



## **E.B. PERT READING CENTER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

The E. B. Pert Reading Center has served the Town of Hector community since 1972. The Reading Center has had quite a journey. It began as a retired Southern Tier Library System (STLS) bookmobile parked in the Hector Presbyterian Church parking lot. Then, it moved into the VLH Fire House Meeting Room, and finally, the Reading Center got its own brand new, 1200-square-foot building. Over the years, the Reading Center has grown into a fully operating library.

Since its beginning, the E. B. Pert Reading Center has been run totally by volunteers and has operated with some local funding, in addition to contributions from fundraisers. In 2024, the Reading Center hired someone to partially fill the hours of operation, in response to a lack of volunteers. In response, the Town of Hector provided enough funds to hire a part-time staff person for one year while the Reading Center seeks sustainable funding through a public vote on the school district ballot.

The Reading Center is a well-loved and well-used community resource. In 2023, it served 2,396 patrons and offered 22 programs for adults and children, with a total attendance of 874. The programs included dog obedience classes, outdoor education from Tanglewood Nature Center, carpentry, and more.

Wireless internet service is available 24/7 in the Reading Center parking lot, and in 2023, there were 803 wireless internet sessions at the Reading Center.



**2,396 people served in 2023**



**803 wireless Internet sessions in 2023**



**1,884 items borrowed directly from the E.B. Pert collection**

Hector community members are avid readers, and library material usage is strong. In 2023, patrons borrowed 1,884 items from the Reading Center. Community members also made requests through interlibrary loan service for materials from other STLS libraries; 274 items were borrowed by Hector residents, and 491 items were loaned from the Reading Center collection to other readers across the Southern Tier. Some Hector readers prefer the digital collection. In 2023, there were 938 checkouts from

the Libby app for ebooks, audiobooks, and digital magazines. The top two digital titles that Hector readers checked out were *Woman's World Magazine* and *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese.



**938 checkouts by Hector patrons from the Libby app**



**Top titles checked out by Hector patrons from the Libby app**

In 2024, the E. B. Pert Reading Center is working to secure sustainable funding that will allow the Reading Center to continue operating for years to come. Securing sustainable funding will ensure that the Reading Center can continue to cover costs for fees paid to STLS; wages for a paid director; utilities; unique programs for adults and children; improved technology, including public computers and wireless services; downloadable books; copy services; and more. The Board of Directors of both the E. B. Pert Reading Center and the Watkins Glen Public Library are working together to support this endeavor, and in May, residents of the Watkins Glen School District will have the opportunity to vote for funding for both libraries.