

Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2022

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

2022 saw a steady return to pre-pandemic library services. The building remained open to the public for the entire year, providing the usual schedule of 53.5 hours per week. The study rooms reopened, all public computers were restored and the educational games on the popular Children's Room iPads were again enjoyed by many preschool and elementary-aged students. Program attendance for all ages, including school class visits, increased from 3,534 in 2021 to 7,425 in 2022.

2022 was a year of planning and community engagement for the Abington Public Library. The *Abington Public Library Strategic Plan, FY2024 – FY2028* was completed with input from a dynamic community committee, and a very successful survey which received 592 responses. The members of the committee are listed at the end of this report. Library Consultant Ruth Kowal facilitated the planning process and her input was invaluable. The *Strategic Plan* provides a blueprint for services for the next several years and introduces the Library's new mission statement: *The Abington Public Library strengthens the community by providing resources and programs which enhance learning and cultural connections for all residents.*

The Abington Public Library provided information services for the residents of Abington: 110,413 items – books, eBooks, audiobooks, DVDs, videos, music CDs, magazines and museum passes were borrowed. Circulation increased by more than 17% for the second straight year; user visits more than doubled, from 25,471 in 2021 to 55,266 in 2022. The demand for curbside pickup and home delivery decreased significantly by the end of the year; these programs remain in place for borrowers who wish to use them.

State Aid to Public Libraries funds were used to purchase new Chromebooks for patron use, replacing the donated laptop program with up-to-date technology. On October 1, at the end of the state/federally funded mobile hotspot program, the Library assumed financial responsibility for the popular items, again using State Aid to Public Libraries. The Chromebooks and hotspots cross the digital divide and give borrowers without reliable home computers and/or Internet access, the ability to work, access educational opportunities, conduct life business, and use the Internet for communication and leisure time pursuits. The hotspots also provide users with Internet access outside of the 53.5 hours per week that the Library is open to the public.

With the support of the Griffin's Dairy Committee, the Library again presented two StoryWalks® along the walking path at the Dairy. The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson. A StoryWalk® places the pages of a picture book in signs along a pathway, encouraging children to both exercise and read. Feedback from the community was very positive. The books featured were *Up, Down, and Around* by Katherine Ayres and *In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming.

2,439 Abington Public School students participated in 143 class visits presented by Children's Librarian Amy Hindle. Kindergarten and Pre-K classes received monthly visits to their classrooms; all classes in grades 1, 2, 3 and 5 visited the Public Library once during the school year. The addition of a part-time Staff Librarian for Children's Services allowed the permanent addition of grade 2 classes to the schedule. Kindergarten classes end the school year with a visit to the Public Library. The very popular Beaver Brook and Woodsdale Art Shows returned to the Library in March for Youth Art Month.

The Non-Fiction Book Club, Popular Fiction Book Club, Cookbook Club, met throughout 2022; the Popular Fiction group meets virtually and the other book clubs meet in person. Device Advice technology programs were offered. Historical lectures, author visits and a theatrical presentation were among the offerings for adults. 71 live and virtual programs were offered for adults with 876 attendees. Subscriptions to the monthly newsletter, *All Around the APL*, continued to grow.

The Friends conducted fundraising activities with book sales in April and October, as well as maintaining their popular “Everyday Sale Shelf” in the Library. An apron/potholder package was offered for sale. The Friends Membership Drive was held successfully in January 2022. The Abington Cultural Council provided funding to the Friends for the patron pass to the Museum of Fine Arts and for a March performance of “Isabella” by the Delvena Theatre Company. The Friends book discussion groups, Book Talk and the Mystery Group, met throughout the year, with a hiatus during the summer. Friends fundraising supports attraction passes and programs for all ages.

Gifts were received for children’s programming in memory of long-time library trustee Melba Smith, Individual residents made donations for library materials, including memorial gifts. The Library Trustees and Library Director thank the many generous residents who donated to the Friends of the Library and provided direct financial support for Library services.

The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) continued to meet and to guide program offerings for teens. Barn Babies made their annual visit to the library and the teens spent an afternoon playing with baby farm animals. Several after-hours programs were offered this year, including the return of a TAB overnight which included a story hour conducted in the wee hours of the morning. In June and November, the popular Chopped programs were held on Friday evenings. Pop-Up Art School has kindled a love of needlefelting in our teens. A group of TAB volunteers supervised activities including a temporary tattoo station, and crafts and games during the Summer Reading Program Kickoff event, held outdoors in the side yard with everyone’s favorite entertainer, Mr. Vinny. Summer reading time continued to be recorded virtually using the READSquared software.

In summer 2022 the Library, once again, hosted several children’s cultural programs generously funded by the Anderson Foundation. Our audiences enjoyed Hugh Hanley, Mama Steph, Rolie Polie Guacamole and Ed Popielarczyk who performed magic for younger folk, and balloon twisting with teens. The Friends of the Library funded Talewise Presents: Pirates Lost at Sea and the Melba Smith Fund funded Mama Steph. The Friends of the Library continued to provide for the library’s preschool and toddler story times, Lego Club, after-school story craft, the popular book discussion clubs for children and teens, additional performers and the summer reading program. The Joyce Lee Bumpus Fund funded the return of Eyes on Owls bringing real live owls to the back of the library. 115 children and teens registered for the Summer Reading program on Read Squared and read for a total of 1,202 hours.

The Capital Plan as voted at the Annual Town Meeting in April generously provided funding for a new roof for the Library. Habeeb and Associates Architects of Norwell served as the project manager. In accordance with all applicable state procurement laws the project was completed by MDM Engineering of Dudley. The removal of the old roof began in October and the new roof was completed in December. The project included replacement of water stained interior ceiling tiles. The Trustees and Library Director thank the taxpayers of Abington for supporting the new roof project, and for maintaining the Public Library building.

Trustees Gerry Haas and Carrie Murray were re-elected in the town's annual election in April. Long-time Trustee Secretary Laura Nuttall chose not to run for re-election. The Board welcomed newly elected Trustee Laura Brink at the May meeting.

A new part-time Staff Librarian for Children's Services position was funded at the April Town Meeting; Library Assistant Heidi Hernandez was promoted to this new position. Library Assistant Jill Monti received more weekly hours and Library Assistant Jonathan Gillis was hired. In September, Reference Librarian Sarah Roberts resigned; Reference Librarian Robert Goodale joined the staff in December. Lisa Scott was appointed to the on-call substitute list in the fall.

The Trustees and Director recognize the dedication and professionalism of the Library Staff: Sandy Bumpus, Ann Bunszell, Susan Donovan, Jonathan Gillis, Robert Goodale, Heidi Hernandez, Amy Hindle, Kerri Lohnes, Jill Monti, Lynne Nickley, Joanne Plunkett, Sarah Roberts, Linda Sampson, Elizabeth Shea, Rosemary Sheehan and Terry Taylor.

Selected 2022 Library Statistics

Circulation: 110,413

85,825 physical items such as books, magazines, jigsaw puzzles etc.

24,588 digital items such as eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, Streaming video and music.

Registered borrowers: 5,495

Total programs/school classes offered: 492. Total program attendance: 7,425

Total patron visits: 55,266

Respectfully submitted,

Henry DiCarlo, Chair

Betty Henderson, Vice Chair

Laura Nuttall, Secretary (term ended in April)

Carrie Murray, Secretary (beginning in April)

Gail Bergin

Laura Brink (elected in April)

Mary Gillis

Gerry Haas

Barbara McLaughlin

John O'Neill

Deborah Grimmer, Library Director

Community Planning Committee Members

Laura Brink, Library Trustee

Henry DiCarlo, Library Trustee

Patti Condon, President, Friends of the Library

Kristina Coull-Youch, Parent Representative

Chief Petty Officer Adam Gunn, USN Ret., Director of Veteran's Services, Town of Abington

Gerry Haas, Library Trustee

Amy Hindle, Children's Librarian – Abington Public Library

Pat Jackman, Council on Aging Representative

Tricia London, Abington Middle/High School Librarian

Jill Monti, Library Assistant – Abington Public Library

Lynne Nickley, Assistant Librarian for Adult Services – Abington Public Library

Kimberly Reid, Community Representative

Julia Riley, Teen Advisory Board Representative

Aimee Tyler, Community Representative