

FLETCHER FREE LIBRARY



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Director

As the largest public library in Vermont, the Fletcher Free Library serves as an inclusive and welcoming community space to learn, explore, share, and grow. Our mission is to inform, enrich, and nurture a community of lifelong learners. The Fletcher Free Library continues to implement the



strategic plan that the Burlington community participated in developing. This past fiscal year we were able to begin and complete many projects. Through our in-house and outreach programs and services, the Library strived to reach all Burlington residents in a responsive manner. Our programs adapted and changed with the needs and interests of our patrons. Our growing on-line resources allowed patrons to access the Library wherever they are. We also served as a free meeting space for other groups and organizations. It has been a busy and successful year.

Statistics

Library Use

- The Library had 240,686 visits during FY18.
- 337,907 total items were loaned to patrons during the year
- 8,450 Ebooks were loaned
- 10,470 Downloadable audiobooks were loaned
- The Library welcomed 2,878 new patrons
- 1,274 people benefitted from the Library Museum Pass program
- 146,016 website visits
- 15,098 WiFi logins
- 37,665 Public computer sessions
- 12,170 Reference questions were answered

Programs & Events

- 868 Programs were offered to the community in FY18, benefitting 16,447 community members, including
 - 510 Early Learner, Youth Programs & Teen Programs with 12,825 participants
 - 358 Adult Programs with 3,622 participants
 - 47 Digital Literacy Programs were offered with 228 participants

Programming Highlights

It has been incredible year of programming in all our departments. Here are some highlights.

- In August 2017, 425 people spread out across the library lawn to view the partial **solar eclipse**. Solar eclipse glasses and binoculars were provided by a grant from NASA and the American Library Association. Moon pies, ice cream, and sun tea made the event festive, but the eclipse stole the show. We live-streamed NASA's footage of the eclipse in the path of totality throughout the day.
- A new children's program met with enthusiasm in 2017. Babytime promotes the Early Literacy concepts of talk, sing, read, write, and play with babies, and models how adults can use these basic concepts every

day with their babies and toddlers.

- Our new and improved summer learning opportunity for school aged children reached almost 1000 children and teens with intentional STEAM programming around community connections ("Build a Better World"). The **Summer Challenge** supports young people in our community to help prepare them for school success in the fall.



- **The Youth Department** forged new partnerships with community organizations in FY18. The Library is looking forward to continued work with the Family Room, the Pride Center, COTS Family Shelters, ECHO, the Flynn Theater, the YMCA, and the Burlington Schools, to name a few.
- Drawing a crowd of more than 100 people, **Drag Queen Storytime** was a great way to connect with the community and make the Library a more inclusive place for everyone.
- The Teen Department developed **Makerspace**, complete with exciting programs, drop-in opportunities, and cool new gadgets to discover.
- NASA and the American Library Association sponsored science activities held in February. Teens and youth levitated trains out of Legos, tried out the green screen, took selfies on the moon, and built a model city.
- **Burlington Rising** brought together bakers of all backgrounds in celebration of a staple of the world's diet - bread. Bakers from DR Congo, Eretria, India, Iraq, Italy, France, Vietnam and America shared their recipes and bread traditions with more than 100 people. The series was funded by the Vermont Humanities Council and the Friends of FFL.
- Our first annual **Wildcrafters Conference** was a two-day series of lectures, workshops and panel discussions. Wildcrafters from across New England gathered to learn and share their knowledge of this ancient practice. The success of our first year spurred planning for an expanded event in 2019.
- Each year, the library offers weekly classes or conversation groups in multiple **languages**. Learn a language or practice one you already know. In FY18, you could have practiced Armenian, Dutch, French, German and English. Educational resources, both print

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and digital, are available through the library to support language literacy. English Language Learner classes are also available, and a new Business English Class was offered in the fall of 2017 to improve fluency in a business setting.

Library Services & Technology

As per our Strategic Plan we continue to improve both our library services, our online library and our technology offerings. Here are some items of note from last fiscal year.

- Our **new website** allowed patrons to have better entry into our **online resources**. We've added some new ones this past year. We are pleased with the positive response to join the Green Mountain Library Consortium which provides additional ebooks and downloadable audiobooks in Overdrive, providing a tenfold increase in titles! The Library also added Kanopy, a free on-demand streaming service for patrons, and Hoopla, which has no holds, no waits, and no late fees for ebooks, comics, audiobooks, music, movies, and TV shows.
- **Expanded Computer Workshops:** In addition to workshops on the Microsoft Office Suite, Facebook, and the iPhone, new staff member Dodit Tshibamba taught a 4-part HTML workshop and several Google Drive workshops. These workshops help a great cross-section of the community: from people reentering the workforce to seniors looking to connect with friends and family through social media.
- Added in early 2018, **Book-a-Librarian** consists of



one-on-one, hour-long sessions with a skilled library staff member. A staff member will give undivided attention to patrons who want in-depth technical assistance on topics such as opening an email account, decluttering a laptop, downloading ebooks, searching the Internet, and using the Library's subscription databases. Other, non-technical topics are also available for Book-a-Librarian sessions, including personalized help with a research project or helping patrons discover new books and authors that match their taste and interests.

- **New Collections:** The Library of Non-Traditional Things includes cooking equipment, musical instruments, tools, and games. We hope to provide the opportunity for the community to learn a new craft or try new equipment for free! Playaways and Launchpads were added to the collection this summer. Playaways are self-contained audiobooks—only headphones are required to listen to the title. We have added many titles in the Youth, Teen, and Adult collections. Launchpads are interactive tablets, geared toward specific age groups from preschool through elementary, that are loaded with games around a central theme like animals or astronomy.
- **Museum Passes** are another exciting part of our collection. Two new passes became available this year: The Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences (VINS) in Quechee and the American Precision Museum in Windsor. Other passes patrons may reserve include the Shelburne Museum, Shelburne Farms, ECHO, and the Vermont State Parks.
- Technical Services staff had several great **professional training** opportunities, and new tools were brought into the workspace to make workflows more effective. We continue to strive to build a robust collection that is up-to-date and relevant to the community's needs and interests.

Staffing

Our staff is the at the heart of everything we do at the library. This year we had several staffing changes.

Robert Resnick retired in May 2018 after 28 years at the Library, serving in many capacities including co-director, reference librarian, and outreach librarian. His wonderful singing has been missed so we treasure the times he stops in to say hello and delight us with a little ditty.

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The Library welcomed Abby Wanserski in November 2017. Abby continues the work begun by Lisa Buckton, the first-ever Teen Services Librarian, who moved on from the position she started in January 2016. Abby brings makerspace experience with her and has been expanding Tween & Teen programming.

Dodit Tshibamba took a new computer assistant position at the Library in July 2017. The Library's computer programming has expanded since his arrival. Dodit speaks several languages including French which has been a great benefit for many of our patrons.

Annie Dalton moved to a full-time position as Communications and Technology Assistant. Her knowledge of the Library and of Burlington history makes her a great resource.

Kate Bouton retired from the circulation desk. The Library misses her cheerful presence and her wonderful laugh.

I am very grateful to our entire hard working staff. As we've been working on our strategic plan our stellar staff participated in making the many improvements come about and then implemented them with enthusiasm.

I would also like to offer many thanks to all of the wonderful interns and volunteers who contribute their time and energy in all departments of the Library. They repair materials, assist at the front desk shelve books, help with events, and do so much more during the year.

Library Commission

I am very grateful to everyone who served on the Library Commission in FY18. The Library Commission helped to form Library policies and strategies to reflect community needs throughout the year. These dedicated volunteers kept the Library moving ahead toward goals in the strategic plan.

Friends of the Fletcher Free Library

The mission of the Friends is to encourage community support for the Fletcher Free Library, raise money for its needs, promote cultural and literacy programs, and sponsor educational and enrichment programs for all ages.

In FY18, the Friends provided \$24,989 in support of the Library. Among other activities, these funds were

used to provide youth music and movement programs, support and outfit the Teen Center, and provide speaker stipends for talks by, among others, Mary Fillmore and Jennifer Pharr Davis. The Friends also supported professional development, for example, funding library staff to attend the New England Library Conference.

These efforts were made possible by over 2,500 hours of Friends' volunteer time, and by the generosity of the Burlington community through donations and purchases of books from the Friends book stall and thrice yearly book sales. The Special Topics cart across from the Circulation Desk has been especially effective in helping books find new homes. This year, the Friends began sharing and selling a variety of small items such as totes, pens, and mugs, branded with the Library's new logo, to enhance the connection between the library and the community.

During March, Women's History Month, the Friends also worked with the Library to hold a Jazz Brunch featuring Jenni Johnson and the Jazz Junketeers, celebrating women throughout history. Based on its success, we plan to make this an annual fundraising event. Friends also provide support to local nonprofits through book redistribution to a range of community organizations in the area, as well as advocate for the Library and library services in the community.

I am continually amazed and humbled by the wonderful work of the Friends. They are an integral part of the library team and I truly grateful for their wonderful support.

Thank You!

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the community for their support. It is my joy to serve you and I enjoy hearing from you. Whether to chat about a book or movie you've borrowed from the library, or to give me your ideas for improvements, my door is always open. Thank you again!

