



# ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

### Updates from the CEO and Board Chair

2023-24 was another busy year at the library! The past two years have been filled with major staffing changes - many of our dedicated staff have retired, and new staff are learning the ropes.

Despite all the internal changes, library services were full steam ahead. There was a 5% increase overall in library usage compared to 2022-23, and we continue to grow beyond pre-pandemic heights.

Later in 2024, we are looking forward to rejuvenating the Library's strategic plan after engaging our communities in consultation. We can't wait to hear where our communities want to take their libraries next!



Julia Merritt, Chief Executive Officer

January 2024 marks the 75th Anniversary of the creation of The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) as the first regional public library in Nova Scotia. From its inception, AVRL has been innovative and forward-thinking, starting with having the first bookmobile in Canada! Understanding and responding to social, economic, and cultural changes that the citizens and patrons of Public Libraries value and support has been key to successful operation over 75 years. 2023-2024 has been a transformative year for AVRL, as it positions itself to address the new and emerging needs for the next 75 years.

In January 2023, AVRL welcomed Julia Merritt as our new CEO and leader of a new management team following the retirements of long-term employees with over 150 years of collective service to the AVRL. As with many organizations facing new challenges post-Covid, Julia looked ahead to the opportunities that re-organization presents, and has guided AVRL forward with the promise of many more years of public library service to the residents and patrons of our 11 branches from Annapolis County to Windsor-West Hants County.

Janet Ness, Chair

NEW USERS

**4,683**



ACTIVE USERS

**24,037**

TOTAL PROGRAMS

**1,989**



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

**14,498**



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## Highlights

- The Same Page partnership with the 8 rural libraries in Nova Scotia continues to be a resounding success in its second year. AVRL users borrowed over 157,000 items - 20% more than 2022-23!
- Over 4,000 new memberships were issued, which means 1 in 5 residents in Annapolis Valley is actively using their library card.
- The Lawrencetown branch began piloting changes to its hours, eliminating the dinner-hour closure to provide uninterrupted service for the public.
- AVRL celebrated the generous bequest of the late Mr. Donald Evans, who donated over \$1.2 million for the long-term benefit of the Annapolis Royal branch.

DIGITAL ITEMS BORROWED

**108,311**

TOTAL ITEMS BORROWED

**800,152**

PUBLIC COMPUTER ACCESS (HOURS)

**21,689**

WIRELESS USAGE (HOURS)

**282,269**