



Stonington Free Library

Annual Report 2017-2018



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Community, like family, to be truly valuable needs to provide both the constant and the consistent. I rejoice in the constants in the day to day life of the library over the year – season in, season out.

Foremost of these is perhaps the high quality of service and consistently warm welcome offered by the staff to all who walk through our doors or call or email us.

I feel a debt of gratitude to all our staff every day for this, their abiding warmth of greeting, their skills and hard work, their willingness to step up and help out, their flexibility in the face of change and the daily challenges of working in public service in a public building – in sum, their willingness to go that extra mile, both for the library and for each other as the need arises.

The second constant is the faithful service of our numerous volunteers who add so much to what the library is able to offer – enhancing and enriching the quality of life and sense of community that is the beating heart of the library. The length of the list of names and the variety of things that they do included in this Report on page 11 bear witness to the important part this team plays in the life of our library and of the community.

A third in this list of treasured constants is the unfailing generosity of our patrons and donors who care so much about us and want to see their library thrive, showing their loyal and consistent support through response to our Annual Appeal, Giving Tuesday, the Mystery Dinner and other special appeals.

It is these constants that create the firm foundation on which we have been building over the past year, extending our outreach to the wider community, both physically and digitally, by creating a new website, by adding programs, re-allocating our hours, where possible repurposing our existing space, continuing to make available the newest books and other materials and to keep our collection current and relevant. Like all libraries, we continue to look for ways to address and mitigate the digital divide, one of the greatest social and economic challenges of our times, so that all have equal access to the world of the internet.

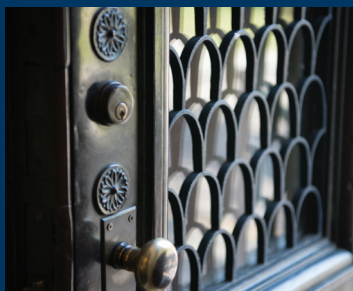
The quality of what a public library offers ultimately all comes down to the quality of the staff, volunteers and supporters.

It is on this firm foundation that we will build going forward into a new year with all its challenges. ADA accessibility, refurbishment and repurposing of our existing space and working with the Town to reimagine the sustainability of the Library going forward – all are components of our dreams and aspirations to make a library that meets the needs of everyone in this community in the 21st Century.

Given all the players in this grand endeavor, I have high hopes that together we will succeed.

Belinda de Kay

Belinda de Kay, *Executive Director*



STONINGTON FREE LIBRARY STAFF

Belinda de Kay *Executive Director*
Micayla Hall *Assistant Director*
Maris G. Frey *Youth Services Director*
Suzanne Kerr *Development Coordinator*

Stacey Burt, *Asst. Youth Services Librarian*
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Paula Sutton, *Librarian*
Catherine Taylor, *Asst. Youth Services Librarian*
Tracey Willis, *Librarian*



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Reflections about our Library

As I look back on six years on the Board, and ahead to all the exciting initiatives the Library is pursuing, I am struck by how such a relatively small organization can have such a profound impact on our community. I am convinced that the reasons for this outsized impact are 1) The combined talent, creativity and dedication of the people who serve the library: our great staff and crew of volunteers led by Belinda and Micayla and the remarkable collection of people who serve on our Board and 2) the unwavering commitment all these folks have to enriching Stonington by making the Library responsive to the ever-evolving needs of this community.

Toward that end we embarked nearly four years ago on a comprehensive self-assessment from which emerged a bold strategic plan with three goals: *Expand our Reach*, *Re-Imagine our Space* and *Enhance our Sustainability*. As has been recounted in detail in recent editions of the Librarian we are zealously pursuing these goals with rigor through initiatives across the community, a transformative building project and plans to enhance both public and private support for the Library.

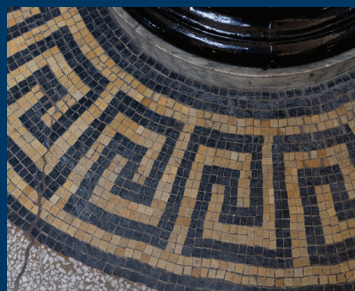
Our modest but very popular seed library project captures the essence of our mission. All of what we do is intended to foster growth and enrichment for the people of Stonington. This is achieved in countless ways using wide ranging methods which go far beyond merely lending books – which were the exclusive offering when the Library was born 130 years ago. Whether through facilitating non-profit collaboration, off-site activities across the Town, enhanced digital offerings accessible through an improved website or simply enjoying a great book, magazine or newspaper in a cozy chair, the Library will continue to offer diverse “seeds” of growth opportunity for the community we serve.

I am struck by how such a relatively small organization can have such a profound impact on our community.

I could not be more excited about the future of our Library because I know that over the entire course of our existence our guiding compass has been listening to and serving the emerging needs of the people of Stonington. Thanks to all of you in the community for joining us in the effort to help our Library make Stonington a better place to live.

Sincerely

Nicholas Kepple
President of the Board of Trustees, Stonington Free Library



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INITIATIVES, OUTREACH AND PROGRAMMING

This past year the Library and its dedicated staff, board and volunteers saw many important initiatives come to fruition in response to our Strategic Plan. In August 2017 we reallocated our hours to stay open later during several weekdays and launched a brand new website and visual identity. In October 2017 an Open House Week and Community Conversation were held to present the results of our Strategic Plan, the Library's financial situation and a proposed Accessibility and ADA Compliance addition.

Outreach and collaboration continue to expand our reach

Our branch at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, which started in January 2017, has grown significantly. Our PNC branch is now open every Wednesday from 10 to 11:30 and is staffed by our volunteer librarians. This past year it served 215 people who checked out 388 items. This is a 165% increase in people served and a 237% increase in items checked out compared to last year.

The Stonington Nonprofit Roundtable, with current membership of 33 organizations, continues to meet and grow at the Library. The purpose of this group is to share information, pool resources and to promote collaboration. The group's accomplishments this year include: an intern fair at the High School, a social gathering of board members, a panel discussing the impact of the recent tax reform on non-profits, access to Grant Station at Human Services and participation in Human Service's Community Spring Fest.

The Little Free Libraries (LFLs) built and installed last summer through a collaboration between the Stonington Village Improvement Association (SVIA), the Library and the Stonington High School Shop Class have been very popular. Library volunteers stocked them with 959 books last year. Thanks to their popularity the SVIA installed two new LFLs in July at the Children's Playground near the Town Dock and Wimpfheimer Park at the Velvet Mill.

Circulation and Adult Programming

This past year a total of 67,069 visitors stepped through our doors, our 3,353 active card holders borrowed 50,034 materials and 8,011 people attended 377 library programs.

Our new website, which launched in August 2017, is a digital branch that serves the community 24/7. Since then our webpage views have increased 54% with measurable longer view times.

We continue to increase our number of adult programs. Adults enjoyed 37 more programs this year for a total of 84, which drew 2,049 participants. Part of this increase is due to two new programs: a Knitting Group and SFL Nightclub. The Knitting Group meets every Wednesday from 12 pm to 2 pm at the Library. The Nightclub, in collaboration with Deidre Toole, Community Classroom Coordinator and Transition Counselor at Stonington High School, is an inclusive pilot program which ran between May 21 and July 2 and will continue again this winter.

This coming year we will continue to work toward our Strategic Plan goals, keep the momentum of our advocacy campaign and hopefully break ground on our Accessibility and ADA Compliance addition. As always, we will continue to respond to the community's feedback, interests and needs. Let us know how we are doing and we hope to see you soon!

Thoughtful Thursday and Sunday Evening Lecture Guest Speakers

Ambassador Molly Raiser, Chief of Protocol 1993-1997 – *Diplomatic Anecdotes*
Jean Baur – *Get Off Your Computer and Get a Job!*

John Fullerton – *Regenerative Capitalism: Stonington to the Global Economy*

Jean Baur – *Joy Unleashed: The Story of Bella, the Unlikely Therapy Dog*

Whitney Donhauser, Director of the Museum of the City of NY –
Reinventing the Museum of the City of New York

Howard Park – *Art Demonstration and Discussion on Painting and Color*

Alex Prud'homme – *The French Chef in America: Julia Child's Second Act*

Sally Wood – *Agatha Christie: The Making of a Murderer*

David Leeming – *Medusa*

Lydia Miner and Kelsy April – *Trending Topics in Children's and YA Literature*

Ellen Litman – *Becoming an American*

Noreen Kepple – *Attracting Pollinators*

Nishant Sahoo, Financial Advisor Merrill Lynch – *Identity Theft*

Ian Watson, Director of CT Early Music Festival – *What is Early Music?*

Paul Freedman – *Ten Restaurants that Changed America*

Gleanna Doyle – *Pet Behavior*

Micayla Hall

Micayla Hall, Assistant Director



YOUTH SERVICES

Bad libraries build collections. Good libraries build services. Great libraries build communities.

R. David Lankes

Each year presents new possibilities to build community and this year brought Read BOLD, a community read collaboration between the Library, Stonington High School and Stonington Human Services. The purpose behind Read BOLD was to build bridges between adults and youth in our community, helping adults understand teens and opening a dialogue between the two groups. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky was chosen by students at Stonington High School and a lively discussion group was held for adults and teens at the end of the program. Free copies of the book were available at both the High School and the Library, along with some autographed copies! Everyone finishing the book was eligible for a prize drawing.

We also instituted a Teen Advisory Board this year, meeting every three months to provide an avenue for teens to have input into relevant programming, along with the chance for them to earn community service hours. We offered some late night study times, along with free tutoring assistance during winter exam period and hope to do this again in the upcoming year. The Teens also provided a Stonington Spa Day during our Summer Reading Program, painting fingernails for little girls.

Our Read and Feed Collaboration with the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center enjoyed another successful summer. The children helped others in our community by donating over 500 canned and dry goods to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center Food Pantry.

The Youth Services departments offered 293 programs for children and teens this year with over 5,960 attendees. A Summer Reading Program grant again enabled us to bring programming to summer camps in our community, along with free books for the campers to bring home. We include in this report a list of supporters; we rely on this support to make our program happen. Nice job and congratulations to all our summer readers!

Maris Frey

Maris G. Frey, Youth Services Director

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MYSTERY DINNER

April 28th celebrated the 10th successful year of the Mystery Dinner - the Library's signature annual fundraiser and a cherished tradition in Stonington. It's the perfect way to kick off the spring season – introducing residents to new friends and neighbors, creating a wonderful sense of community and raising a significant portion of the much-needed annual funding for the Library.

Guests were welcomed to Antoine's Restaurant in the French Quarter of New Orleans circa 1948, inspired by Frances Parkinson Keyes's bestselling novel *Dinner at Antoine's*. For the cocktail reception, the Library was transformed into a formal restaurant, complete with paneled walls lined with photographs, elegant floral arrangements and a small private dining room set with crystal and silver. And as shadows began to fall, guests headed out to 19 different "Mystery" dinner destinations, looking forward to NOLA-in-Stonington style hospitality and an evening of celebration with new and old friends for the best of causes.

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REPORT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

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his report recognizes all donors to the Library during the past fiscal year – July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. The level of support we receive each year is a wonderful testimony to the continuing commitment of our patrons, donors and friends of the Library.

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The Pediment Society recognizes the generosity of donors at levels of \$500 and above.

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John & Deborah Papp
Joyce H. Payer
Dan & Alexa Pearson
Charles Peterson & Susan
Tohbe
Albert J. Phillips, Jr.
Denise Pierson
The Pizza Lady
Daniel Potter & Marya Ursin
James Potter
Kenneth & Paula Reid
Carl & Joan Reiser
David & Lora Reisfeld
Frederick & Nancy Richartz
Thomas H. Rolfe
James & Carol Rooney
Christopher & Rosemarie Rose
Donald & Mary Roy
Nancy Rupert
Aileen Saari
Arthur & Cheryl Saxton
John M. Schloss & Janet
McCaffrey Schloss
Lynn Schroder
Gary & Gayle Schulte
Stuart J.D. Schwartzstein

John & Constance Seremet
Rick & Linda Skehan
Steven Slosberg
Patricia Small
Jerry & Shirley Snyder
Caroline Souter
L.E. & Martha Sproul
Steven & Paula Sutton

Lynn Thieme
Kevin & Nicole Torres
Timothy & Suzanne Tyler
Julia E. van Dyke
Barbara Van De Vusse
Frank & Mary Vargas
Pieter & Linda Visscher
Stuart A. Vyse

Washington Trust Charitable
Foundation
Kathy Weinberger
Edward & Margaret Wilhelms
Joseph & Kirby Williams
Kathy Williams

CORPORATE
PARTNERS

Adams & Associates
Amazon SMILE
Atherton and Sons Moving &
Storage
Avena & Kepple, LLC
Davis-Standard
Eileen Fisher
GW&K Investment
Management
Leckerling, Ladwig &
Leamon, LLC
Masons Island Marina

McQuades Marketplace
O'Brien, Stuart, Eppinger &
Collier, LLC
Poor Morgan
Sea View Snack Bar
SNS Electric
Stonington Players, Inc
Switz Real Estate Associates
The Pizza Lady
Tom's News Stand

MATCHING GIFT
PROGRAMS

Charter Oak Federal Credit
Union
Cigna Foundation
ExxonMobil Foundation
Henry J. Kaiser Foundation
IBM Matching Grants Program
Pfizer Matching Grants

TRIBUTE, MEMORIAL, BEQUEST & FOUNDATION GIFTS FOR OPERATIONS

Bequest: Estate of Maryanne Felmet

Tribute Gift: Marc Ginsberg – Susan Berk

Tribute Gift: Nick Kepple – Bekah, Ben, Jocelyn & Michala Kepple

In Memory of Jane E. Richmond: Richard J. & Barbara L. Richmond Fund

In Memory of Dorothy Avery: George Avery

In Memory of Emily Smith: Susan Ogden

In Memory of Betty Kepple: Carol Martin

In Memory of David Clapp: Patricia Kleeman

In Memory of Teresa M. Ellis Memorial: Steven & Jean Lachance

Grant: Rotary Club of Mystic

Grant: Rotary Club of Stoningtons

Grant: Mystic Woman's Club

BABCOCK PHELPS SOCIETY

The Babcock-Phelps Society, named for the two founding donors of the Library building, recognizes those individuals who have chosen to remember the Stonington Free Library in their wills or other estate planning documents.

John Michael Bass
Jean Blanchet
Mrs. Helen Brewster
Peter Megargee Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore N. Danforth, Jr.
Inger McCabe Elliot
Maryanne R. Felmet
Elizabeth & Charles Harding
Priscilla F. Hodges
Jean M. Jones
Cynthia Crawford Lichtenstein
Maria McVitty

Mr. & Mrs. Frederic C. Paffard, Jr.
Joyce & Francis P. Pandolfi
Santo Puglisi
Elizabeth Holliday Ramsey
Carol & Edward Sauers
Owen Sherry
Robert & Heidi Simmons
Anne T. Stevens
Judith & Andrew Westwood

FINANCIAL REPORT



Over the past year, the Stonington Free Library recorded approximately \$538,000 in operating income, of which just under 1/3 came from municipal sources including both the Town and Borough of Stonington. The remaining funds were generated from private donations, mainly the Annual Appeal, and draws from the Library’s endowment.

2018 operating income reflected lower than projected Annual Appeal giving, together with a reduced endowment draw intended to protect the principal balance. Operating expenses totaled \$545,000 for the year, a 2% reduction versus comparable 2017 results and almost \$20,000 below budget, reflecting the partial year impact of cost cutting measures implemented in 2018 in recognition of lower income. Capital expenditures, which are not included in operating costs, amounted to an additional \$16,000 for the year.

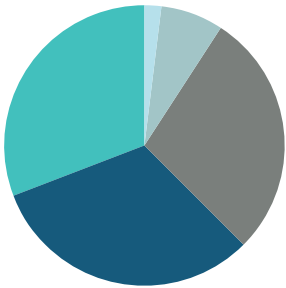
Expand our Reach and Reimagine our Space

Looking beyond the numbers, how do the Library’s financial operations align with our strategic goals? In addition to launching our newly designated “digital branch” and reallocating our service hours to better meet the needs of our community, we have also received commitments for \$190,000 toward our planned ADA compliance building project; \$52,000 of this total was received in fiscal 2018, \$50,000 has been pledged to us by the Town of Stonington and the balance comes from two individual private donors. These funds are held separately from operating funds, and can only be used for their designated purpose.

Enhance our Sustainability

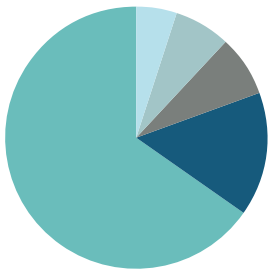
In order to safeguard the principal value of our endowment so that it can continue to help fund Library operations into the future, we have reduced our annual draw from the endowment for operating use. While in the short term this has required offsetting cuts in spending, it is critical for the long term financial health of the Library, and we continue to pursue strategic avenues to provide a permanent path to sustainability. We also received a generous bequest of \$250,000 from the estate of Jean Blanchet which has been designated as an addition to the endowment.

Operating Income =
\$537,947

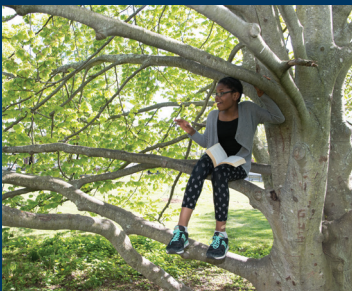


Annual Appeal.....	\$164,529
Municipal Funding	\$171,147
Endowment Draw.....	\$152,109
Other Fundraising, Contributions, Grants & Bequests	\$39,039
Service Fees	\$11,123

Operating Expenses =
\$545,089



Personnel Costs.....	\$355,434
Programs, Materials & IT Resources.....	\$82,472
Building Maintenance & Utilities	\$42,048
Insurance & Professional Fees.....	\$36,825
Other.....	\$28,310



SFL BY THE NUMBERS 2017-2018

Total Visitors	67,069
Books etc. check outs	47,913
Webpage Views	35,101
Program Attendees.....	8,011
Cardholders.....	3,353
Hours Open / Year	2,236
E-book check outs	2,121

On-Site Programs	377
Volunteers	60
Kindle check outs	45
Trustees	15
Staff	10
Little Free Libraries	4

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS & PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart...

Little Free Libraries

Rory Contin
Judy Westwood

Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center Library

Rory Contin
Patricia Tuccio
Meg Wilhelms
Barbara Corbeil
Beth Freeman
Joyce Fingerut
Susan Terkanian
Judith Hanratty
Sharon Sisitzky
Fred Souza

Circulation Desk Volunteer

Christine Nickerson

Book Coverers

Barbara Corbeil
Patricia Tuccio
Meg Wilhelms

Stonington Nonprofit Round Table Moderator

Jason Vincent (Town of
Stonington Town Planner)

Tech Help for Patrons

Rory Contin
Sharon Sisitzky
Joseph Sebagala

Tutors for High School Exam Week

Andrea Besky
Rory Contin
John Malmros

Night Club Social Group

Jean Baur & therapy dog Rudy
Ben Kepple
Noreen Kepple
Patty Moody
Deidre Toole

Book Group Moderators

Jean Baur
Mary Kelley
Judy Westwood

Knitting Group Organizer

Beth Garbo

Seed Library

Noreen Kepple

Program Committee

Susan Martin (Chair)
Sally Ball
Dodie Bump
Laurie Cameron
Kathy Conger
Susie Knox
Pam Leeming
Chris Turrentine
Vivie von Walstrom

Summer Reading Help

Gail Woodrow

Development Committee

Clare Sheridan (Chair)
Susie Clapp
Deb Dodds
Denise Easton
Marc Ginsberg
Allegra Griffiths
Vera Harsh
Beth Leamon
Sage Williams

Librarian Editor

Charles Harding

Flyers/Marketing

Nan Danforth

Window Cleaning

John Adams

Landscaping

Terra Firma Landscaping –
Kathy Weinberger

Christmas Wreaths

SVIA – Kirby and Joe Williams
Kathryn Burchenal
Dodie Bump

Community Conversation Help

Jocelyn Kepple
Morgan King

Partnering Organizations

James Merrill House
C.B. Jennings Dual Language
& International Elementary
Magnet School
La Grua Center
Look It Up program
Leslie Buck
Memorial Fund
Rotary Club of Mystic
Rotary Club Stoningtons
Masonicare at Mystic
Mystic Noank Library
Ocean Community YMCA
Pawcatuck Neighborhood
Center
St. Michael's School
Stonington Borough
Merchants Association
Stonington Community
Center
Stonington High School
Stonington Historical Society
Stonington Human Services
Stonington Garden Club
Stonington Nonprofit
Roundtable
Stonington Public Schools
Stonington Village
Improvement Association
Westerly Library



STONINGTON FREE LIBRARY - CONTACT US

Email stonlib@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Website www.stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Belinda de Kay - director@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Micayla Hall - micaylahall@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Maris G. Frey - marisfrey@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Suzanne Kerr - development@stoningtonfreelibrary.org

Mailing Address

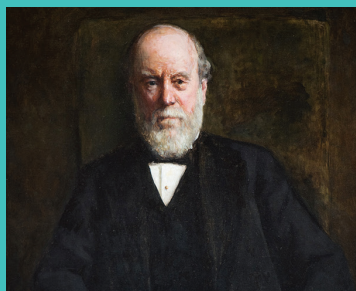
Stonington Free Library
PO Box 232, 20 High Street,
Stonington, CT 06378

860-535-0658 Phone

860-535-3945 Fax

The Stonington Free Library seeks to enrich lives and build community by bringing information, ideas and people together.

Mission Statement, Adopted June, 2017 by the Board of Trustees



Cover Art: David Brubaker

Photography: Peter Goldberg Photography, Maris Frey, Suzanne Kerr

Design: CMB Creative Group

Printing: Quality Printers