



Westwood Public Library Update
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director
September, 2024

Summer 2024 Recap

Library Updates

- Passport service is now available at the Main Library. We have had a total of 25 passport appointments since the soft launch in June! Word is getting out and patrons are happy to be at the library for this service. We will begin offering notary services at the main library beginning in October. For now, the Branch location is available for notaries by appointment.
- This summer we restarted our popular Readnext Selection Service in a format that is more sustainable for library staff and still meets the needs of patrons to surprise and delight! Staff will take turns picking 3 titles and a few sweet surprises that patrons can reserve ahead of time. We rolled out 20 bags for July and 20 bags for August and each time the slots were filled in a day which proves this is a valuable and desired service. Julia Horwitz, our new Readers' Services Librarian will be facilitating this service moving forward.
- The Bookmobile has active Wifi and a new starter book collection! The Bookmobile will debut to the community at **Westwood Day on Saturday September 21st**. The small collection will have a sampling of titles for adults, kids, and teens. We can't wait to show off our new service and hear from community members where they want to see our bookmobile next! Andy and I are looking into the statistics provided by a new feature called LibraryIQ from Minuteman Library Network. We are able to analyze library usage and identify gaps in where the usage is lowest. We plan to create a service plan that can help us close some of those gaps. We already have plans to have regular stops at the COA. We are also reaching out to University Station to participate in their Trunk or Treat event in October. More to come!
- The ARIS Report (annual library statistics for the State) was fully submitted on August 14th. I am now working on the Financial report which is due to the state October 4th. Both the ARIS and Financial report together is how the library stays certified and eligible to receive state aid funds.
- Sound Panels will be installed in the Teen Room on September 19th. This addition will help manage the acoustics of the space.
- I was accepted into the Suffolk University Massachusetts Municipal Manager course for this year which means I will have classes every Friday beginning in September 2024 through May

2025. I will be learning about foundations of local government, financial and budget planning, public policy and legal challenges, human resources management, and strategic leadership. I am very excited for this course and feel that it will help me excel in the many aspects of Library Directorship.

- Our Archives Arrangement/Local History Grant will finish up September 30th 2024. We have used the grant funds to purchase a new state of the art microfilm machine and have also begun to digitize and microfilm the remaining years of physical newspapers of the Westwood Press. Vicki Andrelinas will be hosting a program for the community on all the different options we have available to look up local history while providing “fun facts” of history of Westwood. To highlight our local history collection and the microfilm, we will be making short videos where we explore a local history theme or “nugget” of information and show how to access it via the microfilm. We also plan to roll out local history appointments for in depth questions that need 1:1 assistance. We are also doing ongoing staff training on the microfilm so there is a basic understanding to help patrons navigate its use. We were so lucky to receive this LSTA grant that will greatly increase the accessibility of our local history collection for all community members.
- Our library Communication Team (made up of members from all departments) have been stellar at getting the library out there to the community. Not only do we share information on our programs and services but we also showcase other important town information. We have received so much positive feedback on how we both demonstrate that library staff are welcoming and fun to be around but also how we can provide vital information. Most recently we collaborated with Amanda Wolfe from the Housing Department to highlight updating the Housing Production Plan. I love that the library is becoming the first place town departments consider to collaborate with to reach the community.
- Andy and I were invited to present at the Norfolk County Town Managers meeting in August. Our presentation “Why Public Libraries are a Vital Asset in Your Community” highlighted our strategic initiatives and how they support overarching goals by the town and how the library can be a direct line of communication to community members.

Summer Reading 2024 by the Numbers

Participation Numbers

- Total number of Babies-Preschoolers signed up: 126
- Total Number of Kids in grades K-5: 889
- Total Number of Teens : 146 (18% increase from last year)
- Total number of Adults 266 participants (65% increase from last year!)

All together, we had 1,427 participate in the Summer Reading program!

Adult Services: Summer Recap

We are in phase 2 of redesigning the info services desk on the second floor. Two more pieces of desks have been ordered and will complete the more customer service focused design. Public PCs have been moved to the window and we have also moved the ReadNext Collection to the top of the stairs.

Patrons have commented how happy they are with the changes and we have personally witnessed more browsing of the collection with these changes.

A new self-checkout kiosk is installed on the second floor by the new service desk. We are very excited about this addition that furthers our initiative for patrons to have a smooth transactional experience (we don't have to send someone "away" to check out their book downstairs).

Suzie and Caroline hosted another summer beach craft program outside the front doors of the Main Library and had over 100 people of all ages attend!

Summer Reading was extremely successful for the Adults this summer. We gave away a weekly prize of library merch (hat or bag) and then had a grand prize basket for those who completed the Bingo challenge. I am happy to report that we had an increase of 65% participation.

Youth Services: Summer Recap

1,161 Summer Reading sign ups for kids between the ages of 0-18!

The Youth Services department held 60 programs and approximately 1552 in person participants in July and August.

This is the year we debuted our Summer Reading Champion Medals that replaced the Yard Signs. Feedback was very positive from parents and kids, who were delighted to get their very own medal to wear home and show off to family and friends. Programs were fun and interesting and very well attended! Highlights were The Whalemobile, a giant, inflatable Blue Whale in which kids could go inside and learn facts about their lives and biology, and Vinny the Bubble Guy, a high energy outdoor performance in which more than 100 participants ran around joyfully chasing giant bubbles in Deerfield. The summer reading program and all its prizes were funded by the Friends of the Library. This summer we were able to hold extra programs with special funding from the Westwood Young Women's Club. Families were overjoyed to have more opportunities for programming for their children.



Islington Branch Library: Summer Recap

It's been a great summer here at the Branch. We kicked off summer with our 3rd annual plant swap. This was a program for all ages. Suzie and Caroline had tables of plants and vegetables for patrons to swap. There were crafts for the kids to do and take home and there were gardening books from the FOL for purchase. The weather was perfect and we had a lot of visitors that day. Our three book clubs ran through the summer. We have a patron from Texas who comes to

stay with her son and his family for the summer to help and she comes to both historical and Wednesday night book club. This is her second year. She is on my email list so she gets the list of books all year. We have a few new members in all three of the groups. Branch Books and Boogie is always fun. We were lucky to add two P J Storytime this summer. We also have a Monday drop in craft for young and old. Gigi the Therapy dog visited us each month also for the kids young and old to cuddle with. We hosted a Glow Golf here for three hours and we had close to 200 people come for this, and they all left happy! A lot of patrons requested them come again and Wentworth Hall lower level is a perfect place for glow in the dark mini golf.

We also had a couple of local residents run a program on their Camino De Santiago walk. It was a full program and really inspired others to take the walk. Sit and Knit is also growing in numbers. We try to have a night each month for patrons who can't make the Thursday morning.

This week we noticed a lot of new families coming to the Branch getting library cards. Lots of little ones are happy to be looking at books. What a perfect way to spend a hot day in a nice air conditioned space.

-Claire Connors

Budget

- Capital Requests to the town were due August 30th. As part of the 5 year capital plan, the library submitted two requests for FY26:
 - \$25,000 for patron/end user technology (this is a yearly request that upgrades all computer/software equipment for both main and branch library)
 - \$50,000 for construction of additional study rooms
- We have a few major capital projects happening this year. We have received funding for these projects in the last couple of years. Here is the status:
 - **New Website:** We are still waiting for the procurement process to be finalized so we can start the new library website design. The timeline has been pushed back as we had hoped to start it last spring but due to procurement delays we will be working on this project this Fall/Winter.
 - **AV meeting room upgrade:** we will be working with our IT consultant **Seth Graham** on this project. We are looking to replace the projector/screen and update the microphone system in the large meeting room and upgrade the equipment in the conference room so it can also function as a Zoom Room for hybrid meetings.
 - **Media Suite:** We are also meeting with an architect to begin planning the construction of space that can be used for both podcasting and meeting room functionalities.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lizzy McGovern, Library Director