

J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

This Library Report includes a section on the Library COVID-19 Pandemic response.

Ellen Rainville, Library
Director

New initiatives, collections, services, technology and expanded programs in FY 2020 included:

- New *Library Web Site* funded by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc.
- Hoopla and KANOPY funded by the Fall Appeal
- New *MVLC App* and *Author Alerts*
- *Racial Justice Reading List, COVID Employer and Job Seekers* and *Downloadable Staff Recommends* on web site
- New *Grab 'n Go Bundles, Binge Boxes* and *Dementia Friendly Kits*
- Middle School *SKYPE Book Club* and *Quarterly Book Talks* with Library Staff
- Fall and Winter *Exam Weeks* for WA students
- *COVID-19 Historical Archive*
- Focus Groups and S.O.A.R exercises for the *Strategic Planning Process*

Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project Grant:

Since 2011, Library staff, the Library Facility Needs Committee, and the Library Trustees Board have worked to poise the municipality for a Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Massachusetts *Public Library Construction Project Grant* application which was submitted in 2017.



The Town of Westford is now waitlisted [at number 8], in line for \$7,851,944 million in grant funds. This award rests upon state funding, Town review and future Town votes in favor of proceeding with this project (slated for potentially 2023 or 2024). The future design devotes almost all new space to the public and to the residents who use it most. The Library design:

- More than doubles the space for children, and offers a discreet separate area
- Triples the space for young adults and emerging adults
- Doubles public meeting spaces (booked 6 x day)
- Centralizes Circulation functions
- Increases silent, tutorial and collaborative study options
- Offers improved technology and spaces to accommodate future trends and uses
- Offers improved traffic flow and increased parking
- Is fully handicapped-accessible and meets current fire, safety, ventilation and building codes

"Thank you all so much for all you have been doing to help us during this very difficult time."
Library Patron

Youth Programs:

Exciting and new Youth Services programming in FY 2020 included:

- Library Miniature Golf (funded by the KDK Foundation in memory of Kurt Kelly)
- Library Book Clubs K-5 and Middle School, Mini-Masters and Non-Fiction Book Clubs
- SNAP Circuits, OZOBOTS, iROBOT and LEGO Club [STEM programs]



- Teddy Bears' Picnic
- Make and Take Mondays
- Diwali and Winter Solstice drop-in draft
- Pre-School New Year's Party (ball descends at noon!)
- Mr. Vinny's Shadow Puppet Show
- Dr. Seuss's Birthday
- FROZEN Party with *Elsa*
- Dav Pilkey Extravaganza
- Bruins' *PJ Collection*
- *Story Walks*



Adult programming offered the monthly *Library Book Discussion Group*, the *Cookbook Book Club*, the *Monday Mystery Book Club*, the *Non-fiction Book Club*, weekly *English Conversation Circle*, *Knitting Group* and the *Westford Job Seekers Network* hosting free weekly motivational and practical sessions to job seekers until closure on March 14, 2020. Adult programs — in person and virtual after March 15 — included:

- 📖 KonMari Tidying Up
- 📖 *Being Mortal* Book Discussion
- 📖 Adventures with Microgreens
- 📖 Victorian Christmas Traditions
- 📖 Ukulele Strum Along
- 📖 Dublin in Song and Story
- 📖 Marine Life of New England

"You are a HUGE part of my life – Thanks for all the enrichment you provide." *Library Suggestion Book*

The three Summer Reading Programs (child, tween and adult) netted 2,429 registrants from June 2019 through August 2019, with thousands of program attendees. The 2019 state-wide reading themes were: *Readers Rock!* (Juvenile); *A Universe of Stories* (Tween/Teen) and, *A Universe of Stories* (Adult). This program-packed summer read-fest is the engine for our busiest season of the year and was funded by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. and the Massachusetts Library System.

Gift- and Grant-Funded Initiatives and Awards:

In FY 2020, the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library Inc. provided over \$20,000 in book and new format funds, and one-half of the Library's MVLC annual membership was paid from the State Aid to Public Libraries account. The Library thanks those gracious donors who gave to the Friends' 2019 Fall Appeal campaign to fund raise and to supplement Town funds for new media, downloadable collections and technology purchases, which provided critical remote access to titles during the closed final quarter of the fiscal year. The Friends are also thanked for funding multiple museum passes, all library programming, the annual Wishlist and for ALL the ways their support expands and enhances daily Library service.



We thank the Westford Garden Club for underwriting the gift of passes to the *Tower Hill Botanic Garden* facility in Boylston and for enhancing the Library's Main Street entrance all year round with such beautiful and exuberant plantings! The Library and families of Westford thank the KDK Foundation (Kurt Kelly Hockey Memorial Fund) for funding the extremely-popular *5th-Annual* mid-winter 9-Hole Mini-Golf Tournament

in the Library, as well as a fun-filled summer Harry Potter Trivia program! The Library won First Place in the *Westford Festival of Trees* for its *Alice in Wonderland*-themed holiday “evergreen.”

We again thank the Community Preservation Commission for underwriting the preservation of the historic Greek Revival windows in the Mary Atwood Hall (third floor). This initiative allowed the restoration of an historic original feature of the 1895 Library façade on the Town Common with work concluded in the FY 2021 fiscal year.

Administrative, Personnel and Volunteer News:

The Library thanks all staff for their enthusiasm and customer service, as Library programming, circulation and attendance continued to expand. We also thank here the many volunteers – both adult and juvenile – who assist us and particularly note the *Link to Literacy* program, under coordinator/volunteer Elizabeth Elliott, which pairs tutors and pupils in English as a Second Language and basic literacy tutoring. Additionally, we thank Carol Morse for running the weekly *English Conversation Circle* which provides real-life practice in English for attendees of all backgrounds. We hope to welcome back volunteers at some point in FY 2021.

Facility Maintenance:

In FY 2020 the Library tackled the following maintenance issues within the facility:

- New Air Chiller motor was installed
- Champion Black Oak was pruned, trimmed and underwent a second sonar tomography Risk Assessment which resulted in the recommendation that this champion be removed; a Farewell Ceremony was held in September 2019
- Safety and security procedures and initiatives were introduced per the *Town School Safety Task Force*



Shut-down, Remote Services and Curbside during COVID:

The Board of Library Trustees met on Friday, March 13 and in light of the Governor’s orders voted to close the library building at end of day on March 14, 2020. A line of patrons was waiting at the door at opening time and the day’s circulation totaled almost 5,500 items. The creativity, planning, technical prowess and flexibility of the staff was tested as all collection access, programming, Book Clubs and meetings immediately pivoted to remote and virtual. It is impossible here to overstate the critical Friends’ support which made possible the new web site, the purchase of *hoopla* and *KANOPY*, the *Browse Tent*, *1610 AM*

Radio transmitter WJVF: Still Serving You on your car radio dial, *Zoom* and a host of other practical items required to provide CURBSIDE PICKUP, BOOK THE BROWSE TENT, LAPTOP ON THE LAWN and remote and virtual programs and services.

While staggered skeletal staff shifts continued to report into the building, all staff began remote work, supervision and reporting immediately, and patron curbside pickup was not offered until June 1. Weekly *Pandemic Reports* were submitted to the Library Trustees.

Professional Development and Town Civic Activity:

Library staff continued to be active in various professional organizations, with Director Ellen Rainville serving as MVLC Clerk and on the MLA Executive Board:

- ALA (American Library Association)
- MLA (Massachusetts Library Association)
- MSLA (Massachusetts School Library Association)
- MVLC (Merrimack Valley Library Consortium)
- NELA (New England Library Association)
- TEEN Summit
- PLA (Public Library Association)
- YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association)
- School Library Journal Day of Dialog
- Westford Records and Archive Committee

"Many thanks...for hosting the weekly Job Seekers Network meetings and providing endless words of encouragement."
Job Seekers Network Attendee

Library Staffing FY 2020:

Director — Ellen D. Rainville

Asst. Director — Kristina Leedberg

Senior Librarians:

Head of Youth Services — Nancy Boutet

Systems/Head of Technical Services — Dina Kanabar

Head of Reference & Information Services — Sarah Regan

Head of Circulation — Holly Sheridan-Pritchard

Staff Librarians:

ILL/Serials Librarian — Charles Schweppe

Young Adult Specialist — Katelyn Bennett Rose

Local History/Genealogist — Virginia Moore

Head Cataloger — Alla Brovina

Substitute — Sandy Kelly

Library Associates:

Cataloger/Data Entry — Lauren Evans

Fine Arts Librarian/Acquisitions — Carol McCahon

Juvenile Reference/Program Assistants — Ellen Apicco;

Jacki Dibble; Jennifer Hamilton

Circulation and Reader's Advisory — Laura Fowler;

Mayleen Kelley; Judy Madsen; Paula McWilliams;

Jeanne Millet; Heather Nevits; Deborah Santoro;

Chantale Shepard

Substitute — Mary Boutet (*resigned 7/9/19*); Jean Butler

Library Technicians:

Order and Acquisition Receiving — Susan Blanchette

Inter-Library Loan Support — Bari Pender; Melissa Seldon

Maintenance Worker I and II — Robert Otto; Joseph Burke

Office Manager — Amy Spadano

Library Pages (5)

Volunteers (19)

"I am so grateful for the support and leadership that you and your wonderful staff have shown to the town." **Library Patron**

