



Greenwich
Library

Greenwich Library is Your Place



Annual Report 2023



Message from the Library Director and Board of Trustees President

“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”

– Laura Bush,
Former First Lady
of the United States

Dear Community Member,

The Greenwich Library has proudly served the Greenwich Community since its founding in 1877. Its essential mission has been and continues to be to further the education, knowledge, and culture of the community. Led by the Library’s dedicated staff, Friends, and Board of Trustees, we continue to offer the range of resources that allows us to deliver on that mission.

Our numbers illustrate our impact. In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the Greenwich Library system saw 457,667 in-person visits, representing an increase of nearly 30% over the prior year. That means that, on average, more than 1,300 people visited a library in the Greenwich Library system each day, participating in a wide range of library offerings.

Among them:

The collection: Your Library’s collection is one of the most robust in the state, featuring nearly 300,000 physical books and media and over 84,000 e-Books and downloadable audio books.

Reference: Library staff fielded 66,036 reference questions and queries in the past fiscal year. Greenwich Library’s team of reference librarians supported the community by offering book recommendations, assisting with genealogical research, providing technology support, and much more.

Dynamic programming: 59,682 patrons participated in 1,722 Library programs, in person or virtually. Greenwich Library’s programs ranged from our Signature Series, featuring well-known speakers such as CNN’s Fareed Zakaria, to Peterson music concerts featuring groups such as *Jane Bunnett and Maquette*, to Friends-sponsored events such as performances by the *Martha Graham Dance Company* and the *Connecticut Gay Men’s Chorus*.

Greenwich Library, its staff, trustees, and Friends, are all proud of their institution and the positive impact it continues to have on the building of a better and more connected community.



Joseph Williams,
Library Director



Peggy Edersheim Kalb,
President, Board of Trustees



Your Place for Authors

Xochitl Gonzalez book signing.

“I look forward to meeting up to play Dungeons & Dragons. It’s a fun way to meet new people, too.”

– Library Patron and gamer



Your Place for Games

Your Place to Find Great Staff



“For years, I’ve counted on the amazing staff to steer me to interesting and new ideas.”

– Longtime Patron
and book lover

Your Place for World Affairs



Fareed Zakaria in the Berkley Theater.

Your Place to Enjoy the Arts



*“The quality
of the acoustics
in the new
Berkley Theater
is incredible.”*

– Library Patron and
performing arts lover



Your Place to Work

“When it’s crunch time, my friends and I study here. We always get our work done at the Library.”

– High School Junior and study buddy

Your Place to Study




Our community depends on Greenwich Library. And, we depend on you. All Greenwich Library programs, classes, and lectures are funded entirely by charitable donations from people like you.

Thank you for your support.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Fiscal year 2022-2023 saw the implementation of a new strategic plan, a transition of Library leadership, and the rollout of the Library's fine-free policy and announcement.

Building on the previous year's focus on reestablishing in-person programming and resuming services after the height of the COVID pandemic, Greenwich Library, along with its Cos Cob and Byram Shubert branches, continued to reaffirm its place as a cultural and intellectual center for the community.



From the circulation of materials to reference assistance to website visits to program attendance, almost all key metrics at the Library increased throughout the fiscal year. Notable highlights include:

- The Library announced it was officially fine free, extending and making permanent an internal policy that had been implemented during the pandemic.
- Systemwide checkouts increased by 3% (from 890,902 in '21-'22 to 921,175 in '22-'23), and eBook checkouts accounted for 19% of all systemwide circulation.
- Programming attendance—including in-person and online programs—skyrocketed by 47%.
- The Rain Garden—once the home of Greenwich Library's famed pin oak tree—opened after a major year-long design and landscaping project with the support of the Greenwich Garden Club.
- The Library initiated a diversity audit to ensure the collection reflects the diverse backgrounds and interests of the Greenwich community and completed several collection-related initiatives.
- The Trustees continued planning a renovation and expansion of the Cos Cob Branch Library with a community survey conducted and plans to start work in the Fall of 2024.
- The Library upgraded the network infrastructure at the branch libraries in Byram and Cos Cob to parallel the Main Library infrastructure.

Statistics and Highlights

This fiscal year was the first in the post-COVID era where the Library was fully open and operational, without restrictions.

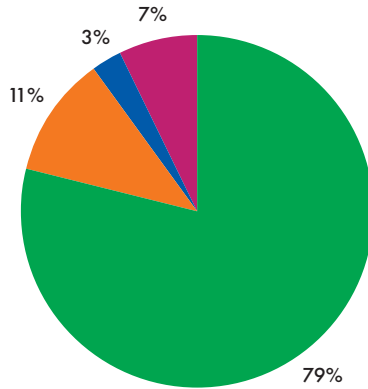
From July 2022 to June 2023 the Library system saw 457,667 visits, which amounts to an average of more than 1,300 visits per day. This represents a 42% increase in visits from the 322,077 visits of the prior year.

The trend line for visits is still rising, and it is approaching parity with the Library's pre-pandemic levels.

Circulation numbers recovered and ran steadily at a little over 680,000 physical items borrowed per year, which falls in line with the year prior. The same holds true for eBooks, which largely stabilized in circulation. The largest growth area for materials was downloadable audiobooks, of which our available collection is one of the best for a public library.

- Total circulation increased 3% from 890,902 (2021-2022) to 921,175 (2022-2023), including a 1% jump in physical book checkouts.
- Circulation of digital materials increased in all areas:
 - eBook circulation increased 5%
The most-borrowed eBooks of the year were *Lessons In Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, *Book Lovers* by Emily Henry, and *Olga Dies Dreaming* by Xochitl Gonzalez.
 - eAudiobook checkouts increased 14%
The most-borrowed eAudiobooks of the year were *The Paris Apartment* by Lucy Foley, *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, and *The Last Thing He Told Me* by Laura Dave.
 - Patron use of streaming video increased by 15%
- The total number of programs offered increased by 31% (from 1,317 to 1,722), and attendance was up an incredible 47% (from 40,703 to 59,682).
- Total virtual program attendance decreased year-over-year by 62% as in-person programming was restored. This decline was due to the decrease in the number of virtual programs from 444 to 191 (-57%) as focus shifted to in-person programming.

Sources of Funding



SOURCES OF FUNDS

- Town
- Peterson Foundation
- Friends of Greenwich Library
- Other Private Funding

Greenwich Library has a long history of public-private partnership. The annual operating budget is funded by the Town of Greenwich, while the Board of Trustees Development Office and the Friends of Greenwich Library raise private funds to support Library programs and initiatives. The Friends of Byram Shubert Library and the Friends of Cos Cob Library provide additional program funding.

A long-standing private endowment comes from the Clementine L. Peterson Foundation. The Foundation was established under the will of Clementine L. Peterson in memory of her son, Jonathan, and her husband, J. Whitney Peterson. Peterson Foundation Trustees exclusively govern the investment plan and distribution of funds. The annual distribution is used for operating and staffing costs of the Peterson wing, as well as for enhancing business and music collections and services.

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