Throughout this guide you will see five icons, which represent our five strategic goals. 2019 was the first implementation year of our five-year Strategic Plan, which was developed in collaboration with our Library Board, Johnson County residents, elected officials and policy makers. When you see a section with an icon, we believe it highlights the work we are doing to meet that particular goal. We want to ensure we are fulfilling our commitment to those who live and work in Johnson County within these five areas, and are always seeking to improve.


2019 WAS A MOMENTOUS YEAR FOR US. WE CELEBRATED SEVERAL MILESTONES, FROM FIRSTS—LIKE OUR INAUGURAL GENEALOGY DAY, WHICH DREW OVER 500 ATTENDEES TO THE CENTRAL RESOURCE BRANCH—ALL THE WAY TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CEDAR RUE LIBRARY. WE CONTINUED WORK ON OUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, WELCOMED MANY TALENTED NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, AND DEEPPENED OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH FUNDRAISING, OUTREACH AND PROGRAMMING. ONE SUCH HIGHLIGHT WAS HOSTING A CONVERSATION WITH CELEBRATED AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST TA-NEHISI COATES, AS PART OF A MULTI-DAY EVENT EXAMINING IMPORTANT TOPICS LIKE COMMUNITY, RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

“IN ITS FIRST SIX MONTHS, LENEXA CITY CENTER LIBRARY WELCOMED NEARLY 140,000 VISITORS IN THE BRANCH AND 7,700 THROUGH ITS DRIVE-THRU.”

And hot on the heels of opening the Monticello Library in 2018, our first new branch in over a decade, we opened the doors to Lenexa City Center Library in June. In its first six months, Lenexa City Center Library welcomed nearly 140,000 visitors in the branch and 7,700 through its drive-thru.

At the writing of this letter in 2020, we are in the midst of great uncertainty thanks to the global pandemic. While next year’s Annual Report will certainly look a bit different than this one, I am certain that the solid foundation our staff, supporters and community built in 2019 has kept us steady today. Johnson County Library is a place to learn about the past, explore the present, and innovate for the future. Looking back only makes me more optimistic about the days ahead.

— SEAN CASSERLEY
COUNTY LIBRARIAN
Board of Directors

NANCY HUPP
OUTGOING CHAIR
Appointed by Ed Peterson, District 1
Service: 2010-2019
Occupation: Retired Senior Director of Corporate Advertising Services
Favorite Book: And Ladies of the Club by Helen Hooven Santmyer

BETHANY GRIFFITH
INCOMING CHAIR
Appointed by Mike Brown, District 6
Service: 2016 - Current
Occupation: Home Educator and school choice advocate
Favorite Author: Guy Gavriel Kay

DONNA MERTZ
Appointed by Ed Elert, District 7
Service: 2017 - Current
Occupation: Retired Real Estate Appraiser/Community Service Volunteer
Favorite Book: The Scarlet Letter, by Nathaniel Hawthorne

SHERYL SPALDING
OUTGOING
Appointed by Steven Klika, District 3
Service: 2017-2019
Occupation: Journalist/Publisher/Teacher; Former member of the Kansas House of Representatives, 29th district
Favorite Book: Historical biographies

BRANDY BUTCHER
INCOMING
Appointed by Jason Osterhaus, District 4
Service: 2019 - Current
Occupation: Bookkeeper for her husband’s residential painting business
Favorite Book: Staff Picks

DAVID SIMS
INCOMING
Appointed by Becky Fast, District 1
Service: 2019 - Current
Occupation: Financial Planning Specialist, Ward, Fuller & Associates

AMY AMOS RUO
Appointed by James (Jim) P. Allen, District 2
Service: 2017-Current
Occupation: Office Manager of the family business, Amos Family Funeral Home
Favorite Book: The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

FABIAN SHEPARD
INCOMING
Appointed by Michael Ashcraft, District 5
Service: 2019 - Current
Occupation: Quality Management, Harte Hanks, a global marketing firm

J R RILEY
OUTGOING
Appointed by Michael Ashcraft, District 5
Service: 2015-2019
Occupation: Chaplain, Olathe Health. US Army, 32 years
Favorite Book: Historical biographies

WAYNE BURKE
INCOMING
Appointed by Steven Klika, District 1
Service: 2019 - Current
Occupation: Superintendent, Spring Hill (KS) United School District 230

SHERYL SPALDING
OUTGOING
Appointed by Steven Klika, District 3
Service: 2017-2019
Occupation: Journalist/Publisher/Teacher. Former member of the Kansas House of Representatives, 29th district
Favorite Book: Historical biographies

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Appointed by Jason Osterhaus, District 4
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Appointed by Michael Ashcraft, District 5
Service: 2015-2019
Occupation: Chaplain, Olathe Health. US Army, 32 years
Favorite Book: Historical biographies

CEDAR ROE REOPENING
(Look to Right) County Librarian Sean Casserley; Councilmember Michael Habie; Roeland Park City Councilmember Jan Fadley; County Commissioner Becky Fast; Councilmember Tom Madigan

Administrative Team

SEAN CASSERLEY
COUNTY LIBRARIAN

TRICIA SUELLENTROP
DEPUTY COUNTY LIBRARIAN

JENNIFER MAHNKEN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, BRANCH SERVICES

ADAM WATHEN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, SYSTEMWIDE SERVICES

BENETT SUNDS
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

NICKI NEUFELD
FINANCE DIRECTOR

STEPHANIE STOLLSTEIMER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHNSON COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION
Library Volunteers come from all backgrounds and areas of Johnson County, helping with everything from shelving books, processing donations and working in our bookstores, to serving on our Library Board! They support our Library with an average of 50,000+ hours each year.

$1,263,286 SERVICE VALUE
- 912 active volunteers
- 79 opportunities
- Equivalent to 23+ full-time employees
- 141 volunteers gave 100+ hours of service
- 49,677 total Hours of Service in 2019

The purpose of Friends of the Johnson County Library is to support the Johnson County Library system by promoting community involvement and interest in the Library’s functions, services, resources and needs, and by raising supplementary funds.

18,000+ FRIENDS VOLUNTEER HOURS
- 800 members
- 393 volunteers
- 4 staff
- 3 bookstores
- $50,000 raised annually to support collection development

The Johnson County Library Foundation’s purpose is to build an endowment fund for the Library’s collection and to secure financial support for life-long learning programs offered at Johnson County Library.

$313,936 SUPPORT TO THE LIBRARY
- Collection Support
- Summer Reading Program
- Black & Veatch MakerSpace
- elementia and Teen Programming
- Race Project KC
- Launched 1952 Society for planned giving

Supporting Organizations

support your library

Library Volunteers like you help your Library with 53,000 hours each year.

join

Our Friends play an essential part in your successful Library community.

give

A gift to the Foundation empowers your Library collections & programs.
JOHNSON COUNTY LIBRARY

Cardholders .................................. 260,761
Visits ........................................... 2,397,326
Materials ...................................... 1,321,296
Includes books, audio/video, eBooks, periodicals
Public computers ................................ 377
Includes all branches
Computer sessions annually .................... 322,751
Wireless sessions annually ........................ 869,970
Staff members ................................... 434
Total Square Footage ............................. 322,800
Branches ........................................... 15
Including our eLibrary

CIRCULATION
Physical Items .................................. 7,598,224
Electronic items ................................ 522,623
Interlibrary Loans ............................... 186,366

PROGRAMS/EVENTS
Number of Programs/Events ..................... 2,794
Attendance, all ages ............................. 91,822

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Facebook Followers: .......................... 13,450
Twitter Followers: .............................. 10,470

By the Numbers

Marie Kondo on Books:

理想的，保持少于30本书

Ravenclaws everywhere:

You mean per subject, right?

Most popular Facebook post from January 2019, with over 100k engagements and 30k reactions!

EUGENIA ORTIZ
Patron Highlight

Overland Park artist Eugenia Ortiz was at a crossroads in 2018. She was facing personal challenges. Professionally, she needed to expand into a new creative phase.

She posted a Facebook query: where could she access a machine that would help her with her new ideas requiring artistic cutting and etchings she wanted to do in Plexiglass and other materials? Someone responded that she should check out the Black & Veatch MakerSpace, which provides free use of laser cutters, 3D printers, a CNC router, electronics equipment and other devices, at Central Resource Library.

“This opened up a whole new world of possibilities for me,” Ortiz said.

Ortiz, who has a home studio, needed a precision tool to help with her specialized imagery. The laser cutters worked perfectly. “This opened up a whole new world of possibilities for me,” she said.

She’s been able to do engravings in acrylic and has also incorporated these geometrical designs into her jewelry and clothing creations. She has also learned to use the 3D printer and vinyl cutter, and plans to branch out to wood and leather. She has found the laser cutter is also ideal for fashioning her own custom-made paint brushes. “I wouldn’t have been able to do that,” without the machines, she said. “They have helped me grow my career as an artist.”

RICH COOK & FAMILY
Patron Highlight

It takes many resources and committed individuals to offer the diverse range of services available at Johnson County Library. “While tax dollars provide most of that money, the Johnson County Library Foundation helps to provide additional dollars to make that car really shine,” says former Foundation president Rich Cook, a real estate lawyer.

“The public should know how its government works and have an informed view of history,” says Cook. “Without that knowledge, it’s hard to preserve democracy. Knowledge requires access to information, and public libraries provide access to people from all walks of life.”

Cook, his wife, Morgan, and their children enjoy the great outdoors and have camped in national parks across the U.S. All are also avid sports fans. “KU basketball and football, Sporting KC, Royals, Chiefs, whatever it is, we’re into it,” he says. Henry, 10, Charlotte, 8, and George, 5, are active in scouting, soccer, basketball and baseball.

Most popular tweet was from August 2019, with over 22k impressions.

8/20 AM - Aug 28, 2019 - Twitter Web app
21 Retweets. 8 Quote Tweets. 265 Likes

Johnson Co. Library
@jcklib

This cute walked through the drive-thru at Lenexa City Center Library yesterday. What book do you think it was returning?
A house of secrets rises in mid-air

where mysteries and questions interlace

somewhere a nook, somewhere an empty chair.

In summer when you're seeking cooler air

in winter, warmth – or just a friendly face,

a house of secrets rises in mid-air.

You never have to knock. Come home to where

your story takes a deeper turn toward grace –

somewhere a nook, somewhere an empty chair.

A certain book awaits your downward stare.

Its pathless path leads to a placeless place;

its house of secrets houses you mid-air.

“A home within a book is anywhere

you are and carries you through time and space

far from this nook, far from your comfy chair.

When countries have forgotten how to care

and cruelty's contagious, commonplace,

a house of secrets rises in mid-air:

somewhere a book, somewhere an empty chair.

The Library by Wyatt Townley

A house of secrets rises in mid-air

where mysteries and questions interlace

somewhere a nook, somewhere an empty chair.

In summer when you’re seeking cooler air

in winter, warmth – or just a friendly face,

a house of secrets rises in mid-air.

You never have to knock. Come home to where

your story takes a deeper turn toward grace –

somewhere a nook, somewhere an empty chair.

A certain book awaits your downward stare.

Its pathless path leads to a placeless place;

its house of secrets houses you mid-air.

Townley is a Kansas State Poet Emerita.

This work was commissioned to

celebrate the opening of the Lenexa

City Center Library and read by her at

opening events June 21, 2019.
Our Branches

**ANTIOCH LIBRARY**
34,000 sq ft
8700 Shawnee Mission Pkwy
Merriam, KS 66202

Johnson County Library has had a presence in Merriam since 1953. Established by volunteers, it was initially housed in the basement of a residence in the 8500 block of West 55th Terrace. This library was open just five hours a week, from 4 to 7 pm on Wednesday and from 10 am to noon on Saturday. The library moved to its present site, renamed “Headquarters,” in November 1956—then a rented space. Besides offering public service, Headquarters also housed library administration, business office, and technical services.

This building and its site were purchased in 1961, with 8,000 square feet added in 1970. Antioch was remodeled to expand the public space, and in 1983 the building was again expanded by 8,400 square feet to support new service functions. By 1988 space at Antioch was at a premium, so the administrative offices were moved into off-site rented office space. The Central Resource Library moved to its current location in 1995, and the Antioch building converted to a branch library in 1996.

**CEDAR ROE LIBRARY**
16,000 sq ft
5120 Cedar St.
Roeland Park, KS 66205

Cedar Roe Library is a well-loved neighborhood branch in Roeland Park. This branch closed briefly to allow replacement of the flat portion of the library roof. Crews cleaned carpets, replaced stained ceiling tiles, improved lighting and painted doors where the paint has chipped away.

Cedar Roe also got a new manager. Anna Gordon had been an assistant branch manager at Monticello for about 18 months. She previously was an assistant branch manager with Mid-Continent Public Library.

In June 2019 friends, patrons and former staff of Cedar Roe Library gathered to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The compact building—17,157 square feet—was dedicated in 1969. The name “Cedar Roe” was the winner in a naming contest, a combination that incorporated its Cedar Street address and its Roeland Park neighborhood.

**BLUE VALLEY LIBRARY**
24,000 sq ft
9900 W 151st St.
Overland Park, KS 66221

The first library in the Stanley area opened in mid-1953. It was a self-service library of 200 books at Boehm’s Grocery. Bookmobile service began in June 1956 and the Stanley area was thus served until shortly before the Blue Valley Library opened its doors.


**OLI RAY**
Patron Highlight

Oli Ray, a junior at Olathe High School, interned at Central Resource Library as an editor and designer for issue 15 of elementia, the library’s teen literary magazine. He discovered a wide array of resources the library offers. He especially appreciated the Maker Space, where patrons can use digital design software, a recording studio, video hardware and software, 3D printers, laser cutters and more. That’s where Oli created elementia videos that he posted on the library’s YouTube channel. “The Maker Space enabled me to create higher-quality film projects,” says Oli. “The library is an undervalued resource I’d encourage everyone to learn about and appreciate.”

“HE JUMPED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ELEMENTIA BIGGER AND BETTER”

Teen Coordinating Librarian Kate McNair says, “Oli’s energy, enthusiasm and respect for the work of others was contagious and has left a lasting impact on our editorial committee and the elementia community.” She adds, “Oli brought his experience in spoken word poetry and videography to the table to help us best represent our performances online. He jumped at every opportunity to make elementia bigger and better, contributing his time and talents to select writing for publication and design the issue.”

Now, Oli is majoring in writing and minoring in film at the Pratt Institute in New York. “I was fortunate to intern at the library and meet the elementia staff and the library personnel,” Oli says. “I learned a lot and made a lot of friends. It opened a lot of opportunities for me.”
Our Branches

CENTRAL RESOURCE LIBRARY
90,000 sq ft
9875 W 87th St
Overland Park, KS 66212

Central is one of Johnson County’s busiest branches, with several hundred thousand user visits per year. Its diversity of customers includes teens and children who love its welcoming spaces, plus small business owners who rely on its computers and meeting rooms.

“It’s so fast and there’s always so much to deal with. But I enjoy that,” said branch manager Laura Hunt. “I kind of thrive off of that.” Central is a vital community resource that residents greatly appreciate, but staff also encounters a broadly various patron population. Hunt has worked hard to provide the equipment, training and management support that employees need. “That’s really the thing I love the most about the job,” she said, “being able to help guide the staff through some of those challenges, help them grow and make sure they know I’m there to back them up.”

Our Branches

DE SOTO LIBRARY
3,800 sq ft
33145 W 83rd St
De Soto, KS 66018

De Soto Library got a nice refresh. The little 3,600-square-foot Library had changed little over the past several years and was crowded with books and furniture and was not as patron-friendly as it could be.

“Big-picture, we needed to neaten things up and make it more accessible for the patrons coming in—not for the patrons we imagined we were coming in,” Assistant Branch Manager Lisa Jordan says. “I worked there so I could see for myself who was coming in and what they were looking at, and I talked to the patrons.

By looking carefully at the layout of the Library from a patron’s viewpoint, Jordan saw possibilities for better service. The rearranged and decluttered environment now allows patrons to enjoy more room to walk around, neat shelves and improved convenience at their Library. And most importantly, the patrons approve.

Our Branches

CORNITH LIBRARY
20,400 sq ft
2900 Mission Rd
Prairie Village, KS 66208

With its emphasis on serving all types of patrons, the Corinth branch is a vital part of the Prairie Village community—and it’s clear that the community loves and appreciates all the ways it touches their lives.

The Corinth branch provides services and activities for patrons of all ages. The library’s lower level is a large children’s space where there are books, DVDs, computers and well-lit study areas. For adults, the Corinth Branch hosts many programs. Among them are Legislative Coffees, where patrons can get to know their local elected officials, and An Edible Discussion, where attendees share a potluck meal while they learn from community chefs and experts.

Modern technology is making the library more efficient. When you feed a book into the sleek new Corinth returns slot, it lands on a conveyor belt inside, where its RFID tag is scanned. The book is checked in and removed from the patron’s account then deposited in a bin, depending on its destination. The sorter swiftly processes a volume of books that would take employees hours to sort by hand.

Monticello Library had 20 talented teen volunteers in summer 2019, but one in particular stood out to the Library’s youth information specialist, Julia Belcher. Mahmood Hassan was “exemplary,” according to Belcher, because of his work ethic and his joy on the job. “He’s great with the patrons. He’s always very friendly, very personable. He’s so happy to help.”

Belcher especially appreciated Hassan’s interaction with young children in the Library. For Hassan, a precocious 14-year-old who has skipped two grades and is a junior at Olathe North High School, the Library was a great opportunity to give back to the community. “It’s just exciting to work at such a professional and interesting environment,” he said.

“I wanted to start volunteering because it helps build character. It helps make new experiences,” Hassan recalled. “I thought 13 years old would be a good age to start. You want to get as much volunteering as possible, especially because colleges look at that as well.” He volunteered at Lackman Library, then joined other volunteer teens at Monticello for the summer 2019 season.

“HE’S ALWAYS VERY FRIENDLY, VERY PERSONABLE. HE’S SO HAPPY TO HELP.”

“Modern technology is making the library more efficient. When you feed a book into the sleek new Corinth returns slot, it lands on a conveyor belt inside, where its RFID tag is scanned. The book is checked in and removed from the patron’s account then deposited in a bin, depending on its destination. The sorter swiftly processes a volume of books that would take employees hours to sort by hand.”
The Johnson County Library bookmobile ceased operation in the early 1980s. More convenient library service was needed in the city of Edgerton. For many years two carts of books for self-checkout stood in the Edgerton City Hall.

In 1999, a former bank building in the downtown area was acquired by the city. The Edgerton Library Task Force set about raising funds for providing a setting for modern library services. In 2000 the Edgerton Library was opened, offering circulating library materials, public-use PCs, a meeting room, and youth and adult programming. The library is open 46 hours a week including two evenings and Saturdays. It is always busy after school.

Johnson County Library’s newest branch manager, Sarah Aanestad, joined Leawood Pioneer Library in early June. She appreciates the quality of the Library staff members she interacts with. “They’re really smart people, and people who have a lot of different interests and talents and skills,” she says. “It’s been really refreshing.” Aanestad is keeping busy – the branch is one of the most frequented in the system, and recycles an average of sixty thousand items a month.

Sheila and Roger Kelly’s story is rather romantic: Roger, an American Air Force officer stationed in Banbury, England, went to a local church. There he met a sweet 18-year-old English girl named Sheila. In a short time, they began talking about getting married. “Eventually, my parents decided they liked him,” says Sheila. They were married in 1965, and the couple moved to Denver, Colorado. They had two children and later adopted three more.

The Kellys eventually settled in Gardner, KS. She likes the small-town feel – similar to the small English town where she grew up. Between church with Roger and spending time at the library, she knows a lot of people in town. You can find Roger and Sheila at Gardner Library nearly every morning. Sheila reads Amish historical fiction while Roger works on the computers. Sheila often strikes up conversations with other patrons. She asks what they like to read and suggests books they might like. And when moms bring their kids, she lets them know that they can get free children’s books as part of the summer reading program.

“Shelia does a wonderful job promoting the goings-on in Gardner Library,” says John Keogh, Gardner Library’s branch manager, “talking to other patrons and encouraging folks to come to our events.” Sheila has gotten acquainted with many regular patrons of the Gardner branch, as well as Library staff. Keogh says, “Sheila and Roger are a delight! They come in every day, they know all our staff, and we’re a central part of their lives.”
Monticello Library

The Monticello Library stands elegantly at 22435 W. 66th Street in Shawnee, KS and when it launched services in 2018 was the first new library location in the County since 1994. Design for Monticello Library benefitted from extensive public input and deep analysis of evolving needs for Library services in the 21st century. The two-story, 33,000+ square foot building features floor-to-ceiling glass along three sides designed to let in lots of natural light and to be stylishly visible to those driving by on Shawnee Mission Parkway.

The 2-level library features a dramatic central stair, self-checkout stations and a large area for children’s materials and programming. A large meeting room seats up to 100 people. Public computers include Mac workstations. The interior incorporates flexible spaces and design strategies so it can adapt to future uses and public needs in the coming decades without needing to physically expand. An ecologically sensitive green roof adjoins a terrace with ample seating.

Oak Park Library

In the heart of Johnson County, Oak Park Library serves a diverse community that includes speakers of Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and other languages from around the world. Oak Park offers many popular programs including ELL (English Language Learning), storytimes for babies, toddlers and preschool-aged children. The branch also hosts other activities to spark children’s interest in learning while having fun.

For example, Branch Manager Roxanne Belcher says, “We hosted a CanineCourage program — a young police officer brought his German shepherd to visit with the kids. They looked very engaged — anything with a dog is popular with the kids.” What’s new? In May, the Kansas City Arts Coalition will install original art at Oak Park and Blue Valley Libraries, transforming walls into creative visual landscapes.

Spring Hill Library

Book mobile service was available at Spring Hill in the early days of JCL, and a branch was established there in 1971. Open just a few hours a week, it was a joint effort of the Library and Spring Hill School District. By 1980 the Spring Hill Library was included in a multi-service center, and Johnson County Library proposed new permanent libraries in Spring Hill, De Soto and Gardner. A new 2,681 sq. ft. Spring Hill Library opened in 1982 and serves the community today. The interior has been remodeled to accommodate new media, and public PC workstations have been added.

Shawnee Library

The first Johnson County Library branch opened in 1953 in the old Dunbar School in Shawnee at 57th and Reeder. The Shawnee Library moved into rented space a block west of Nierenman Road on Johnson Drive in 1955. Unfortunately, a 1958 budget cut required closing the Shawnee location for 34 years.

Taking into account their western expansion, the city of Shawnee offered the present site for the library on Johnson Drive and the Shawnee Library opened in 1992. A lower floor was left unfinished to allow for future expansion. The new facility was featured in Library Journal’s Annual Architecture Issue in 1992.
Johnson County Library is a top-rated public service in Johnson County. In 2019, 87% of respondents said that Libraries are important to the quality of life in our County over the next 20 years.

Johnson County Library is one of the County agencies with the highest satisfaction ratings from County Residents. We know we are important to Johnson County. And we continue to work hard to earn this trust.

Thank You.

The County’s annual Citizen Survey assesses community needs and priorities on behalf of the Johnson County Board of Commissioners. This survey helps the County understand effective use of resources providing services that residents want from their county government. Surveys were completed in each of the county’s six commission districts.

2019 Johnson County Citizen Survey