

REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

Significant staff turnover in 2024 led to a restructuring of the departments at Avon Free Public Library. The resignation of our Technology & Technical Services manager, as well as several part-time staff from that department, gave the Library the opportunity to combine our acquisitions, cataloging, and circulation services into a single Borrowing Services department, managed by Patricia Valsecchi. We also combined two vacant part-time positions into a new full-time Library Technical Assistant position, filled capably by new hire Molly Auidi. This realignment allowed us to reduce management staff while increasing efficiency, leading to a shorter time between when new books arrive at the library and when they hit the shelves, ready to be checked out. The Borrowing Services staff also had to deal with big changes when we shifted our primary book vendor to Ingram due to their larger inventory and better fill rate for most types of books.

The technology responsibilities of the former department manager were filled by another new full-time librarian, Shuqian Zhang who was hired in October. Shu came to Avon from the Bryant Library in Roslyn, NY where she was the Technology Coordinator. Shu's impact in Avon was immediate, and she reinstated one on one technology help appointments, acquired a new 3-D printer, and began teaching classes and holding open computer lab hours for 3-D printing and other technology topics. Shu was on board in time to help with the launch of the new and improved Avon Library website, www.avonctlibrary.info, in February 2025. Other significant upgrades to our technology services this year included implementing SPOT Global Print, an app-based print from anywhere solution, and providing access to Udemy, an online learning platform to improve work related skills or develop skills around a personal interest. Udemy was generously funded by a grant from PeoplesBank.

While the Children's and Teen Services department did not have a restructuring, there were several new faces joining the team that provides library services to youth in Avon. Grant Hendrick started work as our new full-time Teen Librarian in the spring of 2025, and was joined by Dee Cianci and E Poetsch, who were both hired as Children's Library Specialists. All three of these new staff brought exciting and creative ideas to improve library services for children and teens, and it showed with a roster of educational and interactive offerings for all age groups and notable success in building audiences for both returning and brand-new programs. Kids and parents alike were also thrilled with the new collection of Tonies, screen-free kid-friendly audio players that narrate stories from favorite characters ranging from Ariel to Winnie the Pooh. The initial collection of Tonies was funded by the Wintemute Family Foundation and were all checked out within the first week of hitting the shelves!

The Reference and Adult Services department had a great year as well, with highlights that included wrapping up the multi-year Save America's Treasures preservation grant for local history services and the 10th anniversary of the Local Author's Festival celebrated in the summer of 2024. Two significant programming series were held this year as well. *Poverty, a Community Conversation* was co-sponsored by Avon

Friends for Equity and funded by the Avon Greater Together Community Fund. This series of programs included book discussions, films, and lectures, all centered around Matthew Desmond's book *Poverty, by America* and focused on the causes and potential solutions for those experiencing poverty. *Exploring Human Origins*, a national traveling exhibit on human evolution from the Smithsonian, arrived at Avon Library in December 2024 and transformed our Community Room into a natural history museum for six weeks. Grant funding for associated programming was provided along with the exhibit materials and librarians augmented the traveling exhibit with local historical content related to Avon's Paleo-Indian past. Hundreds of visitors from around the state and beyond toured *Exploring Human Origins* during its stay at Avon Library.

Improvements to the library facility and grounds during the 2024-25 fiscal year included adding to and upgrading our network of outdoor security cameras, new furniture for the teen room, additional grant-funded shelving for the Marian Hunter Local History Room, and the repair and replacement of some exterior and interior doors. We were also the recipient of a gift of a Northern Red Oak tree, planted in the library's lawn. The Garden Club of Avon provided this tree as part of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of their group.

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Resident Card Holders	6,957	7,553	7,810
% of Population	38%	40%	41%
Library Visits (door count)	116,003	133,442	132,384
Visits per capita	6.3	7.0	7.0
Circulation			
Adult Collection	88,737	95,306	86,809
Children's Collection	137,450	140,952	137,786
Young Adult Collection	16,575	16,064	12,982
Downloadable Collection*	35,546	42,762	47,495
Total	278,308	295,084	285,072
Circulation per capita	15.2	15.7	15.1
Programs & Services			
Library Programs**	885	1,211	1,016
Program Attendance**	31,757	45,354	38,229
Reference Questions	27,723	31,291	31,957
Internet Usage	5,925	7,648	7,993
Database Searches	130,170	158,561	90,330
Website Visits	126,254	253,811	148,417
Library Collection			
Print Collection	93,485	92,827	92,727
Non-print Collection	117,190	122,207	133,007
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	7,878	7,553	7,976
Non-print Collection	12,952	11,767	24,065
Magazine Subscriptions- <i>includes digital titles</i>	4,898	5,399	1,408

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

**Includes online programs and attendees