



## Wadleigh Memorial Library

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### LIBRARY 2015 Annual Report

A few years ago, the library underwent a strategic planning process. During the course of a series of focus groups and more meetings than I can count, we renewed the library's mission to serve as the "educational, cultural, technological and social center" of the community – a place which supports lifelong learning and connects Milford residents not only to resources and services, but to each other, in a comfortable space that transforms and inspires all who walk through its doors. The library is a place that is open to everyone, a place that provides equal access to technology, information and other resources regardless of income level, age or ability.

With over 10,000 visitors a month streaming through our doors, Milford's public library is **THE** most heavily trafficked town facility outside of the schools. The original building is now 66 years old and had its last upgrade 30 years ago when it was renovated and an addition built. Half a century-old structures and thirty year old systems do not function efficiently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and those receiving the heavy use ours does cannot continue to function without fail indefinitely.

That said, we have a hard-working, dedicated staff that has made an art form out of making do. We've been able to continue operating with band-aid repairs. We've been able to offer programs, services and access to some pretty terrific things, but not nearly to the best of our abilities -- and there's so much more out there we want to be able to offer. Libraries are not just about housing items to be checked out; they're places with resources to encourage learning, creativity and creation. As an example, we were one of the first public libraries in the state to have a 3D printer available for our residents to use (and it's received 800+ hours of use since). It sits on the end of our circulation desk. We would love to have it in a lab joined by other innovative hardware and software for residents to explore, tinker and create. These labs are known in the field as Makerspaces, Hackerspaces or FabLabs.

Our hands are tied, however, by an old facility that is by no means accessible to all (we do not meet the standards set forth by the ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act), is less than comfortable and can hardly be described as a transformative or inspirational space. For years, we've been shoe-horning 21<sup>st</sup> century library services into a dated, municipal building last touched in the decade before computers became common in the workplace.

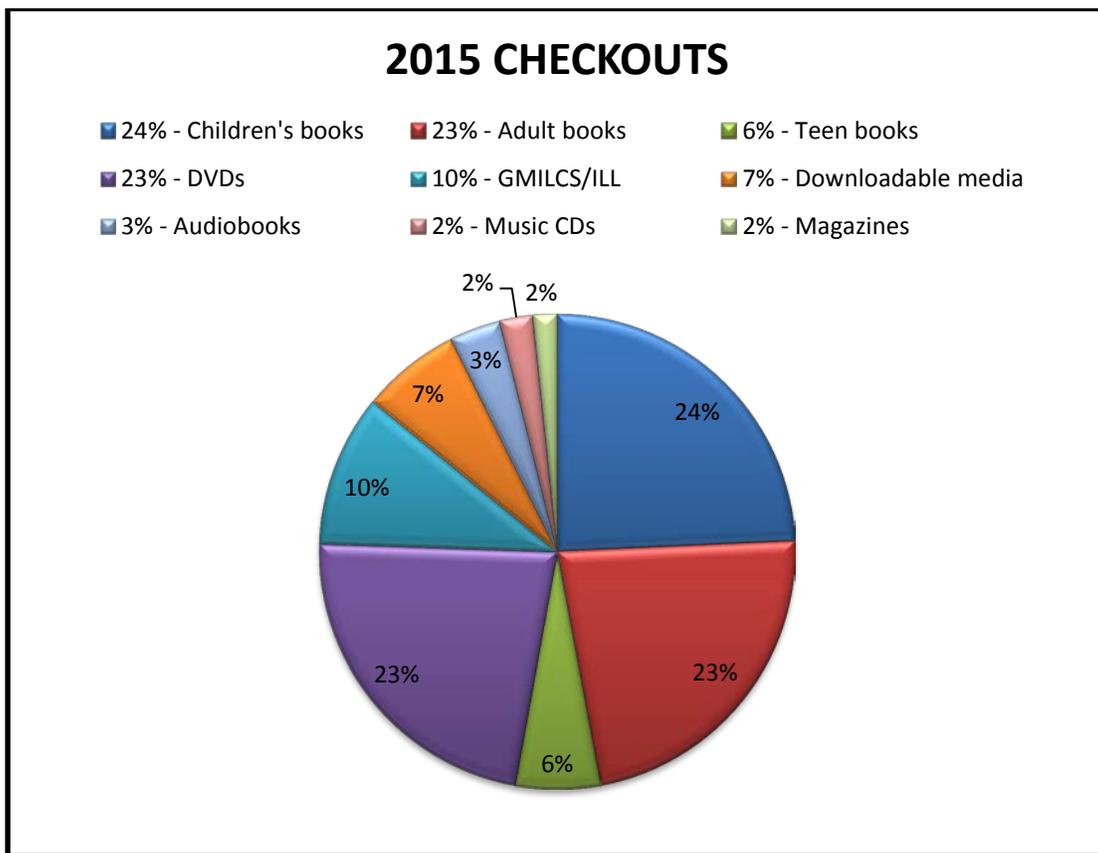
That entire staff deserves credit for modifying, partnering and thinking outside the box in order to provide the best programs, materials and services possible given the physical constraints of the library space. What follows is a summary of what we've been able to accomplish this year.

## Collection

Nearly 120,000 – or 52% – of this year’s checkouts were books. The most heavily checked out items were children’s books accounting for 24% of our total circulation; DVD and adult book checkouts were close behind comprising 22% each. The biggest change this year was young adult book checkouts which surged by 7% after several years of sluggish growth.

Our downloadable media collection encompasses e-books, downloadable audiobooks and – new this year – digital magazines. While this category only accounted for 7% of our total checkouts, downloadable audiobook use jumped in popularity while e-books, after years of increases, saw only a modest bump in checkouts.

Patrons continued to take full advantage of Milford’s membership in the GMILCS Library Consortium. GMILCS allows Milford residents access to over a million titles held in the libraries of Amherst, Bedford, Goffstown, Hooksett, Manchester, Merrimack, Salem, Windham, New England College and the New Hampshire Institute of Art. If Milford doesn’t have what you need (or our copies are checked out), we can have it delivered to the Wadleigh – usually within a matter of a few business days. Sharing resources allows us to save substantial sums of money in the purchase of materials, electronic resources, and the technology and related expertise needed to maintain an integrated library system (ILS).



## Programs

Overall program attendance increased by nearly 5% this year as close to 16,000 attended one of our 700+ programs spanning all age groups.

Of particular note was the attendance at children's programs which spiked 14% due to a vast array of educational and fun events. We introduced a "Makerspace" series in which kids learned elementary coding and circuitry by way of Ozobots and Snapcircuit kits purchased with a grant from the Wadleigh Library Development Fund. Wingmasters and Lindsay & her Puppet Pals returned by popular demand. The Summer Reading theme of "Every Hero has a Story" brought forth fun programs including a Superhero Training Party and classes on storyboarding, art in comics and heroes of Greek mythology. Once again, the Summer Reading program was sponsored in large part by the Development Fund.



The Children's staff also took their programs on the road holding summer story-times in Keyes Park and visiting schools and early learning centers throughout the year. Late in the year we launched a "1000 Books Before Kindergarten"– a nation-wide project encouraging early literacy. Materials for the project were purchased thanks to a literacy grant from the Milford Lions Club.



**Book hedgehog: Superhero Model**

Teens continued to enjoy ongoing book clubs, gaming and anime groups. They also experienced zen coloring and learned how to make book hedgehogs, build marble roller coasters and paint at the speed of light.

Adults marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWII's end with musical historian Richard Kruppa, who brought to life unusual stories behind some of the most well-known wartime songs and learned about the history of women in the spirits industry with "Ladies Behind Bars," presented by members of the Ladies United for the Preservation of Endangered Cocktails.

We launched the 16<sup>th</sup> season of our popular Acoustic Café series; presented NH Humanities Council grant-funded programs including "Grail Mania: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Retelling of a 12<sup>th</sup> Century Heresy"; and hosted Fred Marple, the self-professed Garrison Keillor of New Hampshire. Our ongoing History Book Club, Spanish Conversation

Group and Knit 1/Crochet 2 Group each saw increasingly large numbers of people attending their meetings.

We experimented in holding more programs off-site, utilizing the Town Hall Banquet Room in addition to the Amato Center's theater, both to accommodate large numbers of people and to have a more comfortable program space.

## Services



**BECAUSE MORE  
THAN A  
QUARTER OF U.S.  
HOUSEHOLDS  
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CONNECTION.**

There's a saying that "librarians are the original search engines" and this year ours received nearly 11,000 requests for help in locating material on a vast array of subjects including World War II and local history; how to obtain citizenship in Ireland; and assistance in researching information about the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline. We proctored exams for students taking online classes and helped people troubleshoot email, get started on creating a resume and assisted in navigating online job applications and forms. Once again, we partnered with AARP in providing free income tax assistance and as always, we continue to offer public copy, scanning, faxing and notary services.

With help from our Teen Tech Squad, we provided needed technical support to patrons having trouble with new e-readers, cell phones or other devices as well as those using our free wifi and desktop workstations. An upgrade to our wireless system gave us the ability to reliably track its use for the first time (over 11,000 logons during the year). We also had more than 13,000 logons to our desktop computers and 12,000 jobs sent to our printers totaling over 30,000 pages.

In mid-September we introduced online patron registration. This enables residents to pre-register for a library card and have immediate access to online resources and e-books for 30 days. Within that time, residents can stop in the library at their convenience to verify registration, receive their new library card and have full access to all library resources.

Our 3D printer continued to field heavy use with patrons printing all make and manner of objects including replicas of hand bones for a physical therapy student; model rocket sections; parts for a robot; holiday ornaments; and replacement parts for a yarn winder and a toy fork lift. We also took the printer on the road for demonstrations at Ledgewood Bay and the Souhegan Valley Boys and Girls Club.

Many patrons researched their family trees by taking advantage of our subscriptions to Ancestry, HeritageQuest and GenealogyBank. Others monitored their investments via our

Morningstar subscription database; and students utilized our Facts on File databases in large numbers for homework assignments.

### **Facilities & Grounds**

Despite community meeting room space in other departments, we continued to have hundreds of reservations by Milford groups and individuals seeking space for meetings or quiet study; approximately half were requests for quiet study space. Nearly 2000 people utilized library meeting room space last year – an increase of 10% from last year.

The particular space deficiencies of our meeting rooms and departments have been thoroughly documented in previous annual town reports and the details have not changed. We kindly refer interested residents to past town reports (we have them all in our NH Room).

After having been recommended for funding by the town's Capital Improvement Plan Committee 15 times/years, the library building project finally made its debut on the ballot this year and received 43% of the 60% votes needed for a bond issue. We were greatly encouraged by these numbers – especially given Milford's history of large projects needing to appear several times on a ballot before receiving voter approval. For 2016's ballot, the inflation of construction costs has added \$160,000 for a total project cost of \$5.6 million. A \$500,000 gift from the Morris K. Webster Trust Fund and fundraising revenues of \$10,000 (and counting) would reduce the cost to \$5.1 million for taxpayers.



The proposed building project has an open concept that would not only meet our current needs, but allow for decades of future adaptability as library services change through the years. In addition to finally bringing us in compliance with ADA standards and addressing all of the needs identified in previous surveys, assessments and focus groups, some of the highlights include a more sizable Children's Department with programming space; a larger Teen Department; a technology/business center where residents can access and learn how to use current and cutting edge hardware and software; a bigger meeting room with after-hours access for our more heavily attended programs and larger community group meetings; small group/quiet study rooms; and a vastly improved parking lot nearly double its current size and with a generous number of handicapped spaces.

### **Staff**

In February, Kathy Prevey-Levin was hired as a Library Assistant in the Technical Services Department. She takes over the position left by a staff retirement at the end of 2014.

Several staff members took advantage of local library conferences, online training opportunities and workshops held through Primex. Young Adult Services Librarian Katie Spofford chairs the GMILCS consortium's TeenNet section; Library Assistant Susan Dahlen, Head of Circulation Mary Ann Shea, Head of Children's Services Letty Goerner, Head of Reference & Adult Services Kim Gabert and Head of Technical Services Diana LeBlanc are all active in other GMILCS groups. Part-time Reference Librarian Sue Amann takes part in the NH Library Association's READS chapter activities. I remain active on the Board of the GMILCS consortium, NHLA's URBANS section, the regional Hillstown Library Coop and in the Milford Rotary Club.

### **Summary**

The Wadleigh Library and its staff have worked hard to provide a warm, welcoming space with a plethora of materials, equipment, programs and opportunities for all ages to learn something new, research a topic, get assistance, enjoy a performance, connect with neighbors and friends or just pass the time with a magazine. We are thankful for a community that continues to take advantage of all we have to offer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle R. Sampson  
Library Director