

row, from left, are Calvin Henry, Alana Hinson, Justin Hoffman, Jolee King, Brianon Schmeeskamp, wanda Bozada, Austin Twichell, Macalyn LaCrone, 2019 King Ryan Herman, 2019 Queen Hannah Barrett, Gus Land, Zoe Gaszak, Dakota Richardson, Macenzie LaCrone, Johnny Kindel, Gracie Sohn, Oliver Williams and Emily Barkhurst.

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Library Has Successful Year

More Programs, Attendance Up

By Kristen Dragotto
Missourian Staff Writer

The St. Clair Library had its first full year in its newly renovated and expanded building in 2019, which proved to be very successful.

The building expansion was completed in August of 2018. A grand reopening was held in September of that same year.

The project came with a lot of up-

grades for the library.

New additions to the children's area included a 55-inch interactive screen television, big foam blocks and a play area for children with puppets and a toy kitchen. There also is an interactive table where kids can participate in various hands-on activities.

According to Kara Bell, branch manager, what adults seem to like most about the children's area is the window seat where they can watch

their children play.

"The children's area is always a busy spot, kids really seem to enjoy it," Bell said.

There also is now a teen area in the library where an Xbox and board games can be found.

"The teen area is really nice and it isn't uncommon to see them playing a game like UNO," Bell said.

The library also has an adult

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St. Clair Chamber To Host Banquet

Nominations for Awards Still Being Sought for Awards

The St. Clair Area Chamber of Commerce will host its 49th annual Celebrate St. Clair Banquet Saturday, March 28, at Holy Trinity Fellowship Hall, St. Clair.

The Chamber will recognize individuals, businesses and organizations in the St. Clair community who have made exceptional contributions in their area of service.

The theme for this year's banquet is STC Speakeasy. Entertainment for the evening will be a

The evening will begin at 5 p.m. with a social hour. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by the murder mystery at 7:30 p.m.

The awards ceremony will get under way at 8 p.m.

Admission is \$25 per person. Registration can be done online, <http://business.stclairmo.org/events/details/49th-annual-celebrate-st-clair-banquet-7008>, or by calling the Chamber office at 636-629-1889. After registering,



Schools Honor Prince

Students Luke Dierker, left and Hollander Bauman girls and boys varsity basketball games against Sul nation of Lynn Prince, a former St. Clair bus driver

LIBRARY

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seating area with a fireplace, booth seating and a cafe where patrons can get coffee, hot chocolate and other treats. Adjacent to the adult seating area there is an adult patio.

In addition to the new seating and play areas, there are two private study rooms and a meeting room that can be booked. There are also power towers throughout the library where cellphones and other electronic devices can be charged.

Highlights

Bell said the library experienced a "huge surge" in foot traffic, book circulation and computer usage after the building doubled in size, but that jump did not happen until last year.

Last year the library saw a 25 percent increase from 2018 in items circulation. In 2019 it had a total of 48,848 items circulated.

The library registered 763 new patrons which was a jump from 2018 where it only received 532.

Bell said it became a focus to meet that growth with "innovative programming."

With that in mind, the library hosted its Return to Hogwarts Event Jan. 18. The event was themed after the "Harry Potter" series. Kids were able to enjoy a magical experience of practicing spells and wizardry.

Bell said children programs notably grew the most in 2019, with new events and boosts in attendance.

The library also saw an increase in attendance for preschool story time. Bell re-

attendance is between 20 and 22 kids, which is almost double the amount the library saw in 2018.

The Read Build Play program was changed last year to the first Saturday of every month rather than every Saturday.

"By making it once a month we hoped it would become more of a novelty event for the kids," Bell explained.

Other events held in 2019 were Rubik's Cube 101 and Earth Day Games, which were well attended.

Attendance numbers for adult programs remained steady for the year, Bell said. Book clubs were a big hit for adults.

Bell noted that the biggest success the library had in 2019 were the two adult program events that vary every month. Noting that the most successful was the folded book art, which took place in February of last year.

Another addition was a designated table for people to solve puzzles that are put out.

More in 2020

Bell said the St. Clair Library hit the ground running in 2020, hosting its annual Return to Hogwarts. The event was much larger in scale and had an increase in attendance.

"This event was bigger and better than ever," she stated.

Bell added that the new additions made it more of a family event. This year the library set up its meeting room to look like the dining hall in "Harry Potter," where refreshments were served. Participants were sorted into the different houses at Hogwarts and then made their own but-

The library will add a community garden this year, which is sponsored by the Friends of the Library Group. The garden will contain 14 vegetable beds and eight flower/herb beds.

One bed can be checked out per household, group, class or organization.

An informational session on the community garden will be held Saturday, Feb. 22, at 2 p.m. for those interested in checking out one. A dedication is planned for Saturday, March 21.

In addition to the garden, there will be new programs related to gardening that will come later this spring and summer.

This year's summer reading program will be Imagine Your Story, which will focus on books on fairy tales, mythology and fantasies.

For more information on the St. Clair Library and its upcoming events, visit <http://www.sccl.lib.mi.us/>, its Facebook page at [stclairbranch](https://www.facebook.com/stclairbranch) or instagram at [stclairbranches](https://www.instagram.com/stclairbranches).

BANQUET

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ing nominations for the Community Award, Educator of the Year, Outstanding Young Man/Woman of the Year and Spiritual Leader of the Year.

The deadline to submit a nomination is Monday, Feb. 24.

Nomination forms can be picked up at the St. Clair Area Chamber of Commerce office located at 960 St. Clair Plaza Drive or online under the resource tab at <http://stclairmo.org/coc/index.php/resource-menu/forms->