



the **TOOL** LIBRARY

Borrow & Build:
How We Strengthen the
WNY Community by
Sharing Tools

2018 Annual Report



OUR MISSION

We provide communities with the tools they need to create the change they want.

The Tool Library is an all-volunteer nonprofit tool-lending library located off of Main Street in Buffalo's University Heights neighborhood. We believe that cost shouldn't be a barrier to fixing up your home, growing your own food, or improving your community. For a small annual fee, our members — including people, organizations, and businesses — can borrow from our inventory of over 3,000 tools.

We also believe that a strong community is a civically engaged community. We put our tools to work on large-scale community projects such as neighborhood clean-ups, tree-plantings, community gardens, and public art installations. When communities come together, incredible things can happen.

Finally, we believe that you only know something as well as you can teach it. We transformed the storefront next door to the Tool Library into the Community Laboratory or 'CoLab' to provide a space in the neighborhood to host hands-on DIY workshops. By sharing skills and knowledge, we build stronger, more connected communities.

THE BIG PICTURE

The Tool Library is part of the sharing economy. With borrowing at its core, the sharing economy builds community, fosters connection, and makes money less important, all while saving planetary resources.



Grounded in a Demonstrated Need

The Tool Library opened in 2011, inspired by founder Darren Cotton's experience as a University at Buffalo student renting from a negligent landlord in University Heights. The goal was to provide people with affordable access to tools to fix up their homes.



*Come visit us
at 5 W. Northrup
Place in Buffalo!*

Embedded in the Neighborhood

The Tool Library is located in a storefront that had sat vacant for years. Our shop is located in the walkable heart of University Heights and is just a 5 minute walk from the nearest Metro subway station.

How We Made a Difference in Buffalo in 2018



We Prioritize Sharing

The Tool Library is proud to be a part of the sharing economy, which prioritizes access over ownership (I don't need a drill, I need a hole in the wall!). In 2018, our members borrowed more than 5,600 tools from our shop on W. Northrup Place in Buffalo and saved tens of thousands of dollars in the process.

Learn more about our tools, our shop, and our members on pg. 4 & 5.



We Transform Spaces

From tree-plantings and park clean-ups to public art installations and community gardening, the Tool Library led or facilitated more than 30 community service events in Buffalo in 2018. We also provided over 1,000 shovels, rakes, hammers, and more to other community organizations, aiding their good work around the city.

Learn more about our work in Buffalo on pg. 6



We Build Knowledge

In 2018, 129 events, including home improvement classes, were held in the CoLab, a community space that the Tool Library operates next door. Dare to Repair Cafes, an initiative of the Tool Library, connects volunteers fixers to people with broken items, and get residents to rethink junk, diverting 1,998 pounds of waste from landfills.

Learn more about our educational initiatives on pg. 9



Memorable Moments & Milestones in 2018

It was a big year for the Tool Library. We earned 501(c)3 nonprofit status, formed a board of directors and held our first annual Borrow Build and Brunch fundraiser, with more than 100 people turning out to show their love for the Tool Library! We also changed our name from the University Heights Tool Library to the Tool Library, better reflecting the breadth of our mission to serve not only the University Heights neighborhood, but all of Buffalo and Western New York.

Check out our organizational updates on pg. 10

Photo Credit: Douglas Levere | University at Buffalo



We Prioritize Sharing

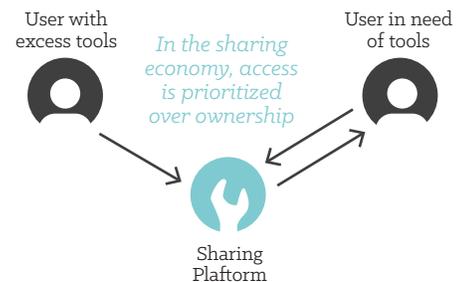
The Tool Library is part of the sharing economy, maintaining an inventory of thousands of tools that members can borrow. Need a wrench or a simple screwdriver? No problem! How about a circular saw? We've got a few of those too.

Sharing resources promotes access, equity, and sustainability. The Tool Library saves members thousands of dollars each year while also keeping clutter out of their homes and garages. In addition, our tools enable community organizations to carry out large-scale projects such as neighborhood clean-ups (see pg. 8), some of which might be prohibitively expensive without the Tool Library.

The sharing economy also extends next door to the Tool Library at the CoLab. Not only does this space host DIY workshops and block club meetings, it also provides a short-term, rentable "pop-up" space that budding business owners, entrepreneurs, and artists can use on an hourly or daily basis without the traditional overhead of a brick-and-mortar location.



Sharing Economy



Just \$20/year gets members access to 1000's of tools!

It's a Jackhammer! It's an Infrared Heat Gun! It's a Super Tool!

Our Super Tools won't make you invisible or help you fly, but they're still pretty awesome and will endow you with superhuman strength and abilities.

In 2018, the Tool Library acquired a jackhammer, infrared heat gun, and power drain snake thanks to funding from Black & Decker and the Richard W. Rupp Foundation. These tools will be among the first in the Tool Library's Super Tool program, which will enable people to borrow premium tools for a small daily fee.

The program is scheduled to launch in 2019. It will enable the Tool Library to carry items that members have often requested but were previously too pricey to acquire.



The infrared Speedheater Cobra provides a safe alternative to stripping lead-based paint.

3,035

Total # of Tools

The Tool Library's inventory grew by about 600 tools in 2018. These additions included many individual donations, along with tools purchased with foundation and corporate support.

5,656

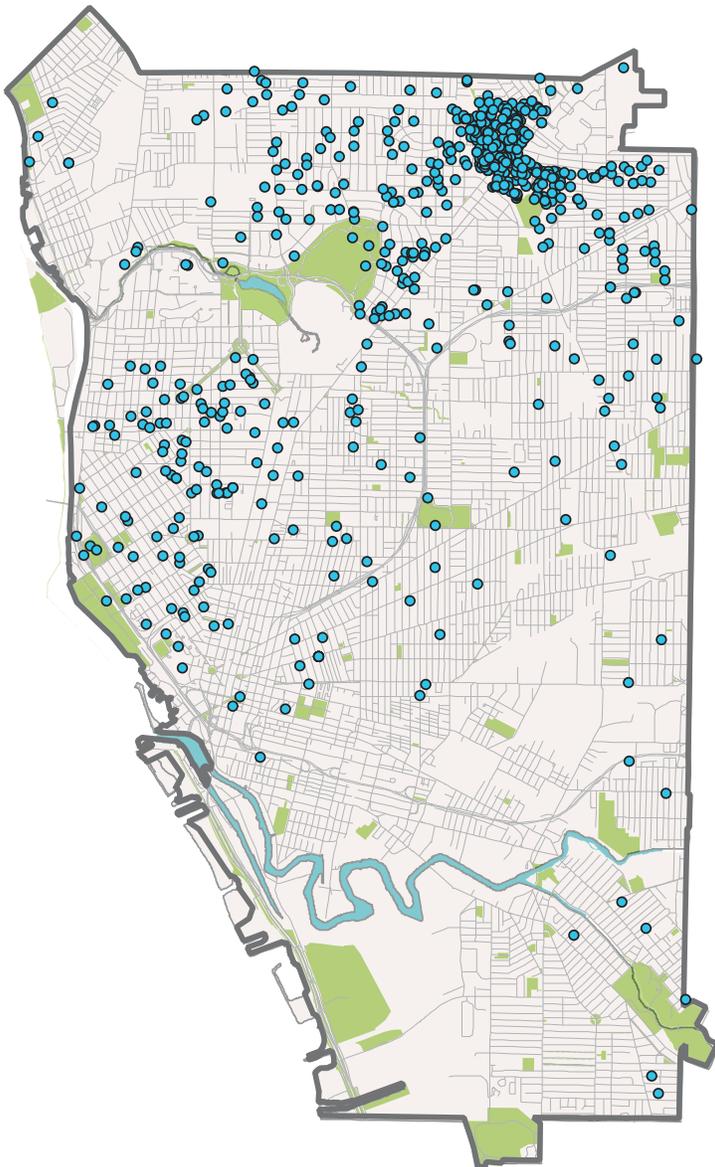
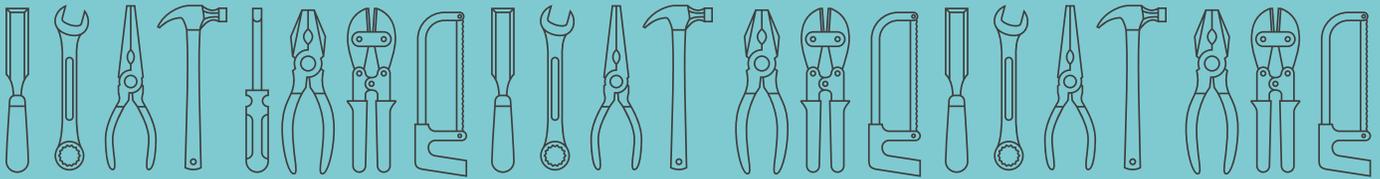
Unique Transactions

The number of loans we made rose by more than 5% over 2017, including new loans and renewals. Block clubs, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations borrowed 1,099 tools in 2018 — our biggest year yet!

TOP 10

Most Popular Tools

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Miter Saw | 6. Pressure Washer |
| 2. Circular Saw | 7. Air Compressor |
| 3. Cordless Drill | 8. Reciprocating Saw |
| 4. Cordless Chainsaw | 9. Hedge Trimmer |
| 5. Belt Sander | 10. Caulk Gun |



Where are our members?



The Tool Library would not exist without our members! Revenue from memberships helps us keep our doors open and supports the many community improvement projects we undertake. Our tiered membership structure allows individuals and organizations to reserve a larger number of tools while also contributing to the Tool Library's long-term sustainability. Tool Library members come from 47 zip codes, but over 30% are located within a 20-minute walk of our shop on W. Northrup Place. 62% of our members are homeowners and 38% are renters.

508 Members in 2018



Tool Belt

\$20/yr | 5 tools at a time
481 members



Tool Box

\$50/yr | 25 tools at a time
17 members



Wheelbarrow

\$100/yr | 50 tools at a time
10 members



We Transform Spaces

Seeing is believing! The Tool Library supports low-cost, high-impact neighborhood improvement and beautification projects that are transforming Buffalo's University District, as well as other communities across the city and Western New York.



In the University District, the Tool Library acts as project sponsor for a number of initiatives, including tree and bulb plantings, community gardens, and public art. In this role, we recruit volunteers, raise funds, organize events, and engage in long-range planning.

- 

ReTree the District
- 

Bailey Fights Blight
- 

Tyler Street Community Garden
- 

Bloom Where You Are Planted



With community partners across the University District, the Tool Library has developed an annual calendar of more than two dozen service events that connect students, residents, and volunteers with hands-on opportunities to improve their community.

We lent over 1,099 tools to other community organizations around the city in 2018 to aid in their own neighborhood-based projects. Highly visible, catalytic projects are the “win” that many community groups need to galvanize efforts, recruit volunteers, and ensure long-term success.

From planting trees and building community gardens to boarding up buildings and painting public art, the Tool Library builds social capital and capacity in communities through service learning, civic engagement, and volunteerism.



From an overgrown patch of weeds to one of the most prominent public gardens in the University District, the Winspear-Tyler Triangle is an example of a public space transformed by volunteers



160+

Volunteers Engaged on Bailey in 2018

The Tool Library worked with more than 160 resident, business, and student volunteers along the Bailey Avenue corridor in 2018. Activities included removing graffiti, street sweeps, mulching tree pits, and using the City of Buffalo's 311 app to advocate for safer streets.



BAILEY FIGHTS BLIGHT

1,300

Trees Planted Since 2014

The Tool Library planted an additional 89 street trees across University District in 2018, bringing the total number of trees planted through ReTree the District to 1,300. Through hands on stewardship workshops, the Tool Library trained more than a dozen people in basic tree care.



RETREE THE DISTRICT

Forever

Thanks to Grassroots Gardens WNY purchasing the land at 73 Tyler St., the lot will remain a community garden in perpetuity.

In addition to being purchased by Grassroots Gardens in 2018, the Tyler Street Community Garden also saw the addition of a permanent sign.



TYLER ST. COMMUNITY GARDEN

3,500

Bulbs Planted Since 2016

Community volunteers planted 1,000 daffodil and 400 tulip bulbs in greenspaces, parks, and vacant lots across University District in 2018. Locations included the North Buffalo Rail Trail, Shoshone Park, the Bailey-Kensington intersection, and many more!



BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

Putting Our Tools to Work Across WNY

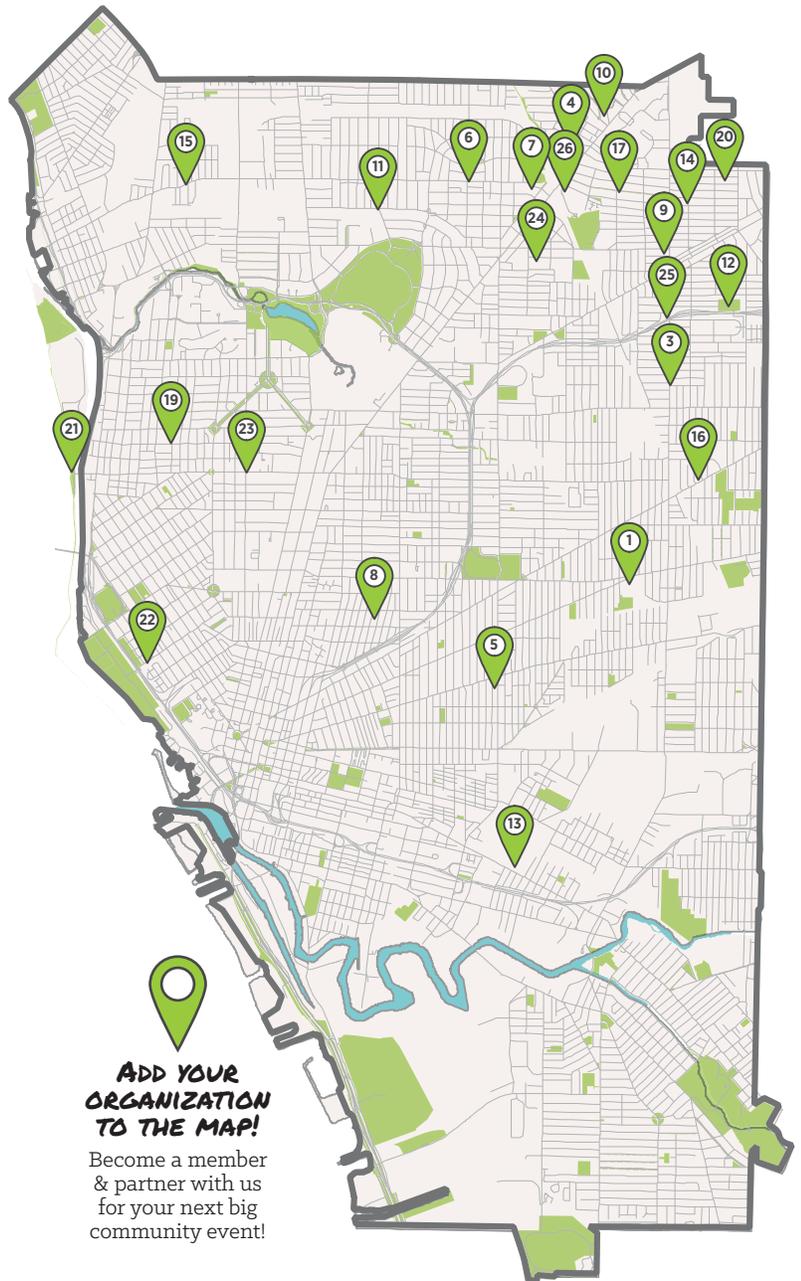
The Tool Library has increasingly become a community resource center not just for the University Heights neighborhood, but for the entire WNY community. Organizations look toward the Tool Library to save hundreds of dollars on tools for neighborhood cleanups, tree plantings, green infrastructure improvements, workshops, and more. With our inventory growing, we'll continue to offer an affordable array of tools and expand their reach across the greater Buffalo area, encouraging civic engagement and volunteerism at a grassroots level.



1,099 tools

were borrowed in 2018 by organizations across WNY for community projects, workshops, and service events.

1	BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	14	BUFFALO PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD
2	UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY	15	ERIE COUNTY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COALITION
3	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICE	16	UNIVERSAL SCHOOL
4	CAPEN GARDEN WALK	17	MINNESOTA AVENUE BLOCK CLUB
5	GREATER EASTSIDE FIELDS OF DREAMS BLOCK CLUB	18	SUFFOLK-ORLEANS TREE PLANTING
6	NORTH BUFFALO ORGANIZATION	19	RE-TREE WNY
7	BUFFALO IN BLOOM	20	B-TEAM BUFFALO
8	UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO CENTER FOR URBAN STUDIES	21	NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION
9	BAILEY AVENUE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION	22	HEART OF THE CITY NEIGHBORHOODS
10	UNIVERSITY PARK BLOCK CLUB	23	ELMWOOD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
11	COMMUNI-TREE STEWARD PROGRAM	24	JOURNEY'S END REFUGEE SERVICES
12	ROOSEVELT PARK TREE PLANTING	25	THE FOUNDRY
13	SENECA BABCOCK COMMUNITY CENTER	26	UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION





We Build Knowledge

The Tool Library empowers people through training, hands-on workshops, and learn-by-doing community projects. The CoLab (University Heights Community Laboratory) has become an event and workshop hub, offering no-to low-cost rental space to the community. Dare to Repair Cafes have diverted thousands of pounds of repairable items from local landfills and gotten people to rethink waste.



2018 was another year of growth for the CoLab. A ~600sq./ft. storefront space located next door to the Tool Library, the CoLab hosted 129 events, inviting 1,292 people through its doors to experience workshops, art galleries, dance performances, community meetings, and more! The Tool Library began offering monthly no to low-cost DIY workshops ranging from how to fix a window screen to how to properly winterize your home.



Started in 2017 thanks to a partnership with the City of Buffalo Department of Recycling, Dare to Repair Cafes are pop-up community events that connect volunteer fixers with owners of broken items. By saving people money, diverting usable items from landfills, and teaching basic repair skills, Dare to Repair is shifting the way people look at waste. In 2018, the Tool Library and its partners in repair hosted 6 repair cafes, which successfully repaired 192 items and diverted 1405 lbs. from the landfill.

1,998 lbs.

of waste diverted from local landfills since 2017.

The Dare to Repair program rekindles a fixer culture and gets people to rethink junk.



Home to **129**  **Events**

From block club meetings to black box theatre, the CoLab is more than an event space. It is a place where no idea is too big or small to test out!

Memorable Moments & Milestones in 2018

Let's get incorporated!

In 2018, the Tool Library was granted 501(c)3 status, a federal designation for tax-exempt charitable organizations. Prior to this, we operated proudly as part of the University Heights Collaborative, a nonprofit neighborhood organization. Now, we're ready to grow on our own! Becoming a standalone nonprofit will enable the Tool Library to hire staff and compete for larger public and private grants.



What's in a name?

Coinciding with our incorporation as a 501(c)3, we changed our name from the "University Heights Tool Library" to the more inclusive "The Tool Library." We remain loyal to our roots and will continue to lead community projects in Buffalo's University District, but our new name better reflects our goal of serving all of Western New York.



Leading the Way

The Tool Library board draws from the local community. Board members have professional expertise in fields such as community development, education, preservation, finance, tech, and communications. This breadth of experience serves the Tool Library well as we work to fulfill our mission in new and exciting ways. The board has also formed various working committees that assist in developing fundraising, marketing, and communications strategies.



Tool Library Members Roundtable

The Tool Library board organized the first Roundtable, which brought members, volunteers, and community residents together for a participatory planning session meant to help build a better Tool Library! Attendees shared ideas and brainstormed ways the Tool Library can continue to empower neighborhoods and provide communities with the tools they need to create the change they want. Topics ranged from types of DIY workshops that should be offered, fundraising strategies, marketing plans, and ideas for satellite locations of the Tool Library.

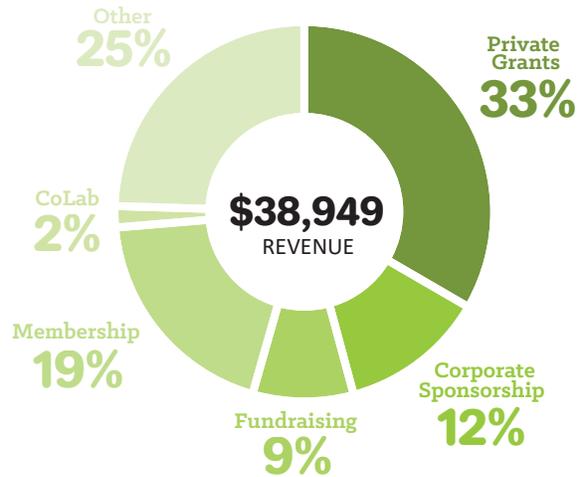
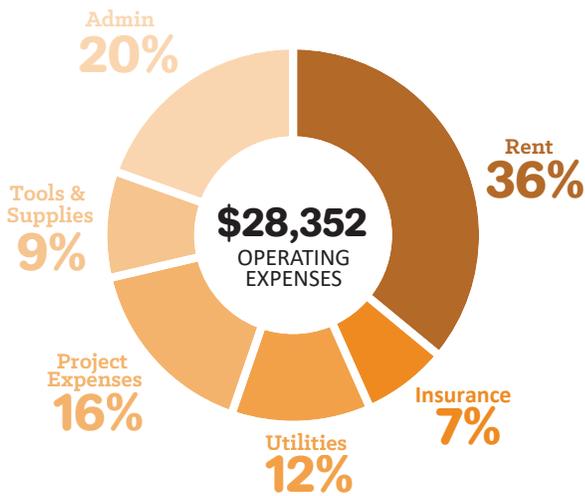


Borrow, Build and Brunch!

More than 100 people turned out to show their love for the Tool Library at our first annual Borrow, Build and Brunch fundraiser in December 2018. We had an awesome basket raffle, great food, and even better conversation. The event was open to all, and those who came included homeowners, renters, students, professionals, families, and community leaders. We even had a kids' table! Veteran Tool Library members attended, as did people learning about the organization for the first time. Borrow, Build and Brunch helped us build new partnerships with individuals and community groups, and celebrate old ones. The event took place at St. Joseph University School on Main Street.



Financial Snapshot



The Tool Library spent \$28,352 on operations in 2018, up from about \$20,000 in 2017. We invested more than \$2,500 in new tools, enabling us to expand the inventory available to the community. We also spent more than \$4,500 on high-impact projects such as tree-plantings, repair workshops and community programming in our CoLab event space. As in past years, most of our budget went toward renting and running our brick-and-mortar location at 5 W. Northrup Place.

Our 2018 revenues came from membership dues, late fees, fundraising, private grants, and corporate support. The organization ran a surplus of \$10,597 in 2018, which will be reinvested into the shop and community projects.

Sponsor Spotlight

The Tool Library got a big boost in 2018 thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Richard W. Rupp Foundation. A Western New York-based philanthropic organization, the Rupp Foundation supports many of Buffalo's best known and most active cultural, environmental, and community-based organizations.

Through this catalytic funding, the Tool Library was able to support a number of new and ongoing initiatives, including hosting its first annual fundraiser (Borrow, Build & Brunch), cultivating its first crop of donors (sustaining members), developing a high-end tool rental program (Super Tools), and continuing neighborhood improvement projects like ReTree the District and Bailey Fights Blight. Not only has the support of the Rupp Foundation had an immediate impact on the operations of the Tool Library and the community projects it facilitates, it has also helped to build the organization's capacity, ability to scale, and long-term financial sustainability.



These people make what we do possible!



Tool Librarians

What makes the Tool Library truly unique is the community we've been able to cultivate over the past seven years. As an all-volunteer organization, the Tool Library relies on individuals willing to donate their time, talents, and energy to keeping the doors to our shop open. Tool Library volunteers during 2018 include:

- Dylan Steed
- Fabian Windheim
- Jill Kliber
- Joe Kurtz
- Darren Cotton
- Martin Seeger
- Matt Straub
- Matthew Gates
- Maxwell McManus
- Mike Czajkowski
- Colin McCarville
- Matt Eichhorn
- Dayna Overton-Burns
- Ryan Green

Sustaining Members

Sustaining members are donors who make monthly or annual contributions to support the Tool Library.

- Good Neighbors Home Inspection
- Rachel Chrostowski

Sponsors

Sponsors support the Tool Library through grants, event sponsorships, or program funds.

- Buffalo Green Fund
- M&T Bank Rupp Foundation

Partners

We believe that partnerships are crucial to overcoming many of our community's greatest challenges. Thanks to our community partners, we've been able to build a stronger, more resilient Buffalo.

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| Buffalo in Bloom | GOBike Buffalo | Christopher Kameck | University District Community Development Association |
| Buffalo Promise Neighborhood | Grassroots Gardens WNY | The Foundry | University Heights Business Association |
| Capen Garden Walk | Habitat for Humanity Buffalo | UB Center for Urban Studies | University Heights Collaborative |
| City of Buffalo Department of Recycling | Heath Street Block Club | UB Engineers for a Sustainable World | Valu Home Centers |
| City of Buffalo Division of Parks and Recreation | Main Street Garden Group | UB Honors College | Westminster Community Charter School |
| Dash's Market | myTurn | UB Office of Student Engagement | |
| Edreys Wajed | Northrup-Custer Block Club | University District Block Club Coalition | |
| | ReTree WNY | | |

Board of Directors

- Darren Cotton
- Joseph Kurtz
- Eric Borenstein
- Hadar Borden
- Michael Vertino
- Paul Neubecker
- Linda Garwol
- Barbara Bono
- Dylan Steed
- Madisen Hughes
- Martin Seeger
- Charlotte Hsu
- Kelsie Hoke

The Tool Library Needs You!



Join



Donate



Volunteer

Call, click, tweet, or stop on in!

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