

Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2010

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

2010 provided even greater economic challenges for the Abington Public Library and the town as a whole than the previous year. In accordance with its mission, the Abington Public Library provided information services for the residents of Abington. 112,061 items – books, audiobooks, dvds, videos, music cds, magazines and museum passes were borrowed. 66,569 visits to the library were recorded.

Library transactions per hour were up by 5.5% over 2009 figures, despite a 4% decrease in total circulation for 2010. The reason for this anomaly may be found in the reduction in library hours, especially the elimination of public service on Fridays. 2010 again saw a great demand for the Library's Internet computers and wireless Internet. Job seekers continued to flock to the Library, seeking Internet access, resume and career information. Residents' demand for access to technology and assistance in locating materials in print and on-line increased steadily throughout the year. Usage of downloadable materials, ebooks and eaudio increased by more than 100%, indicating that more residents are seeking information in alternative formats.

Library resources decreased substantially during 2010 as the Library budget was reduced from \$371,955 to \$316,216 at the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. The addition of \$9,000 to the budget at the October Special Town Meeting provided some relief in the form of additional staff hours at peak service times, but still resulted in a net reduction of 12.5% from the prior fiscal year. Library hours were reduced by 10% on July 1, with the complete elimination of public service on Fridays. In June, Children's Librarian Emily Miranda resigned. The Board of Library Trustees made the difficult decision to leave the position of Children's Librarian unfilled; by so doing, the planned layoff of three part-time staff members was avoided. The impact on services to children and teens was severe; program offerings for all ages, from toddlers to teens were drastically reduced. In order to avoid reducing library hours below the minimum requirements for State Aid certification, the Board of Library Trustees decided to again use State Aid funds to pay for staffing. State Aid funds are usually used to enhance and expand library services.

Abington High School's Drama Club chose the Abington Public Library as one of the venue's for their fall children's production of "Red vs. the Wolf" and this collaboration led to a capacity crowd for the student dramatists. Other services to the schools and their students were reduced as the lack of a Children's Librarian resulted in the elimination of public school class visits for the 2010-2011 school year. For more than twenty-five years Abington Public School classes in grades one, three and five have visited the Abington Public Library and the Trustees expressed grave concern about the impact of this cut on young students. Off-site visits to school classes, preschool groups, and to the Abington Senior Center were eliminated.

Due to the 12.5% budget reduction, the Library failed to meet minimum funding requirements for State Aid Certification from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. A waiver application was filed in October, and at the writing of this report, the Board of Library Trustees has been informed that the waiver was granted. Certification is necessary for residents to borrow materials from other libraries, and for the Library to receive State Aid funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Due to the decrease in hours open, the library's monetary State Aid award will be penalized by 12%.

The library was the recipient of two grants during 2010. The library won a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act

administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The \$11,700 grant will be used over the next two years for the library's "Serving Teens and Tweens" project which will expand programs, materials and other library services to Abington's children and teens in grades six through twelve. The library submitted the proposal in March 2010 and funds were received in fall 2010. The project will continue through fall 2012. The library also received a grant from the Target store chain for supporting early literacy in conjunction with the popular Drop-In Story Hour program.

The Friends of the Library conducted fund raising activities including the annual magazine subscription drive and the spring book sale. The Friends provided Museum passes and funding for children's programs. The Friends also provided support and assistance for adult programming, and continue to conduct a very successful book discussion group.

The community was again generous to the Library. Gifts were received from the Abington Lions Club, Abington Rotary Club, The Anderson Foundation, a bequest in memory of long-time library trustee Melba Smith, and a donation from the proceeds of Jack Bailey's daylily sale to support Sheila's Garden. The Abington Bank continued to fund bookmarks. Many individual residents made donations for library materials, in response to the budget crisis, including the many members of the community who contributed to the Donation Jar, which was established in February to provide additional funding for children's materials..

In 2010 the Library hosted two children's cultural programs funded by the Anderson Foundation. The Hampstead Stage Company's theatrical presentation of *Alice in Wonderland* was enjoyed by a large audience, as was the musical group *Little Groove*. An encore presentation by *Barn Babies*, in which baby animals visited the library, was enjoyed by a large crowd and funded by the Friends of the Library, while the energetic *YoYo People* were sponsored by the Joyce Lee Bumpus fund. The Friends of the Library and the Joyce Lee Bumpus Fund also generously provided preschool and toddler story times, afterschool story-craft programs, the popular book discussion clubs for children and teens, and the summer reading program. The 2010 summer reading program, was enjoyed by 273 children and teens who read a total of 1584.5 hours. Total attendance at children's and teen programs for 2010 was 2,283. It is important to note that the total number of children's and teen programs offered was reduced by 25% from 186 in 2009 to 139 in 2010. This decrease is the direct result of the unfilled Children's Librarian position during the second half of the year.

The Board of Library Trustees saw changes in 2010 as Trustees James Doucette and Jonathan Harris retired. The Board thanks both outgoing members for their dedication and service to the library users of Abington. Gerry Haas and Laura Nuttall were elected in April and welcomed as the newest Board members. The Library Trustees wish to thank the many volunteers who donated their time to provide better library service for the community. The Trustees and Acting Director also recognize the dedication and professionalism of the Library Staff: Sandy Bumpus, Judith Condon, Michelle Cooke, Susan Durand, Jodie Hurst, Barbara Libby, Emily Miranda, Isa Murray and Linda Sampson.

Selected 2010 Library Statistics

Circulation: 112,061

Registered Borrowers: 6,933

Hits on the Library website: 1,446,046

Abington Public School Class Visits: 12 (all from Jan. – June); 0 (from Sept. – Dec.)

Respectfully submitted,
Henry DiCarlo, Chairman
Betty Henderson, Vice Chairman
John O'Neill, Secretary
William Adamczyk
Gail Bergin
James Doucette (term ended April 2010)

Gerry Haas (term began April 2010)
Jonathan Harris (term ended April 2010)
Kathleen Jones
Christina McMahon
Laura Nuttall (term began April 2010)
Deborah Grimmett, Acting Library Director