

Rockingham Free Public Library

Annual Report July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

While the Library faced the unprecedented challenges of 2020, the staff quickly adapted and continued to provide information and library services through the year. The health and safety of our employees and community comes first—and after ensuring we had strong safety protocols in place—our dedicated, creative staff found new ways to connect with residents and with each other. We look forward to returning to whatever will be normal post-COVID. Until then, we will continue to adapt to provide services to the community.

The arrival of COVID-19 led to the building being closed to the public on March 18, 2020. The Library staff responded by...

- Extending the period of all library loans and waiving fines.
- Answering your questions via phone and e-mail.
- Utilizing our website and social media updates to reach the community directly, and to advertise the Wi-Fi available outside the building.
- Helping residents learn how to use the Library's catalogue of online digital resources from home, including eBooks, audiobooks, magazines and the new Learning Express database.
- Creating the Library's Online Resources for the Children and Families website page which lists free, online resources for families, including digital library subscriptions to Open eBooks and Red Apple Reading, and access to Noggin for educational video programming.
- Assisting the mutual aid group, Rockingham Help & Helpers, to guide residents to community resources during the pandemic, and providing outreach through phone calls and email.



Reading together in the Youth Department

- Providing tech help online, teaching patrons how to sign in to library accounts, advising on what books to borrow next, filling holds and InterLibrary Loan requests, scheduling appointments for curbside service, and providing faxing, printing and copying services.
- Maintaining the role of the Library as a place where everyone can obtain content for learning and enjoyment, as well as for trusted information and valuable resources.

Children and Teen Services – Through the year, children and teens enjoyed the Youth Department’s collections of books and media, and participated in many educational programs.

- The 2019 Summer Reading Program, *A Universe of Stories*, included Modern Times Theater, Stuffed Animal Sleepover, reading and STEAM activities, Tie Dye and Ice Cream Social, CLiF Summer Readers event, *Make Space for Pollinators* with The Butterfly Guy, and the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum's program *Alien Earth*.

- Fall & Winter Youth series of programs included many activities such as story times, reading clubs, Library tours for Middle School students, Gingerbread Jamboree, family photograph sessions with Kristy Lisai Photography sponsored by the Friends of the Rockingham Library, and Sandglass Theater’s *Punsch* which attracted an audience of all ages. In the Spring when the pandemic hit, we created an Outdoor Scavenger Bear Hunt, to encourage safe social distancing and walking outside, and Town residents responded by displaying 75 bears in windows and doors. We provided virtual story times for daycares, and the Youth Gaming Group continued to meet online through Zoom.



Sandglass Theater’s Punsch

Adult Services – Along with an excellent collection of books and media, innovative adult programs were offered, often featuring local presenters.

- Climate Change with John Cushman, Vermont Folk Music with David Dean, Writers' Workshop and travel program with Elayne Clift, Genealogy research sessions led by Wayne Blanchard, Tai-Chi classes led by John Bohannon and Leslie Lassetter, and The Counterculture’s Impact on Vermont and Vermont’s Influence on the Counterculture Generation, sponsored by the Historic Preservation Commission and led by author Yvonne Daley.

- Other programs included Brattleboro Hospice Advanced Care Directives, Workers Center’s affordable state-wide healthcare, the digitization of the glass plate negatives, DNA testing to identify your ancestry, History of Women’s rights, Poetry Open Mic and book discussions.

- Films presented were a documentary *One (VT) Town at a Time*, and *The Public* which was followed by a discussion about homelessness, led by Louise Luring. The Friends of the Library sponsored a concert with *Across The Zoo-Niverse*, along with a medley from Sam Maskell’s show of the musical adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast*.

- The Meeting and Program Rooms were used for meetings by the Rockingham Meeting House Association, and for programs such as the WNESU’s Early Childhood Class, Senior Solutions’ Introduction to Medicare, and the VT Council of Rural Development’s Let’s Take Action: Rockingham Residents discuss goals to improve the town.

- When the library building closed due to COVID 19, in-person programs were suspended and the staff began exploring how to provide more online services. Usage increased for online reference and tech help, ebooks, downloadable audio books, Gale databases, and the Ancestry database which was made available for cardholders to use at home. Programs that moved online through Zoom included Poetry Open Mic, book discussion and the Windham County Genealogy Interest Group which was co-sponsored with Brooks Memorial Library.

Reference & Historical Services – Along with reference and research assistance, we answered a wide variety of history and technology questions such as how to use cell phones or pcs to do remote meetings through Zoom and Teams, how to use excel, to research the Ancestry database, and to file for unemployment. We arranged for the Library’s digital collections to be accessed on the Digital Public Library of America’s website and the Green Mountain Digital Archive, set up the *Rightfully Hers* 19th Amendment display, and provided the history of the Rockingham Public Library to Vermont Librarian, Jessamyn West, who set up a Wikipedia page listing the four Carnegie Libraries in Vermont.

Community Engagement – The Library worked with local and State individuals, organizations and schools, to set up programs and for other purposes. Staff visited a Rotary meeting to talk about Library services, joined the Intellectual Freedom Committee of VLA, led a hands-on session for librarians on how to teach computer science with Google CS curriculum, and assisted the Rockingham Help & Helpers, the mutual aid group which grew out of the Sustainability Task Force and the Let’s Take Action forums.

Grants & Donations – The Library received many grants and donations which paid for programs and added to the Library collections and services.

- The Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities grant funded the purchase and installation of exhibit railings in the Youth Rooms, Main Floor hallway, Fiction Room, and the top floor Meeting Room. The grant was made possible by matching funds from the Friends of the Rockingham Library.

- The Public Library Association Grant funded acquisition and service for five mobile hotspots, to loan out to patrons for Wi-Fi who need online access in a remote location.

- The Children’s Literacy Foundation (CLiF) funded books and programs which were shared with the schools, and grants from the Dept. of Libraries paid for the Summer Reading Program, Inter-Library Loan courier service, and e-rate fiber connectivity.



Virginia Clark Painting Hanging in Meeting Room

- The Friends of the Library paid for a PockeTalker Sound Amplifier and an Assistive Listening System with 6 Receivers for visitors who have trouble hearing at programs. They donated funds

for museum passes and programs, gave \$1,000 general donation, and paid for two folding tables, protective equipment, and yard signs with the National Library Week logo motto, *Find the Library at Your Place*, to advertise our online services.

- Many residents donated to the Library's major fundraiser, the Annual Appeal, and donated funds, time and materials to support the Friends of the Library's successful fundraising efforts, including the Membership Drive, Guilford Welcome Center food table, Holiday raffles and Silent Auction.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 STATISTICS

HOURS Open July-March 17 | 1,680
Online March 19-April | 240
Curbside & Online May-June | 359
Library Visits | 35,204
Library Curbside Visits | 289
Library Card Holders | 5,872
Info Transactions | 24,000

COLLECTION NUMBERS

Number of Books | 37,288
Audiobooks | 1,413 Videos | 3,285
Magazine / Newspaper Subscriptions | 57
Print & Media Checked Out | 29,617
E-Books & Audios Checked Out | 11,154
Items Borrowed from Libraries | 722

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Number of Child & Teen Activities | 132
Attendance at Youth Activities | 4,924
Number of Adult Activities | 123
Attendance at Adult Programs | 1,040

Total Number of Programs | 255
Total Attendance | 5,964

TECHNOLOGY

Public Computers | 12
Computer Sessions | 5,960
Wi-Fi Sessions | 6,025
Website Visits | 57,783
Database & Ancestry Searches | 6,976

We are very appreciative of taxpayers' support, and of the many individuals, businesses and organizations that volunteer and make donations to help provide dynamic library services for the community.

Céline Houlné
Library Director

STAR WARS READS DAY

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF READING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18TH 5PM
Rockingham Free Public Library
65 Westminster St | Bellows Falls, VT

FREE Star Wars event for all ages

**GAMES
ACTIVITIES
CRAFTS
BOOKS
AND MORE!**

COSTUMES ARE ENCOURAGED!

ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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