



**Westwood Public Library Update**  
**Lizzy McGovern, Library Director**  
**December 11th, 2023**  
**Library Updates**

- We had a very successful Sisters in Crime program where mystery authors and audience members create a mystery story together. We had over 25 participants attend.
- Therapy dogs have been so popular. We now have Woofing Hour at the Main and Pause for Paws at the Branch each once a month.
- The Main Library filled 1,800 holds (materials reserved from our library or other libraries in Minuteman Network) in the month of November. We also had over 350! new library applications in the last few months: August, September, and October.

**Adult Services:**

We are excited to be fully staffed in the Adult Services Department and are planning a lot of great programs for this winter which will be highlighted in the Winter edition of the Westwood Word. One of the initiatives highlighted in Molly Riportella's bio is her advocacy work which is being supported and encouraged by Library and Town Administration. Please see attached document highlighting Molly Riportella's BiblioUnderground initiative for more detailed information.

**Youth Services**

Youth Services has had a busy and productive month with several outreach visits to local preschools and many successful programs that served more than 700 patrons of all ages. We've also had many middle schoolers coming to the library after school, particularly on half-Wednesdays, when we had around 120 kids in the building (last week).

We've also seen an increase in the volume of families using the library as a place to hang out and play since the weather has turned cold. The room is buzzing on the weekends and the play area is always getting a lot of use. Last Sunday, we counted 60 people using the children's room between 2-5pm! Speaking of the busy-ness of the room, we're currently working on training two new library assistant substitutes to help with coverage while Felicia is out on maternity leave and in preparation for a very busy winter season for both kids and teens using our spaces!

### **Islington Branch Library:**

- We continue to monitor problem patron behavior incidents at the branch library and are working towards consistent procedures on effectively enforcing Library policies.
- The Warm Reads initiative has started again. The knitters have donated close to 80 hand-knitted items and we will pull names throughout the month. Anyone can enter the drawing every time they visit the branch and can also suggest a book recommendation..
- Registration is open for the popular Book Tasting program. We have it at Neroli and rotate staff to book talk their favorites picks.

### **Staffing Update**

Welcome to Maryam Mallick, our new Adult Services/Reference Librarian. Maryam graduated with a Master's in Library Science from Southern Connecticut State University, and earned her BFA at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Art History. Maryam's professional interests include marketing and publicity and creating innovative programming that teaches people how to access information and engage with the community in order to meet their needs. Her ultimate goal is to promote lifelong learning, and she is always looking for ways to improve the library experience for everyone. Maryam is fluent in Urdu, Hindi, and English. Her hobbies include crafting, reading mysteries and graphic novels, hanging out with friends and family and taking care of her plants.



### **Budget**

The FY25 Budget was submitted to the Finance Department for review on December 8th 2023. We did ask for additional staffing with a focus on programming for the Children's Department for FY25. Ideally, 20 hours dedicated to children's programming and another 15 hours for Bookmobile outreach.

In FY25 the Library Bookmobile will be fully operational which will be a huge draw for families, neighborhoods, and school visits. The library needs to expand programming and build staffing for this exciting addition to library services. Both of these needs together equate to one 35-hour full-time Children's Librarian. Throughout the year children, teens and families continue to make up the majority of the people coming in and out of the Westwood Library. The Department routinely serves up to 900 children per month through programming alone, from babies all the way up to high schoolers, at the Main Library and the Branch.

The Children's Department has not had any increase in staffing in over 10 years. In fact, in the move to the new library in 2013, there was a decrease in staffing hours dedicated to the Children's Department. In the previous building and organizational structure, there was additional part-time staffing that equated to 30 hours. When the new building was opened, all available staffing hours were moved to the Circulation Department. This change has left the Children's Department struggling for coverage especially as the new library draws many and more families. Over the last 10 years, the increased demand for programming, materials, and most especially outreach, has grown exponentially and the current staffing levels cannot keep up.

**Specific Benefits:** This additional professional librarian role would be primarily focused on programming (expanding preschool programming and assisting with elementary-age programming), participating in outreach visits to preschools, events, and stops of the Bookmobile. Additional staff would let the Department expand programming to all ages including much needed programming for tweens. Outreach is a big part of the Children's department and the Department routinely struggles to have enough staff to make all the school visits in June when we start promoting the Summer Reading Program. This position will also provide regular desk coverage in the busy department, freeing the Department Head to assist the Teen Librarian elsewhere in the building with the large teen population most afternoons.

### **Holiday Schedule**

The day after Thanksgiving was extremely slow. Westwood was one of four libraries in our area that remained open. Some statistics from Friday November 24th:

Patrons checking out materials: 13  
Telephone calls "Are you Open": 2  
Patrons using the Gallery space: 6  
Patrons using the Children's department: 40  
Museum Pass pick up: 3  
Reference Questions: 5  
Study Room Bookings: 2

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director