



Westwood Public Library Update
Lizzy McGovern, Assistant Library Director
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Staffing

Two in-house staff, Suzie Canale and Patti Wade, have accepted the open positions of Library Assistant in Technical Services and Library Assistant in Circulation, respectively. We are thrilled to have the talents of Suzie and Patti continue to shine at the library!

We will be posting both of the open positions of the Head of Adult Services and the Reference Librarian in the next week (January 10th) or so. We are confident we will attract qualified candidates that will help the library continue to offer the standard of high quality services to the Westwood community..

Wentworth Hall / Islington Branch Library Update:

The Wentworth Hall/Islington Branch project is moving forward at a great speed. The vertical structure is going up and the building is taking shape. A book drop has also been ordered by the architect. Tricia reached out to Chip Hagy of *Tucker Library Interiors* on December 22nd (we have worked with them on the Main Library furnishings and layout as well as the repurposing shelving units with platforms for the pop up Islington branch) to ask about designing an actual layout with shelving options now that the building is going vertical. We have made a lot of decisions since the architect first did a floor plan, and the “post Covid-19” environment will likely lead us in a new direction that we had not contemplated when the plans were first done. They are almost two years old at this point; and Tricia thinks (as do I) that the project and future Islington Branch will be well-served if Chip could be retained as a consultant to work with staff on actual layouts and shelving plans. His company is on the state contract, and he is a very well-respected expert in the field.

We have sent the floor plans to him this week and are hoping to hear back soon. We will need to set up a design or consulting contact--typically agree on the total hours, and a fee, which can be credited back should they (Tucker Library Interiors) quote and provide some amount of product. Tricia and I would like to ask for approval to use State Aid (not to exceed \$5000 as we do not yet have a specific quote) to cover the design/consulting fee for Tucker Library Interiors.

Curbside holds Pick up and Browsing Appointments:

Curbside holds pickup continues to be one of the most popular service options for patrons in the community. In December, we had 965 curbside appointments booked with the Capira app for a total

of **1,526** total curbside pickups (the rest booked over the phone or via email with assembled book bundles) and total of 193 personalized librarian hand-picked book bundles (8 adult and 183 kids/teens). Total curbside holds pick up since June is: **8,689!**

We have been opened for limited express browsing since October and I wanted to get a sense of how much of the community has opted into this service (we know how popular curbside is and the majority of patrons use both curbside/book bundles, I wanted to capture how much the browsing is being utilized since we opened).

Our booking system (Eventkeeper) is not the most intuitive with keeping statistics so this was a bit labor intensive to gather but by our estimations of how filled the available appointment slots were from October-December 31:

Type	# Appointments	# Available Days	# slots per day	Total available slots	% Filled
Saturdays	65	9	27	243	26.75%
Senior	24	13	4	52	46.15%
Express*	615	59	36	2058	29.88%

Patrons who use the browsing appointments are happy to be in the building and choose their books and the majority are in and out very quickly and sometimes pick up their curbside holds on their way out after their browsing appointment.

We are looking into a new software program LibCal (that will be much easier to gather stats with) that is an extension of LibApps (which we currently use for Libchat and Libguides). Libchat is the function for patrons to directly interact in real time with librarians via a web chat window on the website. This feature has been a great tool and one that continues to be utilized every day. Libguides are subject specific research guides created by westwood librarians on various topics. Currently, Felicia has made a libguide for our ReadWoke reading challenge and I have made a libguide for teacher resources. We are planning to add more libguides throughout the spring when we have a fully staffed reference department.

Libcal offers an appointment booking platform that will be easier for both patrons and staff to use and maintain (and has multiple booking functions that can be adapted for expanded services down the line such as study seats or tech help) as well as an event calendar with program registration all on one integrated platform. We hope to roll this out in the next month.

Circulation:

Circulation staff continue to be extremely busy with curbside hold delivery and helping patrons in the browsing area as well as keeping the New Book/staff Picks browsing area fresh with relevant picks so that patrons always find something they want to read, watch, or listen to. Wanting to capture the feedback we receive from patrons, I asked staff to send me comments and conversations they have when interacting with the public (either for curbside or for browsing); most comments are positive and express how patrons are overwhelmingly happy to talk to librarians while being able to quickly pick up their books or take home craft activities. I have attached in a handout the direct responses from staff about patron feedback.

Adult and Youth (Children's and Teens) Services:

Virtual programming across age groups continues to be a popular way for the community to connect with the library and each other.

Claire Connors has a devoted group that attends book clubs, book shares, and knitting. Claire received lovely emails thanking her for the programs and for keeping them connected (I attached some of the emails in the Patron Feedback handout).

The Children's Department finished up Fresh Air Friday storytime and our virtual storytimes in mid-december (we will continue with three virtual storytimes in January).

Reading challenges: We have three reading challenges happening on Beanstack app:

- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten: ongoing challenge for families with children 0-5 and is a partnership with Westwood CFCE Early Childhood Council.
- Read Woke: Ongoing challenge dedicated to reading more diversely across life experiences.
- Winter Reading Challenge: Will be active January 1st-31st and asks patrons ages 5-199 to read total of 10 hours for a chance to win "Cozy Winter Reading Basket" filled with books, goodies, and gift certificates to local businesses in Westwood (we want to support the local community during this tumultuous time); sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Take and Make: Our most popular programs continue to be take and make activities. We provide all the materials needed for a project (and in some cases meet together virtually to do the project in real time with instruction).

- DIY Paperwhite Kit: This was a program developed by Suzie Canale for adults (and their children in some cases) to put together a terrarium-like centerpiece with a paperwhite bulb (which was timely because it made a lovely holiday gift idea). We had an overwhelming positive response to this program with over 30 participants!
- Teen DIY Crafts: Felicia put together a tie-dye mask kit for 12 teens in December.
- Kids Department: Families are LOVING take and make activities (DIY Creative Kids and Book Explorers DIY book club and Alphabets) since the Fall so we added some special December programs for the holidays.
 - Interactive Elf Movie Kit: we provided them with everything they needed to bring this beloved movie to life in addition to the script telling them what to do and when (props like marshmallows, gum, candy canes, fake snowballs and more!).
 - Holiday Penguin Craft for preschoolers
 - Winter Solstice Story and craft: Families picked up a kit for making their own winter solstice lantern out of a mason jar ahead of zoom program where Kristy read a winter story and led the kids through the craft.

We also created a Holiday Book Gift Guide for Adults, Teens, and Kids of "best of the year" suggestions hand-picked from library staff (see handout).

Several flyers for upcoming programs and events were included in the handouts as well as feedback from patrons about how happy they are with current programs.

Outreach Services:

The “Books and a Bite” program, co-sponsored by the COA, Library and Hessco Elder Services continues to grow in popularity with a total of 25 participants from Islington and about 7-10 from Westwood Glen. Claire, Caitlyn, and Karen continue to deliver the books and lunches and find meaningful ways to connect to the vulnerable seniors of the community. Books and Bites starts up again January 2021.

Claire Connors will be delivering more mittens and socks (knitted with love and care by her knitting group) to Pine Street in the next few weeks.

The library was the drop off destination for three different drives in the past few months:

- Westwood Community Food pantry: Maryanne Carty of Veteran services has been picking up boxes of food for the local pantry that goes to those in need in the community.
- Westwood High School Senior, Bonnie Liu, a former Teen Mentor from YFS volunteer program reached out to the library about her student-run newly formed Chapter of the Linens N Love organization, which is a nonprofit that collects discarded linens and home essentials and donates them to places in need, such as animal shelters and low-income households. Their mission is not just to repurpose these slightly imperfect goods, however, but to teach other students on how to become young and effective leaders in these types of community service projects. The project was able to get 25 bags of linens. Bonnie wrote us a thank you email (attached handout) saying *“Without your flexibility and cooperation, our drive would not have been nearly as successful as it is now (we managed to get over 25 bags of linens and household items!)”*
- Daisy Troop Drop Off for personal hygiene products was also held in December.