



Meridian Library District

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Like any rumination on 2020, this annual report reflects a distinct before and after.

At the beginning of this fiscal year, we were already planning for unprecedented times. We were preparing designs and executing plans for two new locations – a permanent home for our unBound technology library in downtown Meridian and a new branch in North Meridian. These are the first of four projects made possible by a 2019 plant facility levy, the first significant library funding measure passed by Meridian voters in over two decades. We were also engaging our community and staff members in creating a strategic plan to guide the next five years of our work, determining the best ways to serve an area that continues to grow. And we were providing library services as we always do – helping patrons find the books and databases they need for work or entertainment, engaging families in literacy and STEAM programs, providing technical assistance to individuals in our computer labs and our temporary unBound location.

But early in 2020, we watched as libraries in neighboring states began closing their doors in response to COVID-19. And on March 13, with the first case reported in Idaho, our Board of Trustees made the same difficult decision, shortly before the entire state was placed under a stay-at-home order. But we never stopped serving our community. Instead, we created new virtual programs, found safe ways to provide computer and internet access, expanded our digital collection to meet new demands, and launched a live virtual chat service before reopening our doors to the public in May.

And our services continued to evolve from there. We began offering free home delivery to all Meridian residents. We set up outdoor displays to make stocking up on children's books safe and easy. We reimaged our outreach programs to stay connected to seniors, child care centers, and low-income families despite the pandemic. And we continued planning for our future, despite the many uncertainties ahead.

It was a transformative year by necessity, and it was often challenging. But it also highlighted what I have long known to be true about the Meridian Library District – that we are an organization of creative thinkers and problem-solvers, striving to do more for our community even when limited by resources and circumstance. Despite everything changing around us, this remains the same: We will always adapt and learn and evolve.

GRETCHEN CASEROTTI

Meridian Library District Director

ABOUT US

The Occident Club founded the original Meridian Library in 1924, and voters established the Meridian Free Library District in 1974. The District now encompasses three locations, with two more set to open in 2021. We serve the area of Meridian, the second-largest and fastest-growing city in Idaho.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Meridian Library District will provide equal access to information, works of the imagination, and public space, offering resources and services that support educational success, economic development, an informed electorate, and overall quality of life regardless of race, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, language, ability, economic and employment status, and educational attainment.

MISSION

Support our community by enriching lives, igniting curiosity, and cultivating connections.

Our staff in February 2020, the last time we were able to gather.



VALUES

Empathy

We treat our patrons and colleagues with patience, compassion, and respect.

Learning

We are committed to lifelong learning and helping patrons find what they want to know.

Excellence

We seek to exceed expectations and demonstrate flexibility.

Relationships

We are a meeting place for the people of Meridian, facilitating meaningful connections within our community.

Inclusivity

We serve and provide access to every member of the community, embracing individuals of all backgrounds.

QUICK FACTS 2019-20



1,094,533 total checkouts



826,732
physical
items



267,801
digital
items



24,565 attendees
participated in
1,253 programs
at the library

5,330 attendees
participated in
290 library
outreach events



370 volunteers contributed
3,250 hours of time,
a service value of more than \$82,000

unBound received **725 submissions**
for 3D printing jobs
from **285 individuals**



23,595 unique users accessed
our public computers and network
23,154 users utilized
our wireless network

Our outreach team saw more than
10,000 visits to our bookmobile
and library sprinter



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020

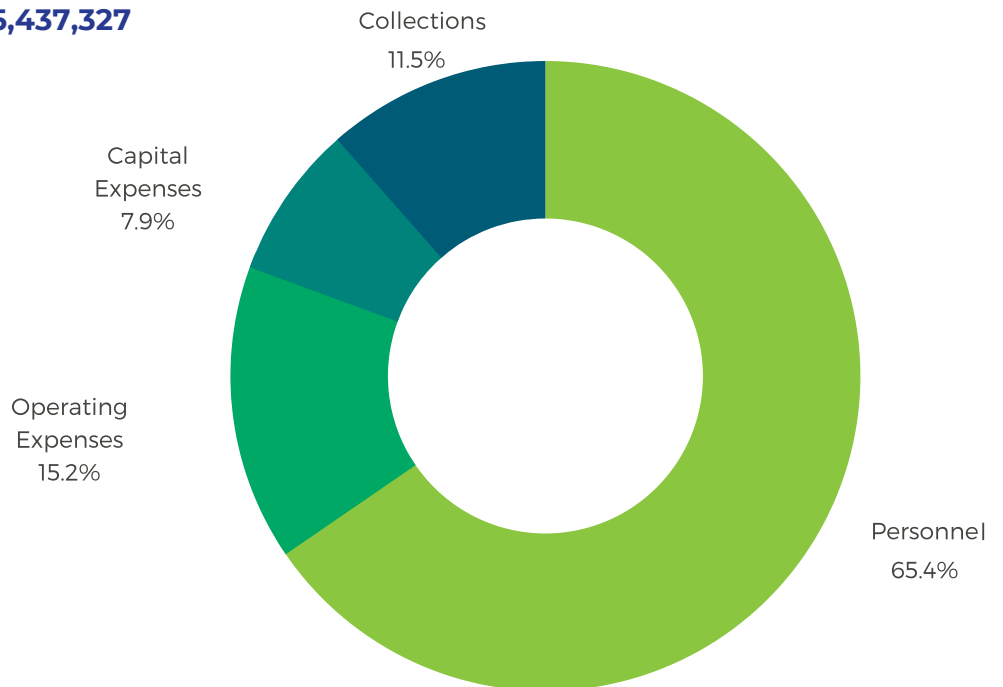
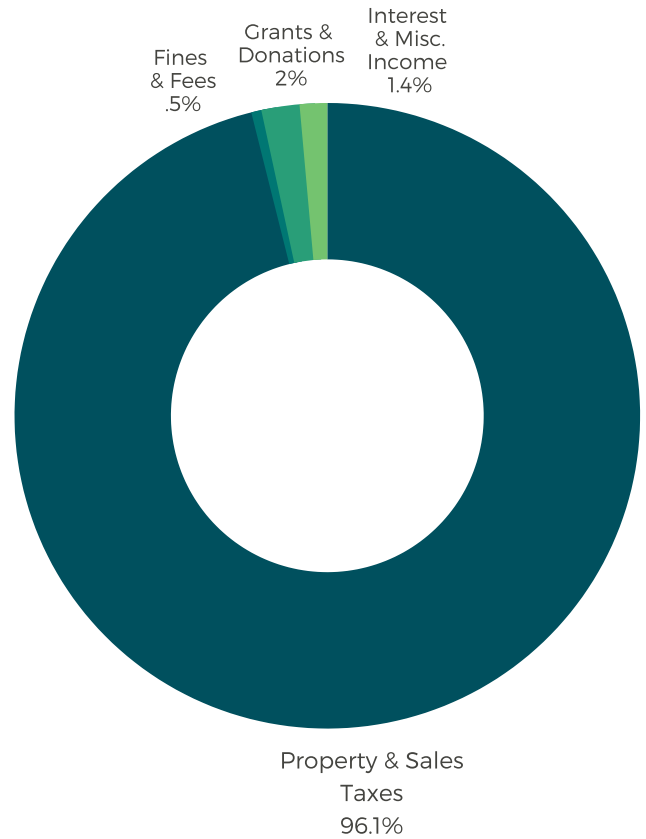
GENERAL FUND

REVENUE

Property & Sales Taxes	\$6,094,067
Fines & Fees	\$33,152
Grants & Donations	\$124,836
Interest & Misc. Income	\$89,986
Total Revenue	\$6,342,041

EXPENSES

Personnel	\$3,557,325
Operating Expenses	\$825,467
Capital Expenses	\$429,961
Collections	\$624,574
Total Expenses	\$5,437,327



CAPITAL PROJECT FUND

REVENUE

Plant Facilities Levy	\$1,400,000
Interest	\$7,228
Total Revenue	\$1,407,228

EXPENSES

Orchard Park – Design Costs	\$85,312
Total Expenses	\$85,312

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



PROGRAMS

Before March, we regularly hosted more than 50 programs a week at our three locations, in addition to outreach events out in the community. Those programs included:

- A range of storytimes, including preschool programs focusing on precoding skills in addition to early literacy, and evening events for working families
- STEAM activities for school-age kids
- Programs for tweens and teens, including a regular afterschool space dedicated to them

In addition, we organized a range of specialized events, including health fairs for families and seniors, fundraising workshops for local nonprofits, and themed events for families. Our **Extreme Book Nerd** program – which challenges individuals to read 50 books in 50 categories within 50 weeks – had 625 participants and 121 finishers its inaugural year.

GRANT PROJECTS

- Our **Meridian Moves** grant, funded by the Network of National Libraries of Medicine, allowed us to welcome 821 participants to fitness programs and introduce 20 new health and wellness kits to our collection.
- The **Memory Lane Story Trail** came to fruition in March when the first picture book title was displayed along a path at Kleiner Park. The featured title will change every few months, and all the selections will be books published before 1960. Inspired to create intergenerational connections, this project was funded by the Blue Cross of Idaho Employee Community Fund.
- Thanks to a generous donation from St. Luke's Health System, we were able to provide hundreds of **healthy snacks** to teens and tweens visiting the library after school and on the weekends.

DURING THE PANDEMIC

BRINGING THE LIBRARY TO HOMES

In May, we began offering free home delivery to every Meridian resident. Our **Home Delivery service** was designed to withstand the anticipated highs and lows of the pandemic, and it is also a long-term commitment to filling service gaps in our fast-growing community. In our first five months offering the service, we **delivered more than 7,000 items to nearly 1,600 patrons**. And it continues to grow in popularity. Patrons frequently reach out to let us know how grateful they are for this opportunity to stay connected to their library even when they might not be comfortable leaving home. One patron declared the service **“the best thing to come out of quarantine.”** and others tell us their children especially love waiting for their library books to arrive.



CREATING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

With PPE shortages impacting our community from the moment COVID-19 arrived in Idaho, we quickly pivoted our uses for unBound technology to help fill critical gaps. We coordinated with 20 area librarians and community members to create PPE for more than 40 local and state organizations, securing a grant from the Idaho STEM Action Center and a donation from TDS Fiber to fund this work. Our unBound team 3D printed more than **1,000 headbands** and laser cut more than **500 visors** for face shields. unBound also 3D printed more than **2,000 ear savers** to keep face masks in place.



SUPPORT FOR JOB-SEEKERS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

During our brief closure, we arranged space at our Cherry Lane location to safely offer computer access to those applying for jobs or connecting with assistance. We also improved our WiFi service and extended its reach so patrons could have 24/7 access to the internet from outside our buildings. When locations opened again, we designated study rooms with video conferencing technology for those in need of quiet space and reliable internet for job interviews or business meetings. We also offered virtual resume review assistance and financial literacy workshops for both teens and adults.

DURING THE PANDEMIC



BOLSTERING OUR DIGITAL COLLECTION

Between March and September 2020, we spent **\$83,350** more on digital content than was initially allocated, shifting funds from the print, media, and database budgets to make this possible. Circulation of all digital materials – including ebooks, e-audiobooks, movies, music, and magazines – **increased an average of 38%** during those months, with the biggest spikes in April (up 64% from 2019) and May (up 54% from 2019).

INTRODUCING VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

With an uncertain future for in-person events, we quickly adapted library programs to a virtual environment. For many staff members, this involved adopting entirely new skill sets: learning film techniques, video and closed caption editing, and building online storytimes that respected copyright. We launched a YouTube channel to post new content nearly every weekday, in addition to hosting a number of live Zoom events. The **243 virtual programs** brought in more than **38,000 views**.



ADAPTING OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- We offered **outdoor book displays** at our Cherry Lane location and **outside holds pickup** at our Silverstone location for safe, easy access to library materials.
- We quickly adapted our Bookmobile stops to be **contactless** so we could continue reaching our most underserved patrons.
- We gave out nearly **4,000 books** through an adapted summer reading program for kids.
- We created **"programs in a box"** for our outreach partners since we couldn't visit in person.
- We launched a virtual **Chat With a Librarian** service on our website to help patrons easily connect with us for account questions, reading recommendations, information about community resources, and anything else! The chat is staffed over 80 hours a week, and we answer more than **1,000 questions a month**.



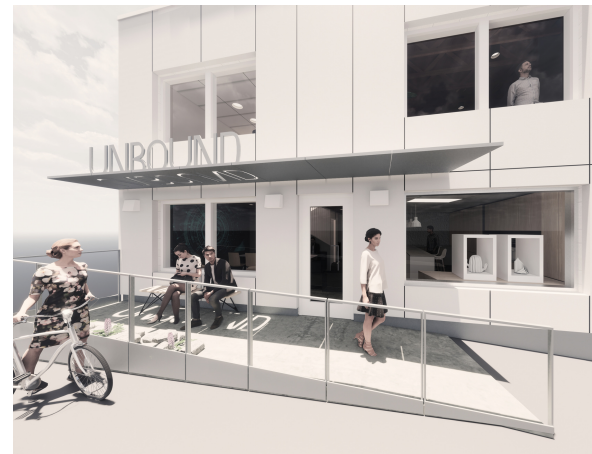
PLANNING OUR FUTURE

LEVY PROJECTS

This was a significant year of planning for the first of four projects funded by a \$14 million plant facility levy approved by Meridian voters in 2019. In addition to the two projects highlighted below, the levy will allow for a major renovation of our main branch on Cherry Lane (2024) and a new library branch in South Meridian (2025). Learn more and follow project updates at www.mld.org/levy-projects.

UNBOUND

Construction on the building remodel for our new unBound location in downtown Meridian began this summer and will be complete in early 2021. We expect to open the location to the public in March 2021. To help plan initial services and programs for this technology and business branch, we held stakeholder focus groups to learn more about the current community needs unBound can help address.



ORCHARD PARK

We spent the year collaborating with architects from MSR Design on plans for our new North Meridian branch, which will be part of the Orchard Park development at Chinden Boulevard and Linder Road. Feedback we received through community surveys and focus groups helped guide that work. Accessibility is central to the design of this location, and it will include features for individuals with special abilities. We expect this branch to open to the public in late 2021.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

The Meridian Library District worked with Library Strategies Consultant Group throughout 2020 to develop a strategic plan for the next 3 to 5 years. The process involved staff discussions, library site visits, a community survey, phone interviews, and virtual focus group sessions. The resulting plan is available to view at www.mld.org/strategic-plan.

CURRENT LOCATIONS

Cherry Lane branch

1326 W Cherry Lane

Silverstone branch

3531 E Overland Road

Tiny Library

5159 S Hillside Avenue

COMING LOCATIONS

unBound

722 NE 2nd Street

Orchard Park branch

Corner of Linder Road
and Chinden Boulevard



@MeridianLibrary

www.mld.org

