

## **2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Thayer Memorial Library brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and build community.

### **OUR CORE VALUES**

#### **Passion**

We love the Library, we love Lancaster, and we love what we do.

#### **Free and Open**

We promote intellectual freedom and privacy for all.

#### **Inspiration**

We enhance learning, the free flow of ideas, and civic responsibility.

#### **Respect**

We respond to all with courtesy and compassion.

#### **Integrity**

We uphold a bond of trust between the Library and the community as stewards of our collections and our building.

#### **Legacy**

We treasure the history of Lancaster and its Library as we embrace the future.

## **BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

Chair	Emily J. Rose
Vice-Chair	Frank T. MacGrory
Secretary	Frank S. Streeter
Member	David I. Spanagel
Member	Kathryn Engelhardt
Member	Anne T. Ogilvie

## **LIBRARY STAFF**

Director	Joseph J. Mulé
Assistant Director / Adult Services Librarian	Karen Silverthorn
Youth Services Librarian	Maren Caulfield
Office Manager / Technician	Janet Baylis
Special Collections Clerk	Marcia Jakubowicz
Assistant Technician	Jo Agnes Santangelo
Pages	Lisa D' Ambrosio
	Dorothy McCandless, Rsnd
	Gail Prewandowski
	Rachel Carter
	Melanie Turpin
	Meredith Brummer
Building Supervisor	Richard Kravfe

## **HOURS OF SERVICE<sup>1</sup>**

Monday	10 – 8
Tuesday	12 – 8
Wednesday	10 – 8
Thursday	10 – 8
Friday	10 – 5
Saturday	10 – 2

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<sup>1</sup> The times listed were the conventional hours of service until the Library closed in late March under the Governor's order in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. Although the Library supplied the public with library services throughout 2020, its scheduled hours varied.

## OUR 158<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

In 2020, Thayer Memorial Library [Library] fulfilled its mission operating from its historic structure on the Town Green. However, 2020 was like no other year in the Library's history except during 1918-1919, when Massachusetts residents encountered the H1N1 influenza A virus commonly known as the Spanish Flu. Circumstances the Library and staff confronted in 2020 managing the conditions caused by the outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 [COVID-19] were abrupt, troublesome, and disruptive.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Massachusetts was part of an ongoing epidemic in the U. S. The first confirmed case was reported in early February, making Massachusetts the fifth state to report an infected person. The second reported case in Massachusetts occurred in early March. Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency on March 10.

The Library responded swiftly and employed a curbside pickup service to avoid staff and the public directly encountering one another. However, by March 23<sup>rd</sup>, all Town buildings closed, and the staff were ordered not to show up to work. Many staff addressed their work duties from home. With the building otherwise unoccupied, the Director reported to the Library.

In early April, an email distribution list including more than 2,700 Thayer Memorial Library patrons living in Lancaster was generated. Several times a month, the Director dispatched emails to the public and offered well-timed information from government and public health agencies on COVID-19 related events and notifications. These emails also apprised Library members of the millions of eBooks, audiobooks, eVideos, and eMagazines that continued to be available while the Library's doors were closed to the public.

In mid-April, the Library began mailing books to residents. Underwritten by the Friends of Thayer Memorial Library, patrons could request media titles on the Library shelves, which were often delivered to homes by the United States Postal Service within 48 hours. While working from home, the Youth Services Librarian began developing a host of innovative virtual programs, including story hours posted on YouTube.

By May, and after meeting health and safety specifications declared by the Commonwealth and Lancaster's Board of Health, staff with lower health risks returned to work. Much of their time was devoted to meeting the growing demand for books by mail, developing virtual services, and preparing procedures, policies, and protocols to eventually welcome the public back into the building.

In the middle of June, The Library commissioned a Re-Entry Taskforce lead by Board Chair Emily Rose. The group, which included Trustees and a local business owner, several members with higher academic credentials, the Library Director, and staff produced the document *Welcome Back To The Thayer Memorial Library*<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Covid-19 FY2021 *Welcome Back to the Thayer Memorial Library: Plans, Policies, Protocols, and Procedures*

The plan required everyone entering the Library to wear a mask covering the nose and mouth, substantiate no COVID-19 symptoms such as a fever, maintain social distancing of at least six feet and practice hand cleanliness. Entry was by appointment only. Upon entering the Library, visitors employed a hands-free temperature station to verify healthy temperatures. To encourage compliance, furniture was removed from public spaces, media stacks reorientated, and signage displayed to promote social distancing.

A feature of the plan was for the public to arrive at the Library's front entrance, check out their materials in the Nathaniel T Dexter Meeting Room on the ground floor, and leave through the rear exit. Occupancy was limited to no more than 25 inhabitants, which included staff. Visitors were scheduled at the top of the hour and permitted to stay for up to 45 minutes. Staff used the remaining time to prepare the building for the subsequent round of reservations, starting at the top of the next hour.

The Board of Health endorsed the Library's plan by the end of September. At its October meeting, The Board of Trustees approved welcoming the public back into the building. The last patron to visit the Library was on November 19. Around this time, the COVID-19 infection rate in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and the rest of the country spiked, which led to the decision by the Town to shut down public buildings until further notice. Staff continued to report to work to support curbside pickup services and provide and develop various virtual programs

## **THE LIBRARY AS LIFELINE**

The Library became an invaluable presence in the community as residents grappled with the burdens coupled with remaining at home isolated from family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and neighbors. In the earliest days, emails sent to most households announcing the latest information provided optimism, fun, and humor using quirky anecdotes and the Director's musings. Some recipients renewed their library cards when reminded of the digital and virtual resources available to them.

The times were gloomy, and patrons missed visiting the Library for various reasons. Scores of titles were mailed to residents' homes. Eventually, interlibrary loan service was restored, and media titles were accessible from many libraries in CW MARS. Although patrons could not enter the Library to pick up their requests, the staff developed curbside pickup services enabling the public to pick up requested titles waiting for them outside the Library. However, with more significant investment in digital resources, whether eBook, audiobook, videos, or magazines, patron use boomed. Growth in electronic media grew by nearly 30% since 2019.

The value of all services from borrowing conventional and electronic media to attending virtual programs was more than \$598,000. Even under duress, the Library was an excellent investment and provided Lancaster citizens with nearly \$79 of services for every dollar appropriated by the Town.

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## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

The Board of Trustees continued to meet monthly to evaluate the staff's well-being, the Library's response to the pandemic and begin planning for a post-pandemic reaction. In addition the Board continued its routine duties of preparing and advocating for the upcoming FY2022 budget negotiations with the Town, reviewing and writing policies in light of the conditions on the ground, and work on addressing various building structure concerns.

Even when working from home, staff found ways to start new projects, developed services that could be delivered over a networked community, and planned to reopen the building. The Assistant Director worked with the Special Collections Clerk to update the Library's disaster plan. She also worked with a team to begin the arduous process of transcribing handwritten manuscripts in the Library's special collections.

Other groups formed and met online, including one to evaluate the Library's website and begin to plan on a redesign. Staff regularly convened and collaborated over shared work duties. The Board and staff even started organizing around developing a new strategic plan.

The Youth Services Librarian was awarded an LSTA grant for subscriptions to Beanstack, an online application to customize community reading programs, enabling the Library to reach more residents at home. The Assistant Director's grant application to the Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation was awarded.

The Library and volunteer Bob Kadlec worked with the Commission on Disability to virtually display the Disability History Exhibit on the Library's website. The exhibit was developed by Alaska's Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and was on display for October.

## **STAFF CHANGES**

In 2020, a long-standing member of the staff retired. Dot McCandless left at the end of August after serving as Page for more than 12 years. The community cherished Ms. McCandless. Her duties included working on the frontline of service at the circulation desk. Anyone who visited during her work hours was warmly greeted with a smile and a cheerful "hello." She was good for a laugh which usually resonated throughout the Library's rotunda and adjacent rooms. The staff sorely missed Dot and wished her all the best in whatever she pursues in the next stage of her life.

## **MEDIA COLLECTIONS**

In 2020, the Library added 3,782 media titles to the general collection and many titles to its eMedia collections. It also added a new online video collection called Kanopy. Table 2 shows the Library retained more than 725,000 titles broken down by several media types. Electronic media

comprised more than 93% of accessible titles yet contributed less than 25% of titles borrowed by the public<sup>3</sup>.

Table 2 illustrates the circulation by media type at the Library in 2020.

**Table 1. Collection Breakdown by Media Type**

<b>Media Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Audiobooks and Music	7,718
Books	41,354
DVDs and Blurays	8,985
eAudiobooks	251,400
eBooks	247,701
eComics	20,906
eMagazines	198
eMusic	30,190
eTelevision	31,067
eVideos	83,493
Magazines	2,285
Microfilm	87
Miscellaneous [passes, art, kits, etc.]	969
Video Games	409
<b>Total Titles</b>	<b>726,762</b>

**Table 2. Circulation Breakdown by Media Type**

<b>Media Type</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Audiobooks and Music	2,038
Books	28,226
DVDs and Blurays	8,260
eAudiobooks	5,128
eBooks	6,216
eComics	157
eMagazines	94
eMusic	173
eTelevision	186
eVideos	606
Magazines	999
Miscellaneous [passes, art, kits, etc.]	282
Video Games	390
<b>Total Circulation</b>	<b>52,755</b>

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<sup>3</sup> The cost of collecting electronic media titles is shared among all libraries comprising Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing [CW MARS] network.

Although many museums and attractions closed once the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, some opened with limited occupancy. Others that remained closed extended the Library's subscription.

Funding provided by the Friends of Thayer Memorial Library and the Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund at the Worcester Community Foundation underwrote all attraction pass acquisitions listed in table 4.

**Table 3. Museum and Attraction Passes**

Animal Adventures	Museum of Russian Icons	USS Constitution Museum
Butterfly Place	Trustees Go Pass	Worcester Art Museum
Davis Farmland & Megamaze		

## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

The Library scheduled more than 240 programs which more than 3,050 citizens attended. Nearly half of the programs were conducted virtually. The Youth Services Librarian also started a YouTube channel and uploaded 21 videos which generated about 920 views. All of these programs were funded using grant funds and gifts donated to the Library. Many of the programs held in 2020 are listed in table 5.

**Table 4. Programs and Events at the Library in 2020**

In-Person		
Weekly	Monthly	Other
Knitting Club [3]	Adult Book Discussion Group [5]	7 Bridge Writers' Collaborative Programs
Mama' boot Camo [10]	Board Game Mania [x1]	Bright Star Theatre: African Folk Tales
Monday Movie Matinee [8]	Crafternoon [x2]	Dungeons & Dragons tutorial
Scrabble Club [4]	Every Child Ready to Read [x1]	Frozen Party
Snuggles and Stories [x3]	Family Movie [x3]	Music Makers with Miss Katie
Storytime [x13]	LEGO Club [x3]	Pajama Storytime with the Nashoba Chieftains
Toastmasters [9]	Read to a Therapy Dog [x1]	Photography Workshop for Kids
	Tween Book Club [x2]	Uno Tournament

## Virtual

### Weekly

Mini Storytime and Craft [x10]

YouTube Storytime [x11]

Zoom Storytime [x12]

### Monthly

Adult Book Discussion Group [3]

LEGO Club (biweekly) [x13]

Teen Advisory Group [x4]

Teen Movie Club [x2]

Tween Book Club [x7]

YA Book Group [x2]

### Other

7 Bridge Writers' Collaborative Programs

Christmas Around the World

Fairy Tale Puppet Theater Take and Make

Harry Potter Trivia Night

MRE & Me Stay-at-Home Storytime [x4]

Music Makers with Miss Katie [x2]

"New Year's Eve" Eve Party

Noon Year's Eve Party

Storytime with Princess Anna

Storytime with Princess Belle

Teddy Bear Picnic

Teen Game Night

The Climate Crisis and Its Solutions: The Truth in

Twenty with the Nashoba Valley Climate Coalition

## BUILDING

From January through late March, the Library continued to make plans and progress towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in its strategic plans. Through the capital budget process, pursuing grants, and fundraising, the Trustees, looked forward to addressing many capital concerns that plague the historic wing of the Library. By April 1<sup>st</sup>, opportunities for the Library to raise capital funds by any means vanished. However, all was not lost. Capital funds approved in FY2019 were put to use in 2020 to install a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient HVAC unit for the Constance V. R. Dexter Special Collections Room. The Town raised an additional \$13,000 through the National Grid's Green Communities program to complete this installation.

## FUNDING LIBRARY SERVICES

The calendar year 2020's operating budget was comprised of revenue collected in the latter half of the fiscal year 2019 [January-June] and the first six months of the fiscal year 2020 [July-December]. Service expenditures were paid using municipal funds, grants awarded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and non-profit agencies, trust fund income, as well as generous supporters' gifts. The Library expended more than \$362,879 on operations. 11% [\$40,000] of this sum was funded using non-municipal income.

## Municipal Support

The Library's municipal appropriation funded operational expenses, including wages, the purchase of books, magazine subscriptions and other media, the CW MARS membership, office, and housekeeping supplies, and building maintenance services. Table 6 illustrates municipal appropriations to the Library in FY2019 and FY2020.



**Table 6. Municipal Apportions in FY2019 and FY2020**

<i><b>FY2019</b></i>		<i><b>FY2020</b></i>	
January - June		July - December	
Appropriated Municipal Income	352,119	Appropriated Municipal Income	357,550
		Change	1.54%

### **State Aid**

A municipality and its library must be annually certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners [MBLC] as meeting statutory and regulatory requirements to receive State Aid to Public Libraries funding. Lancaster and the Thayer Memorial Library met all criteria to certify with the Commonwealth and received a State Aid award. Requirements for certification included:

- Being open to all residents of the Commonwealth
- Being open for service 49 hours per week
- Expending a reasonable portion of the library's total budget on library media
- Reciprocally lending books to other libraries
- Filing all necessary reports with the Commonwealth

As a result of certifying with the Commonwealth, the Library received a State Aid award of \$14,500.

### **In-kind Donations**

The Library accepted books, compact discs, DVDs, magazine subscriptions, and other public in-kind donations throughout the year. In 2020, 656 titles were added to the collection, with an estimated value of more than \$7,750.

Thayer Memorial Library thanks the citizens of Lancaster for their continued support!