



Westwood Public Library Update
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director
March 14, 2022

Library Services and Programs

Library programs are returning to in-person and attendance is starting to ramp up as the worry of covid seems to fade. Children's storytimes are back in person and registrations are full! Suzie's "Say it with Flowers" Bloom zoom program was held at the main library on Saturday, February 19th and participants made arrangements with roses. It was a fantastic program and we received so much positive feedback (some even emailed me to tell me how it brightened their whole month). The only complaints we hear are about getting *into* Suzie's programs since registration fills up quickly.



Abby and Suzie met with Lina from the COA and talked about collaborating for programs including Armchair Travel at the main library, Email 101 for Seniors, and having Suzie hold one of her popular flower/plant programs at the COA.

With the Branch open, I have created a programming subcommittee that will meet quarterly to plan programs and share ideas. [Abby Walsh](#), [Claire Connors](#), and [Kristy Pasquariello](#) are currently on this committee. The idea is to spread programming between library locations, days/evenings, weekdays/weekends in person/virtual etc. so that we have consistent offerings that are accessible to the community across Westwood. To that end, Suzie will be holding her Bloom Zoom programs one month at the Main library on a Saturday and one month at Wentworth Hall on a Wednesday evening.

A Westwood resident reached out to me last week about helping the people of Ukraine and most specifically those who have had to leave their homes and cross the border into Poland. She is Polish and is working with a local group Sunflower for Peace who have the ability to send medical aid supplies to the Poland border to create first aid kits that will be given to the refugees and those helping them. The resident dropped off a donation box at the main library vestibule for the community access to donate.

Grant Opportunity

Suzie has also submitted a first draft of the MBLC for the LSTA Dig In! grant that promotes gardening/wellness in libraries. Here is a description of Suzie's project we are asking to be funded:

Westwood Public Library's "The Living Library" initiative seeks to fulfill the community's need to create an indoor/outdoor "green" space to boost social engagement, improved nutrition and neighborhood cohesion. Currently, the WPL possesses a "Children's Reading Garden" which is inadequately designed to meet these key concerns. Demographic feedback reveals a strong desire to increase horticultural expression through garden cultivation, farm-to-table culinary education, physical/mental wellness and social connectivity in a safe and inviting location. This project will fulfill the lack of local community gardening space available as well as instruct crucial learning opportunities related to health, literacy and wellbeing. The teaching garden will be managed by partnerships with local businesses, organizations and other common stakeholders to make a publically available, quality-tailored programming platform suitable for both a multi-ability and generational audience. Examples of garden-based activities include subjects related to cooking, compost design, native pollinators, early literacy storytimes, landscape/floral design and herb cultivation.

If funded, the "Living Library" will greatly expand community programming and enhance the idea of what a library can be in the 21st century. Imagine checking out books, seeds, even plants from your local library! We will hear more from the MBLC on the grant progress in the next few months. Please see attached Letter of Intent that further outlines the grant.

Library Facilities

The town issued an IFB for the library chiller a few months ago and awarded the project to Briggs Mechanical. Briggs did go out on risk to order the chiller so that is already in progress. We are waiting to find out from the manufacturer firm dates for delivery.

Covid19 Update

Masks are no longer required to enter municipal buildings beginning Feb 28th. We have updated our signage accordingly.

Wentworth Hall / Islington Branch Library Update:

Feedback from the community has been very positive! The first few weeks we have had 50-75 visits per day which is amazing. A lot of regulars who live walking distance to the branch have been so happy and thankful to be back inside.



Grandparents/grandchildren color together at Branch. Knitting group returns to the branch!

FY23 Budget

The FY23 Budget has been submitted to Fincom. Pam Dukeman and I met with a Fincom member to talk about the library budget and had a great conversation. We talked about our strategic planning and upcoming ideas for the next few years for the library as well as the additional hours for the branch and some funding that will expand the collection at both library branches. There was a lot of excitement about the library's future! The Fincom public hearings will be Tuesday March 15th and the final hearing will be March 29th.

Poet Laureate update

Paul and I attended the Select Board meeting, approved to begin the process of creating a Selection Committee by the end of March. We will need a representative from either the Trustees or a library staff member to sit on the selection committee. I have received interest from one of the Friends of the Library board members who is a writer and interested in the arts that is happy to sit on the selection committee as well. I will be reaching out to Cultural Council members and the School superintendent for suggestions for members for the Selection Committee.

Strategic Plan

We are digging up a lot of interesting data on trends in library use in Westwood! Right now the main focus of the research is Focus groups and the community wide survey. Focus groups have been narrowed down to 4 categories:

- Non-Library Users
- Chinese American community members
- Newcomers to Westwood
- Men over the age of 18.

These sessions are in the process of being scheduled as we speak for the next few weeks and will be held on zoom.

The community wide survey is on its second draft. We are going to go through it this week and have staff test the software we are using (survey monkey) before we go “live” to make sure everything works and the data is captured correctly. The survey is broken down into three parts:

1. About You
2. About Your Library Today
3. About Your Library Tomorrow

We have 4 goals for the survey:

1. Find out why non users aren't using the library and **what, specifically, would attract them to use it**
2. Identify a list of specific new **items, programs, offerings and experiences** that the Community broadly supports, which are reasonable / practical / feasible for the library to get funding for and implement in 2023-2025
3. Validate **technology** that should go away, or be added
4. Validate **space** that should go away, or be added (including outdoor spaces, individual workspaces, small group and large group/event spaces, makerspace)

We hope to release the survey in the next couple of weeks and we have a promotional plan to make sure it reaches as many people as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director