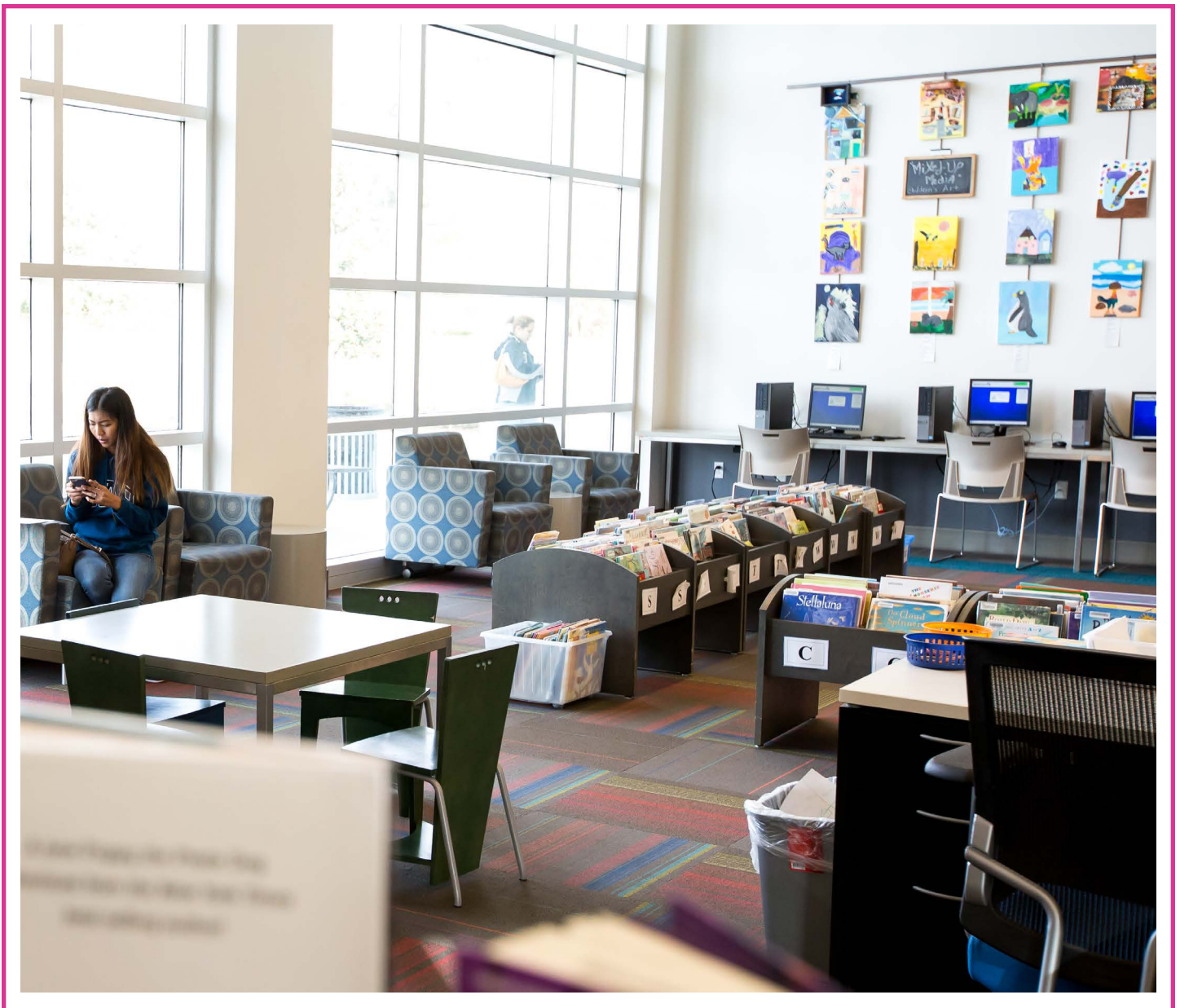


GREAT EXPECTATIONS:

THE OSCEOLA LIBRARY SYSTEM



CASE STUDY



PARTNER LIBRARY:

Osceola Library System

LOCATION:

Osceola County, Florida

BRANCHES:

Buenaventura Lakes Library
Hart Memorial Library
Kenansville Library
Poinciana Library
St. Cloud Library
West Osceola Library

PARTNER SINCE:

2012

THE BACKGROUND

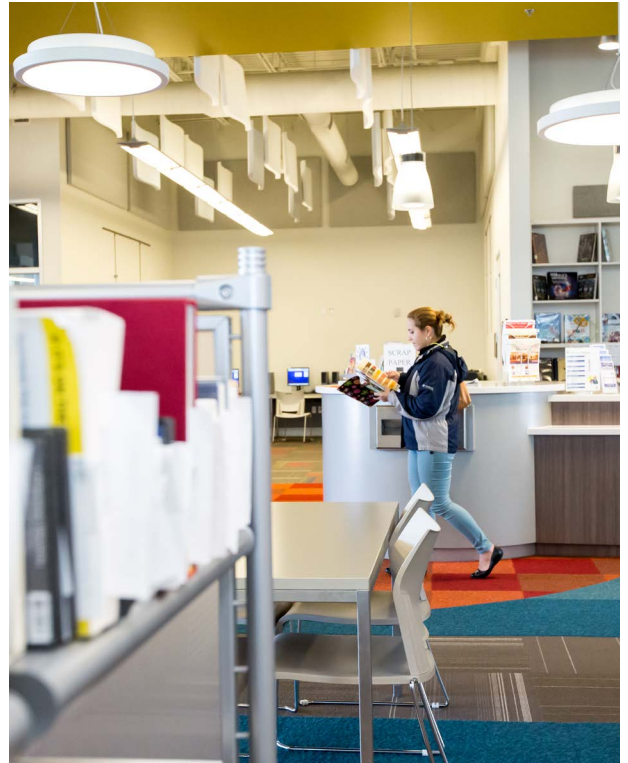
Osceola County is a vibrant and culturally diverse community in central Florida. It covers 1,500 square miles including 178 square miles of water and enjoys an average of 236 sunny days each year. With a strong agricultural heritage and location near Orlando and Disney World, the County is growing rapidly.

The **Osceola Library System** has six locations and is anchored by the Hart Memorial Central Library in historic downtown Kissimmee. The system also has full service branches in St. Cloud, Buenaventura Lakes, Poinciana, and West Osceola, with a smaller branch in Kenansville. The Osceola Library System had its formal beginnings in 1979, and has won numerous awards, including the Florida Library of the Year in 2007, and Florida Public Library Website of the year in 2008.

THE CHALLENGE

The 2008 recession hit Osceola County hard and recovery was difficult. Two years after the recession ended, unemployment was a record high 13 percent and the County budget was under pressure. Leaders faced a dilemma when it came to the library system: Reduce hours of operation and collection size or find a new model for operation. Job security for staff was paramount, as was local control. Leaders searched for a solution that addressed budget constraints while providing more services. **They believed strong libraries were key to community strength.**

On January 3, 2012, the Osceola Library System became the first library system in Florida to partner with Library Systems & Services (LS&S) to manage operations.



THE SOLUTION

LS&S experts were aware of Osceola County's challenges and focused on the Library's crucial role in helping strengthen the community. Eager to provide quality patron service, **LS&S embarked on a journey to excellence with a plan from day one.**

First-year improvements were implemented in programs, partnerships and events. Existing library staff retained their jobs, received LS&S training and contributed to the successful transition.

In the unique public-private partnership model, the Osceola County officials control policy, direction and assets and LS&S employs library personnel and manages day-to-day operations. LS&S streamlines and modernizes operations and centralizes back-office tasks, enabling staff to focus on front-line service. This patron-focused model combines with LS&S's large consortium discounts on materials and technology to result in significant cost savings and excellent public service.



THE RESULT

Today, the Osceola Library System is at the forefront of service, collection and technology excellence and is known for community impact.

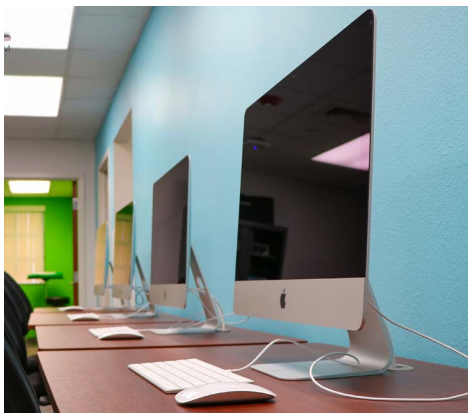
Amy Jones, Osceola Library System Director, recalls the time before the partnership with LS&S. “We were going through budget cuts because of the recession. There was a lot of uncertainty and several rounds of layoffs, furlough days the the possible elminiation of all part time staff. We were very concerned and wondered how would we be able to serve the community.” Eight years later, Amy enjoys the work like never before. **“LS&S has put the power back into our libraries,” she says.**

Four branches have undergone extensive renovation since the partnership began. LS&S staff worked closely with Osceola County officials to collaborate and recommend interior design and layout.

Key to the Library’s success is executing a strategic plan. Gathering community and stakeholder input via surveys, focus groups and community meetings and setting clear achievable goals helps library staff focus on key service areas. Initiatives include expanding support for job seekers, creating innovative virtual services, enhancing marketing activities and connecting the diverse community.

Investment in new materials formats has paid off. In 2012, the Osceola Library System’s only digital materials were eBooks. By 2019, the Library added cloudLibrary, a user-friendly system providing access to a statewide collection of digital titles, plus Kanopy and hoopla streaming films and music, Odilo Spanish eBooks and RBDigital magazines. The Osceola Library System now provides access to online databases such as Lynda.com (LinkedIn Learning), Universal Class, Mango Languages, Ancestry.com, Heritage Quest (genealogy), Testing and Education Reference Center, Tumblebooks, America's News and Magazines, the Washington Post and its newest offering, AtoZ Databases.

Educational and enrichment programs have almost doubled under LS&S operation. Offerings grew from 1,314 programs annually to 3,179, with a focus on both adult and multigenerational family programs. Increased partnerships with local organizations has significantly expanded program quantity and variety. The FanFaire comic con grew over several years to a large event that expanded into a joint offering with the City of Kissimmee. The Library also joined with the City of Kissimmee to participate in the African American Read-In, celebrating history by reading a wide range of inspirational and humorous selections from African American literature aloud. Other partnerships include the Adult Literacy League, Osceola Reads and the Communication Center for the Deaf.



A leader in innovation, the Osceola Library System is the first Sensory Inclusive library in Florida as certified by Kulture City. This certification means all branch locations are inclusive and accommodate patrons with Autism, ADHD or other sensitivities. TechCentral, an innovation space at Hart Memorial Library, offers an incredible array of professional-grade technology in virtual reality and graphic design; music, video and podcast production studios, a full clothing design and sewing center and robotics room. Much more than a makerspace, TechCentral provides hands-on training for careers in engineering, music, entertainment and design as well as STEAM programs for youth.

COMMUNITY IMPACT THROUGH SEVEN YEARS OF LS&S PARTNERSHIP

■ 2012 ■ 2019

eBooks	2,925	358,382
Total Annual Public Service Hours	19,032	19,157
Registered Users - Non Resident	4,759	10,449
Total Collection Expenditures	\$609,167	\$820,170
Adult Programs	143	1,690
Total Programs	1,314	3,179
Adult Attendance	1,753	5,460
Total Attendance	42,225	44,717
Friends of the Library Donations	\$1,100	\$14,465