



Bellingham Public Library

Bellingham, Massachusetts

"The hub of the community...where people and ideas come together"

Annual Report 2019

Honorable Selectmen and the Bellingham Community:

This year was not only the 300th Anniversary of the Town, it was the 125th Anniversary of library services in Bellingham, and the 30th Anniversary of the opening of the “new” library on Blackstone Street. We had much to celebrate, and we did!

Our facility was again visited by nearly 100,000 people in 2019; averaging more than 325 people each day we were open!

The 30-year-old facility received a major face-lift in the spring of 2019. New carpeting was installed throughout the main area of the building. We opened our new and very popular Café space, renovated our local History Room to a beautiful new space for study and research, opened a Conference Room with audio visual equipment for meetings, and updated many of the furnishings throughout the building. The renovations were well-received with the most frequent comment from the public being that the space seemed much larger.

As always, we offer services to people of all ages! The library is a buzzing hive of activity on weekday mornings with preschool programs, and weekday afternoons with middle and high school children. Adults attend book discussion groups, craft programs, lectures, and workshops. Still, our most popular service is the traditional lending library services of books, audiobooks, DVDs and more!

Andrew Carnegie, noted library philanthropist, saw the value of public libraries, and we are grateful that the Bellingham community sees our value as well. We look forward to serving our community for the next 300 years!

Bernadette Rivard, Library Director

Nicole Buckley, Trustee Chair

A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert.

Andrew Carnegie
PICTUREQUOTES.COM



**BELLINGHAM
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**BOARD
OF TRUSTEES**

**Nicole Buckley
Chair**

**Rebekah Tracy
Vice Chair**

**Carol Bird
Secretary**

Amy Bartelloni

Laura Howard

AT A GLANCE

Services

- 53% of Bellingham residents have a library card
- Nearly 100,000 visitors in 2019
- Over 1600 volunteer hours worked
- Over 10,000 public Internet sessions on our wired and Wi-Fi networks
- Over 600 times families received discounted admission to museums and attractions with our Discount Pass Program
- Each month nearly 3300 pages are printed or photocopied on our public copier.

Collections

- Over 87,000 items (books, DVDs, audiobooks and more) were checked out of the library, a small increase from 2018.
- Nearly 10,000 eBooks were checked out; an increase of 25% over 2018.
- The library collection has over 53,000 items, including more than: 46,000 books, 4500 DVDs, 3500 audiobooks and music CDs, and 600 magazine issues.
- Each month hundreds of patrons access our online resources including: ancestry.com, online language learning, self improvement courses, newspapers, journal articles and streaming and downloadable music.

The Library Board of Trustees generally meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the library. All are welcome to attend.

FY2021-FY2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



In 2019 the library administration embarked on a new five-year strategic plan. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners requires that libraries have a strategic plan on file in order to qualify for grants. In addition, the plan provides town administration with a road map of the library's goals for the upcoming years.

In June the library held facilitated community focus group sessions with stakeholders to 1) identify the library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results and 2) identify the community's needs and wants for the future.

The outcome of those meetings was to identify the library's role in prioritizing, partnering and supporting the following: school stability, public transportation, community gathering spaces, safe and welcoming community spaces, and facilitating public forums.

In addition, over the summer of 2019 we conducted a community survey that was completed by nearly 400 individuals. The top three programs and services that the community would like to see us expand on are: 1) improving outdoor spaces, 2) bringing programs into the community, and 3) investing in technology. The top five 21st-century library services were identified as 1) STEM programs, 2) art shows and programs, 3) provide outdoor seating and/or patio space, 4) establish a tool library, and 5) acquire additional copies of best selling books to increase availability.

The final document was created based on the results of the focus group and surveys and can be viewed on the library website under About Us—Library Board of Trustees—Strategic Plans.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS



New Café Space Opened



Renovated History Room
Funded by the
Friends of the Library &
the Middlesex Bank Charitable Foundation



Renovated Conference Room



**Updated Service Desks &
Main Area Carpeting**

As mentioned in the introduction, in 2019 we renovated the main area of the library, added a Café, updated the Meeting Room to a Conference Room, and renovated the History Room. Photos of the renovated spaces are above.

Our strategic plan update helped us identify additional facility needs to address in the upcoming years, including: connecting the library to town sewer, improving storage, upgrading to energy efficient lighting, updating our public restrooms, and creating an outdoor patio space. Furthermore, we would like to acquire a facility generator so the library could stay open and serve as a community information center, with Internet access and a charging station, during long-lasting power outages.

PARTNERS

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)

The MBLC is the state agency that certifies libraries and ensures state standards for library services are met.

Public libraries are required to meet certain spending and service levels each year in order to maintain certification and receive state aid. By maintaining certification, the library receives over \$20K in state aid funds each year.

2019 was the second year of the library's "Go Local: Building Communities and Connections" federal grant of \$15,000 from the Institute of Museum & Library Services. The remaining grant funds are being used to put the finishing touches on a book that commemorates the town's 300th anniversary and history.

Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/WMARS)

C/WMARS is our library network. Our dues to the network fund the shared library patron and item database, a staff and public computer network, our Wi-Fi network and access to electronic resources, including eBooks.

Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

The library is a member of MLS, which provides delivery of library items between Massachusetts libraries, as well as access to online magazines, newspapers and journals. They also provide continuing education for library staff.

CHILDREN & TEEN PROGRAM STATISTICS

Attendance: Over 2100 adults and children
attended library programs for children ages 0-12 each month!

Number of Programs:
Each month the library offered **over 80 programs** for children ages 0-12.

Teen Room Programs:
In 2019, over 4,200 teens visited the library Teen Room, averaging between **300 and 600 children** visiting after school each month!

ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

589 Preschool Programs attended by 18,121 people
(50 more programs, attended by nearly 500 people more than last year!)

140 Elementary & School and Family Programs attended by 3,938 people.

172 Middle School Programs attended by 3668 children.

(expanded the ASK Program to 5 days which doubled the attendance of last year!)

20 Homeschool Programs attended by 250 people.
(Triple the previous year!)

4 Outreach Programs reaching 614 people.
School visits to promote the library's summer reading programs and to kick off Stall Brook School's Readathon.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

In 2019, we continued to offer our regular preschool programs: Ring-a-Ding, Alphabits, Book Babies Playgroup, Babygarten, and Picnic Stories. In addition, some of the special programs we hosted for preschoolers included: Bubble Dance Party, Dental Health Story Time, Mommy & Me Yoga, Princess Party, and PAW Patrol Party.

These 589 programs were attended by 18,121 people.



From April through October Picnic Stories is held on the Town Common on Wednesdays at 12:30 pm



Visit from the New England Patriots Mascot, Pat Patriot!

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Special events for families in 2019 included: Astronaut Training, Cardboard Kingdom, Interactive Movies, Library Sleepovers, Halloween Crafts, Fancy Nancy Party, Hanukkah Story Time, Harry Potter Wizarding Program, Mini Golf, Giant Candyland, Pirate Crafts, Scienctellers, Spooky Bingo, Star Wars Party, Stuffed Animal Checkup and Spa, the Pat Patriot Visit and the end of the year Winter Extravaganza!

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Our elementary school programs in 2019 included: Book Smarties, Chinese New Year Party, Creation Station, Dog Man Party, Make Your Own Planet, Hobby Hour, Krafty Kids, Mother/Daughter Book Club, Pi Day, Ravenous Readers, Read to Daisy and Super Party.

140 Elementary and Family programs were attended by 3938 people.



Make Your Own Planet Program!

A.S.K. FOR 4TH - 6TH GRADERS

In the fall of 2016, the library started a new program aimed at 4th–6th graders who come to the library after school. Now called the ASK (After School Kids) Program, it has expanded from 3 to 5 days and has moved from the Children's Program Room to the Community Room to accommodate the growing attendance. In the spring of 2019 attendance averaged 18 children per day. The fall of 2019 saw the program grow to average 30 children per day.

In 2019 we updated the program to require parents/guardians to register their children for the program and to agree to behavior expectations. This program, led by Library Assistant Diane Nelson, ensures the 4th - 6th graders are greeted by an enthusiastic staff member who keeps the children engaged and always coming back for more!

The room is equipped with 10 Chromebooks, a WiiU Gaming Station, DVD player, as well as a wonderful supply of games and craft materials for the children's use in the after school hours.



Creating Edible Haunted Houses!

Fun in the After School Kids Program

The ASK kids painted many, many rocks to fill the Library's 300th Anniversary Kindness Rock Garden



TEEN ROOM PROGRAMS

Now entering its fourth year of operation, our Teen Room is open every day after school from 2-5 pm with activities for 7th through 12th graders. There are computers, video games, craft supplies, board games and more!

Each day Amanda Maclure, our Youth Services Librarian, or Library Assistant Heidi Santucci, provide a haven for Bellingham's teens in our successful Teen Room.

Between **300 and 600** teens visited the room each month during the 2019 school year!

After School Fun in the Teen Room

SUMMER READING



Joshua Hazell of Rockland Trust presents a check to sponsor the Friends of the Library's Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading theme in 2019 was “A Universe of Stories.”

We kicked off our summer with a laser light show called “Lasers in Space” by Prismatic Magic at the Bellingham High School Auditorium; nearly 300 people attended!

The summer also included a variety of programs for kids of all ages, such as: Animal Adventures, Davis Bates, Drumlin Farm Owl Moon, Todd Migliacci Magic, Robert Rivest: First Mime on the Moon and more!

Over 500 children participated in our Summer Reading Program by checking out books, attending library programs, and keeping track of their reading progress throughout the summer.

The library continues to purchase and provide copies of school summer reading books to assist students with their school assignments.

300TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY

Throughout the year the library held events to celebrate the town’s 300th Anniversary.



In April the library hosted Deborah Sampson: Farm Girl on the Front Lines, by Janet Parnes, of Historical Portrayals by Lady J. In the photo at left, Kate Smith and her daughter Julian “meet” Deborah Sampson.

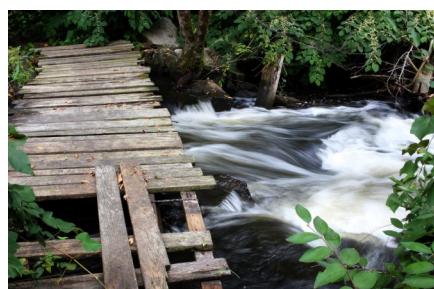
Deborah Sampson disguised herself as a man in order to serve in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. She enlisted in the Army right here in Bellingham!

The library participated in the town’s July Old Home Days by holding a community book sale, and hosting Mike Piazza’s High Flying Dogs during the celebration.

In September the library celebrated its own anniversaries, 125 years of library service to the town, and 30 years at the Blackstone Street location. All former library trustees, directors and staff were invited to this celebration. The event was paired with a Photography Show & Concert that featured photographs taken in Bellingham.



Current and Former Library Staff at the Anniversary Celebration



Best in Show Photograph from the Photo Contest, “Path by the River” by Stephanie Marcott.



Ric Allendorf provided acoustic music for the evening.

ADULT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

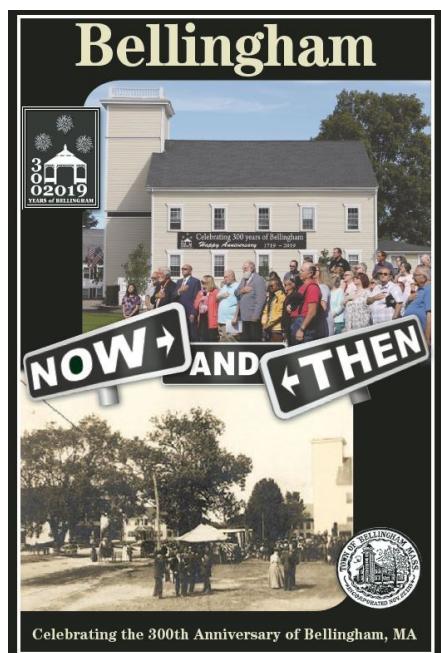
The library hosts a variety of recurring programs for adults, including: a monthly book club, a monthly writing group, and a weekly knitting/crocheting group called the Bellingham Skein Artists.

In addition, the library also hosted the following special events in 2019:

- Two sessions with the Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens; a spring program on Growing a Summer Salad and a fall program on Herb Gardening.
- In September the Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club brought their equipment to the library to demonstrate the importance of amateur radio and how to become a “ham” radio operator.
- October brought Ted Reinstein of WCVB’s Chronicle to Bellingham to present “New England General Stores.” The program highlights stories from his book called “New England’s General Stores: Exploring an American Classic.” Ted told stories of these historical institutions of our communities in small towns from Connecticut to Maine. They are stories of community resilience and neighborhood gossip. The general store is not only where many purchased their first penny candy, it continues to be a staple of many communities.
- In November and December the library hosted two programs for artists and crafters. November saw the return of pastel artist Gregory Maichack to a group of 20+ aspiring artists. The group recreated a Monet impressionist painting in pastels. In December Ana Mendes of Millville assisted attendees in creating tulle holiday wreaths.
- Also in November the library held an off-site event, an educational Historical Walk on High Street. The walk was led by Marjorie Turner Hollman, author of the *Easy Walks in Massachusetts* series. Over 30 residents and 3 dogs hiked from the High Street Field through the trail to the Charles River. Attendees learned the history of the trail and had the opportunity to hike a great path in our town’s backyard.



300TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK



Over the course of the year, the library’s 300th Anniversary Book Committee has been working on finalizing the “Bellingham Now and Then: Celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the Town of Bellingham, MA” book. The book is being published with funding from a Library Services & Technology Act grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, this \$15,000 grant has made possible the documentation and celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Town of Bellingham.

The book is scheduled to be published in the Spring of 2020. The book committee members are: Bernadette Rivard, Library Director; Cecily Christensen, Reference Librarian; Pam Johnson, Editor of the Bellingham Bulletin; and Marjorie Turner Hollman, Personal Historian and Local Author.

Chapter titles include: Anniversary Year Events, Development 1960-2020, Faith Communities, Bellingham Schools, Municipal Buildings & Public Spaces, Veterans, Long-time Businesses and Multi-Generation Families, I Remember Bellingham, Items of Interest, and In Memoriam.

SOCIAL MEDIA

2149	Facebook Followers
2119	Constant Contact Library News & Events (Electronic Newsletter Subscribers)
1191	Library App Users
687	Pinterest Followers
340	Wowbrary New Item Notification (Electronic Newsletter Subscribers)

ELECTRONIC COLLECTIONS

5537	Songs streamed through Freegal
1426	Songs downloaded through Freegal
9939	eBooks downloaded through Overdrive
301	Magazines downloaded through RB Digital Magazines
492	Online language learning lessons through Mango Languages
253	Participants in online classes through Universal Class



OTHER STATISTICS

	2019	2018	2016
Library Visitors	90,977	128,168	113,051
Library Circulation (items checked out)	87,608	86,777	95,593
Museum Passes Issued	621	640	670
Tech Help, Reference Questions and Interviews	1485	1398	1070
Children's Program Attendance	16,516	15,225	12,991
Teen Program Attendance	4288	4845	4106
Adult Program Attendance	827	981	736
eBook Circulation	9939	7900	5812

Bellingham Public Library Staff

Bernadette Rivard
Director

Cecily Christensen
Reference Librarian

Steven Fowler
Senior Youth Services Librarian, Ages 0-12

Amanda Maclure
Youth Services Librarian, Grades 7-12

Pauline Krajcik
Anne Kuncewicz
Barbara Pacak
Library Technicians

Carol Bonnell
Library & Accounts Payable Assistant

Diane Nelson
Library & Children's Assistant, Grades 4-6

Heidi Santucci
Library & Children's Assistant

Renee Milliken
Patricia Honour
Jane Vichi
Library Assistants

Jim Maher
Custodian