

Centennial Celebration

This year, the Murrysville Community Library (MCL) celebrates the centennial of its founding in 1922 by the Murrysville Woman's Club. There will be a kick-off celebration on March 11, but the MCL will be celebrating all year long. Hopefully, you and your children will be celebrants with the MCL many times over in the course of the year.

The MCL was a Woman's Club volunteer project in its early years, building a collection from book donations. The initial collection consisted of only 660 books. By 1935, the collection consisted of about double that, and the operating budget was \$60; the operating budget today is over \$450,000. The Library was then open only a few hours/week, for only ten months of the year. It is open at least 62.5 hours/week nominally now, by code of the PA Office of Commonwealth Libraries to which it belongs. COVID-19 has caused exceptions over the last two years of course. Circulation was only 145 items/month in 1935; it is counted in the several thousands/month now.

The MCL's home has been in the Murrysville Municipal Building on Sardis Road since 1994, having before been in the Murrysville Community Center behind left center field in Haymaker Park; construction of the Center began in the late 1950s. Prior to that time, the Library occupied a stand-alone building given over to it by Dr. Orbin Hall. In 1969 the MCL had its first Board of Trustees and hired its first Library Director.

Today, the collection consists of more than 60,000 print items alone, with more than 5,500 audio/video items additionally, another approximately 1,200 e-materials in the collection, and, besides the local collection, 24/7 electronic access to nearly one million items countywide through the WLN's Westmoreland Information Network™. The Network had its first full year of operation in 2008, and MCL was one of the key leaders in the WLN in making this big jump in service.

That is just one example of MCL's key leadership role in the WLN over the years, of how the MCL has evolved into one of the strongest Libraries in the WLN. Its leadership is evidenced also by its WLN headquarters' role in 2005-11, before the WLN headquarters relocated to a much needed, more spacious, stand-alone office in Greensburg. The MCL is just one of two public Libraries in the county to have been headquarters for the WLN while still serving as a public Library.

Even while serving that cramped dual function, MCL found ways to excel for adults and children alike. Children are always "in school" at the Library even when they are out of school. In 2009, the Pennsylvania Library Association presented the MCL with the statewide **David J. Roberts EXCEL Library Service Award** for the most creative program for early learning in Libraries. The award was for recently retired Coordinator of Youth Services Carol Siefken's innovative One Book, Every

Young Child program, “Growing Readers, Up, Down, and Around.” The Community should take pride in Carol’s legacy and in all her helpers, as well as in all of the above — and much more. So, have a great centennial celebration everyone!

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