

Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2023

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

2023 was a year of celebrating the past and looking to the future for the Abington Public Library. In January the Library celebrated the 25th anniversary of the building with a concert featuring *The Steve Rudolph Trio*. The community celebrated the completion and occupation of the APL building, which has provided the setting for library services and programs since its dedication in January 1998. The year concluded with the launch of the Library's new website. The original website was constructed in 2004 and there was a significant revision in 2012. Staff worked with Piper Mountain Webs of New Hampshire, to update and refresh the website, which can be found at www.abingtonpl.org. The Trustees and Library Director thank Assistant Librarian Sandy Bumpus, website project coordinator, for achieving a visually appealing and functional website. The new website is optimized for mobile devices, which was a major flaw of the old website in recent years.

The Library applied for a competitive LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant in April. The grant, called "Civic Hub", focused on the need for residents to have a place to civilly discuss political and societal issues. The \$15,000 grant was awarded in July. The funds come from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Programs began in October and will continue through September 2024. A Banned Book Club was created, with the first meeting in October. A program called "Ask a Muslim Anything" was also offered in October; this lecture became very timely with the beginning of the conflict between Hamas and Israel. More social and political issues will be examined during grant programming in 2024.

The Chromebook and hotspot borrowing programs, which cross the digital divide by giving library users 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, remain popular. 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 offered three 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. In just three years, the StoryWalks® have become a much-loved community summer tradition. The books featured were *If You Plant a Seed* by Kadir Nelson, *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert and *Lola Goes to School* by Anna McQuinn.

2,356 Abington Public School students participated in 147 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. 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 2023; 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. In the fall Reference Librarian Rob Goodale began visiting the Abington Senior Center for individualized device advice help. Eighty-nine live and virtual programs were offered

for adults with 1,383 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. The Friends Membership Drive was held successfully in January 2023. The Abington Cultural Council provided funding to the Friends for the patron passes to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Boston Children’s Museum, as well as for the January 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.

Another gift was received for children’s programming in memory of Joyce Lee Bumpus. Gifts were again received for children’s programming in memory of long-time library trustee Melba Smith. A donation for the Story Garden was received from the Bailey’s daylily sale. Memorial gifts were received in honor of Barbara Gates Wells and Raymond Gehling. Individual residents made donations for library materials, including additional 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 ever-popular Chopped program in June, as well as a newspaper fashion show/scavenger hunt program in August. The teens’ love of needle felting grew with two programs with the Pop Up Art School in March and July. 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 2023 the Library, once again, hosted several children’s cultural programs generously funded by the Anderson Foundation. Our audiences enjoyed musical performances by Hugh Hanley, Mama Steph, Stacey Peasley, and a puppet show with Pumpnickel Puppets. The Friends of the Library funded Talewise Presents: Science Heroes 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. Mr. Vinny returned to the library in December for his fun and unique shadow puppets program.. One hundred four children and teens registered for the Summer Reading program on Read Squared and read for a total of 1,982 hours.

In April, the Library’s twenty-six-year-old boiler began leaking and was deemed unrepairable. A boiler replacement project went out to bid in late summer and the project was awarded to Araujo Bros. Plumbing and Heating of Acushnet. The work began in the fall and the new system was operable by early December. Due to supply chain issues, the project will not be completed until early 2024. The Trustees and Library Director thank Town Manager Scott Lambiase for overseeing the bid process, and also thank Scott Lambiase and Town Accountant Andrew Nocon for working with Plymouth County to obtain Federal ARPA funds for this needed project.

Trustees Barbara McLaughlin and Jake O'Neill were re-elected in the town's annual election in April. Long-time Trustee Vice-Chair Betty Henderson chose not to run for re-election. The Board welcomed newly elected Trustee Susan Crowley at the May meeting.

Elizabeth Shea resigned as a Library Assistant in May. Library Assistant Jill Monti resigned in June and Collen Phelps joined the staff as a part-time Library Assistant in August. Jill Monti and Liz Shea were added to the on-call substitute list in the summer. Kim Reid became a children's programming substitute in January and was added to the general on-call substitute list in May.

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, Collen Phelps, Joanne Plunkett, Kim Reid, Sarah Roberts, Linda Sampson, Elizabeth Shea, Rosemary Sheehan and Terry Taylor.

Selected 2023 Library Statistics

Circulation: 115,455

86,552 physical items such as books, magazines, jigsaw puzzles etc.

28,924 digital items such as eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines, Streaming video and music.

Total programs/school classes offered: 580. Total program attendance: 8,929

Total patron visits: 62,796

Respectfully submitted,
Henry DiCarlo, Chair
Betty Henderson, Vice Chair (ending in April)
Gail Bergin, Vice Chair (beginning in May)
Carrie Murray, Secretary
Laura Brink

Mary Gillis
Gerry Haas
Barbara McLaughlin
John O'Neill
Susan Crowley (beginning in May)
Deborah Grimmett, Library Director