick up their "I'm the Author!" sticker.



“Just moved recently from Toronto to Ajax in Nottingham neighbourhood. The staff at the library is much more friendly and helpful compared to Toronto. Love to come to this library with my kids. Thank you. Great staff and service.”

- Anonymous



Safe and Welcoming Spaces

Drag Queen Storytime

The annual celebration of inclusion and self-expression took place at Main Branch on June 7, 2025. Over 80 participants enjoyed stories and songs from Queens Selena Vyle and Van Goth, with crafts and sweet treats before and after.

Pink Shirt Day ►

On February 26, 2025, the Library acknowledged Pink Shirt Day, an annual anti-bullying event across Canada. Staff wore pink to mark their support, and the Library had displays featuring books about kindness, inclusivity, and standing against bullying.

STEM Clubs for Black Youth

In partnership with Ontario Tech University and the Congress of Black Women (Ajax/Pickering Chapter), the Library offered Black Girls and Black Youth Empowerment STEM Clubs throughout the summer.

Accessibility Fair ▼

In May, the Library hosted the Town's Ajax Accessibility Fair, spotlighting community services that support people with physical and/or intellectual disabilities. Local advocate, entrepreneur, and athlete, Anthony Lue was a keynote speaker, seen below with Tulip the therapy horse.



Create and Grow

Winterfest at the Makerspace

In partnership with Town of Ajax, the Library's McLean Branch and the Makerspace were open for Family Day as part of Winterfest. Over 2,200 visitors took part in the festivities, including the special Town of Ajax 70th Anniversary button making craft.

SPARK, HeARTbeat, and Bookmark Contest! ►

SPARK! is an annual juried art show and competition for Ajax children from junior kindergarten through grade 8 supported by legacy funding from the Pine Ridge Arts Council, which takes place every March.

In May 2025, the HeARTbeat Teen Art Show featured artists' work from local high schools in Rotary Room.

The annual Design-a-Bookmark Contest celebrates the creativity of Ajax children from kindergarten through grade 8; winners for 2026 were announced in November.

International Black Diversity Film Festival

To showcase films created by Black artists from around the world, the Library partnered with the Town of Ajax and the IBDFP organizing team to host film screenings at the Main Branch on May 29 and May 30.

Seed Saturday

In March, the Library hosted Seed Saturday at Main Branch. To support environmental literacy, the event included a Seed Exchange, Gardening Advice program in partnership with Durham Master Gardeners, and a Seed Storytime with a Scavenger Hunt for families.



“Excellent facilities and service. Hours are very convenient. Staff are extremely knowledgeable and helpful. Always provide good guidance. Very happy customer.

- Maria

Engaging Together

TAC Black History Month Video

In February 2025, TAC members completed their Black History Month video, themed: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants—Our Hopes for the Next 10 Years that was shared at the 18th Annual Black History Month Celebration, which is now available on [YouTube](#).

Islamic Heritage Month VR Exhibit ▶

In October, Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Canada, hosted a public installation at Main Branch. In celebration of Islamic Heritage Month, customers were able to take a journey using a virtual reality headset, blending art, Islamic culture and heritage, and technology.

Ramadan Storytime

In March, stories, crafts, and henna to celebrate the Ramadan observance were offered by Muslim Women of Durham Region at Audley Branch. In addition to the activities, participants learned about the lunar calendar and how Eid is celebrated.

National Indigenous History Month ▶

In June, the Library partnered with Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council (ODRMC) to celebrate National Indigenous History Month. Meaningful community events were arranged through the partnership, including a storytime highlighting Métis culture through picture books and a lively demonstration on how to play the spoons.



“We are so happy with your library. We love going there. The space is so welcoming and there is lots to do. I’ve brought my grandkids since they were little, and we just gave them full responsibility for their cards at 16. Thank you.

- Anonymous

Free to Read

Author Visit with Michelle Good

In September, the Library hosted a virtual author visit with award-winning Indigenous author Michelle Good. Michelle spoke about her book “Truth Telling: Seven Conversations about Indigenous Life in Canada.”



Local Author Day ►

Highlighting local authors and their works, this drop-in event was hosted in October as part of the Library’s participation of Culture Days. Engaged customers were able to listen to author readings, speak one-on-one with authors, and purchase books.

Freedom to Read Poster Display ▼

As part of Freedom to Read Week 2025, the Library installed an exhibit of over 30 archival Freedom to Read Week posters, dating back to 1988, to encourage discussion of the importance of intellectual freedom. The exhibit was on display for the month of February.



“Thank you for your dedication to enriching our community through such thoughtful programming. Your hard work in supporting adult members and creating meaningful cultural experiences does not go unnoticed.”

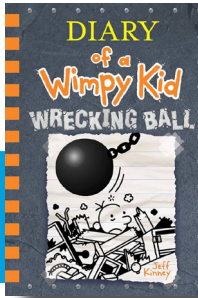
- Riaz Qureshi



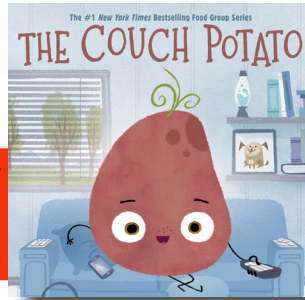
Favourite Finds

Books our customers enjoyed most in 2025!

Junior Fiction



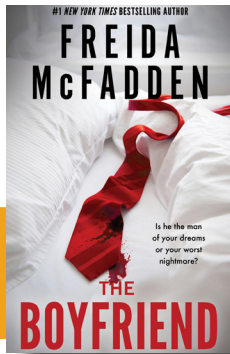
Junior Picture Book



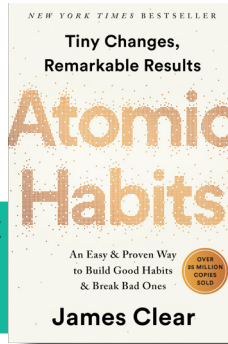
Junior Non-Fiction



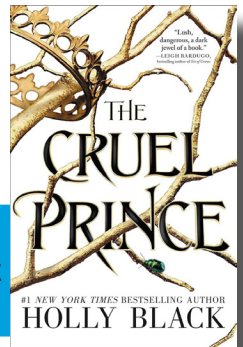
Adult Fiction



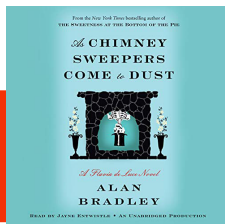
Adult Non-Fiction



Young Adult Fiction



Audio-book



DVD



Video Game



Top Authors! Jeff Kinney continued to be the most popular author amongst our Junior Fiction readers, taking all top 3 spots out of the top 10! Freida McFadden topped the Adult Fiction collection.

Partnerships

Special thanks to some of the partners who help us build a stronger community:

- Achev
- Ajax Outspoken Speakers/Toastmasters
- Afghan Women's Organization
- AIDS Committee of Durham Region
- Alzheimer Society of Durham Region
- BlackLit Durham
- Blue Heron Books
- Business Advisory Centre Durham
- Catholic Women's Guild—St. Bernadette + St. Francis
- Community Development Council Durham
- Community Living Ajax-Pickering
- Compassionate Friends Ajax
- Congress of Black Women of Canada Ajax Pickering Chapter
- Conseil des organismes francophones de la Region de Durham (COFRD)
- Credit Counselling Society
- Cultural Expression for CHANGE!
- Durham Children's Aid Society
- Durham Chinese Canadian Culture Centre
- Durham College
- Durham Community Legal Clinic
- Durham Family & Cultural Centre
- Durham Master Gardeners
- Durham Public Health
- Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
- Durham Youth Services
- EarlyON Child and Family Centre Durham
- Fill a Purse for a Sister Campaign
- Gap Committee
- Grandview Kids
- Herizon House
- Hispanic Canadian Alliance of Durham
- John Howard Society of Durham Region
- Literacy Network of Durham Region
- Muslim Women of Durham Region
- Ontario Caregiver Association
- Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council
- Ontario Shores Recovery College
- Ontario Tech University
- Region of Durham
- RBC Wealth Management
- Safety Network Durham
- Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Centre Inc.
- Self-Management Program Central East
- Service Canada
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
- Town of Ajax
- Tri-Regional Infant Hearing Program
- University of Toronto Scarborough
- Victim Services of Durham Region
- Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
- WMRCC: Women's Multicultural Resource & Counseling Centre
- YMCA Greater Toronto
- Youth Pride Durham

Valuing Ontario Libraries

Ontario Library Service (OLS) and Nordik Institute created the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) to measure the value and impact of public libraries in their communities. The framework is built around the concept of Social Return on Investment (SROI), which applies a dollar value to services offered at no charge, such as library programs and circulation.

The total value of free services, programs, and spaces provided by the Library is over \$77,000,000. These directly support Ajax residents and the social and cultural fabric of our Town.

	Economic Value
Total SROI	\$77,609,881.36
SROI Benefit per Resident	\$612.71

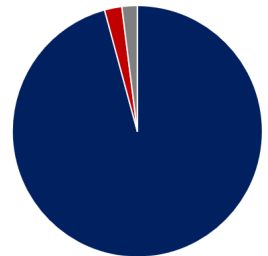


For each dollar (\$1) invested in Ajax Public Library, the community experiences a **\$10.90 SROI!**

Financials

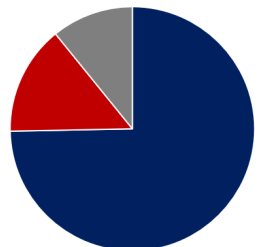
Income

- Town of Ajax Operating Grant: \$7,528,100
- Provincial and Federal Grants: \$176,002
- Other Income: \$155,979



Expenses

- Staffing: \$5,723,644
- Operations: \$1,109,259
- Collections: \$829,966



*Above figures are not final until the Library's annual audit.



Mission

Design experiences and connections where community, discovery, and innovation intersect.

Vision

A welcoming and exceptional Library empowering success within our diverse community.

Stay Connected

905-683-4000

libraryinfo@ajaxlibrary.ca

ajaxlibrary.ca

Main Branch

55 Harwood Ave. S

McLean Branch & Makerspace

95 Magill Dr.

Audley Branch

1955 Audley Rd. N

Grandview Kids Express Branch

1461 Harwood Ave. N.