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Library Administration Team:

Peter Struzziero, *Library Director*
Deitra Barnes, *Administrative Coordinator*

Library Usage - Highlights

- 1,215 individuals signed up for library cards, bringing the number of cardholders to 16,266 - about 65% of all Belmont residents
- 4,659 people attended 214 meetings held at the Library
- Library patrons downloaded 27,330 ebooks, e-audiobooks, movies, and music selections, a nearly 50% increase over last year
- Library patrons borrowed 533,778 items
- 14,080 children, teens, and adults attended 491 concerts, story times, book clubs, cooking demonstrations, hands-on workshops, and other library programs. This was an 8.5% increase in offerings which yielded a 9% increase in overall attendance
- Museum passes provided 2,437 free or discounted visits to area museums for families and individuals
- Reference librarians answered 35,174 reference questions
- Public computers were used for 22,277 internet and online research sessions
- Library website had 360,200 views
- Facebook page had 630 “likes” and Pinterest page had 714 followers
- 103 Volunteers provided 1,830 hours to support Library programs and services, including 78 high school students fulfilling their community service requirement

Year in Review: Summary of Activities and Accomplishments

Staffing

There were a number of key staff transitions this year including the hiring of a new Director. Reference Department Head Emily Reardon served as Acting Director for the early part of the year. Her leadership and willingness to serve guided the Library while a search committee worked towards hiring a new Director.

The eight-member search committee was made up of representatives of the Trustees, the staff, the Friends, Town government, and the community. The search concluded in late spring and Peter Struzziero was hired.

After many years of service, Reference librarians Carol Baer and Corinne Chan retired. Librarians Joanna Breen and Cynthia Mitchem left to pursue other career opportunities. Three librarians, Mary Carter, Nancy McColm, and Kylie Sparks joined the staff, bringing new ideas, enthusiasm for helping patrons, strong technology skills, and experience working at other Minuteman libraries. In the Circulation Department three new part time assistants were brought on board also as the department saw a staff member retire, another relocate to the Midwest, and another still move on to a new career opportunity.

Adult Services

Expanding Digital Services

Digital materials continue to be the fastest growing part of the Library's collection in terms of circulation. Downloads of ebooks and audiobooks through Overdrive, a collection shared by the Minuteman Library Network (MLN) Libraries, grew by an impressive 50%, from 18,222 checkouts in 2014 to 27,330 in 2015. In its first full year available to Belmont patrons, the Library's Hoopla subscription – offering streaming and downloadable music, movies, and TV shows as well as audiobooks and graphic novels for free to patrons – had 2,866 downloads, compared to 673 downloads in the last three months of 2014. As of year end there were 590 patrons signed up for Hoopla.

Library patrons also enjoyed using the Zinio subscription, which enables them to page through a graphical presentation of 49 different magazines. This year Zinio added The New Yorker, Architectural Digest, Vanity Fair, and Bon Appetit – some of Belmont's favorite magazines – to its offerings, boosting checkouts of magazine issues by 10% to 2,652 checkouts.

Staff continued to monitor usage of the online databases to make sure they match up with patron interests and needs, and support the school curriculum. In 2015 database usage reflected the broad range of Belmont's interests. The most-used subscription provided free access to the Consumer Reports website; it garnered 933 visits that yielded 12,412 page views. Also very popular were the Morningstar Investment Research Center, with 5,204 searches in 1,965 separate sessions, and Ancestry Library Edition, with 8,659 searches in 178 sessions. Unlike the other databases, which almost all offer remote usage, Ancestry must be used at the Library.

One-on-One and Group Instruction

The Library is committed to teaching as many Town residents as possible how to use the wide range of electronic resources available. Throughout the year, Library staff offered one-on-one sessions twice a week to give patrons individual help on using Overdrive, Hoopla, and Zinio to download ebooks, audiobooks, music, movies, TV shows, and magazines onto their computers or personal devices.

In May and June, staff also offered "E-Camp," a series of classes on how to get the most out of these digital resources, and reference librarian Joanna Breen appeared on Angelo Firenze's cable TV broadcast, Belmont Business Report, to discuss electronic resources useful for small businesses.

New and Future Electronic Resources

In the spring the Library was awarded a \$17,923 Community Preservation Act (CPA) to digitize its microfilm holdings of Belmont newspapers in the public domain, from 1890 to 1923. Patrons will be able to access these records on the Internet 24/7 both remotely and inside the Library. Keyword searching will be available, making historical and genealogical research much easier for historians, students, and staff.

At the end of the year the Library signed up for a very exciting service, Lynda.com, which offers over 4,000 courses, ranging from beginner- to advanced-level, on a variety of topics: design, marketing, photography, software development, business skills, and more. Courses are taught by industry experts, who break down their subject into short and understandable video segments. Users can follow along at their own pace, taking a complete course or tuning in to individuals lessons. The Library is also on the waiting list to have the Boston Public Library digitize our entire collection of Belmont High School Year Books.

Programs for Education and Entertainment

This year the Library expanded the types of public programs organized for adults, particularly “maker” type programs with hands-on participation. Offerings have attracted a loyal following, and included papercrafting, silk scarf dyeing, acrylic paint, Chinese brush painting, and memory wire bracelet workshops, plus a four-week series on pastels and a return of Lisa Piel’s popular eight-week knitting class.

“Music on Saturday” returned for its twelfth year with monthly performances of American music January through May, including Dixieland jazz by Sammy D and the Later Risers, classic jazz by the John Arcaro Trio, music for string quartet by the Arneis String Quartet, Broadway musicals by graduate students from the Boston Conservatory Theater Division, and ragtime by women composers by pianist/composer Deborrah Wyndham.

The Library also hosted Science for the Public for a series of lectures on “The Dark Age of the Universe,” “Evolution and Environmental Toxins,” and “Origami: Art and Science.” Other lectures included a genealogy talk on the challenges of researching women by Alice Pluchard Stelzer and a presentation and book appraisal by Ken Gloss of the Brattle Street Book Shop. A return by the Library’s favorite chef, Chef Gerry, with seasonal fall recipes; a program on vampires; a learn to cartoon workshop; and holiday music for brass instruments rounded out the offerings.

Book Discussions

Library staff began a monthly “International Fiction Book Club,” reading novels by authors from India, China, Viet Nam, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Lebanon, and other countries. The group now has more than 20 members. Each month the circulation figures for the books chosen increased significantly, as both members of the book club and members of the reading public have checked out the books. The Library’s two ongoing book discussion groups continued to stimulate lively discussions – a group led by librarian Corinne Chan that meets at the Library and focuses on new titles, and a group led by librarian Miriam MacNair that meets at the Beach Street Center and focuses on classics.

Six local authors were invited to speak about their books and answer questions from attendees at Books and Bites, the monthly book review program coordinated by Miriam MacNair. The authors were Richard Primack, *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau’s Woods*; Jessica Lander, *Driving Backwards*; Nichole Bernier, *The Unfinished Work of Elizabeth D.*; Nancy Esposito, *Lamentation with June Bug*; Len Abram, *Debris: A Novel of Love, War and the Lusitania*; and Dorothy Stephens, *A Door Just Opened*.

Outreach

In an effort to increase public awareness of all the resources the Library can offer, staff attended community events including Meet Belmont, Town Day, Back to School Nights, Career Night, the Chenery Winter Book Festival, and the Belmont High School Wellness Fair. Library staff also brought a “pop up” library to the Farmers Market each week in July and August, checking out children’s books and adult best-sellers to market-goers. In addition, librarians offered a “crash course” at Town Hall on downloading ebooks, audiobooks, music, movies, and magazine articles, and other digital resources onto personal devices.

To address an important community need, the library started an English Conversation Circle after discussing the needs of Belmont ELL students and families with the Belmont High School ELL director. The class is co-taught by Library staff and a volunteer teacher and consistently attracts 10 – 20 adult students each week. To support the group the Library has expanded its collection of language learning materials and books in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, including required summer reading for high school students.

After several months of meetings, the One Book One Belmont Planning Committee, made up of Library staff and community representatives, selected the best-selling novel *The Boston Girl* as the featured title for the Library's sixth town-wide read. Author Anita Diamant will speak in Belmont in April 2016. Library staff will collaborate with the Belmont Historical Society, The Belmont Gallery of Art, Belmont Against Racism, the Belmont Public Schools, the Recreation Department, the Council on Aging, and other co-sponsoring organizations to plan a month of workshops, lectures, films, book discussions and other activities leading up to the author talk.

Professional Development

Reference staff participated in a variety of workshops and training sessions to keep up with changing technology and new ideas. These included workshops on website design for libraries; on statewide resources, such as the Digital Commonwealth, for digitizing and posting historical materials; using the new Encore catalog; and using both Decision Center and Millennium list-making features for collection development. Staff also attended webinars and workshops on reader's advisory for romance, teen fiction, mysteries, crime fiction, historical fiction, and popular new titles.

In June, Coordinator of Adult Services Emily Reardon attended the annual conference of the American Library Association in San Francisco, going to presentations on how libraries can transform themselves through marketing, space reorganization, new construction, programming, "maker spaces," and other strategies. Technology Librarian Ellen Girouard served as vice-chair of the MLN Key Users Interest Group (focusing on new technology in libraries) and other staff members attended the various interest groups that the Minuteman Library Network sponsors to help librarians share ideas, best practices, and solutions to common problems. In October, Library Director Peter Struzziero attended the annual conference of the New England Library Association in Manchester, New Hampshire. He attended presentations on library management, managing capital projects, and multiple director roundtable opportunities.

Young Adults

Participation in young adult programming steadily increased in 2015 with over 1000 teens attending programs and events. During the summer and fall, Librarians hosted two popular series of movies to draw in this age group. The library purchased a popcorn maker and showed the movies on weekday evenings or Saturday afternoons. Attending the movies were 149 teens, tweens and parents.

School Collaboration

2015 was a fruitful year for collaboration with the schools. During 2015 the Young Adult Librarian and children's librarians met often with the librarian at the Chenery Middle School. As part of that ongoing collaboration, the Young Adult Librarian attended the Chenery Winter Fair and talked to attending fifth graders about library programs and resources. The Belmont Public Library provided the school librarian with a library card, so that she may demonstrate the library databases to her 5th grade classes. The librarians planned an author festival which will take place in the spring, and a series of joint database training sessions for spring 2016. The Young Adult Librarian met with teachers at Belmont High School in an effort to support curriculum. As a result of this collaboration, Belmont Public Library purchased multiple copies of different books, allowing teachers at the school to offer new curriculum units.

STEM Programming

2015 was a big year for teen STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programming. In March the Young Adult and Technology Librarians collaborated on an all day STEM program. One hundred twenty teens came for workshops on 3D Printing, stop motion animation, Gamemaker, Paper Automata, Robots on the Run, Soft Robots and Scratch programming. In October, the young adult librarian began organizing a Girls Who Code group at Belmont Library. Twenty girls have enrolled in the club, which teaches girls in 6th to 12th grades programming skills, starting in January 2016.

New Initiatives

A Teen Advisory Board was assembled in October. Teens met to work on a volunteer project and plan future teen events. Teens from this new advisory board helped to plan two popular holiday parties. At the parties, 65 teens came and got henna tattoos, learned origami, decorated ornaments and played games. Teens enjoyed these events so much they continue to ask when the library will repeat them.

Finally, a large focus of attention this year was on improving the physical space and organization of the Young adult room. The young adult room received new shelving and new signage in 2015. The collection was weeded, and many new books were ordered expanding the collection. A new display table was set up to showcase staff picks. Circulation of the collection and usage of the room both increased.

Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room

In 2015 the Jane Gray Dustan Children's Room continued many of its successful programs and partnerships, expanded community outreach, and made changes to the layout of the Children's Room. A total of 330 programs were offered, with 12,210 children and caregivers attending.

Children's Outreach

The Children's Department expanded its outreach to preschools in Belmont and is now providing monthly storytimes to toddlers and preschoolers at both the Waverley Square Daycare and the Wonder School. During the summer, librarians continued to present weekly storytimes at the Belmont Farmers' Market while colleagues circulated books. Children's librarians also offered story/craft programs at the Town summer camp at Wellington School.

Children's librarians were happy to participate in a number of events at Belmont elementary schools during the school year. Events included International Walk to School Day with the Wellington School, Library Night at Butler, and visits to the Winn Brook fourth grade classrooms to promote the Library's summer reading program. Third grade students from Wellington also visited the Library to get library cards and check out books.

Summer Reading

The 2015 summer reading program, Every Hero Has a Story, had a superhero theme and was a great success with over 700 children participating. Children set their own reading goals for the summer and, when they reached their goal, chose a book as a prize. Pre-readers completed early literacy skill-building activities and

also selected a book as a prize when they finished. The prizes were generously funded by the Friends of the Library.

Summer programming included a range of activities and performances; the highlights were a storytime conducted by a Belmont police officer, Mike Bent's Magic Show, Bubbleology with Keith Michael Johnson, a concert by Ethan and the Jamberries, and "Lollipops for Breakfast" by award-winning puppeteer Bonnie Duncan. Over the summer 2,545 children and caregivers attended programs at the Library, a 12% increase over the previous summer.

Pre-School Children

The Watertown/Belmont Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant continues to provide weekly Literacy Playgroups at the Library, which grew in popularity throughout the year. CFCE grant staff also conducted parent workshops and the Library's first Story Walk programs in which families read picture book stories that were posted outside the front of the Library.

Storytimes for infants through preschoolers maintained steady crowds throughout the year. Programs for infants were in particular demand and attendance at baby programs increased 36% over the previous year. A new summer play program for babies and toddlers was an instant success, with families enjoying sensory and gross motor activities. Librarians expanded playtime after baby and toddler storytimes so that parents and children could socialize; new toys were purchased by the Friends of the Library for this purpose.

The Jane Gray Dustan Trust continues to fund a variety of programs for young children, including sing-alongs, ever-popular music and movement classes with Belmont resident Rubi Lichauco, and the Musical Storytelling series by Powers Music School.

School-Age Children

The Library introduced two new programs for school-aged children. In Tween Tuesday, a new monthly program, kids in grades 4-6 gather to do activities ranging from celebrating the latest release by popular author Rick Riordan to making their own graphic novels. The Library also bought LEGO WeDo robotics kits with funds from the Friends of the Library and began doing robotics programs for kids in grades 2-4.

Regular Lego Clubs, craft programs, and a new book discussion group for kids in grades 2-3 also drew enthusiastic crowds. Vacation week programs had excellent attendance and included a live animal show by Creature Teachers, Fun with Fossils and Dinosaurs by Paulette Morin, and a standing-room only crowd for a New Years' Eve concert with Jeff Jam.

Children's Room Layout Staff made several changes to the layout and organization of the Children's Room, with the goal of making it easier for library patrons to find materials and enjoy the space. A generous gift from the Friends of the Library allowed the Children's Department to purchase new picture book shelving and comfortable seating for library patrons. Staff also created a popular reading area by the newly expanded children's graphic novel collection.

Volunteers

twenty-five adults in 2015 volunteered for 967 hours and 78 high school students gave 863 hours for a total of 1830 volunteer hours. Library volunteers helped shelve books and straighten shelves, made home deliveries, assisted with program planning, worked to form the Teen Advisory Board and gave book reviews at “Books and Bites.” Students volunteered individually and at events like the Belmont High School Senior Day of Service, and often applied their hours to fulfill the school’s community service requirement. This year many teen volunteers chose to continue volunteering in the fall and winter after their service requirements had been fulfilled.

Friends of the Belmont Public Library

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library continued to provide strong support for the library in 2015. The Friends sponsored many library programs, including the Music on Saturday series and the Library Friends Author Series. The Library Friends Author Series had a particularly successful year, with the following authors speaking: Adam Tanner on *What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data—Lifeflood of Big Business—and the End of Privacy as We Know It*; Len Abram on *The Medallion*; and Dr. Craig Malkin on *Rethinking Narcissism: The Bad—and Surprising Good—About Feeling Special*.

The highlight was a presentation by Wall Street Journal columnist Jason Gay, who grew up in Belmont, discussing his book *Little Victories: Perfect Rules for Imperfect Living* with a standing-room-only crowd.

The Library Friends Annual Book Sale in October was a success. The Friends' Everyday Book Sale continued to be a favorite spot among patrons as well. Special thanks to Louise Halstead and Phil Hughes for the time they contribute to manage that operation. The Friends continued to fund the library's popular museum pass program. The museum pass program offers free and discount passes to many museums and parks, and passes circulated a total of 2,437 times in 2015.

Through the assistance of the Department of Public Works the Friends we were able to see the “Little Free Library” project come to Belmont. A pilot of two libraries were installed on the grounds of the Town Hall and Beech Street Center, and have received positive support and usage from the community.

Notable Building Updates

In addition to the programming and staffing highlights shared above, it is important to note significant improvements made to the library facilities. In addition to these improvements, the Library Trustees and the Town Administrator worked to reach agreement and to implement the Facilities Consolidation plan. We appreciate the efforts of the Town Administrator and the Facilities Director in working to achieve this arrangement.

At the Spring 2015 Town meeting, funding and permission was awarded to the Board of Library Trustees for a Feasibility Study of the property. The study will look into three options: renovation, renovation with addition, and reconstruction. The Town and Library will share the cost of this study, estimated at \$90,000.

Some of the key improvements made to the facility are noted below:

- The Flett Room was redone completely including new paint, carpet, tables, and extended wireless internet coverage. The room is utilized daily for children's programs, community meetings, and a variety of adult programs.
- New floor tiles were installed on the first floor. This was a notable improvement to the main program space in the building. Tiles were also installed in the main 1st floor hallway, staff kitchen, and staff breakroom. This installation followed an excavation of asbestos tiles which were original to the building. More asbestos tile exists in the building but remains intact. It will be addressed going forward as needed.
- Library staff in both the circulation and technical services departments completed a conversion of the DVD and Blu-ray collection, discarding the traditional quick cases in favor of security strips on each disc, which increased space for films by 100%. New attractive shelving was also added to the main hall to display the entire film collection and restore the elegance of the space.
- The electrical system received a small update to increase the number of outlets, ports, and usage of Wi-Fi throughout the building. The increased Wi-Fi coverage has been recognized and enjoyed by patrons.
- Nearly every collection in the building was shifted, relocated, or otherwise presented differently in an effort to increase ease of locating materials, and usability in each area of the library. The Fiction, Nonfiction, Periodicals, Oversized, Mystery, Graphic Novels, Science Fiction, DVD, and Blu-ray collections all now enjoy increased space and visibility.
- Picnic tables were added to the back patio during the summer. They have been enjoyed by staff regularly, and library patrons as well as citizens enjoying a break from the pool for lunch.

2015 was a year of continued transitions in leadership and staffing for the library. It saw continued trends in changes to the programs and services provided by the library. A new 5 year Long Range plan was completed with key community input. I look forward to the implementation of this plan and the opportunities that it brings for the library and the community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Keohane, Chair
Board of Library Trustee