

REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

This year marked the return of more traditional library services, with Avon Free Public Library being open to the public for our full schedule of operating hours for the first time since March of 2020, and the resumption of in-person programming and public room bookings. This increased activity is evident looking at our library visits, which doubled from the previous year, although they still lag behind pre-pandemic numbers. While in-person programming, including elementary school field trips and the Friends of the Library book sale, brought crowds into the building, staff continued to provide a full roster of virtual programming for those who preferred, for either safety or convenience, to participate remotely.

Virtual programs included extensions of two popular program series. *Unearthing History*, co-sponsored with the Avon Historical Society, continued to present a scholarly look at the exciting local discoveries from the Paleo-Indian era, and our community conversations on race, funded by a grant from the American Library Association, invited community members of all ages to discuss the history of racism in America.

Another significant addition to our in-person library services was the launch of our Memory Care Collection, which was generously funded by the Friends of Avon Library. This dedicated collection of books, DVDs, magazines, and activities for those living with memory loss and their caregivers, was inspired by library staff who participated in dementia friendly training. LiveWell Dementia Specialists, a non-profit organization focused on caring for individuals at all stages of Alzheimer's disease and related conditions, provided training to several staff members who used that as a springboard to host a series of dementia and memory care related programs and build this collection of valuable resources on the topic.

With a return to in-person use of the library, significant improvements were made to the facility as well. The new geothermal HVAC system that was installed in the first half of 2021 was commissioned into service and provided comfortable temperatures through both the heat of summer and the cold of winter, permitting the library once again to be a heating and cooling center when needed. Technology upgrades included new network switches and a new firewall, which were required for the new voice-over-IP telephone system that was installed. This system is connected to the Town of Avon's telephone system, allowing for four digit dial and call transfers between the library and other Town departments as well as significantly lowering ongoing carrier costs.

One new piece of technology that Avon Library debuted in 2021 was not put in the library; it is in your pocket—or should be! The Library Connection Mobile app, available for Android and iOS operating systems, provides quick and easy access to your library account, the collection of Avon Library along with 30 other participating greater Hartford area public libraries, and so much more. The app can store your library card, so no more digging through a wallet or purse when you are ready to check out, and connects with all of Avon's digital resources like e-books and online learning platforms. Use Library Connection Mobile to connect with the library's social media accounts as well as our

events calendar, to stay up to date on all of Avon Library's events, programs, and services.

The Library experienced some significant staff turnover this year as well, with two full-time librarians and numerous part-time staff, representing many decades of experience, leaving for other opportunities or simply retiring. While excellent replacements have been hired for most vacant positions, the recruitment and training of new staff, as well as covering for the gaps in knowledge, skills, and staffing hours, did take up a good deal of time and energy.

Avon Library's Board of Directors was not spared from personnel changes either. Long-time Board President Carin Salonia stepped down, as well as the Board's Secretary, Stephanie Guralnick. Nicole Nunziata moved up from Vice-President to lead the Board, with Amee Mody taking over the Vice-President role, and Colette Slover was elected as the new Secretary.

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
Resident Card Holders	8,257	6,197	6,206
% of Population	45%	33%	33%
Library Visits (door count)*	125,605	40,762	80,405
Visits per capita	6.8	2.1	4.2
Circulation			
Adult Collection	85,304	84,717	95,417
Children's Collection	85,334	71,409	126,244
Young Adult Collection	15,659	11,293	17,798
Downloadable Collection**	31,297	37,396	32,684
Total	217,594	204,815	272,143
Circulation per capita	11.9	10.8	14.3
Programs & Services			
Library Programs***	1,032	1,059	979
Program Attendance***	30,182	25,538	27,669
Reference Questions	21,174	16,989	22,300
Internet Usage*	19,162	4,322	7,705
Database Searches	75,012	83,528	93,464
Website Visits	100,776	110,673	113,310
Library Collection			
Print Collection	98,456	96,062	92,312
Non-print Collection	92,539	103,631	109,600
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	7,039	7,669	9,139
Non-print Collection****	13,513	29,742	13,000
Magazine Subscriptions- <i>includes digital titles</i>	214	3,616	3,325

*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