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 Kunczewicz
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
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

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

Bellingham Public Library

THE LIBRARY CONTINUES TO REBOUND!
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!
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.
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
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.
Electronic Resources

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

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

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
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 Brillant-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.
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