



Chelmsford Public Library

Becky Herrmann, Library Director



The Chelmsford Library staff, Trustees and Friends of the Library embraced the spirit of an ancient Chinese proverb for FY18. "When the wind of change blows, some people build walls, others build windmills."

This year, the library applied for and will receive a \$7500 LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant to fund a project to break down walls and promote civic engagement and civil discourse in our community. We are calling the project R.E.A.C.T: Read Engage and Come Together. Over the course of the next year, we will be helping our community to engage and discuss six key social issues often mired in misinformation and confusion: climate change, immigration, gender and sexual identity, racial inequality, poverty and food insecurity, and equity of access to education/information. The main goal of the project is to position the library as a safe place to discuss difficult issues and find accurate and unbiased information. We have the support of many organizations in and around town, and are excited for the project to begin.

In addition, in an effort to break down any perceived barriers to service for Chelmsford youth, the separate Teen and Children's Department were restructured into a unified Youth Services Department with shared staffing. We want to

encourage children and teens to cross seamlessly between these borders, while still being able to access curated collections appropriate to age and reading level. We also changed things up by surveying the community for new adult program ideas and as a result, we offered a multitude of fresh and creative events.

The Board of Trustees changed their direction by adding a Fundraising Subcommittee and initiating an advocacy and annual giving focus. And the Friends doubled their efforts, offering two great Book Sales this year and welcoming two new co-chairs, Maureen Foley and Kathy Cryan-Hicks. It was a year of embracing change and trying a little reinvention.

Public Libraries especially see the winds of change blow with technology. In the two decades since the revamped Chelmsford Public Library opened, we have seen striking advancements. Digital storage has gone from a hard drive to a floppy disk to a CD to a flash drive to the Cloud. We have gone from vinyl records to cassette to CD to streaming music. We have seen movies morph from VHS to laser disc to DVD to Blu-ray to streaming. And phones? Did any of us imagine that we would carry a computer around in our pocket twenty years ago?

Services at the library have also changed dramatically due to technology. Options to ask and answer informational questions evolved over the years to include phone conversations, online chat, Facebook queries and in-person requests. Accessing our online catalog and databases? First you had to come to the library in person, then you could use your dial-up computer at home, then high speed broadband access, then Wi-Fi anyplace that had it and now you can use your phone to do it all. (Or if you want to save on your data usage- you can check out one of our mobile Wi-Fi hotspots.) Change is perpetual, technological advances grow exponentially and remaining relevant is our challenge.



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One constant in the face of all of this revolution is the tenacity of the book. Whether in digital or print format, reading remains one of the favorite pastimes of Chelmsford residents. 700 copies of the best-seller *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah were purchased with Friends of the Library money and patron donations. These books were shared with our community as part of the One Book Chelmsford reading program. Over 800 people attended when NY Times best-selling author Kristin Hannah was interviewed by Hank Phillippi Ryan at the CHS Performing Arts Center, one of our biggest turnouts ever!

The following are highlights for the year from each department.

Adult Services Department:

- WinterFest 2018 was a huge success with record attendance, great food from more than two dozen local restaurants, escape room challenges, music and fun for everyone. This year's event closely tied in with our One Book program and Kristin Hannah's visit
- Over 100 people came to hear our guest Anna Ornstein relate the moving story of her family's experience during the Holocaust as part of our One Book program too
- Reading is also promoted through 8 book groups including popular fiction, cookbook,

history, and mystery groups, rotating displays around the library, monthly recommendation lists offered in print and online of recommended titles, a quarterly book share program for the public, and a summer reading challenge for adults

- The library's first ever Trivia Night was held in October of FY18 – we had almost 100 people come to have fun after hours in the library
- A revamping of our program schedule boosted attendance and included programs such as: beer-brewing, after hours concerts, wildlife programs, and a how-to series of programs, including ukulele playing and bicycle maintenance
- Friends-run events such as the delicious Apple Pie contest and the very popular Book Sale continue to be extremely successful. Special thanks to the Friends for all of their support!

Children's Department:

- Our Summer Reading Program proved very successful with 987 participants and over 800 logs returned (over 10,000 minutes read!)
- The June 2018 Summer Reading Kick-Off Party for K-1st Grade was a great idea! We registered 120 K-1st graders for the SRP in one day, and worked with K-1st reading specialists from Chelmsford Public Schools to host the event



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- Our collaboration with SEPAC (Special Education Parents Advisory Council) to create a new collection for parents of children with special needs and to host events for children with special needs and their parents was important to our school/library partnership
- Baby Yoga & Preschool Yoga proved very popular and we are exploring the idea of offering this again
- We also expanded Construction Zone (formerly LEGO club—with even more building toys!) – let your imagination fly!

Teen and Pre-Teen Services:

- An all-new Summer Reading Program for middle- and high-schoolers was created for summer 2017. There were 487 participants with over 5000 interactions with the library (interactions = checking out books, attending programs, logging books read over the summer) - Awesome!
- We upped the programming in FY18 – An average of 7 programs were held per month with a total of almost 1500 attendees (over double the attendance from FY16)

Most popular programs: Edible Slime, Gingerbread Smackdown, Hot Chocolate Workshop, Goldfish Aquarium Soapmaking, Haunted Halloween Cupcake Wars

- Volunteer Program: We trained 102 new teen volunteers who volunteered 394 times for children’s programs and shelf reading—wow!

Highlights: Harry Potter Birthday, Elephant and Piggy Party, Live Action Arkham Horror (created props and played characters for the live action role play)





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Reference Department:

- Lisa Francine joined the reference department and her MLS expertise has been much appreciated. She did extensive updating of our Career Section and helped develop our Fake News tech talk.
- Speaking of Fake News, we launched an online resource guide for fake news this year and overhauled our Education and Health & Wellness resource guides as well. We acquired Universal Class, which has allowed us to offer real online courses to the general public on a variety of subjects, including the ability for them to earn CEU's.
- We created the Citizenship Corner this year, which has been popular. The USCIS handout "10 Steps to Naturalization" is one of the most frequently taken fliers
- We began digitizing our local newspaper microfilms with the help of volunteers.
- We also installed a digital display screen at the reference desk to advertise our library programs and services

Marketing Department:

- Library staff have been visiting the winter Farmers' Market at the Chelmsford Agway and the summer Farmers' Market on the common to promote library programs and raise awareness about our services
- Facebook engagement numbers have really taken off

Number of people who liked our page: 2160 (up 18% from FY17)

Total posts on FB in FY18: 559 (up 57% from FY17)

Total interactions with our Facebook page posts (likes, comments, and shares): 23,344 (up 26% from FY17)

- Our monthly newsletter continues to reach a growing audience and keeps them informed of upcoming programs. Sign up at www.chelmsfordlibrary.org/signups

Technical Services:

- Busy staff implemented a new Acquisitions program in the Symphony library system
- In addition, we implemented Serials (a magazine cataloging tool) in the Symphony system
- Another project was the reclassification of graphic novels and manga to make it easier for patrons to easily find them

Technology:

- We expanded our wireless network

Town replaced all existing access points in summer 2017

We installed 3 new access points in fall/winter expanding coverage

- We expanded our security cameras

Deployed 11 cameras

We are now part of the town's security camera environment and video is accessible by police department

- We upgraded Audio-Visual systems in the meeting room

It included a new projector, new screen, and a new controls system

This was paid in part by the Friends of the Library

- Eighteen new computers were deployed for staff members and public
- Our self-check service was upgraded with three new computers and software



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Facilities:

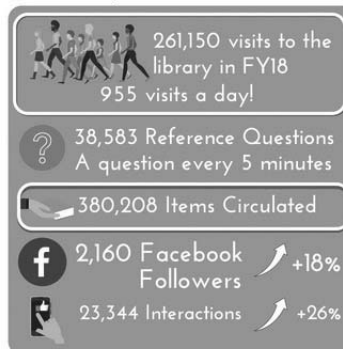
- The exterior trim of Adams building was repainted, with the rest of the building to come in FY19
- We worked with the town to install a new roof on the MacKay Library – looks great!
- The library secured capital funding for the first phase of new carpeting project
- Eleven chairs and the Children’s Room bench cushions were reupholstered after almost 20 years of use
- The landscaping around the Adams building was improved to match the look of the new Greenway, and to foster healthier and long-term growth in the trees, bushes, and lawn

Staffing Changes:

- Upon completion of her MLS degree, Supriya Bhat was promoted to Head of Circulation Services
- Sara Dempster, Head of Teen Services was reassigned to be the new Head of Youth Services
- Marty Mason was hired as Youth Services Programming Librarian and Lindsay Castner as a Children’s Specialist
- Jeff Hartman joined the library in January as Marketing and Community Outreach specialist
- Diane Frassa, Front Desk Library Assistant retired and Sally Chagnon, Children’s Specialist resigned after moving to the North Shore - both with more than 16 years of service
- Building custodial assistant Lou Lipomi retired after 8 years
- The library welcomed back Jose Delossantos to replace Lou’s position



Library Connections FY18



Trending Up for FY 18





Chelmsford Board of Library Trustees

Jillian Kenny, Chair



Laura Ecker, Margaret Marshall, David Braslau, Lisa Daigle, Sarah Conte, Jillian Kenny, Adam Schertzer



Chelmsford Board of Library Trustees

Jillian Kenny, Library Chair

Adam Schertzer, Vice Chair

Lisa Daigle, Treasurer

Laura Ecker, Correspondence Secretary

Maggie Marshall, Capital Planning Liaison

Sarah Conte

David Braslau

In the Massachusetts Public Library Trustee Handbook, it states: "Successful trusteeship creates a working relationship with the community, library staff and fellow trustees. Trustees take their responsibilities as public officials beyond the library boardroom. An effective trustee is one who participates intelligently in the entire political process: understanding municipal finance, local budgetary pressures, personnel concerns, and the administrative practices of the municipality as a whole. A library board which recognizes that the library is not an island, but part of a larger municipal structure, will build stronger partnerships within the community it serves." This past year, we as a board worked to strengthen these relationships. With the Greenway project completed, the board was able to focus our attention on the betterment of the library as a whole. We reached out to the community and staff to assess the needs to develop the best plan for funding improvements. By involving our community, we have put into place an action plan for launching an annual giving campaign, which will be the focus in the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Jillian Kenny, Chair