



# Bellingham Public Library

## Annual Report 2013

*"Google can bring you back 100,000 answers.  
A librarian can bring you back the right one."*

Neil Gaiman, Author

Honorable Selectmen:

The Bellingham Public Library embraces the rich heritage and vibrant future of our community. We aspire to be the best possible library for the residents of Bellingham: a true community center, the destination place residents consult to acquire and indulge in a lifetime love of learning, literature and leisure activities. In this document we will provide information about the library staff, collection, facility, affiliations, services and program activities in 2013.

We look forward to continuing to provide these and many new services to the community in 2014!

Bernadette Rivard

*Library Director*

Suzanne Garten

*Chair, Board of Trustees*

Board Members: Amy Bartelloni, Kenneth Hamwey, Lisa Hanson, Russell Lafond

### Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees

Suzanne Garten, Chair  
Lisa Hanson, Vice Chair  
Amy Bartelloni, Secretary  
Kenneth Hamwey  
Russell Lafond

#### Did you know?

More people visit Massachusetts public libraries each year than attend entire seasons of the Red Sox, Patriots, Bruins and Celtics combined!

Massachusetts residents borrowed 58 million items from their libraries, about 110 per minute!

22,000 people per day use the Internet in Massachusetts libraries, not including WiFi sessions!

In a single year eBook borrowing from Massachusetts libraries has more than tripled.

### *At a glance...*

#### *Services*

More than 1/2 of Bellingham residents have library cards.

Nearly 100K people visited the library in 2013, an average of 317 people per day.

We answered 28% more reference questions than we did in 2012!

Volunteers worked an average of over 150 hours per month at the library.

Nearly 1200 people per month visit the library for a session on our public Internet stations. Many also come to the library to use the free WiFi on their own devices.

Each month over 50 families received discounted admission to a variety of museums and attractions through our Discount Pass Program.

#### *Collections*

Circulation of library materials is steady. Over 124K items were checked out in 2013.

Ebook downloads continued to grow to an average of 263 per month.

The library collection includes over 50,000 items including more than:  
42,000 books  
3,000 audio books and music CDs  
3,000 movies  
700 magazine issues

Materials for people of all ages: Books, movies, audiobooks, video-games, graphic novels, ebooks, etc.

Free access to online language learning, self improvement courses, assistance for job seekers, newspapers, journal articles and so much more!

#### *Programs*

More parents are accompanying children to library programs. Adult attendance at children's programs grew by 20% this year.

The library meeting rooms hosted over 1000 meetings and events.

Each month the library hosts more than 40 programs for children ages 0-12.

Attendance at our afterschool program for middle and high school students has increased by 50% over 2012.

The library hosts nearly 10 programs per month for adults of all ages.

The Board of Trustees generally meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm.

All are welcome to attend.

## ***Library Staff, Collection & Affiliations***

### ***Staff***

This year was a stable year for library staff; we had no changes to our staff. We continue to host volunteers from the community, including the 10-12 seniors that work at the library through the **Senior Tax Work-Off Program**.



**Zoe Pechter**  
our spring 2013 intern

In addition, in the spring of 2013 the library hosted a Simmons College Graduate School of

Library and Information Science student for a 120 hour internship. **Zoe Pechter**, a library school student and former children's bookstore owner on Martha's Vineyard, worked with Steven Fowler, our Youth Services Librarian to reorganize the library's picture book collection to a hybrid Dewey Decimal System / bookstore model that is becoming more popular in libraries.

### ***Collection***

The size of the library collection has not changed significantly. On a continual basis we are adding new books, DVDs and other materials to the collection, as well as "weeding" titles that are outdated, damaged or no longer in demand. **We add over 400 items to the collection each month.**

In addition to the picture book collection project mentioned above, we also **reorganized the Young Adult Nonfiction Collection** into categories to be more useful to teens. These categories include: Art & Music, Celebrities, Gaming, Health, Interests, Life, Relationships, Sports, Style and Whatever!

### ***Affiliations***

#### ***Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)***

The MBLC is the state agency that certifies libraries and ensures that they meet standards. In order to be eligible for state aid and LSTA federal grants through the MBLC, libraries must meet standards including: meeting the requirement for the number of hours the library is open, the education level of staff, the total municipal budget and the funds spent on library materials.

Although our budget has increased, over the past few years, the 10.4% budget cut from 2009 has again prevented the library from meeting the Board's Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR).

In the fall we completed our state aid and waiver application. All indications are that since the budget did have a small increase, the waiver should be granted.

*"Public libraries are required to meet certain spending levels each year in order to receive state aid. Under the current system, a municipality must fund its library at 2.5% above the average preceding three years budgeted amounts... If a library cannot meet this requirement, it may petition for a one year waiver from the Board of Library Commissioners..."*

In the summer of 2013 the library was notified by the MBLC that our application for a federal LSTA grant to implement our "**Shaking Up STEM!**" program had been approved. Starting in the fall we began purchasing materials and equipment for this program that will start in January of 2014.

Under this program, the library obtained an educational seismograph from the Weston Observatory; purchased a 3D printer and other technology gadgets to facilitate collaborative learning on STEM topics.

#### ***Massachusetts Library System (MLS)***

The library is a member of MLS, which provides access to online magazine, journal, newspaper and reference source materials that our patrons can access from home or in the library.

MLS also provides delivery service for interlibrary sharing of materials. Each day hundreds of items from the Bellingham Library are sent to and received from other libraries throughout the state.

MLS is the primary source of free continuing education for library staff. Library staff attends workshops, webinars and other training at libraries throughout the region with MLS trainers.

This year the library joined with MLS to launch a pilot project to enhance the library's eBook offerings. One of 51 libraries in the state chosen to participate, through the MA eBook Project, library patrons now have access to additional titles through the Baker & Taylor's "Magic Wall" and a service called BiblioBoard from a company called BiblioLabs.

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

C/W MARS is our library network. The annual dues we pay to the network fund our use of the shared library database for patron and item records. This database facilitates the sharing of library materials among member libraries. The network also provides our computer network for staff and public access computing and access to a select number of research databases, as well as access to thousands of e-book titles through Overdrive.

## Facility

Our long-range plan outlines the upgrades needed to the facility, which will be 25 years old in the fall of 2014. During this year, we have addressed some of these needs on a small scale.

***Our major repair project in 2013 was an overhaul of the library's fire sprinkler system.*** The main pipes of the system were replaced. This repair required the library to close for three days in July.

***We also updated areas of the library with a fresh coat of paint.***



The freshly painted wall in our adult area that will host the educational seismograph program.



One of three walls in the children's room that were painted a bright blue. This simple step makes the children's room a warmer, more inviting space!

### Young Adult Renovation Plans

***For the past few years, we have been preparing for the renovation of the Young Adult area of the library.***

Since the opening of the new Bellingham High School and the renovation of the middle school, the use of the library by middle and high school children after school has greatly increased. Over the years we have recognized the need to provide dedicated facility space for this age group. In 2013 attendance at our after school program for middle and high school students grew by over 50% with some months nearly 400 middle and high school students visiting the library in the afterschool hours.

Given the open floor plan of the library, it is very difficult to have a space that has that many people in it and maintain noise levels that are suitable for the rest of the library. Our short-term solution was to move our afterschool program "After School Café" to the community room. This has been a temporary solution, but has led to staffing challenges as it results in two areas to monitor, and limits the use of the community room by other members of the town during the afternoon hours.

For over five years, there has been discussion about enclosing the Young Adult area, to make it a space dedicated for this age group. With the addition of a Young Adult Librarian with a schedule that mirrors the school schedule, we now have the personnel to staff the room in the busiest afterschool hours, and are looking forward to moving ahead with the project.

Our plan is to enclose the room, but to keep it open to the main part of the library during less busy hours, with a wide entry double door.

***The room will be equipped with state of the art technology, including:*** laptops and tablet computers. It will also highlight our collection of books, DVDs, Music CDs, Books on CDs and other library materials for middle and high school students that will enhance their access to materials to supplement their education and expand their personal interests.

***The space will have separate areas for a variety of activities:*** homework and group work spaces; tables and chairs for craft projects and other uses, a tech bar for using and charging tech devices; spaces for socializing; and an audiovisual center for movies, music and video games.

***The renovation plan will include new lighting, carpeting, shelving as well as new technology devices and furnishings.*** Our plan is to request funding from the town for the construction costs and to fund equipment and furnishings through state aid or other local sources.

During 2009 and 2010, with grant funding, we were able to provide the after school program 5 days a week. Since 2011 we have been offering the program 3 days a week and in the last year, with Amanda Maclure as our Young Adult Librarian, ***attendance has continued to increase 50% per year.***

## Services & Programs for Children

### Preschool Programs

*In an average week the library hosts a minimum of 8 programs for preschoolers*, including story times and sing-alongs with such names as Ring-A-Ding; Alphabits, GOT Mail Story Time, Magic School Bus, and Book Babies. Each week we also host a Lego Club called Lego Build for Kids.

In addition, special story times and other events held this year included:



Alphabits on the Road!

For the letter "M" for "Music" the library's Alphabits program met at the Senior Center and enjoyed holiday music with the Bellingham Community Chorus!

Stuffed Animal Sleepovers; Fancy Nancy Party; Pirate Party; and visits from Buzz Lightyear, Skippy Jon Jones and Curious George.



Mr. Steve (Steven Fowler, Youth Services Librarian) introduces Curious George to a crowd of children at a library program during April school vacation.

### Elementary School Programs

*In an average week the library hosts an average of 4 programs for those in kindergarten through grade 6.*

One of our most unique and popular programs for early readers, is called "Reading with Indy." Indy is a certified reading therapy dog that visits the library each Monday and children sign up for 15 minute time slots to read to Indy. This year, Indy made his 50th visit to the library.



Indy's reading pals congratulate him on his 50th visit to the Bellingham Library.

Some of the special programs in 2013 included: Back in Time (where we highlighted a decade from the 1940s-1980s in the month of February); The Write Stuff; The Bellingham Library Book Awards; and Edible Haunted Houses.

Audience	Programs	Attendance
Family	26	1,884
Preschool	306	11,462
Elementary	194	2,444
Middle & High	129	2,620
Homeschoolers & Outreach	9	1,158
Total	664	19,568

### For Families

The library hosts programs for families to attend as a group.



Sitting in the Front End Loader at Touch a Truck!

This year our family events included: Touch a Truck, Stuffed Animal Vet Checkup, Polar Express, Picnic Stories and the Amazing Chase.

### Middle & High School Programs

*In an average week the library hosts an average of 4 programs for those in grades 5-12.*

Three days each week when school is in session, we host After School Café, a program where middle and high school students can socialize, do homework, play games, participate in crafts and use library computers.

There are a group of 7-10th graders that form our Teen Advisory Board that meets at least once a month to discuss and assist in planning library programs and collection purchases for the Young Adult area.

Special programs for this age group in 2013 included: Monthly Mother/Daughter Book Club Meetings; Events at the Youth Center; Discover the Culture of... (China, France, Percy Jackson, Lord of the Rings, Hawaii, India and Mortal Instruments); and a

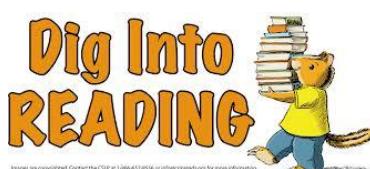


The daughters in the Mother/Daughter Book Club show off their crafts!

## Summer Reading, Community Outreach, & Other Services

### Summer Reading

This year's Summer Reading Theme was **Dig Into Reading**. For the second year in a row the Summer Reading Kick-off Event, with Alex the Jester as the performer, was held off-site, at the Bellingham High School Auditorium and was attended by over 300 people.



Each time a child came to the library

and checked out books or attended a library program, they received a pirate coin. They were able to exchange their pirate coins for books and prizes. More pirate coins, better prizes.

In addition, we hosted a variety of programs throughout the summer including:

- Burrowing Animals
- Computer Camp
- Archaeology Club
- Flushed Away!
- Star Wars Origami
- Battle of the Books
- Animal World Experience

- Paulette Morin, Fossils & Dinosaurs
- Davis & Roger: Earth Rhythms
- Tim Van Egmond, Folksinger, Storyteller



**Total attendance at Summer Programs 3712**

### Community Outreach

*The library hosts meetings of many community groups including:*

Bellingham Business Association

Bellingham Crafters

BHS Advanced Placement Testing

Bellingham DPW Training

Bellingham Women's Softball

Bellingham Youth Soccer

Girl Scout & Brownie Groups

Bellingham/Medway Mom's Club

High School Mock Trials

Do Not Knock Citizen Petitioner

Franklin Art Association

Massachusetts Library System

Red Cross Blood Drives

Realty Executives Easter Egg Hunt

and Home Buying Seminar

Retired Educators Association of Mass

and the following condo groups:

Bay Colony

Bellingham Estates

Bellwood

Birchwood Grove

Brook Estates

Crystal Springs

Maplebrook.

This year the library staff made a concerted effort to increase our community outreach.

We continually strive to improve our relationship with the Bellingham school community. Our Young Adult Librarian was a substitute teacher at Bellingham High School. This significantly improved our connection to the school. We continued to collaborate with the schools by visiting the elementary schools to promote summer reading and a variety of other events and promoting all events in brochures at the elementary school.

### Other Services

We are also continuing to expand our online offerings to the community. The library website, which is accessed over 5000 times per month, is our main vehicle to connect with the community. We continue to streamline the content of the site to make it easier to locate high-use content. On the website library users can: Reserve and renew library materials online through the online catalog; reserve museum and attraction passes; register for library programs and contact library staff.



We also offer the ability to access the following resources: **eBooks** through Overdrive, Baker & Taylor's Magic Wall; and BiblioBoard.

Take an online personal improvement class through **Universal Class**. Course topics range from Accounting to Yoga.

Learn a new language online through **Mango Languages**. Over 60 world languages are available including French, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and even Pirate!

Patrons looking for assistance with job searching can access **Career Cruising**, our online career assessment and job searching tool.

We continue to "go where our patrons are" and use **Facebook** to promote library programs and community notices and events. We have over 650 followers on our Facebook page.

The library hosted the following programs for adults:

#### Lectures



Bellingham author Jeff Belanger's Supernatural Evening is always one of our best attended lectures.

Supernatural Evening with Jeff Belanger;  
College Planning Strategies;  
Long Term Care Planning;  
Planning for Healthcare in Retirement;  
Who's Tracking You Online

#### Book Groups & Author Meet 'n Greets

Monthly Book Group Meetings  
Meet 'n Greet Amy Kwei



Martha Peterson, author of **Widow Spy** and widow of Bellingham resident John Peterson, drew a large crowd when she told her tales of working for the CIA.

Meet 'n Greet Martha Peterson  
Meet 'n Greet Steve Ulfelder

#### Adult Programs

#### Workshops & Groups

Extreme Couponing  
Nutrition Workshop with Sue Makowski  
Personal Finance 101



Tony Calcia,  
Hockomock Area YMCA  
Vice President for Child Protection and Responsibility trained over 20 community members in the Darkness to Light Program.

Total Programs	90
Total Attendance	720

#### Programs for Job Seekers

Career Planning for Job Seekers  
Interviewing Skills  
Networking  
Online Social Networking  
Online Job Searching



Certified Resume Reviewer  
Bea Hait

Resume & Cover Letter  
Workshops with  
Certified Resume Reviewer  
Bea Hait

#### Computer Training

Internet Computer Training  
Word Processing Training  
Spreadsheets Training



The library hosted Bellingham's 2nd Annual Veterans Day Ceremony honoring three local veterans: Gordon Curtis, Brandon Perella and James Wood.

# Summary of Services

Many of the programs that are outlined in this report would not be possible without additional funding from ***The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library***. The Friends routinely fund the museum and attraction passes, the summer reading program and other lectures and events throughout the year.

Our **Circulation Staff** is the mainstay of our library services. Their daily dedication and exceptional customer service skills, keep library operations running smoothly.

Our **Youth Services & Young Adult Librarians** show their dedication to serving the children of Bellingham every day. With innovative, fun and educational programs, our youth programs continue to be our most well attended and in demand services.

Our **Reference Librarian** assists patrons every day in their quest for information, computer assistance, job searching assistance, the referral to that right next book. Her services are what Neil Gaiman is referring to in his quote that begins this report.

The Library Director, Staff and Trustees thank the members of the Bellingham community for their continued support of the library. To quote Laura Bush ***"I have found the most valuable thing in my wallet, my library card."*** We aim to have that statement be the sentiment of the residents of Bellingham.

Other Statistics	
Days open	293
Hours Open	2395
Total Staff Hours	14,090
Total Volunteer Hours	1,850
Items Added to Collection	5,485
Reference Interviews & Questions Answered	1,378
Internet Users	14,272
Public Copier & Printer Pages Printed	18,264
Online Courses Enrolled	110
E-books Downloaded	3,153



**Bellingham  
Public Library  
Staff**

Bernadette Rivard  
**Director**

Cecily Christensen  
**Reference Librarian**

Steven Fowler  
**Youth Services  
Librarian**

Amanda Maclure  
**Young Adult Librarian**

Pauline Krajcik  
Anne Kuncewicz  
Barbara Pacak  
**Library Technicians**

Carol Bonnell  
**Library &  
Accounts Payable  
Assistant**

Renee Milliken  
Janice Simmons  
Nancy Ross  
Patricia Honour  
**Library Assistants**

Donald Eldredge  
**Custodian**