

Kent  
District  
Library

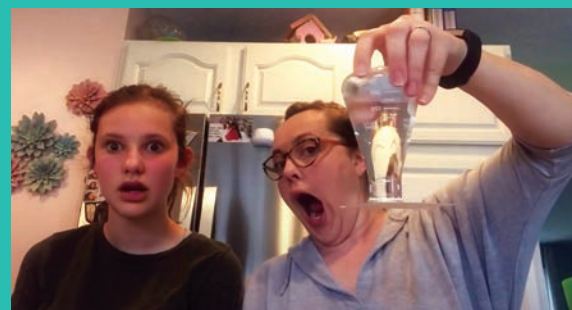


2020 Annual Report

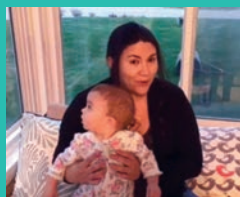
Information●  
Ideas▲  
Excitement!







# Resilience & hope



Greetings! As I reflect on 2020, and all the change and uncertainty it brought to the library (and the world), two words come to mind – resilience and hope.

Last year certainly brought its challenges, but we never allowed those challenges to stop us from serving our communities. Our impact continued. Our branches were closed to in-person visits for a time, but the library never closed. We continued to put library materials into the hands of our patrons via curbside pickup and online offerings. We continued to entertain and educate children through virtual programming and an at-home Summer Wonder program. We held a very successful virtual fundraising event. We even launched a new service – Book Bundles – that gave people an easy way to get a collection of books to try when they couldn't browse our shelves.

We did all these things while doing what we could to keep our staff and patrons safe and healthy. I am so proud of the resilience we showed.

We have so much hope for the future! 2020 laid a great foundation for 2021. We can't wait until things get "back to normal," but we hope it's a new normal – a normal where we are more flexible, creative and customer-focused than ever before.

Thank you so much for all the support and encouragement you have given us this past year. We hope you join us for all the excitement that is to come!

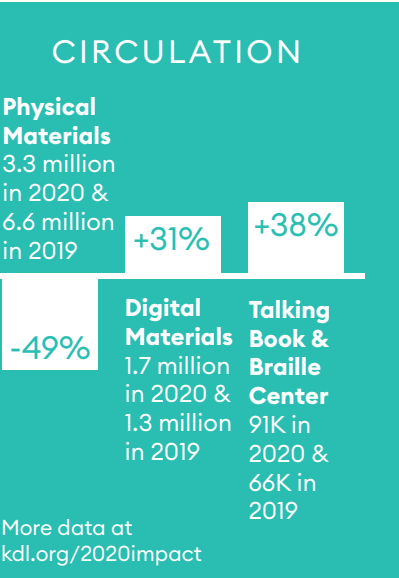
Sincerely,  
Lance Werner  
Executive Director



1,402 livestreamed programs and outreach events were created in 2020 to bring the library into homes during the pandemic. For a schedule of upcoming programs, visit [kdl.org/events](http://kdl.org/events).

2020 started like most years, with great excitement and planning for the year ahead. With news of Coronavirus, we immediately shifted gears on several fronts.

While COVID guidelines changed frequently, the need for library services and the desire to visit branches never wavered. In many ways it's become more important as people seek solace through reading, learning and staying connected with others. We continue to go above and beyond to safely serve you.



Review of emergency preparedness began in January. In March, about a week before the stay-at-home order was announced, the library closed to in-person visits. Staff continued to work from home and events shifted to online live-streamed programs. Additionally, checkout limits for digital resources were increased and new library cards became available with a simplified online application.

With new limits on physical access to the library, it was no surprise that circulation of physical materials dropped. At the same time, digital circulation rose, new curbside service was launched, Summer Wonder workbooks were delivered to households, Seed Library packets were delivered by mail and a new website was launched.

We were also due to develop a new strategic plan. Our options were to wait for things to settle down or press forward. We opted to develop a new strategic plan. The framework of the new plan is shown on these pages.





KDL staff quickly responded to the pandemic, meeting the increased need for online resources, programs and outreach.



Mobile WiFi Hotspots circulated 2,888 times and checkout periods increased from three weeks to four months.

+110% eVideo circulation on Hoopla

+28% eMusic circulation on Hoopla

+11% eMusic streaming on Freegal

+60% eAudiobook circulation on Hoopla

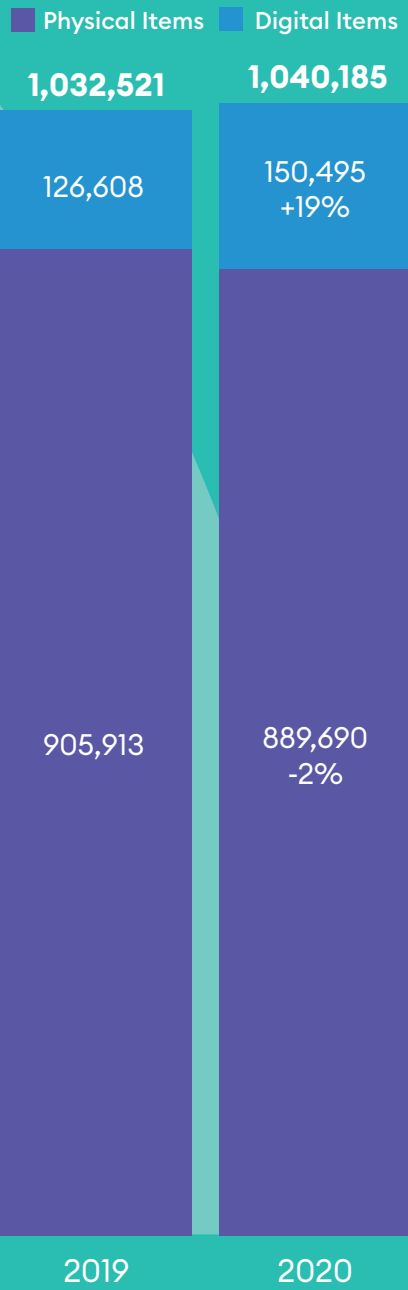
+134% eBook circulation on Hoopla

+37% eBook circulation on OverDrive and cloudLibrary in 2020

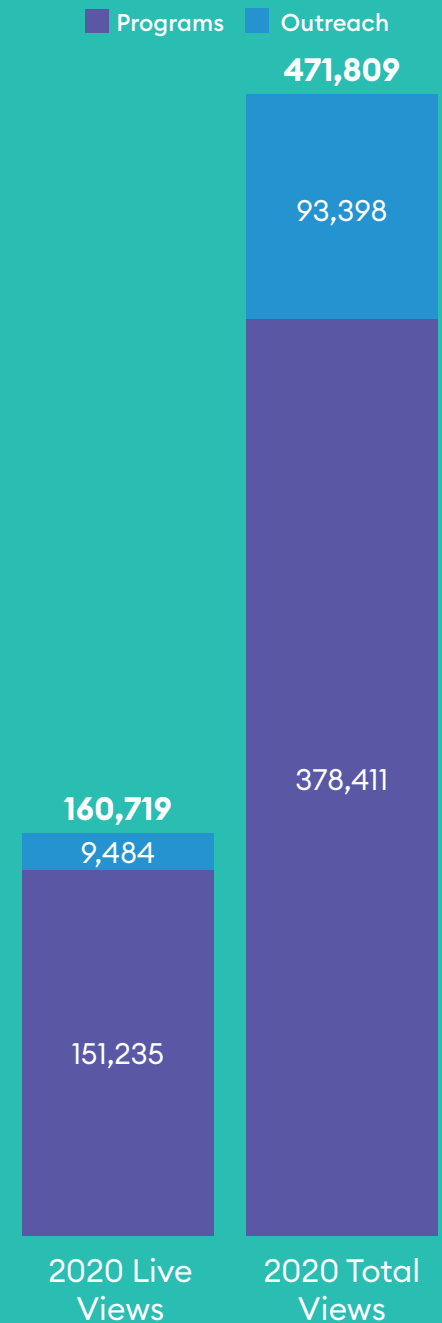
OverDrive replaced cloudLibrary in June

More data at [kdl.org/2020impact](http://kdl.org/2020impact)

## Collection size increased 0.7%



## Virtual Programs and Outreach\*



1,218 virtual programs and 184 virtual outreach visits were conducted during 2020, bringing the library into homes during the pandemic.



\*Virtual programs and outreach are entirely new categories of activity. They resemble traditional programs and outreach, except that they're live-streamed online and include interactivity with viewers.

2020 digital circulation  
**+31%**



## Men of Color Read

On January 24, 2020, the Men of Color Read initiative was launched in Kent County. Over 25 men met at the Martin Luther King Leadership Academy to read to small groups of children. The kids loved it!

Jon Covington founded Men of Color Read (MOCR) in Los Angeles over a decade ago. The program came to Muskegon five years ago, and has now found a home in Grand Rapids. Men of Color Read is a literacy initiative comprised of men in the community determined to help eradicate functional illiteracy and improve youth reading skills. The men visit urban schools once a month to read to and connect with students.

“We couldn’t be more excited about our partnership with KDL,” said Covington. “Functional illiteracy in any community is not a THEIR problem, it’s an OUR problem. And it’s going to take all of us to eradicate it.”

KDL is pleased to support the partnership between MOCR and MLK Leadership Academy. We are hoping to help expand the program into other schools in Kent County.

“We dream, plan and execute not FOR our community but WITH our community, because we are who we serve,” said Sara Proaño, Community Engagement Manager. “KDL strives to come beside leaders and shakers, such as Jon Covington, and support their efforts for better access, better presence and better representation. Thank you MLK Leadership Academy and MOCR!”

The pandemic put a pause on the program’s in-school visits, but MOCR will restart in the beginning of 2021 with a live-streamed program.

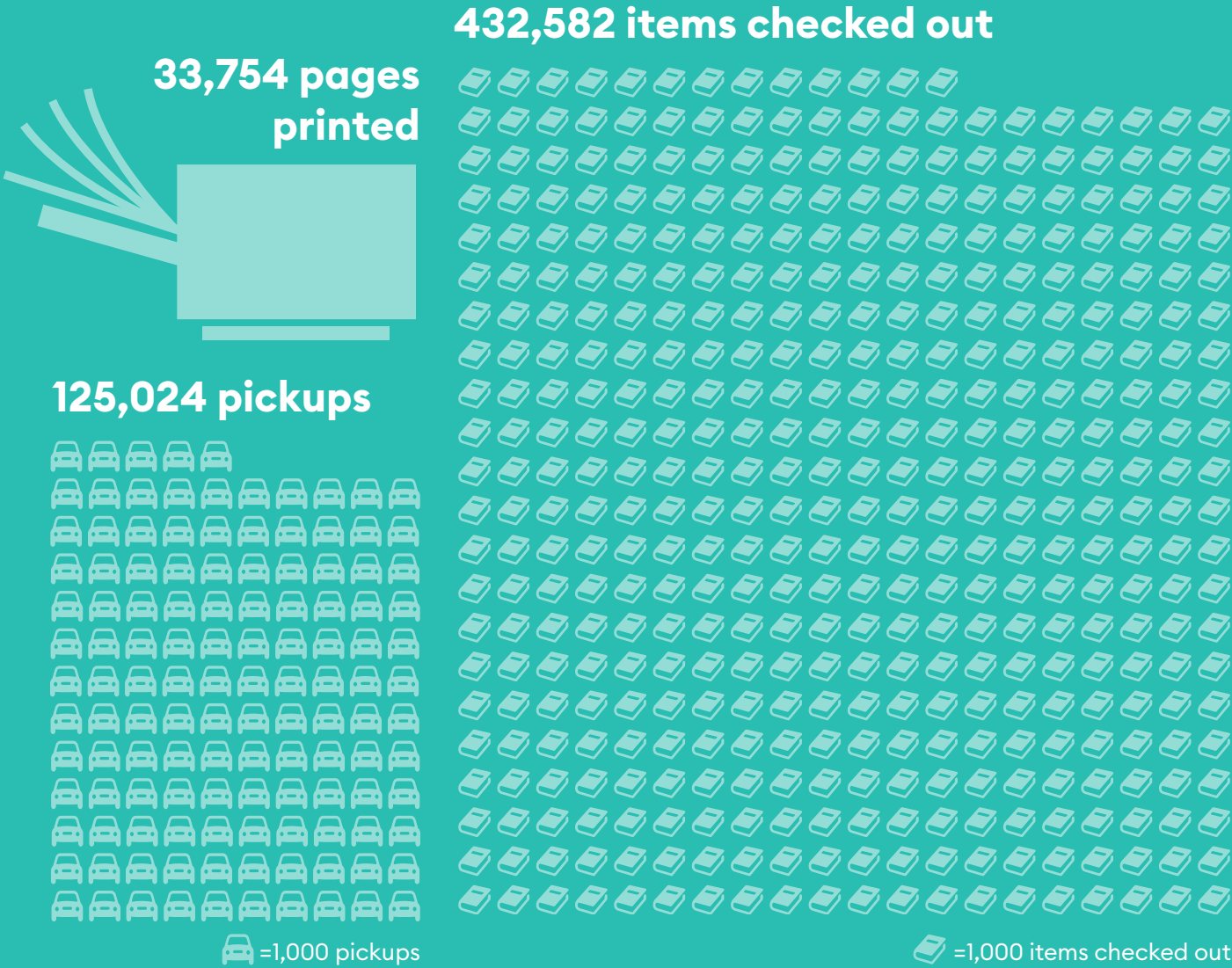




# Curbside service launched in June



Curbside service opened up an entirely new way to access the library. This service was conceived when the public was unable to visit the library in person. “People really miss visiting the library in person,” said KDL User Experience Manager Morgan Hanks. “Curbside service restores the in-person services that so many people love, and does it in a way that’s safe for everyone.” Curbside printing was introduced in August and its popularity took off immediately.



More data at [kdl.org/2020impact](https://kdl.org/2020impact)

# The Lyles are a KDL Family



The Lyle family: Matt, Katie, Avalon (8), Brielle (6), Myla (3), and Jude (4mo). They school at home for now. Matt works at GE Aviation and Katie is a stay-at-home mom.

“Since Avalon was one year old, we have been attending storytimes and checking out books. We’ve gone from 10 books a week to now over 50+ new books and activities a week. The resources at the library have fit us at each stage! I earned my Master’s degree in Reading and Literacy and know the immense value of providing quality books and materials, which the library has a vast amount of.

KDL has provided access for my children to thousands of books, which we could not do on our own. We enjoy tens of thousands of dollars worth of books each year from KDL.

While we haven’t been inside the library in months, KDL continues to innovate and provide easy access to books and materials. We’ve loved being able to pull up and have our holds delivered to our vehicle, especially during the last few months with a newborn. I know I use more library resources now than I ever did before COVID. Here are a few that I use now that I didn’t when going in person: curbside printing, to-go crafts, Book Bundles (saves me so much time and they’re very well curated!), Personalized Picks for my 8 year old, KDL Go! Packs, live stream storytimes and book discussions, and many more!

Our favorite thing about KDL is the people. The other week when picking up my materials curbside, I mentioned to Mr. Greg that I felt bad about checking out so many things and creating so much work for them. He responded with, “You’re why we’re here!” What a great attitude! We used to attend Miss Hennie’s storytimes and always loved seeing her at the library. She’s always welcoming with a smile, waving hello to the kids, and providing excellent book advice!

A fun little memory: When the library opened up for curbside after having been completely closed at the start of COVID, my girls were SO excited that they made signs for the car. Things like ‘I love the library! We missed you!’ It was so fun to watch them so excited for new books.”

Katie Lyle



## Talking Book and Braille Center circulation increased 38%

The Kent District Library Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC) is one of nine Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Advisory and Outreach Centers in Michigan and is part of the National Library Service Network. We serve all of Kent, Montcalm and Ionia counties, providing books, magazines, videos and DVDs in alternative formats (digital audio cartridge, Braille and descriptive videos), as well as downloadable materials in audio and electronic Braille. These materials are shipped free directly to the patron’s home and are mailed back free to TBBC.

66,051  
Items  
Checked Out

91,408  
Items  
Checked Out



“When you first told me about those audiobooks, I thought there was no way I was gonna let somebody read my books to me. But it let me keep reading when my eyes let me down. It ended up really being a lifesaver.”

Bob Alspaugh, 96-year-old patron of TBBC and lifelong reader

2019

2020





Despite all the pandemic-related closures, the KDL Bookmobile remained busy with visits to Bethany Christian Services and Feeding America food pantries, in addition to hosting Meet Up and Eat Up meals and conducting virtual visits to senior centers.

“In the programs at Bethany that serve Hispanic children ages 4 to 17 in our educational center, many of our children are youth who have been historically under-served and are academically, socially and/or emotionally behind their peers.

Our bilingual staff work with children based on their educational level, not their age, so our classrooms have varying levels of ability in any given subject. A little over two years ago, we began working with the KDL Community Engagement Department when they offered us 300 Spanish and bilingual books, as well as a book stand. This simple gesture blossomed into not only book donations so our children could read books in their own language, but we also began to receive books to support ESL acquisition.

After about three months or so, KDL’s mobile library called the Bookmobile began coming to our site. Staff read stories and teach the kids how to borrow and return books... something they had never done before. The kids have been so excited to see the Bookmobile and check out books each week. The KDL staff are helping our children develop healthy reading habits that will last a lifetime.

Once COVID-19 hit, KDL staff went above and beyond. Each week, library staff drop off the supplies we need for our virtual session with library staff that week. They have a different class and activity each week via Zoom and have been extremely creative in finding topics of interest for our children. Our kids have enjoyed learning about magnets, electricity, mummifying an apple, music and many other topics.

I cannot begin to tell you how much it means to our staff and students to have the incredible staff at Kent District Library working with us! If it were not for them, our kids would not have the opportunity to learn about how the library works and have so many wonderful resources such as bilingual books and other items they donated to our program. They have truly been a blessing!”

Jennifer Crampton, Teacher BA, Transitional Foster Care  
Bethany Christian Services of Michigan



Bookmobile visit at Farmworker's Appreciation Day in October.





814 W. River Center Dr. NE, Comstock Park, MI 49321 // **kdl.org**

Kent District Library is a public library system operating 20 branch libraries and a Bookmobile that serve nearly 400,000 residents of 27 different municipalities throughout Kent County. KDL enriches lives by providing information, ideas and excitement. It is an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by millage dollars and private donations. KDL is a member of the Lakeland Library Cooperative. For more information, visit [kdl.org](http://kdl.org).

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