

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Bellingham Public Library

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SUZANNE GARTEN, CHAIR
MACALA LAMOUR, VICE CHAIR
NICOLE BUCKLEY, SECRETARY
CAROL BIRD
LAURA HOWARD

"The public library is more than
a repository of books.

It's a mysterious,
wonderous place with
the power to change
lives."

Elizabeth Taylor

Library Staff

Bernadette Rivard
Director

Cecily Christensen
Reference Librarian

Melissa Denham
Laura Brilliant-Giangrande
**Youth Services
Librarian**

Amanda Maclure
**Public Services &
Teen Librarian**

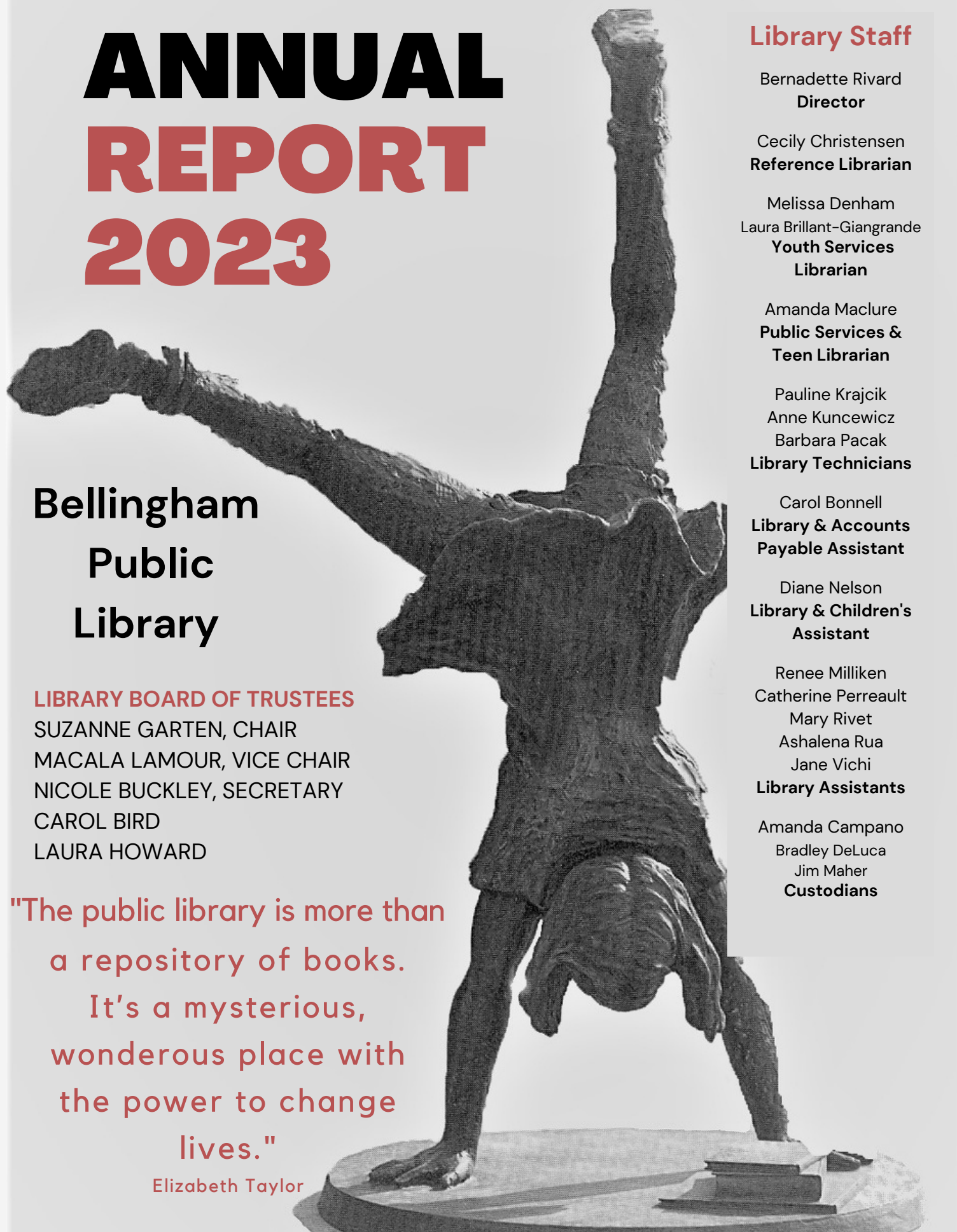
Pauline Krajcik
Anne Kuncewicz
Barbara Pacak
Library Technicians

Carol Bonnell
**Library & Accounts
Payable Assistant**

Diane Nelson
**Library & Children's
Assistant**

Renee Milliken
Catherine Perreault
Mary Rivet
Ashalena Rua
Jane Vichi
Library Assistants

Amanda Campano
Bradley DeLuca
Jim Maher
Custodians



Bellingham Public Library

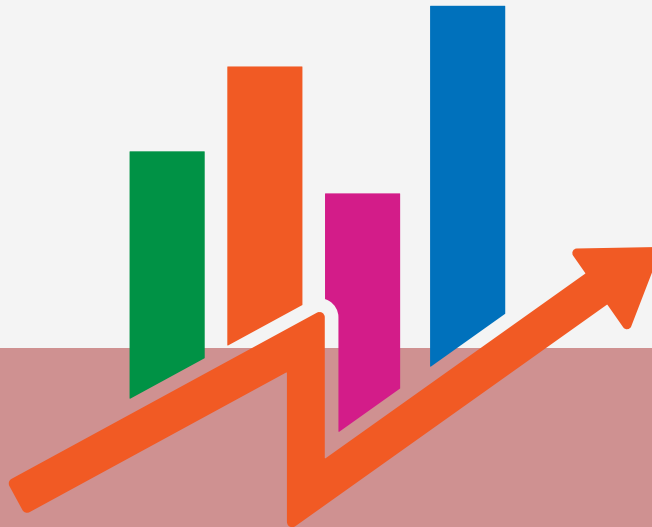
THE LIBRARY CONTINUES TO REBOUND !

Honorable Members of the Select Board and the Bellingham Community:
We are thrilled that use of the vast majority of library services are continuing to increase following the impact of the pandemic earlier in the decade.

We are confident that our usage statistics will continue to climb in 2024 and will hopefully soon rebound to pre-pandemic levels in all categories!

Service

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Days Open	294	283	241	146	274
Hours Open	2,626	2,320	1,793	975	2,487
Items Checked Out	77,044	74,145	63,406	45,776	81,758
Library Visitors	66,039	50,843	29,744	20,646	70,854
Museum Pass Use	296	218	171	108	613
Meeting Room Use	1,455	862	439	413	1,632
Internet Use	8,049	6,085	3,133	2,183	14,424
Adult Programs	150	73	51	43	98
Adult Program Attendance	1,479	537	448	453	799
Children's Programs	487	705	484	298	877
Children's Program Attendance	11,923	14,635	10,229	7,514	24,957
Teen Programs	149	156	78	50	102
Teen Program Attendance	3,023	1,990	937	844	1,893
E-Book Checkouts	16,331	13,289	12,524	10,993	10,453





FY2021-FY2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

This year we are working on the final year of our FY2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Many of the strategic objectives in the plan were impacted by the pandemic. Here's the status of the projects we've completed since the last annual report.

Completed Facility Projects

- In the fall of 2023 we replaced 25 thirty-plus-year old CFL light fixtures with LED fixtures to improve lighting in many areas, as well as save on electricity costs.

Pending Facility Projects

- Outdoor space for children's programming – funds were approved in November of 2020, project scheduled for spring of 2024.
- In the fall of 2023 one of the library's two heating boilers failed. It will be replaced in early 2024.
- Paint lofted interior spaces – will be scheduled in 2024
- Upgrade lighting – additional fixtures still need replacing
- Patio outside Teen Room – planned for 2025
- Increase storage space – install shed in area outside Teen Room
- Renovate Restrooms – no set date

Programs & Services Plans

- School Outreach – in 2023 we have greatly expanded our partnership with Bellingham Schools. We held a teacher orientation day in August and have been working with teachers and school administration to get library cards for Bellingham Public School students.
- Homework Help – in late 2023 we started a homework help component as part of our ASK (After School Kids) program.
- Library of Things Collection – we continue to expand this collection of nontraditional items for patrons to borrow from the library. Our most popular items are WiFi Hotspots and Board and Lawn Games. In late 2023 we added Chromebooks, that are equipped with mobile data plans, to the collection.
- In the spring of 2024 we will begin working on plans for our new FY2026-2030 Strategic Plan!



LIBRARY PROGRAMS

We offered 786 library programs during the 2023 calendar year that were attended by 16,425 people!

Adult Programs

1,479 adults attended 150 programs including: Yoga, Music Concerts, and Craft & Art Programs. We also hosted the town's Annual Veterans' Day Program.

This year, as part of our "Bellingham is Open for Business" grant we hosted Bellingham's first Business Expo. In late April, over 25 area businesses set up tables in the Community Room and main area of the library to informally introduce their business to the over 200 attendees. As part of the program we invited some of the businesses to demo or highlight their services. The karate demonstration and ukulele jam were big hits! We are planning the second annual Business Expo for early April 2024.



Teen Programs

3,023 teens attended 149 programs at the library in 2023. These teens participated in our after-school program. From 2 to 5 pm each school day, dozens of 7th to 12th graders find their place in the library Teen Room to do homework, play videogames, make crafts, and hang out with their friends. In addition, we hosted a few special programs including this Video Game Night.





LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Children's Programs

11,923 children and caregivers attended 487 programs for preschool children and school kids in kindergarten through 6th grade.

Our regular weekly programs included: ASK (After School Kids), Alphabits, Baby Time, Chess Club, Film Fridays, Adult/Child Book Club, Graphic Novel Book Club, Read to Freedom the Reading Dog, Ring a Ding, and Sensory Story Time.

In May of 2023, with assistance from federal ARPA funds, the library in coordination with the Town Common Trustees, opened a StoryWalk® on the Bellingham Town Common. During the year the story is changed to reflect the seasons and events.



Special programs included:
 Vinny the Bubble Guy
 Camp Millionaire
 The Write Stuf,
 Edible Haunted Houses
 Trunk or Treat
 Polar Express
 Gingerbread Houses
 and a New Year's Eve Party



SERVICES

Partners

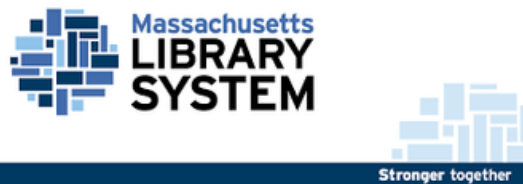
The library partners with a number of organizations in Massachusetts to provide expanded library services to our residents. These include:



The MBLC is the state agency that certifies libraries and ensures state standards for library services are being met. Public libraries are required to meet certain budget and service levels each year in order to maintain certification and receive State Aid. By maintaining certification last year, the library will receive **over \$38,000** in State Aid in FY2024, the highest State Aid awarded to the library ever. For the second consecutive year the library has met all state requirements.



CWMARS is our library network. Our annual 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 numerous electronic resources, including eBooks.



Massachusetts Library System (MLS) – The library is a member of MLS, which provides delivery of items between Massachusetts libraries, as well as access to online resources. They also provide continuing education for library staff.

In 2023, nearly **10,000 items** (books, DVDs, audiobooks, and more) were borrowed from our partner libraries through MLS delivery. In addition, we sent out over **11,000 items**.



SERVICES

Electronic Resources

The library continues to expand resources that people can access online. In 2023 we offered access to the following resources, by category:

Resource Category & Details	2023	2022
Audiobooks from Hoopla, Libby	6,915	5,310
eBooks from Hoopla, Libby	8,074	7,274
Genealogy Resources from Ancestry.com and others	400	4,712
Job and Career Resources from Learning Express Library	285	669
Journal and Magazine Articles from Gale Databases	280	170
Magazines from Flipster, Hoopla and Libby	1,642	697
Movies & TV from Hoopla, IndieFlix, Kanopy, Qello	1,394	903
Music from Freegal, Hoopla, Qello (downloads and streaming)	6,464	4,536
Newspaper Articles from the Boston Globe and NYT	252	171
Tutoring Services from Brainfuse's Help Now	381	124
Online Courses and Tutorials from Craftsy, Great Courses Niche Academy and Universal Class	1,642	697
Language Learning Resources from Mango Languages Lingo Lite, and Transparent Language Online	2,300	1,672

New in 2023

Electronic Books for Kids from Bookflix	288
Lesson Plans for Kids from Teachables & Educate Station	235



Access all of these resources at our website:
<https://www.bellinghamma.org/library/online-resources>



STAFF & LEADERSHIP CHANGES

2023 was a time of change in our Youth Services Department. After the November 2022 departure of Steven “Mr. Steve” Fowler, the Library Trustees hired Laura Brilliant-Giangrande in early 2023. Laura left the library in August of 2023 to pursue other opportunities, and the Library Trustees promoted our Library Assistant, **Melissa Denham** to the Youth Services Librarian Position. Melissa interned at the library to complete her MLS degree in the summer of 2022 and was hired as a Library Assistant when a position opened soon after the summer ended.



Melissa has brought a new Sensory Story Time program to Bellingham, as well as restarted some beloved programs, including Alphabits.

Also in 2023, Renee Milliken, who had been a part-time Library Assistant for over 20 years, left us for a full time opportunity at another library. To replace Melissa and Renee’s part time positions, we hired two new Library Assistants, **Catherine Perreault and Mary Rivet**.

In addition, in the summer of 2023 our Custodian, Jim Maher, retired after 9 years of service to the library. His replacement, Bradley DeLuca, left the library in October and in December **Amanda Campano** was hired. Amanda has experience working as a substitute custodian for the Bellingham Public Schools.





COMING IN 2024!

Online Author Talks!



In January of 2024 the Bellingham Library will join a group of libraries nationwide that participate in the Library Speakers Consortium. This collaboration provides live, online author talks with New York Times Bestselling Authors. In addition, the author talks are recorded for patrons to watch at their convenience anytime after the date of the event.

Art & Photography Show

In 2019 as part of the Bellingham 300th Anniversary festivities, the library hosted a Photography Show. We are reviving and expanding it in 2024 to include art and photography. The event will take place in February and all are invited to participate!



Parenting in the 21st Century, A Series of Panel Discussions by Local Professionals

As we hear about the mental health crisis in our country, the library is working with Bellingham resident, Michelle Gaudet, M. Ed, LABA of Purposeful Connections, LLC to present a series of workshops on topics of concern to parents and families in the 21st century. Michelle will be bringing in experts on each topic and facilitating a panel discussion on the topic. The topics that will be covered in the spring of 2024 include:

- *Challenges at Home & School*
- *Technology & Mental Health*
- *Balancing Work & Home Life*

