



Westwood Public Library Update
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director
January 10, 2022

Library Services and Programs

Over the December school break we had some very popular programs. We had the Trivia Brothers back for a Holiday Movie Trivia on zoom with 40 participants. We also held two back to back in-person “Learn to play the Ukulele with Julie Stepanek” programs, one for teens/adults, and one for children. We received such positive feedback from patrons about attending the ukulele program that we are going to offer weekly zoom sessions for patrons to jump on with the instructor and play ukulele together for January, February, and March.

In the next month, we are looking forward to an author visit from Jan Brogan (local author!) and a new writing program for adults facilitated by local poet Lynne Viti.

Covid19 Update

With the Omicron variant invading everywhere the Town’s test positivity rate is at around 8% (surrounding towns are even higher and unlike other town buildings, the library is used by neighboring community members as well). Due to these factors we have decided to move some of our in-person programs to virtual options for the month of January, particularly storytime as it is hard to socially distance with toddlers and that age group is still unvaccinated and the most vulnerable. Masks are still required in the building at all times. Adult programs that can be virtual have remained so but we are still offering in-person programs if participants are willing to attend and facilitators are comfortable to do so. Most of these programs are small groups and registration is required so we know how many people will be in one space together. We will also be extending curbside pick up, Monday-Saturday, for the next few months.

We have had many staff out as close contacts or infected with the virus themselves and so at times we are working as a skeleton crew. We are prepared for the fact that if too many people are out, it will affect the library being able to operate to its full capacity and may result in temporarily reduced hours or services.

This was not the news we were hoping for and we understand that everyone is exhausted. I am hoping the next month will be a “take one step back” so that we can sooner take two steps forward.

Wentworth Hall / Islington Branch Library Update:

Shelving arrived and was installed the week of December 27th (hallelujah). We started putting books on the shelves this week and unloading boxes of books and materials from storage. Staff will begin working their regular branch hours starting next week January 10th to help with the moving and sorting process. If we can get staff over there to be trained and help with set up, we can be ready for an opening either at the end of the month or the first week of February. It really depends on Omicron, since we are having a lot of staff out with either testing positive or being close contacts etc and so staffing being low might affect the opening date but we hope not. All in all, I think we will be good to go by February 1st for at least a soft opening.

On another exciting note, we visited the Wellesley library's new renovation and they have a gorgeous mural of origami animals painted in their children's department by local artist Jason Sawtelle of BlackBeak Studios. Claire loved his work and loved the idea of having him paint a small mural in the Children's area of the branch to help set it apart (since it's not its own room, having a "marker" for the area would be nice). Claire met with the artist at the branch and talked about a theme of butterflies (maybe in the shape of books?) coming up the wall which will complement the main library children's area that has a glass wall with the flowers when entering the department. The FOL indicated they are willing to fund this special project for the branch and we are hoping to get the artist into the space in a week or so if possible (he is trying to squeeze us in between projects since we indicated we were planning on opening soon!).



Staffing

We have two new hires joining our team, Annabelle Ho who will be the new Branch Library Assistant and Kristen Barenthaler as the new 20 hour Library Assistant.

Annabelle comes with experience from both Wellesley library (and its branches) and Dedham Library, loves to knit, and is excited to join Westwood!

Kristen started as a tech help volunteer in the reference department and became a substitute library assistant a couple years ago. Kristen just received her MLS degree in Library Science and is excited to join the library team on a regular basis as she continues to learn and grow in the profession.

Both Kristen and Annabelle will be starting Monday January 10th, 2022.

Collection Development Policy

I have started to update/edit the collection development policy for the library. Please see attached document. Collection Development policies should be reviewed and updated every 5 years. The collection management policies outline how the library handles the physical and digital collections and how the staff should purchase and discard materials. Topics typically include

- Purpose of Collection
- Selection of the Collection
- Evaluation of the collection
- Censorship
- Request for reconsideration of library materials
- Disposal of library materials

Please review the attached updated policy for your discussion and approval.

Strategic Plan

We took a few weeks off over the holiday weeks to close out the end of phase 1. We are now moving into the research phase and have about 10 research areas that we were able to have multiple key strategic questions in each category. These categories will be shaping our research activities. In the next week or so staff are going to be signing up for research teams led by department heads and begin planning the activities.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director