

**Boulder Public Library**

**2023**

**Annual Report**

**BOULDER**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY





# Message from the Director



**After more than 35 years, the North Boulder Library came out of the ground in 2023 and will officially open its doors in the summer of 2024.** It is testament to the vision and persistence of so many community members and organizations that it would be impossible to name them all in this report. We are truly grateful and hope everyone experiences a sense of joy and pride at this milestone.

When you read this, most of the construction will be complete. The doors will likely be open. It is the first public building in all of North Boulder. The architecture is beautiful and thoughtful, and the building meets or exceeds all local guidelines for energy efficiency. It will continue all the excellent services the NoBo Corner library has provided for years. It will have considerably more books and programs, a makerspace, more places to sit, sizable public meeting rooms, BoulderReads adult and children literacy programs, and even a playground with a gigantic yellow slide.

But I think my favorite goal for the project is the one that Celine, our NoBo library manager, set some time ago; she wants everyone who enters the building to see a familiar face and feel welcome.

“Every person, organization, and even society reaches a point at which they owe it to themselves to hit refresh—to reenergize, renew, reframe, and rethink their purpose. If only it were so easy as punching that little refresh button on your browser.”

- Satya Nadella

**After 116 years as a department of the City of Boulder, 2023 marked the transition of the Boulder Public Library to an independent library district.**

In a way, it is similar to building a new building. But it has also felt a little like starting an organization from scratch: new governance structure, new laws, new Board of Trustees, new charter, new boundaries, new IT system, new HRIS, new finance, new payroll, new insurance, and more. It felt very much like the library work we were familiar with.

I am pleased to report that 95% of the transition was completed in 2023. All the staff came with us, along with all the books, programs, puppets, legos, furniture, and what have you. We closed for only three days to switch out all the computer hardware and software to set up a new network. The remaining changes were completed in the first quarter of 2024, and we have begun to hire new staff. We have also built a work plan to commence every one of our 2018 – 2028 strategic planning goals.

**This year will see NoBo open, followed by renewed investment in the Canyon Theater, Carnegie Library for Local History, Library Café, BLDG61, our BoulderReads literacy and outreach strategic plan, and opening a library in Gunbarrel.**

Along the way, we will double our investment in maintaining and upgrading our current buildings to be greener and more efficient. We have increased the resources we devote to purchasing books, ebooks, and other media by 60%. We have also increased funding for the security and cleaning of our buildings.

None of this would have been possible without community support, staff resilience, innovation, and the tireless devotion of hardworking volunteers. Unbeknownst to most folks who walk through our doors, volunteers comprise about 10% of our workforce. In 2023, 710 volunteers contributed more than 16,200 hours of talent to the library. They do everything from reading to children, capturing oral histories, answering technology questions, teaching citizenship classes, tutor adults learning English, to helping produce programs and festivals. And finally, library volunteers govern our institution.

**Library staff and I wish to extend a huge and heartfelt thanks to all the inaugural Boulder Public Library District Board of Trustees: Joni Teter, Benita Duran, Sam Fuqua, Cara O'Brien, Sylvia Wirba, Jenn Yee, and Doug Hamilton.**

These seven volunteers, appointed by the Boulder City Council and the Boulder County Commission (Steven Frost, Scott Steinbrecher, Benita Duran, Sylvia Wirba, Miriam Gilbert) and seated in May of 2023, contributed nearly 700 hours of precious time, talent, thoughtfulness, and an immeasurable amount of reading, listening, and honest debate in putting together and approving the guiding documents, bylaws, policies, manuals, and budget which created the Boulder Public Library District and gave it the structure to run.

Thank you and enjoy reading our 2023 Annual Report.

**David Farnan, Library Director**

# Financials

## 2023 Approved Budget Sources

BPLD Property Tax	\$18,020,924
BPLD One-time/Capital	\$945,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,965,924</b>

City of Boulder Grant Funds for North Boulder Branch Library Construction	\$175,000
---	-----------

## 2023 Actual Expenditures

Personnel	\$6,353,488
Library Materials and Resources	\$1,097,424
Other Operating Costs	\$4,608,936
Capital	\$767,405
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,827,253</b>

City of Boulder North Boulder Branch Library Capital	\$7,036,842
---	-------------



## Budget Information

## Noteworthy Budget Information

- The Boulder Public Library District received the first property tax revenues in 2023.
- The City of Boulder managed library staff and expenditures from the City's General Fund.
- The Boulder Public Library District will repay the City of Boulder all 2023 operating and internal service costs in 2024.
- The City of Boulder continued project and capital budget management for the new north Boulder branch library project.

# DISTRICT TRANSITION

- The Boulder Public Library District (BPLD) became official as of January 1, 2023.
- Seven community members who reside within the district were appointed to the BPLD Board of Trustees.
- The Board worked in collaboration with City of Boulder staff members and the Boulder County Board of County Commissioners to negotiate Intergovernmental Agreements for the transfer of city library services to the district.
- Simultaneously, the board hired David Farnan to continue as Library Director and began planning and setting up the infrastructure for transferring library staff and assets to the district, which occurred on January 1, 2024.
- Planning also began in response to the campaign promises made during the November 2022 election when the community was asked to support the formation and funding of the district.



The promises made by the newly-created board and leadership team were:

- Address the facilities maintenance backlog.
- Restore library hours to pre-COVID 19 pandemic levels.
- Restore Carnegie Library for Local History staff positions and resume open hours.
- Restore staff positions for BLDG61 makerspace.
- Increase staff to support programs and rental of the Canyon Theater.
- Expand the BoulderReads family literacy program.
- Open a Gunbarrel Corner Library.
- Expand early literacy and outreach programs to Latinx community members.

# NEW NORTH BOULDER LIBRARY



In 2023, construction commenced on the new North Boulder Library, symbolizing our commitment to community enrichment and education. This modern architectural building, spanning approximately **11,000 square feet**, will serve as a vibrant hub of knowledge, culture, and connectivity.

Expected to reach completion by mid-2024, the facility will have **two meeting rooms**, an **indoor/outdoor makerspace**, a **playground**, and will house **BoulderReads offices, classrooms, and study rooms**.

# Volunteers

710 volunteers  
gave 16,228 hours,  
a value of \$516,050.

**710**  
Volunteers

**\$516,050**

Value

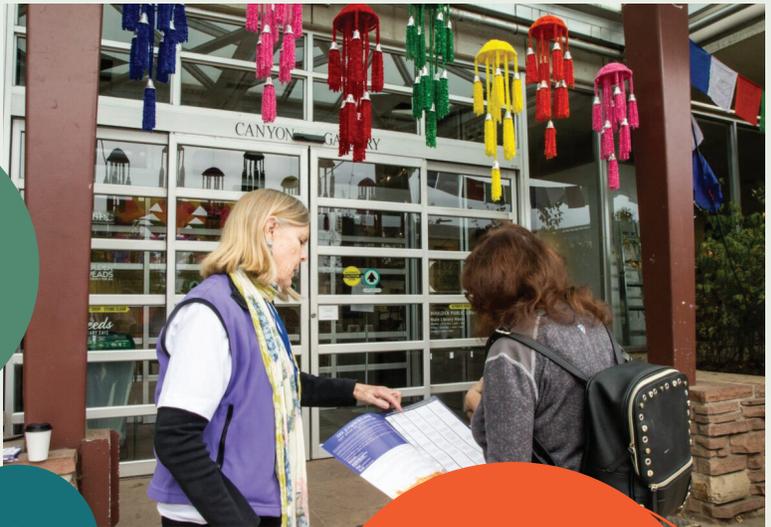
**16,228**  
Service hours

But the numbers only tell part of the story. The efforts of our volunteers are far reaching. Their energy, ideas, and passion have an invaluable, positive impact in our community! The library is very grateful for their dedicated service.

**Summer of Discovery:** 88 teen volunteers and 15 adult volunteers gave 1,405 hours to register patrons in summer reading and activity challenges.

**Conversations in English:** Volunteer facilitators gave 925 hours to lead online and in-person conversation sessions six days a week.

*“Through **BoulderReads** tutoring program, 45 tutors gave over 3,600 hours in training, preparation, and instruction. As a result, learners became citizens, started small businesses, bought homes, received high school diplomas, and more.”*



# Programs

# BOULDERREADS

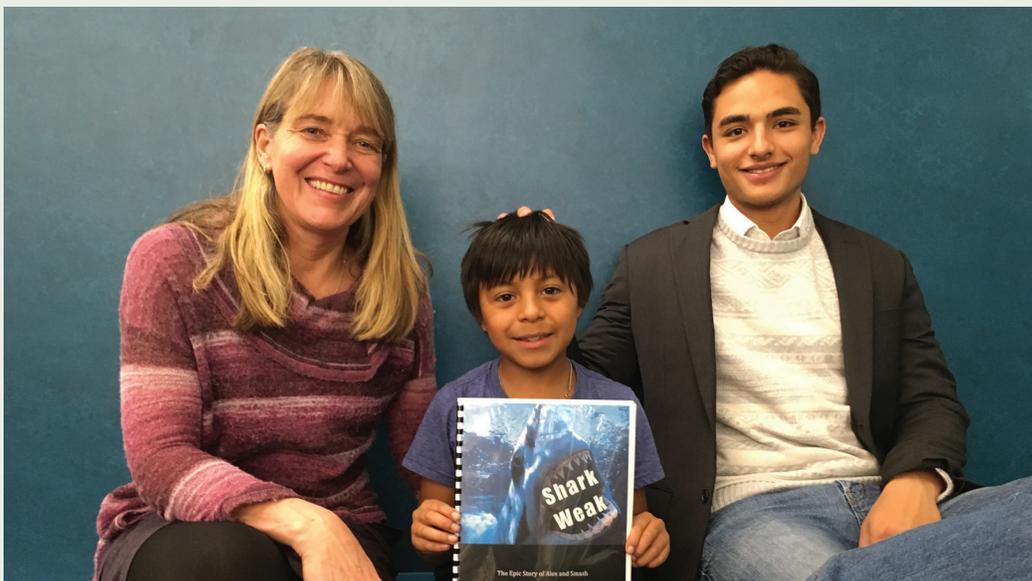
LITERACY FOR ALL



Three sessions of the Reading Buddies supported 40 Little Buddies.

In 2023, **BoulderReads** began hiring for expansion into 2024. New hires included a general program manager and a children's literacy coordinator for the Reading Buddies program. Their enthusiasm and support are enhancing program accessibility. Also, a new **Literacy & Outreach Strategic Plan** was introduced, guiding our future programs.

- **46 active adult learners** and volunteers participated in the **One-on-One Literacy Tutoring program**.
- **140 new learners** participated in the **Conversation in English groups online and in person**. **Nine volunteers** gave **925 hours** of service.
- **Four learners** graduated from the **Career Online High School** with a full scholarship and **five more** enrolled.



## Circulation & Use

**552,408**

Visitors across  
all locations

**1,500,289**

Total check outs or  
borrows including  
physical and digital  
formats

**1,028,120**

Physical item check outs  
or borrows

**472,169**

Digital formats and  
database use (Overdrive,  
Kanopy, and research/  
creative databases)

**444,261**

Check outs or borrows of  
children's materials

## Library Resource Use

# MEETING & STUDY ROOMS

**21,247**  
HOURS

874 individual users made 11,422 reservations to use the library meeting and study rooms. This equates to **21,247** hours of meeting and study room use!

**4,319,170**

[boulderlibrary.org](http://boulderlibrary.org) &  
[boulder.marmot.org](http://boulder.marmot.org)  
combined page views

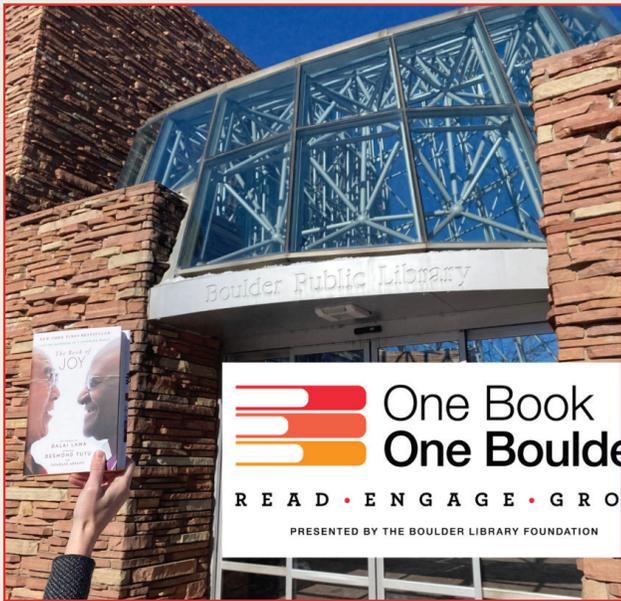
WEBSITE

BPL NEWSLETTER

**54,716** NEWSLETTER  
SUBSCRIBERS

## Programs

# ONE BOOK ONE BOULDER



The 2023 One Book One Boulder (OBOB) selection was the “**Book of Joy**.” As pandemic restrictions continued to ease, the library shifted all programming, including the final author talk, to in-person.

- For the first time, the OBOB selection was **available in Spanish**.
- **35 people** took part in the training to become a book circle leader and **23 active groups** formed.
- **Total circulation was 828**.
- **1,055 people attended** OBOB programs, a 31% increase over the 733 program attendees in 2021.

2023 was the first time ever OBOB was able to offer an in-person author talk, bringing back events to the Canyon Theater! **Douglas Abrams** gave an inspiring talk, followed by a conversation and audience Q&A.

Approximately **175 people attended** this event, which was filmed by Channel 8.



“It was a very uplifting and deep discussion - thank you/the group who selected this book for a perfect choice.”

# Programs

## SUMMER OF DISCOVERY



**BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY 2023  
SUMMER OF DISCOVERY**  
Proudly presented by Boulder Library Foundation

**OUR CONNECTED WORLD**  
Experiences for all ages  
June 1 – July 31  
[boulderlibrary.org/summer](https://boulderlibrary.org/summer)

BOULDER LIBRARY FOUNDATION  
 COLD STONE  
 City of Boulder Parks & Recreation  
BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY

**3,618**  
Participants

**1,405**  
Volunteer hours

**Minutes read**

**2,152,278**

- 2,138 out of 3,618 participants successfully completed the challenge, resulting in a completion rate of 60%.
- **Volunteers gave 1,405 hours of service!** These volunteers registered participants online and handed out prizes during the program.
- 2,152,278 minutes read by participants cumulatively during the summer.



# BOULDER LIBRARY FOUNDATION

The Boulder Library Foundation increases funding for services that help the people of Boulder develop and grow by raising money, increasing awareness, advocating for the library, and encouraging community involvement.

**150**

New donors

**371**

Total donors

**\$324,000**

Raised, including \$119,000 for the new North Boulder Library capital campaign.

**\$23,000**

Spent on direct programming, including six free live music performances, monthly midday music meditations, and three short story dispensers.

Granted to the library for programs and capital construction projects in 2023.

**4,151**

Newsletter subscribers, a 14% increase.

**\$377,000**

Learn more about the foundation or donate by visiting [boulderlibraryfoundation.org](https://boulderlibraryfoundation.org).



**BOULDER** PUBLIC LIBRARY

[boulderlibrary.org](http://boulderlibrary.org)