



BUCKEYE AUTHORS' BOOK FAIR COMMITTEE, INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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VOLUNTEER TEAMS

Buckeye Book Fair is powered by dedicated volunteer teams who support our work before, during, and beyond the fair. Volunteers assist with book distribution and logistics through the Book Team, provide direct support to authors and illustrators through Hospitality, and help ensure smooth educational programming at the Young Authors Conference. Big Day Volunteers bring the fair to life on the first Saturday in November, supporting presentations, books, and event operations. Year-round Organizational Volunteers strengthen our mission through book reviewing, outreach, and communications. Together, these teams make it possible to create a welcoming, well-run experience for readers, authors, and the community.

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair operated with only 73% of the volunteers needed to fully support a successful book fair. While the event moved forward through dedication and flexibility, limited staffing placed strain on operations. Strengthening volunteer recruitment and retention will be a clear priority in 2026.

PROGRAMS + SERVICES

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair delivered a full year of programming designed to support literacy, celebrate authors, and connect readers of all ages with books and ideas. Our flagship initiatives included The Buckeye Book Fair, our annual festival welcoming readers and more than 100 authors and the Young Authors Conference, which brought classrooms together for a day of learning with professional authors and illustrators. We honored student creativity through the Young Authors Award Ceremony and extended our reach year-round through Buckeye Book Presentations in schools and community spaces. Community engagement was further strengthened by the Buckeye Book Crawl, a week of literary events that built momentum and partnerships leading up to the Fair. We also hosted Buckeye Book Camp, a hands-on writing and illustration experience for students. Throughout the year, The Buckeye Bookmark Newsletter kept our audience informed, connected, and inspired. Together, these programs reflect our commitment to meaningful access to literature, education, and community connection across Ohio.



In 2026, we will focus on recruiting and retaining volunteers to ensure long-term stability and success.



We also remain deeply grateful to those who have given their time and generous hours in support of our mission.

“As a local author, I’m so proud of the way this book fair has continued for so many years. We set the book fair bar high!”

73%
Volunteers

2025 secured 73% of the
volunteers needed.

2,666
Hours

Volunteers generously
contributed 2,666 hours.



2025 Key Priorities and Impact Overview

Vision Statement

To position Buckeye Book Fair as the most welcoming book fair in the nation by fostering meaningful connections between authors and readers while enhancing our reach, impact, and sustainability.

Mission Statement

Buckeye Book Fair promotes literacy, supports authors, and connects readers with books through events, education, and community engagement.

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair focused on strengthening its role as a welcoming, accessible, and sustainable literary charity for Ohio readers and the authors who serve them. Guided by our mission to promote literacy and connect communities through books, we invested in meaningful author–reader experiences, expanded our visibility statewide, and built partnerships that support long-term impact.



Creating a Welcoming Book Fair Experience

We focused on connection, access, and a warm welcome for readers and creators.

- Hosted 109 authors and illustrators offering personalized interactions.
- Added a Reader–Author Lounge for deeper conversation at the fair.



Expanding Reach Across Ohio

We strengthened marketing efforts to help more readers discover Buckeye Book Fair.

- Increased online visibility and audience engagement.
- Promoted events through billboard and radio advertising.
- Improved website content and search visibility.



Welcoming Nationally Recognized Authors

We elevated the fair by hosting well-known authors and building industry partnerships.

- Featured Patrick Ryan, Shannon Hale, and Mindy McGinnis.
- Strengthened relationships with publishers and literary agents.
- Secured sponsorships to support headliner participation.



Celebrating and Supporting Authors

We created new traditions to honor authors and thank our supporters.

- Established an annual Author Award Gala.
- Introduced a “Perks for Passholders” program for Friends and individual supporters.

Together, these efforts advanced Buckeye Book Fair’s commitment to fostering connection, celebrating authors, and growing a vibrant reading culture across Ohio. By welcoming diverse voices, expanding our reach, and recognizing excellence in literature, we strengthened the foundation of the fair for future generations of readers, writers, and supporters.



Creating a Welcoming Book Fair Experience

Creating a welcoming book fair experience guided our planning and execution in 2025. We focused on connection, access, and a warm welcome for readers and creators, hosting 109 authors and illustrators who offered meaningful, personalized interactions throughout the day.

As one author shared, “Storytelling is a unique human experience that unites us. Buckeye Book Fair brings authors, illustrators, and readers together in celebration of the stories that deepen our connection one to another.” Another noted, “Being part of The Buckeye Book Fair has been one of my best experiences as an author.”

To encourage deeper engagement, we introduced a Reader–Author Lounge, creating space for conversation beyond the signing table. Attendees echoed the value of this approach, calling the fair “the best place to find new authors and a variety of books to add to your TBR pile” and “a fantastic event that brings Ohio authors together with readers.” These voices reflect our ongoing commitment to building a fair rooted in hospitality, access, and shared experience.



Shannon Hales meets readers.



Tim Bowers signing books, Andrew Auseon & Dustin Brady

Buckeye Book Fair works year-round to create a welcoming community for readers, authors, and illustrators. Through programs, events, and outreach, we build connections, provide support, and foster engagement beyond the fair itself. Whether through workshops, presentations, newsletters, or special events, our efforts ensure that everyone who participates feels included, valued, and part of the Buckeye Book Fair family.



Expanding Reach Across Ohio

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair strengthened its marketing efforts to help more readers across Ohio discover our programs and events. A generous capacity grant from the Ohio Arts Council allowed us to partner with Lorianne Kessler of Innis Maggiore in Canton to develop a comprehensive Marketing Boost plan. Lorianne and her team met with Executive Director Kimberly Jarvis for a creative brainstorming session and consulted with the Board of Directors to capture the heart of the organization. Their plan laid the groundwork for positioning Buckeye Book Fair as the most welcoming book fair in the country.

Early implementation of the Marketing Boost plan has already produced measurable results. We increased online visibility and engagement with readers and authors, promoted events through billboard and radio advertising, and improved website content and search visibility. These efforts have helped more Ohio communities connect with the fair and our year-round programming.



Shannon Hale with Young Authors 2025



Looking ahead, additional goals will roll out in 2026 to expand our reach even further. Thanks to the Ohio Arts Council's support in capacity, partnership, and sustainability, Buckeye Book Fair is on a clear path to greater visibility and stronger connections throughout the state.



Buckeye Book Fair

November 7, 2026 | 9:30 AM to 4 PM
Greystone Event Center
50 Riffel Road | Wooster, Ohio

Meet the Authors
Discover your next read!
Award Winners
Book Crawl Events
Family Friendly



Welcoming Nationally Recognized Authors

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair continued to strengthen its role as a premier gathering for readers, authors, and illustrators by hosting well-known authors and cultivating meaningful industry partnerships. By featuring celebrated writers such as Patrick Ryan, Shannon Hale, and Mindy McGinnis, the fair offered attendees the opportunity to meet trending authors and experience the excitement of literary fandom firsthand. These interactions not only inspire readers but also reinforce the essential message of literacy and the transformative power of reading, which lies at the core of our mission.

The fair also provides a trusted space for authors and illustrators to connect with one another and the broader literary community. Many creators attend knowing they can engage in thoughtful conversations about the publishing industry, share insights about their creative journey, and build lasting professional relationships. Strengthening relationships with publishers and literary agents and securing sponsorships to support headliner participation ensures that the fair continues to attract high-caliber talent while maintaining an environment that is welcoming, collaborative, and inspiring.

Promoting reading is not just about books; it is about nurturing curiosity, imagination, and empathy in our communities. When readers connect with authors and hear their stories, they are reminded of the value of literature in shaping understanding, encouraging creativity, and building connections between people. By elevating the experience for both creators and readers, Buckeye Book Fair amplifies its impact, inspiring a lifelong love of reading and ensuring that books remain a central part of Ohio communities.

This dual focus on author experience and reader engagement strengthens the fair’s reputation, enhances participation, and underscores the importance of literacy as a shared cultural and educational priority.

Promoting Literacy ~ Helping Ohio Authors

Ohio’s Foremost Literary Showcase

318	8630	88	100%
Book Titles	Books	Volunteers	Devotion

109

Authors & Illustrators

1200

Buckeye Book Fair Guests



Patrick Ryan



Shannon Hale



Patricia Sargeant



Cinda Williams Chima



Celebrating and Supporting Authors

In 2025, Buckeye Book Fair introduced new traditions to celebrate authors and recognize the individuals and organizations who make our work possible. A highlight was the establishment of an annual Young Authors Award Ceremony, designed to honor outstanding authors across multiple categories. This prestigious event showcases the achievements of writers and illustrators, highlights their contributions to the literary community, and elevates the profile of Buckeye Book Fair as a leading cultural and literary event. The Romich Foundation generously provided award plaques to recognize Young Authors, veteran volunteers, and a special Legacy Award honoring Dandi Daley Mackall, who has supported Buckeye Book Fair for more than three decades. By celebrating excellence and creativity, the ceremony reinforces the fair's commitment to supporting authors and their work.

We also launched the "Perks for Passholders" program to thank Friends and individual supporters. This initiative provides special benefits, exclusive access, and recognition throughout the year, offering meaningful ways for supporters to feel connected to the fair and highlighting their essential role in sustaining our mission. These efforts strengthen the community of readers, authors, and advocates who champion literacy and the arts in Ohio.



Through these new traditions, Buckeye Book Fair honors creativity, fosters engagement, and builds a culture of appreciation. These initiatives lay the foundation for ongoing growth and demonstrate our commitment to celebrating the transformative power of books.



Services Based on Feedback

Overall, **author and illustrator** feedback on the 2025 programming was overwhelmingly positive, emphasizing the strength of reader and peer connections, a welcoming and well-organized environment, and exceptional volunteer support that fostered a strong sense of community. While the event was widely praised for its facilities, logistics, and accessibility, suggested refinements focused on boosting afternoon attendance of events, improving clarity around inventory and author logistics, managing noise and programming spaces, and expanding dietary accommodations. Respondents also offered constructive ideas to further enhance engagement, such as more visible interactive programming, light gamification, clearer genre-based navigation, and limited late-day incentives, aimed at building on an already high-quality and professionally executed event.

Volunteers found the Buckeye Book Fair highly rewarding, appreciating the chance to support Ohio authors, promote literacy, and contribute to a well-run event. They valued efficient operations, responsive leadership, and personal interactions with authors and illustrators. The volunteers reported few challenges but suggested improvements such as clearer shift end times, additional inventory support, streamlined forms, color-coded name tags, clearer lunch-area signage, intuitive checkout indicators, and more detailed assignment instructions. Most volunteers found their roles manageable and instructions clear, though some requested more guidance or training, and tasks generally went smoothly with peer support. Suggestions for enhancing communication and camaraderie included pre-event or area-specific team meetings, clearer task descriptions, better on-site introductions, and wider involvement of board members in operations, contributing to an efficient and positive volunteer experience.

Attendees rated the Buckeye Book Fair programming very highly, praising its excellent organization, easy navigation, and comfortable, accessible venue. They appreciated the wide variety of authors and genres, found books that interested them, and valued the helpfulness and friendliness of staff and volunteers. Visitors especially enjoyed the opportunity to browse numerous books in one place and engage directly with authors, including bestselling guests.

Event Data and Metrics

- Overall Attendance: Approximately 9,178 participants attended events, engaged with outreach programming, and opened newsletters.
- Books Sold: 3,872 books were sold, with over 108 authors and illustrators participating.
- Geographical Reach: We attracted attendees from over 26 different cities, including some from out of state.
- New and Returning Participants: About 55% were first-time attendees, and around 45% were regular participants.

Social Media Engagement:

- Facebook: Reached over 131K users, with 24,636 visits and 149 new followers, totaling 2138 followers.
- Instagram: 53K views, 55K reached with 12K interactions, and 8K visits.
- YouTube: 4,398 Views, 673K Hours watched, 2551 Subscribers.

Website Analytics:

- 14,112 Visitors to the Website
- 26,425 Page views
- 1,822 Subscribers of The Buckeye Bookmark



Improve Sustainability Efforts

The Buckeye Book Fair has strengthened its sustainability efforts by securing additional grants and expanding partnerships, ensuring the continued recovery and growth of literacy programs post-COVID-19. In 2024, partnering organizations played a significant role in the fair's development and recovery. We are grateful for the support of the Laura B. Frick Grant, Wayne County Community Foundation, Ohio Arts Council, and Arts Midwest, whose contributions have been instrumental in sustaining our mission.

Additionally, partnerships with the Wayne County Public Library and Tri-County Educational Service Center increased, further enhancing our impact. Corporate sponsors including Seaman Corporation, Smuckers, Pinnacle Printing, Morton Salt, Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnson, Pinnacle Press, Kiwanis of Wooster, Ohio Outdoor, and the Romich Foundation Makerspace provided essential funding and support.

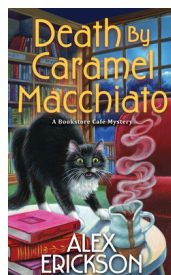
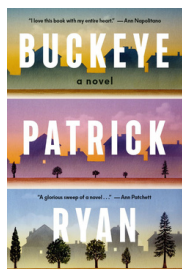
The Buckeye Book Fair also benefits from collaborations with the Wayne County Schools Career Center, Total Distribution, and the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education. These in-kind opportunities enable us to support author events, educational initiatives, and community outreach, making books and literary experiences more accessible. By investing in long-term sustainability, the Buckeye Book Fair remains dedicated to fostering literacy, supporting authors, and enriching the reading community for years to come.

Join us in championing literacy and community by partnering with the Buckeye Book Fair as a sponsor for the 2026 season. Your support will help us continue our vital programs, nurture emerging authors, and bring enriching literary experiences to Ohio. Together, we can make a lasting impact. Let's create a brighter future for readers and writers alike.



2026 BEST-SELLING AUTHORS

Patrick Ryan
Amanda Flower
Regina Brett
Alex Erickson
Julie Hatcher



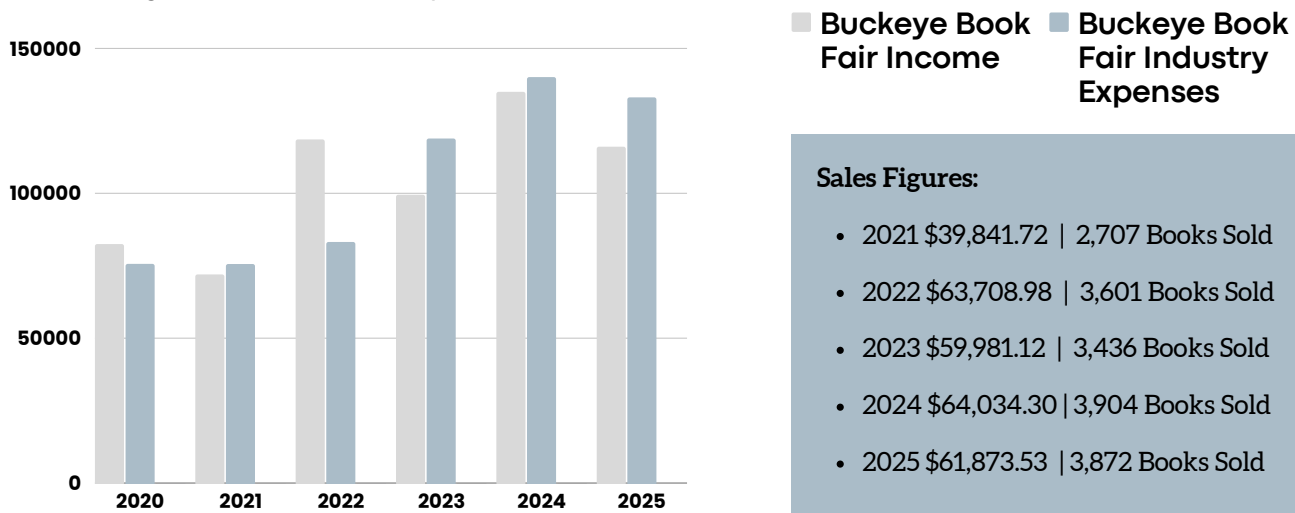


Partnering with Buckeye Book Fair

In 2025, the Buckeye Book Fair faced increasing financial pressure as costs across the publishing and event sectors continued to rise faster than our ability to offset them. Essential expenses (including author honoraria, facility rental, transportation, and book procurement) climbed steadily over the past two years. Operating with a lean budget requires constant vigilance, and despite careful planning and cost-control efforts, these persistent increases placed significant strain on our financial stability.

The Buckeye Book Fair remained operational because of the combined generosity of public funders, corporate partners, individual donors, and Friends of the Fair who contributed financial support throughout the year. We are equally sustained by the dedication of our volunteers, whose time, expertise, and commitment reduce operational costs while strengthening every aspect of our work.

With the support of The Ohio Arts Council, the Wayne County Public Library, the Tri-County Educational Service Center, and our broader community of supporters, we closed the year responsibly. Total expenses reached \$133,099, while income totaled \$116,072. Although this gap was managed, it underscores a clear reality: the Buckeye Book Fair is operating in an increasingly fragile financial environment, and continued investment, both financial and volunteer, is essential to sustaining our mission and impact.



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