

## J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

Ellen Rainville, Library  
Director

### Curbside Pickup, Remote and Virtual Offerings:

After the emergency COVID closure to the public on March 14, 2020, the library began contact-free curbside pickup on June 1, 2020 and entered FY 2021 offering an ever-increasing array of COVID- and CDC regulation- compatible new initiatives, collections, services, and remote and downloadable technologies. The Library thanks all staff for their creativity, planning, technical prowess, imagination and flexibility as all collection access, programming, and outreach pivoted to remote and virtual, adding winter Browsing by appointment and finally re-opening to the public on June 1, 2021. Prior to June 1, staff delivered over 25,000 curbside pickups to the rear entry and covered the equivalent distance of walking to Pittsburgh PA. New service delivery was supported by new technologies and over four dozen new procedures. Safe new offerings included:

- *Hoopla, KANOPY and new website funded by the Library Friends*
- *Book the Browse Tent*
- *Laptop on the Lawn and Device Advice*
- *Grab 'n Go Bundles, Craft Kits, Book Club Bags, Make and Take Bags*
- *Beans, Bestsellers and Books!*
- *Drive-through Friend's Book Sale*
- *1610 AM WJVF Still Serving You on your AM Radio Dial*
- *ABC and Me! Storytime*



**Youth Programs:** Exciting and new Youth Services programming in FY 2021 included:

- *Library Book Clubs*
- *Mug Meals*
- *Story Walks*
- *Virtual Cartooning Class*
- *Rockabye Beats*
- *Mr. Vinny*
- *Chinese New Year crafts*

*"You guys are doing such a great job keeping the kids engaged during the library closure." Library Patron*

*"Being able to call and hold books and come pick them up saved my sanity during the last year." Library Suggestion Book*

**Adult programming** moved monthly Book Groups and Clubs to an all-virtual format: *Library Book Discussion Group*, the *Monday Mystery Book Club*, the *Non-fiction Book Club*, as well as the *Westford Job Seekers Network* meeting weekly. Throughout the Merrimack Valley local libraries shared ZOOM-based programming, opening up attendance to residents across the Commonwealth, and greatly expanding content. Adult programs — virtual throughout FY 2021 — included:

- 📖 *DIY Kombucha*
- 📖 *Holiday Pies*
- 📖 *New Normal New England Road Trip*
- 📖 *Mind and Meditation*
- 📖 *Virtual Sheet Pan Meals*
- 📖 *Musical Baseball Show*



The three Summer Reading Programs (child, tween and adult) netted 1,045 registrants from June 2020 through August 2020 for the state-wide reading theme of: *Imagine Your Story*. This summer read-fest — funded by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. and the

Massachusetts Library System — was a first experiment with a virtual and remote Summer Reading Program.

### **Gift- and Grant-Funded Initiatives and Awards:**

In FY 2021, the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library Inc. provided almost \$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’ 2020 Fall Appeal campaign to fundraise and to supplement Town funds for new media, downloadable collections and technology purchases, which provided critical remote access to titles during the entirety 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 gracious plantings, during a year when the outdoors was so important! The Library and families of Westford thank the KDK Foundation (Kurt Kelly Hockey Memorial Fund) for funding the fun-filled virtual summer Harry Potter Trivia program and December’s Disney Family Trivia!



Finally, we thank Senator Edward J. Kennedy for advocating Remote Juvenile Program Legislative Funding for the six public libraries of the First Middlesex District. The Westford Library received \$16,802 in special funding which allowed the library to purchase a host of equipment and production technology and offer a full half-year of engaging remote programming as we waited to fill the Young Adult Librarian vacancy.

### **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 5], 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. No provisional awards were made in July 2021, but a provisional grant notice from the MBLC is tentatively projected for July 2023. 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 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

*“Our lives are richer because of the library and everything you do...”* **Library Patron**

- Is fully handicapped-accessible and meets current fire, safety, ventilation and building codes

The Westford Library has a strong history of gifts, donations, benefactors and grants:

- 1797 – Original Social Library founded by 25 citizens
- 1859 – Social Library donated to the Town
- 1873 – Agricultural Library donated to the Town
- 1895 – Jonathan Varnum Fletcher donated 75% of the funds to build a new library on the Common
- 1963 – Basement Children’s Room funded by J. V. Fletcher’s great granddaughter Marian F. Winnek
- 1969 – Renovation/addition funded by federal LSCA Title II grant
- 1979 – Bookmobile funded by federal LSCA Title I grant
- 1988 – Renovation/addition awarded Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project (MPLCP) grant award
- 2007-2012 – Library Beautification funded by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc.
- 2017 – Westford wait listed for MPLCP grant award of almost \$8 million



**Administrative News:**

The Board of Library Trustees engaged Sage Consulting and conducted Focus Groups, S.O.A.R exercises and a Fall Community Survey to finalize the Library Strategic Plan 2023-2025 and Annual Action Plan, mandated by the Board of Library Commissioners and approved by the Board of Library Trustees in June 2021. We thank here the many patrons, Board members, staff and residents who contributed to this Strategic Process, setting future direction.

**Facility Maintenance:**

In FY 2021 the Library tackled the following maintenance issues within the facility:



- Champion Black Oak was tested and removed
  - A Finance Committee Transfer Request was approved to replace failed Heat Pump #11
  - Safety and security procedures and initiatives were introduced per the *Town School Safety Task Force*
- We thank here the *Facilities, Highway and Parks and Grounds*



*Departments* for their support and assistance throughout the year.

**Professional Development and Town Civic Activity:**

Library staff continued to be professionally active, 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)

*“I read well over a hundred books from the library by curbside. This saved me several thousand dollars.”*  
**Library Suggestion Book**

- TEEN Summit
- PLA (Public Library Association)
- YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association)
- School Library Journal Day of Dialog
- Westford Records and Archive Committee

**Library Staffing FY 2021:**

**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  
(*resigned 8/17/20*)

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 (*resigned 6/30/21*); Jeanne Millet; Heather Nevits; Deborah

Santoro; Chantale Shepard

*Substitute* — Jean Butler (*resigned 11/13/20*)

**Library Technicians:**

Order and Acquisition Receiving — Susan Blanchette

Inter-Library Loan Support — Sara Morton; Bari Pender; Melissa Seldon (*resigned 7/31/20*)

**Maintenance Worker I and II** — Robert Otto; Joseph Burke

**Office Manager** — Amy Spadano

**Library Pages (3)**

**Volunteers (program suspended due to safety considerations)**

*Staff delivered over 25,000 curbside pickups to the rear entry in FY 2021 and covered the equivalent distance of walking to Pittsburgh PA. Seen here wearing “Curbside T-shirts” created by a staff member, a **Library Patron** extolled, “The system set-up was incredible!”*



*“As I tell everyone: we have the best librarians and library in the world.” **Library Patron***