

REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

This year, Avon Free Public Library continued in its mission to be the center of enrichment for Avon residents with new and exciting initiatives in the areas of children's services, technology, lifelong learning, and community building.

The 2015 summer reading program, *Every Hero Has a Story*, broke records again with 1,495 children and teens signing up to participate and reading 15,547 books during the summer break! Despite all that time reading, people still found time to come to library programs. Over the summer, 10,351 people attended 155 library programs, including our weekly Farmers Market held on the library grounds. Another great summer program was the StoryWalk, an innovative passive program that combined the joy of reading with an outdoor walk. Enlarged pages of a picture book were laminated and posted on the library's lawn so readers could stroll the grounds while enjoying the book.

When the calendar turned to fall, our programming moved indoors, but did not slow down. The Open Art Studio got some great news when we were awarded a \$7,500 Curiosity Creates grant from the Association of Library Services for Children. These funds let us grow the open art experience we had already been perfecting in the studio and reach over 4,200 people with our art programs! The expanded creative programming for library users of all ages included dance and music along with visual art, and culminated in Art Day in May. These programs were so successful that our children's staff were invited to speak about their work at several state and national library conferences around the Northeast.

Technology is a part of almost every aspect of the 21st century world, and libraries are no exception. New software and hardware additions this year included an acquisitions software package that helped streamline the purchase, payment and budget tracking for library materials; a new self-service checkout machine for the teen room; continued programs on 3D design and printing; email marketing software to improve our digital outreach, a device charging station for the adult floor; and the addition of Microsoft Surface tablets for some library staff.

One of the most exciting technology initiatives this year is still a work in progress. The White Room will be Avon Library's idea incubator, collecting digital learning tools in a flexible, creative environment that allows individuals and small groups to design and produce multimedia presentations. Look for a formal launch of The White Room soon!

Lifelong learning is always an initiative at the library, and this year we added several online learning resources to our collection. Mango Languages and LyndaLibrary (funded in part by the Avon Education Foundation) provide anyone with an Avon Library card access to thousands of online, self-paced courses in language, technology, business, and artistic disciplines. BookBrowse is another new online resource, combining book reviews and recommendations with extensive resources for book clubs to stimulate discussion. Login from our web page (www.avonctlibrary.info) and start learning today.

Face to face learning is important too, and we continued to try to be a community building organization. This year the library joined the Avon Chamber of Commerce, and we held our first jointly sponsored training session with the Chamber in the spring, teaching local business owners about online marketing and lead generation. The high school robotics team, the Uberbots, regularly volunteer to teach technology classes in our computer lab, and popular Tai Chi classes were held on the library lawn. Avon Library exhibited at the first annual Greater Hartford Mini-Maker Faire, held at Tunxis Community College, where we spread the word about all the great activities and programs available at the library.

Thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a professional archivist visited the Marian Hunter History Room to assess our local history collection and advise us on the proper preservation needed for photographs, audio-visual materials, and paper

based artifacts. The History Room is a joint project of the Avon Free Public Library and the Avon Historical Society.

AvonCon, our local version of ComicCon, returned in the spring, bigger and better than ever. Thanks to grants from Connecticut Humanities and the Friends of Avon Library, we were able to host Scott McCloud as our keynote speaker. Mr. McCloud is an internationally recognized artist and expert on comics and visual communication.

The generosity of the Friends of the Library also allowed us to hire two interns this year, as well as continue or expand many of our regular programs, most notably, the Sundays at Three music series. Once again we were lucky enough to host a lineup of acclaimed musicians throughout the winter months to standing room only crowds.

This year we added two extra months of Sunday hours to the library schedule, and the public responded very positively, with 5,838 people visiting the library over 20 weeks of Sundays and borrowing 10,334 items.

The Board of Directors undertook a project this year to turn our art gallery into more than just a hallway with art. A fresh coat of paint, additional track lighting, and some new tables and benches make the gallery a much more inviting space to visit and enjoy the monthly displays of local art. The Board also said goodbye to Thirza Hyatt, who after six years of service, cycled off of the library board.

With so much happening at the Avon Free Public Library, don't forget to put a visit to the library on your calendar soon!

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16
Resident Card Holders	9,111	8,594	8,323
% of Population	50%	47%	45%
Library Visits (door count)	155,952	152,136	165,223
Visits per capita	8.5	8.2	8.9
Circulation			
Adult Collection	144,978	141,817	149,128
Children's Collection	125,955	121,168	122,134
Young Adult Collection	15,523	17,090	17,642
Downloadable Collection*	10,719	11,181	10,839
Total	297,784	291,256	299,743
Circulation per capita	16.29	15.77	16.23
Library Programs	1,233	1,020	1,066
Attendance	20,902	25,966	33,438
Reference Questions	30,222	29,505	26,522
Internet Usage	27,400	27,943	30,924
Database Searches**	103,283	136,777	83,856
Website Visits	123,160	158,862	150,022
Library Collection			
Print Collection	104,660	106,310	107,380
Non-print Collection	13,302	16,057	17,392
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	7,610	9,200	8,294
Non-print Collection	1,415	5,326	1,687
Magazine Subscriptions (includes digital titles)	246	307	236

*Total includes downloads of e-books, e-audio, and digital magazines.

**State Library budget cuts means fewer databases are available for Avon library users to search. Searches in locally licensed databases actually increased in FY 2015/16.