

REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

One quarter of Avon Library's full-time staff turned over this year, with the hiring of a new full-time Teen Librarian, Stephanie Smith, in July and the promotion of Victoria Kiszka to the full-time position of Technology and Technical Services Librarian in September. Both Stephanie and Victoria have been growing into their new roles and making their mark on the programs and services the library provides to residents. In addition to changes in the full-time staff, a part-time Library Technician was hired to fill Victoria's former role and several new part-time children's library specialists were added to the Children's & Teen Services staff.

Avon Library's Board of Directors saw similar turnover, with four new members joining. Rob Berman, Natalie Bowers, Paula Schwartz, and Himanshu Singh all were elected to Board positions this year, to fill either existing vacancies or those caused by current members cycling off the board due to term limits. Despite these changes, the Board was very active, preparing a new five year strategic plan for the library and also publishing a brochure marketing the library's programs and services. An "art on a card" contest, sponsored by the Board, led to not only a fabulous display of creative designs in the Gallery, but six exciting new versions of an Avon Library card! Which one is in your wallet?

In October, Sen. Richard Blumenthal visited Avon Library to announce a \$50,000 federal grant award from the Institute of Museums and Library Services. This grant, a part of the Save America's Treasures program, provides funding for collecting, digitizing, and preserving documents and ephemera from Avon representing the 19th century agrarian history of the town. Library staff, in partnership with the Avon Historical Society, have been diligently working to process this collection during the first year of the two year grant period.

Even deeper history, dating back to the Paleo-Indian period of 10,000 BCE, proved perennially popular too, as we surpassed 10,000 views of our recordings of the Unearthing History lecture series. New experts were recruited to continue to add to our catalogue of content that explains and provides context to the amazing discoveries at the Brian D. Jones Site right here in Avon. Support from the Avon Historical Society and the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee are instrumental in letting us continue this programming.

No annual report would be complete without mentioning the Friends of Avon Library. This year, the Friends not only continued their fundraising efforts in support of library services through membership drives and book sales, but also brought back two favorite community events that had not occurred since before the Covid pandemic. The Sundays at Three concert series once again had the Community Room packed with music lovers on Sunday afternoons in the winter, and the annual Ice Cream Social cooled everyone down in the middle of summer. It was exciting to see the level of in-person activity at Avon Library return to numbers not seen since before 2020.

Even with plenty of people visiting the library, staff continued to get out into the community as well. Librarians made outreach visits to all Avon Public Schools, encouraging students to use the library and to read for pleasure, and Avon Library was represented at various local events, including the regional Juneteenth celebration in Simsbury and the Pride Block Party at the West Avon Congregational Church.

Improvements to the library facility included breaking ground on a new and improved courtyard. The courtyard original to the 2012 renovation of the library was unfortunately disturbed during HVAC upgrades and repairs that occurred during the 2021-22 fiscal year. Restoring that space was done with funds leftover from the HVAC project. Library staff are excited to be able to use this flexible, outdoor space again as a location for programs and events, as well as just for quiet reading and studying.

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
Resident Card Holders	6,197	6,206	6,957
% of Population	33%	33%	38%
Library Visits (door count)*	40,762	80,405	116,003
Visits per capita	2.1	4.2	6.3
Circulation			
Adult Collection	84,717	95,417	88,737
Children's Collection	71,409	126,244	137,450
Young Adult Collection	11,293	17,798	16,575
Downloadable Collection**	37,396	32,684	35,546
Total	204,815	272,143	278,308
Circulation per capita	10.8	14.3	15.2
Programs & Services			
Library Programs***	1,059	979	885
Program Attendance***	25,538	27,669	31,757
Reference Questions	16,989	22,300	27,723
Internet Usage*	4,322	7,705	5,925
Database Searches	83,528	93,464	130,170
Website Visits	110,673	113,310	126,254
Library Collection			
Print Collection	96,062	92,312	93,485
Non-print Collection	103,631	109,600	117,190
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	7,669	9,139	7,878
Non-print Collection****	29,742	13,000	12,952
Magazine Subscriptions- <i>includes digital titles</i>	3,616	3,325	4,898

*Library building was closed to the public from March 15 to September 9, 2020 due to Covid-19

**Total includes downloads of e-books, e-audio, streaming video and digital magazines for all age levels

***Includes online programs and attendees

****Includes approximately 8,000 records that had to be re-loaded in 2020/2021