

Stevens Memorial Library
Ashburnham, Massachusetts
Annual Report 2020

Mission Statement: *The Stevens Memorial Library supports its community through the provision of materials, programs, space, and technology to aid in the educational, cultural, and recreational development of its entire community. The library is committed to providing a welcoming space for Ashburnham citizens and residents of neighboring communities without regard to gender, race, age, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.*

Facts at a Glance:

2020 Statistics (COVID-19)

Visitors to the Building (1/1-3/16): 10,164
Library Card Holders: 2,753
Total Collection Use: 39,593
Total Circulation of Materials: 38,481
Electronic Usage (Databases, etc.): 5,505
Total Physical Collection Size: 26,382
Books: 18,815
Audio Books & Music: 1,199
DVDs & Blu-rays: 4,549
Museum Passes, Kits, Misc: 294
Print Periodicals: 592
Items Added This Year: 2,442
Children's # Programs / # Attendance:
80 / 2,385
Young Adult # Programs / # Attendance:
15 / 230
Adult # Programs / # Attendance:
25 / 334
Computer Sessions: 533
Library Website Visits: 15,062
Wireless Sessions Provided: 13,329
Hours Open per Week: 36
Total Number of Staff: 6
Total Staff Hours per Week: 137

Library Staff

Terri Anstiss, Director (FT)
Claire Laprade, Youth Services (FT)
Erin Testagrossa, Circulation Manager (PT)
Keith Penniman, Sr. Library Assistant (PT)

2019 Statistics

Visitors to the Building: 31,825
Library Card Holders: 2,733
Total Collection Use: 40,739
Total Circulation of Materials: 35,696
Electronic Usage (Databases, etc.): 5,043
Total Physical Collection Size: 27,738
Books: 20,698
Audio Books & Music: 1,071
DVDs & Blu-rays: 4,759
Museum Passes, Kits, Misc: 388
Print Periodicals: 786
Items Added This Year: 2,855
Children's # Programs / # Attendance:
146 / 2,182
Young Adult # Programs / # Attendance:
32 / 153
Adult # Programs / # Attendance:
41 / 744
Computer Sessions: 2,080
Library Website Visits: 11,417
Wireless Sessions Provided: 11,440
Hours Open per Week: 36
Total Number of Staff: 6
Total Staff Hours per Week: 137

Angela Wrinkle, Library Assistant (PT)
Rob Johnson, Custodian (PT)
Equivalent Full Time Staff: 3.7

Library Trustees

Edward Vitone, Chair & Secretary

Molly Ruble, Vice-Chair

Paula St. Laurent-Kuehl, Treasurer

Anne Olivari

Christopher Rigby

Katie Stevens

Comments from Library Patrons during COVID-19:

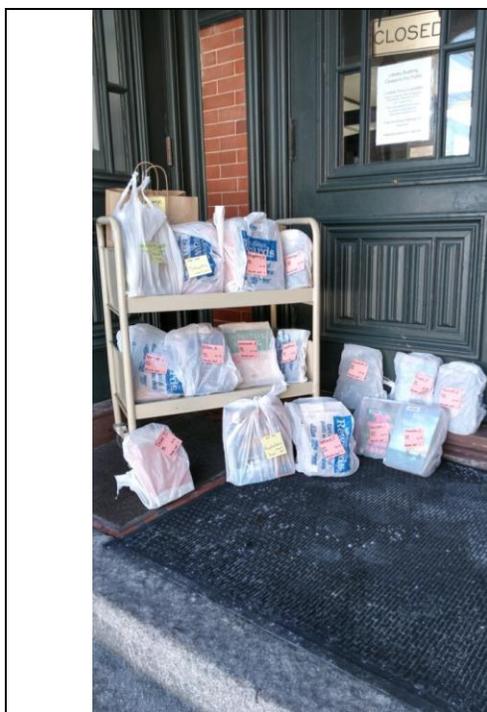
"I cannot remember the library being better in all the time we've been in town—60+ years. During the pandemic, the online book reservation system and curbside pick-up has been fantastic." (Facebook post)

"Supportive, dedicated, accessible, and well-prepared. These are a few of the adjectives I would use to describe your service to the community during these challenging times. Your commitment to the community is second to none. Personally, you were my shelter in a time of storm, and I thank you all." (Letter received)

"I LOVE the Book Bundle service. I'm a browser so I don't always know exactly what I want or what to request. After filling out the book bundle request form on the library's website and having six books picked for me was a treat. I'm halfway through the pile and so impressed. Books I might not have chosen, but books I have thoroughly enjoyed." (Facebook post)

2020 was a year like none other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The year began as a typical year only to come to a screeching halt in March when the Commonwealth went into lockdown. Like many other public libraries across the state, Library staff worked from home and continued to serve the public by communicating with patrons via social media, providing website updates, help with digital services, email and phone assistance. Staff took turns visiting the Library to check on the facility and empty the book drop. Beginning in April, virtual story times began and by June we were offering regular virtual programming each month, including a monthly book discussion group for adults, plus special programs for youth and adults each month, including a virtual summer reading program through the end of July. In June the staff returned to the building full time, with precautions in place. Curbside services resumed (physical items like books, videos, audiobooks available for pick-up) and by July, Interlibrary Loans through the statewide network again became available. This service has been extremely popular and valuable during the pandemic, providing a lifeline of education, information and entertainment to people with limited resources and to everyone dealing with limited or no access to schools, businesses and buildings. **Curbside statistics are below:**

Month (2020)	Curbside "Orders" Filled (not # of items)
June	67
July	174
August	283
September	313
October	379
November	296
December	322
Total	1,934



Curbside Orders Ready for Pick-up



Our Friendly Staff from Left to Right: Erin Testagrossa, Circulation Manager, Claire Laprade, Youth Services Librarian, Angela Wrinkle, Circulation Assistant, Keith Penniman, Sr. Circulation Assistant. Not in photo: Terri Anstiss, Library Director

During building closure staff have completed many long-overdue projects including: “weeding” of the entire physical collection to remove old and outdated materials, including the reorganization of magazines and adult non-fiction; fixes to individual items and collections to make the collection more user-friendly; collection development to make the collection more diverse; a website audit to check for accuracy; research and development of programs to accommodate the virtual environment; the complete update of all library policies and

procedures with the addition of a few new ones; and the clean-out of staff work spaces, the “old” kitchen, preservation room and attic to prepare for building renovations.

During the pandemic, the CW/MARS Library Network provided access to 1.8 million e-content items, up 34% from 2019. Understandably, there was a network-wide decrease in physical items, down 54% from 2019: 5.3 million physical checkouts compared to 11.6 physical checkouts in 2019. Through membership in the network, our patrons enjoyed uninterrupted access to digital resources such as e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines, videos, research databases and free learning platforms and courses during the lockdown and building closure. Interestingly, despite the pandemic, internal circulations for our library alone were up 25% during FY20.

Thanks to our wonderful Youth Services Librarian, Claire Laprade, services to children and teens have continued to grow and develop, even during the pandemic. Since April 2020, just one month after the pandemic hit, the Library continued with its weekly story time in a virtual format. The Library also provided weekly craft kits to accompany story times and activity kits for other children's and teen programs, as well as special monthly virtual programs to engage children, teens and their families. The Summer Reading program looked different this year due to its virtual format but was nonetheless well-attended. We had 115 participants, 929 collective hours read, 31 programs held, 390 craft/program kits dispersed, and 1,458 youth patrons attended our virtual SR programs. Our Youth Services Librarian has continued to meet with the Teen Advisory Board at Oakmont, virtually, to maintain the relationship built in previous years that helps the Library to better understand and serve the teen population. The Youth Services Librarian worked tirelessly and diligently to secure a LSTA grant of \$17,100, to be spent over the next two fiscal years; the grant will improve teen spaces, materials and programming for teens. Some items bought with the grant funds so far include a makerspace cart, gaming technology, reading materials, and décor to improve the user experience for our teens.

Director Terri Anstiss and the Board of Trustees continued to meet, remotely and in person, during building closure. Under the leadership of the Director and with the support of the Trustees, it was determined that we could accomplish quite a lot during building closure,

with the future in mind. Several building projects and renovations, funded by the Whittemore Trust, have been completed to better serve the community. By updating the facility, we hope to improve access and programming, and attract more community members to the Library.

- Outdated kitchen renovated into a patron café
- Attic reinforced to ensure safety and to allow for more storage
- Bird spikes installed to mitigate the pigeon problem at the entrances
- Front water barrier, curbing installed to prevent water damage to ground floor
- Staff offices relocated to the Circulation Desk area
- Old staff offices converted to space for the public (ground floor)
- Painting of the community room, adult nonfiction, and ground floor
- Preservation room materials secured with locks so that the room can be used daily in a more open, accessible fashion by patrons (quiet study, meetings)
- 2021 Plans: New carpet installed on the ground floor, plans for adding new furniture, and painting the youth spaces to be more friendly and inviting
- 2021 Plans: Furniture will be needed to accommodate more spaces for patrons

We are grateful to our Friends of the Library, who work to support special programs as well as items that enhance our services, such as toys, puzzles and furniture in the Children's Room. In 2020, the Friends donated a new café table and chairs for our newly redesigned kitchen space which will now be used as a patron café (donated by one special Friend who would like to remain anonymous). They also funded the painting of the Community Room, which will create a more neutral background for displaying art when we can begin to collaborate with local galleries, artists and schools to bring art into the Library.

The Library's budget represents approximately 1.3% of the town's overall budget. We work diligently to provide friendly customer service, fun, interesting and educational programs, as well as access to diverse collections, both print and electronic. We are hoping that the coming years will bring further collaboration within our community. In 2020, we began work on our newest Strategic Plan, funded with a Community Foundation grant secured by the Director, Terri Anstiss, which we anticipate will be complete by June of 2021. We held many virtual

meetings to brainstorm and set goals to further improve the Library in the near future. Don't hesitate to reach out with your ideas, suggestions and valuable input, now or anytime.

The Library is such an important place for the community to come together. This fact has become more and more obvious during times such as these. We continue to provide our patrons with a safe, welcoming environment where they can enjoy free programming and access to resources and materials. We appreciate the support of our volunteers, our Friends, our patrons, and our entire community.

Staff have worked very hard during the pandemic to meet the needs of the community in the most creative and responsive ways possible. Staff have been extremely flexible with their working conditions, including adjusting their work duties and dealing with constant changes to their work environments (workflows, renovations). Please join me in expressing gratitude to our wonderful staff who have been on the frontlines of working in this pandemic, to serve you, our community. We look forward to be able to serve the community in person when things return to normal operations and share all our hard work and amazing improvements that will make a positive impact for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Anstiss, Director, on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees

February 22, 2021

**Information on children and young adult programming and services provided by Claire Laprade, Youth Services Librarian.*