



Agenda: Board of Trustees  
August 3, 2023, at 4 pm  
Conference Room, Downtown Library

### ***Literacy, Access, & Inclusion***

Library Board President – Clint Twedt-Ball

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: July 6, 2023
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Board Education: Strategic Plan Update – Right Patron Right Time Connections Initiative – Amber McNamara
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
    - No Action
  - Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
    - No Action
  - Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
    - No Action
  - Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
    - No Action
- H. Library Director's Report
- I. Old Business
  - **Action:** Contract Amendment No. 1: OPN Architects for Westside Library Project (original contract amount was \$1,272,100; total contract amount with this amendment is \$1,282,800).
- J. New Business
- K. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **September 7, 2023 at 4 pm**, in the Community Room, Ladd Library.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email [musilj@crlibrary.org](mailto:musilj@crlibrary.org) as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**July 6, 2023**

**Board members in attendance:** [Vice President] Monica Challenger, Elisabeth Hepworth, Susie McDermott, Jeremy Elges (in person); Chris Casey, Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

**Board members unable to attend:** [President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Jade Hart, Rafael Jacobo

**Staff in attendance:** Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Erin Horst, Kevin Delecki, Jessica Musil (in person); Jessica Link, Todd Simonson, Patrick Duggan (via Zoom)

**Others:** Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person)

- A. Call to Order
  - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: June 1, 2023
  - Mr. Elges moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. McDermott seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- C. Public Comments and Communications
  - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Tyler. The Foundation staff is working hard to meet donor commitment goals and schedule conversations with potential donors for the Westside Library project.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - The Friends have been busy with summer Farmer’s Market sales, which have been successful. The Friends are hopeful the remaining sales will also be a success. In addition, online sales are going well, and they have found a lucrative market for old textbooks.
  - At the next Friends board meeting, the organization will welcome new board members.
- F. Board Education: Strategic Plan Year Two Update – Dara Schmidt
  - In July, library staff will start working on year two of the current strategic plan. The first year went well, and the respective committee chairs reported to the board throughout the past year on the progress. Ms. Schmidt read through the year two goals and initiatives for the three main pillars of the plan: Literacy, Access, and Inclusion. She also reviewed a calendar indicating when the teams will work on the initiatives over the next 12 months. As with last year, the committee chairs will report to the board as appropriate.
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Nominating Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
    - **Action:** Slate of Officers FY24. The committee recommended another year with the current leadership slate: Clint Twedt-Ball as President and Monica Challenger as Vice President. The committee believes they will continue to lead the board well in the next year, and both nominees agreed to continue service if approved.  
*The committee recommendation to re-appoint Mr. Twedt-Ball as President and Ms. Challenger as Vice President for FY24 carried with unanimous approval.*
  - Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
    - Ms. Schmidt reported for Mr. Jacobo. At the June Advocacy meeting, the discussion centered on current legislation efforts impacting libraries. The library shared talking points with trustees, Foundation, Friends, staff, and other advocates.

- Unfortunately, the library had to sever the relationship with the Cedar Rapids Community School District to create library cards for students because of concerns with State Law 496. The law limits what can be available in school libraries, and the school district chose to stop issuing library cards based on school IDs in response to the law in order to protect students and educators. Library leadership will review with the program with the district again in a year as well as discuss other opportunities. Ms. Schmidt noted that ten percent of the cards were used regularly, and those cards will remain active for the students. The library removes any inactive library cards after three years. In an upcoming purge of inactive accounts, we expect library cardholder numbers to drop significantly, as this program started about three years ago. Ms. Schmidt also believes that this legislation may put additional pressure on public libraries to maintain collections as school libraries are limited.
- Ms. McNamara noted that the committee also discussed implications on city budgets because of legislative changes capping taxes. It's possible these caps could impact the FY25 budget, requiring modifications. The law also reduces a senior tax base, which could impact the budget as well.
- Ms. Casey asked if the library has heard from school librarians about books that they can no longer shelve. We've heard that some are boxing and storing books for now. Schools are waiting to receive final direction from the state level and school administration before doing any more. The Friends have not received any discarded books for donation yet.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Challenger reviewed the May Finance memo as presented in the board packet. Eleven months into the fiscal year, the library has received 91% of revenues and has paid out 89% of the anticipated expenses. The final fiscal year accounting will not be available until September or October, at which point they will have been certified by the City. Once received, the board will receive an update. Ms. Schmidt also noted that Finance committee will not meet in August due to lack of June financial information.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - **Action:** Policy 3.08 Right to Protest, Petition, and Assemble.
    - The committee is recommending a new policy. Ms. Schmidt reported that other libraries similar in size and larger have this type of policy, so it's not uncommon. The committee has had multiple conversations to hone the policy prior to having it vetted by the City Attorney.

*The committee recommendation to adopt the new policy as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.*

- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Hart. The committee will meet again at the end of July. OPN has adjusted the building design, and that design's cost will be estimated to ensure the project remains on target for the budget. The cost estimation will be ready for the next meeting to review. At this point in the project, we will likely take a pause for fundraising. In June 2024, the library trustees will ask the Foundation for possession of the land with groundbreaking to occur not long after. The goal is to open in September 2026. A more detailed report should go to the board in August after the committee meeting.
  - Ms. McDermott asked Ms. Schmidt if she learned anything interesting at American Library Association (ALA) conference regarding building projects? Ms. Schmidt went to a session on net zero architecture, and shared about a library on the east coast that used geothermal and solar to be net zero for energy use. Ms. Schmidt will ask OPN if this could be possible for the Westside Library.

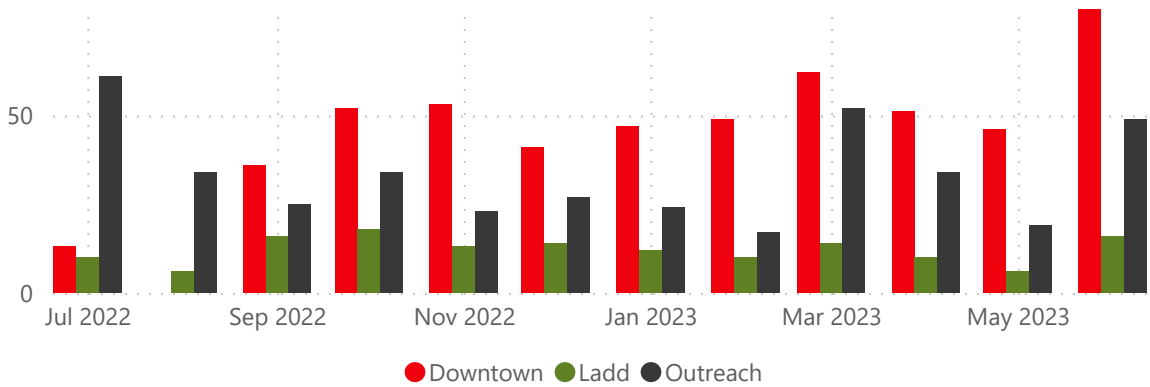
#### H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt attended the ALA conference at the end of June. During the conference, she attended her final meeting as a Public Library Association (PLA) board member. Though her three-year term is over, she may join a committee in future. In general, Ms. Schmidt attended on building projects. Otherwise, she focused on intellectual freedom and developing strong board policies. Ms. Schmidt feels very confident that our library is preparing well for future issues.
  - The summer reading program continues to go strong with sign-ups, programming attendance, and community engagement. The end of summer party is on July 29. Though the program is halfway done, Ms. Schmidt encouraged people to join.
  - The library was accredited through the State Library of Iowa for another three years at the top tier. Ms. Schmidt expressed thanks to the trustees for reviewing the policies and staff for their work as well. It is a time-consuming process but it's really important to complete to benefit our community.
- I. Old Business
- There being no old business, the meeting continued.
- J. New Business
- There being no new business, the meeting continued.
- K. Adjournment
- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

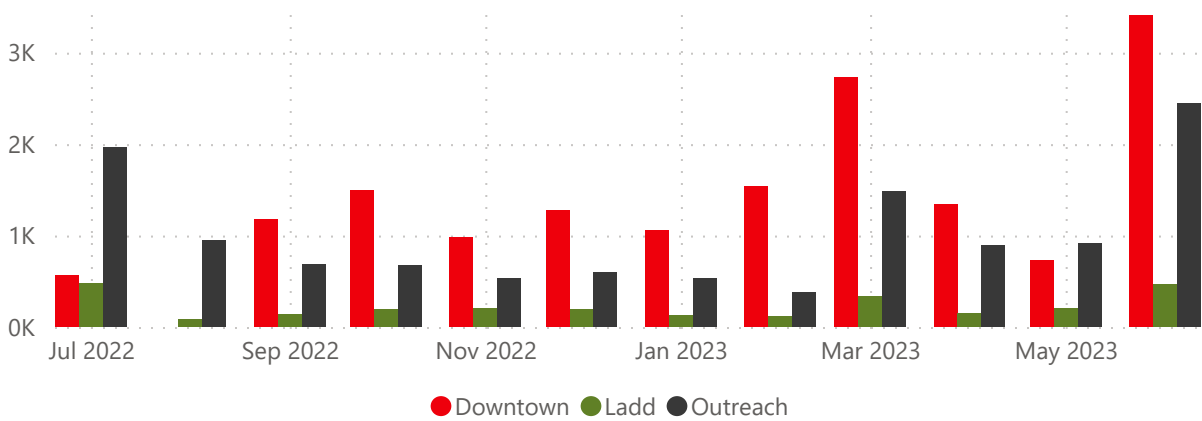
**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library**



Programs



1,074  
# of Programs



30,969  
# of Attendees

The Programming department is winding down with Summer Dare, and what an exciting summer it has been! So far, more than 12,000 patrons have attended programs in our buildings and all over the community, and more than 2,000 people have signed up and read nearly one million minutes this summer! Programs have been successful in many different avenues, with park visits and outreach exceeding all previous years' attendance, baby and toddler play times and preschool story times regularly exceeding 80 attendees each day, hundreds of people getting to experience magic, music, animals, and more at our special performances, and weekend programs giving families the opportunity to build forts, meet dinosaurs, try out our maker spaces, and celebrate with Pride.

Here are three recent stories from out at the parks:

1. At Jacolyn Park, a boy around kindergarten age, came over to the table of books. He quickly looked at the books and proclaimed he did not like books. I told him that we would not force him to take a book, but he was welcome to come back later if he changed his mind. Towards the end of his family's visit to the park, he came back around and selected a book. No one on staff said anything to him, but we noticed he returned for a book. He came running back to the library tent to let us know he found a book by saying, "Did you see I picked a book?"

2. At Hayes Park, a young boy had selected a book. He saw Grace for President and asked if he could have that book too because "the character looks like me."

3. At Hughes Park, a young girl with the YMCA childcare was looking to select a book. She found one she liked and asked if she could keep it. I told her yes it was hers to keep. She then asked, "forever?" I told her "forever ever." She then asked, "until I'm a teenager?" I told her she could keep it until she was a grandma. She turned to the childcare teacher and said, "I want to be a mom." – Elizabeth Yusko, Literacy Coordinator

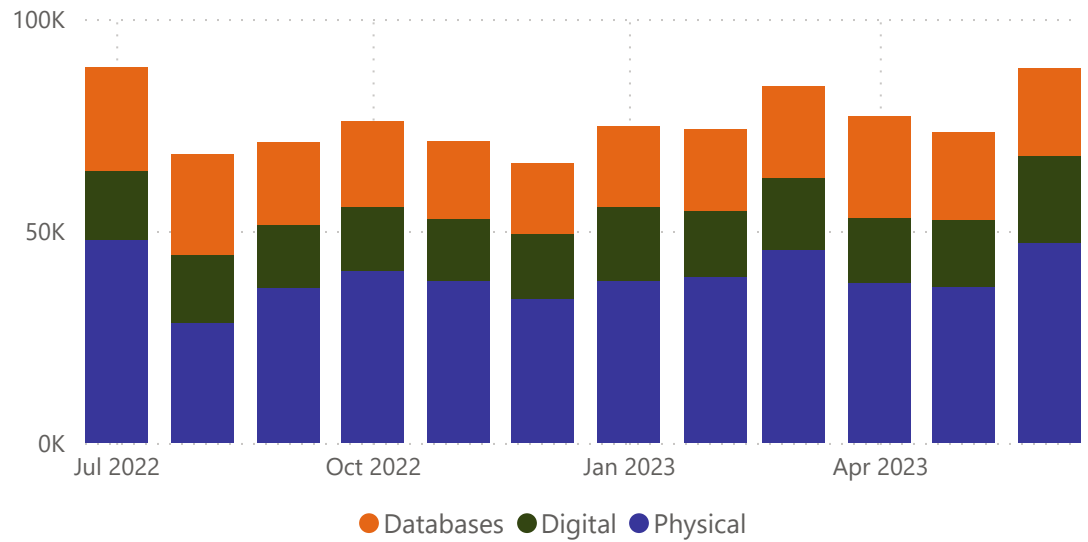
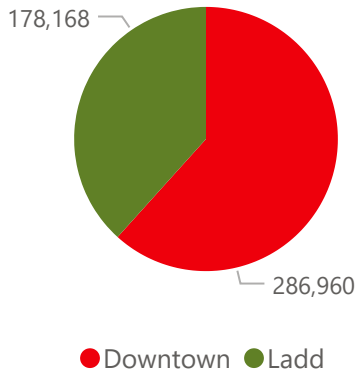
Community Relations is working on final promotions for the Summer Dare and preparing for the fall issue of OPEN+ magazine. We are turning our attention to the 2023 annual report, due in October this year. We're also working on some exciting plans for Welcoming Week in September and Banned Books Week in early October. Both offer opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and work across departments within the library.

Summer Dare Everywhere park programming has given access to 327 free books for the month of June. This is a higher number of books given out than summer of 2022 for the month of June. Book access, especially over the summer, allows children the opportunity of ownership and self-identity. Here are some meaningful words from the young park visitors themselves: "the character looks like me" and "I get to keep this forever".

Borrowing & Collections

247,606 Databases      194,591 Digital      465,128 Physical      5,169 Technology      768,182 Total

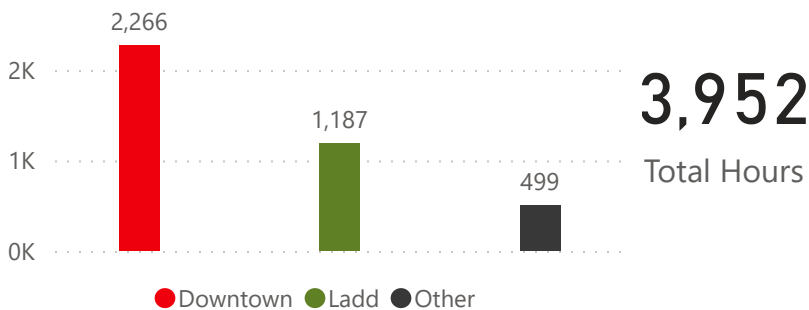
Physical Circulation, by Location



The Materials Department is working on service renewals for fiscal year 2024. We've completed our first full year with PressReader, which is accessible to the library through support from the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation. Over 48,000 articles were accessed by patrons in this first year, making it one of our most used electronic resources. We've recently added *The Economist* and *USA Today* to the collection and are excited to see usage continue to grow. Work on our historic preservation grant can begin soon to digitize the first library board meeting notes, historic library annual reports, and additional Linn County historic documents and maps. This project is possible with the support from a Linn County grant.

Volunteers

Volunteer Hours

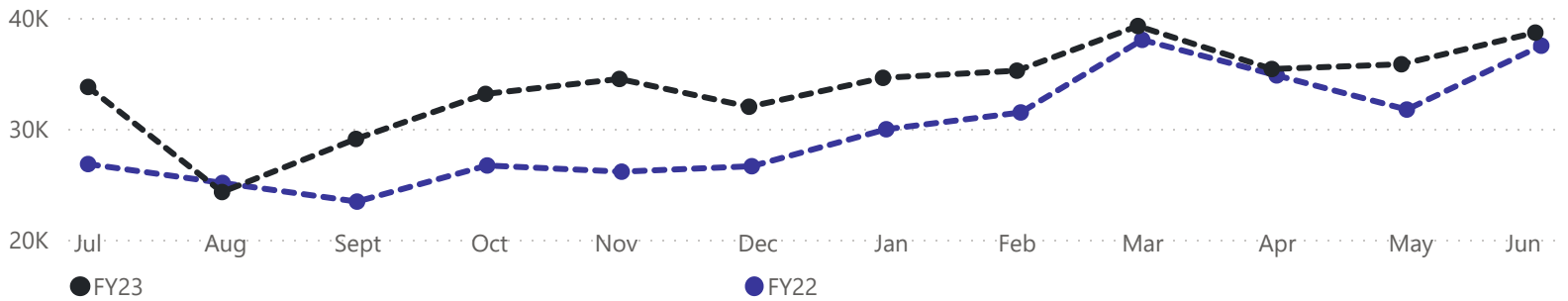
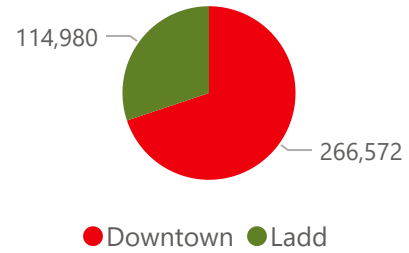


In July, we continued to onboard new volunteers – including four new Closed Captioning volunteers. These individuals joined us through Kirkwood's work/study program. The flexibility and remote work opportunities that this role allows for makes it an ideal fit for many students balancing school and work. To date, 161 videos have been captioned and 19 have been translated into Spanish by Library volunteers. Volunteer Hours in June 2023: 423 hours

*A volunteer Holds Hunter, who has been with us for over four years, told me today that he had an unusual item pop up on his holds list this week: a children's book in Braille. That was only the second time in all these years he's had a Braille book on his list. He said that as he was pulling it, he was just so thankful the Library had these resources for our community, and it made him proud to be able to help someone access those special items in our collection. Stories like this always remind me of the multi-layered impact of volunteers in relation our mission. They are helping us connect patrons to information that enhance the quality of life...but they are also improving their own quality of life and community connectedness through their service. It's a win-win-win. I'm so thankful for our many dedicated, generous, and thoughtful volunteers. – Jessica Link, Volunteer Coordinator*

Visits

381,552  
Physical Visits



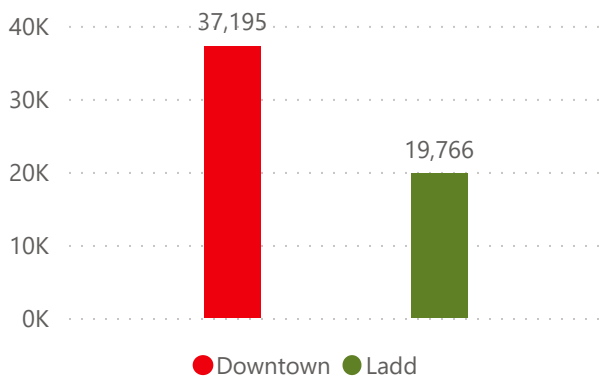
At the July Downtown Ambassador Group Meeting, the Police Department shared data of the Downtown area. Data about the library exemplified the tremendous work of the Public Service team with Active Service to build relationships and address behavior issues with compassion, dignity, respect, and empathy. In June 2022, there were 45 police service calls to the library and in June 2023, that decreased to 18 calls. For July 2022, we had 27 police calls, decreasing to 17 calls in July 2023.

According to our data collected on behavior, most of these calls are for medical issues, or come from patrons and are not staff initiated. The Public Service team has spent significant time and training to address behavior issues, and this data is a great indication of the efforts.

*At Ladd, I was in the sorter room one evening when Melia came back and said that a patron had a math question that she believed I would be best able to answer. When I approached the patron, she explained that she was having some trouble understanding an assignment she had received in her Kirkwood math class. The patron greatly appreciated my explanation of exponents and multiplication by negative numbers, and I was glad to be able to utilize my knowledge about math instruction (I majored in education with an endorsement in mathematics) to provide assistance at the library. I think it's great that everyone who works at the library brings different skills to the table and that we know each other well enough to know who specializes in each area. – Elizabeth Gardner, Public Service Associate*

Technology Access

PC Uses



170,175

Virtual Visits

125,618

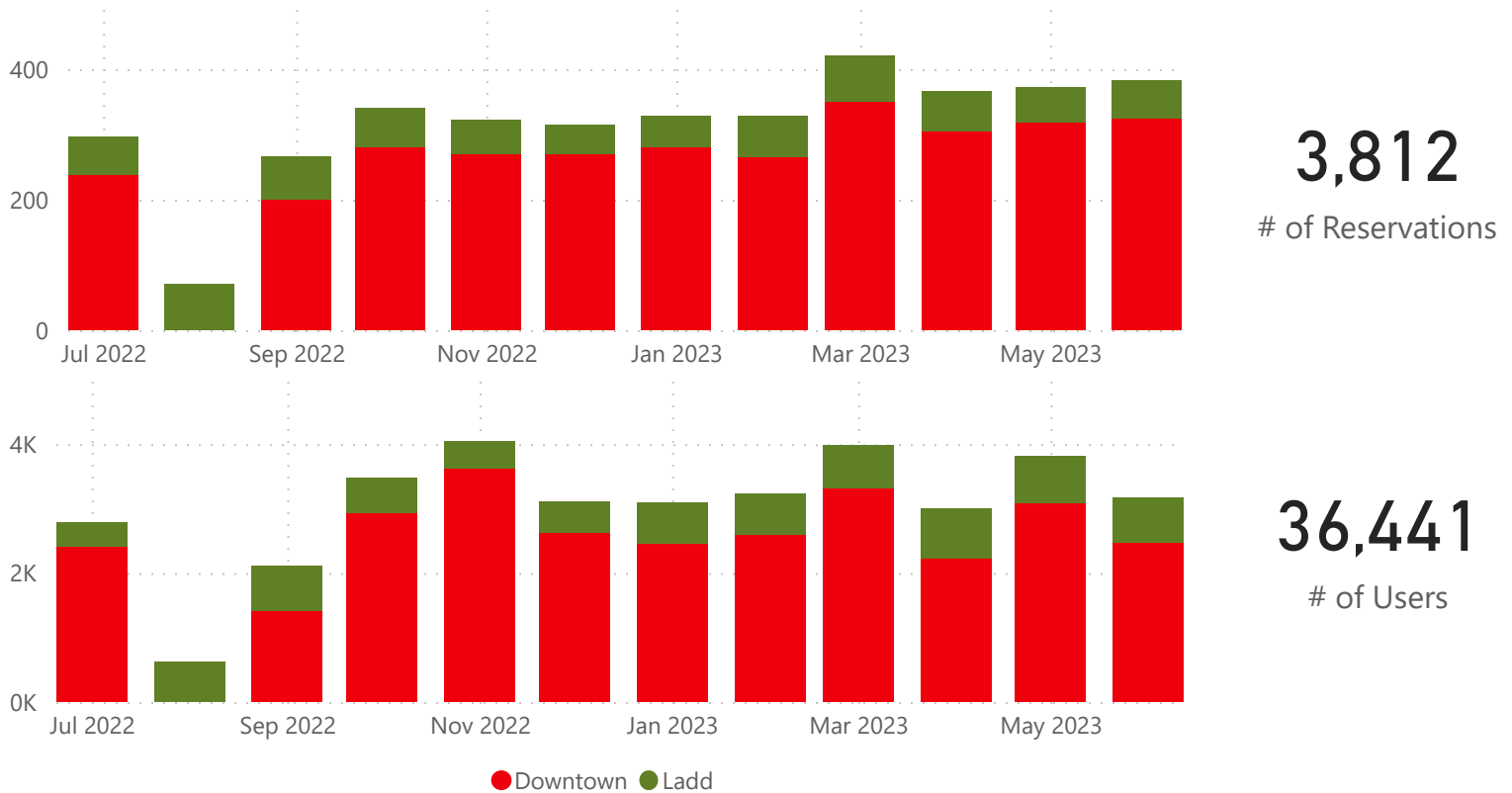
WiFi Sessions

The Technology Solutions team is near completion of plans to update new wireless hardware in both buildings. Preparation is complete and the switch to the new network will take place in August. Anti-virus software continues to be a necessity and the team just deployed new protection on library computers. The team maintains a close partnership with the City of Cedar Rapids IT department to coordinate on security and software updates and initiatives, leadership meets regularly to talk about ways to support each other and improve access to resources.

*I was helping a patron release a print job. She shared that, thanks to the library's computers, she was able to get a new job recently. She was excited that soon, she would now be able to get her own computer! – Rebecca Vernon, Librarian*



Meeting Room Use



During the month of June, there were over 280 reservations for meeting room spaces, not counting library events, welcoming approximately 3,082 patrons. There were the usual baby and wedding showers, birthday parties, book clubs and movie viewings.

In addition to the Summer Dare Program, June brought a new season of free workshops for budding thespians, the Summer Youth Employment Program at Ladd Library, and the beginning of a weekly series of classes for vision impaired people to learn braille. The Library continues to be a place of civic engagement as Spot the Hot sign-up took place here and the Tree Voucher informational meetings continue. Local groups, organizations, homeowner associations, and boards continue to use Library spaces to conduct their meetings at the Library, remote workers can collaborate and touch base, and human services organizations bring families together and provide resources using the space.

*Tom Pease's visits are always a highlight, and running large events this summer was my project. I've worked with Tom several times now and we have a great rapport. He came into his performances this week not feeling his best. He was getting over pneumonia and wasn't sure how his voice would hold up. He got through his first two performances fine, and then his voice started to get croaky and weak. He was very concerned that he wouldn't perform up to his own standards. He knew that I had a prior career as a performer/musician so he asked me if I would back him up on vocals, to help fill out the sound. I of course agreed, and he gave me lyric sheets and chord charts and within half an hour we had a set list worked up with the two of us. Just two musicians solving the problem. The rest of the shows were a delight and the kids loved him!*

*He sent me the following email after his performances this week- "Oh, my, that was so fun to work with you the last few days. Absolutely, delightful! As I said yesterday, you saved my butt but mostly my anxiety about having a weak, compromised voice. Simply put, you helped me relax and just enjoy the time. Thank you soooo much! Good luck with the play and enjoy the rest of the summer. Keep it going!" Truly, it was my honor to perform even as backup with such a consummate professional. Five-year-old Kami seeing Tom Pease at the old Library would never have imagined it! - Kami Zbanek-Hill, Event Specialist*

