

Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2019

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

2019 saw a 4.5% increase in user visits to the Library and an 8.8% increase in total circulation of library materials. The Abington Public Library is a destination for residents, providing technology, study space and creative outlets for children, teens and adults. The small study rooms were used 1,163 times in 2019, with in-house computer and iPad usage totaling 6,780 sessions. In accordance with its mission, the Abington Public Library provided information services for the residents of Abington: 111,963 items – books, eBooks, audiobooks, DVDs, videos, music CDs, magazines and museum passes were borrowed and 78,912 user visits to the library were recorded.

Downloadable materials, electronic books, audiobooks and magazines, continue to be popular with borrowers as digital materials accounted for 15% of total library circulation in 2019, up from 13.5% in 2018. Library staff conducted workshops and worked individually with many patrons to teach them how to borrow downloadable materials. Demand for library computers remained high as adults, children and teens used the computers for work, schoolwork, research, job seeking, filing federal and state taxes, email, social media, word processing and countless other applications.

Abington Public School classes in grades K, 1, 3, and 5 again visited the Abington Public Library. Children's Librarian Amy Hindle visited the Kindergarten and Pre-K classes monthly during the school year. 2,176 high school, middle, elementary and preschool students in 97 classes participated in these school class visits. Freshman English classes visited the Library. The Library again hosted the Youth Art Month displays in March and the Portfolio Art Show in May, highlighting student art work.

Abington Reads 2019 continued the "one book, one town" programming begun with a federal grant in 2013. The 2019 program encouraged members of the community to read *A Chance in the World: An Orphan Boy, A Mysterious Past and How He Found a Place Called Home* by Steve Pemberton. Participants met for book discussions and other related activities, including a discussion about the current state of the foster care system in Massachusetts by Dr. Aviva Rich-Shea. Author Steve Pemberton spoke about his book and life experiences in April. More than 150 people participated in Abington Reads 2019 by reading *A Chance in the World* and/or attending a related event.

In addition to Abington Reads programming, a number of other events were offered for adults. A lecture about Mount Washington and its notorious weather was a popular winter offering. Historian Dr. Gary Hylander entertained history buffs with lectures about the Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and the Scopes Trial. Nature photographer Peter Christoph wowed the crowd with his photos of Birds of the New England Swamp. The Delvena Theatre returned with "Ann and Abby", a play about the popular advice columnists. Jeff Belanger presented a spooky Halloween program called "Ghosts and Legends of New England".

The Non-Fiction and Popular Fiction discussion groups continued their monthly meetings. The very popular bi-monthly Cookbook Club continued in 2019 and monthly craft evenings for adults again attracted capacity crowds. Local author Nicole Asselin spoke about her first novel, *Murder at First Pitch*. Authors Lisa Duffy and Maureen Boyle appeared in the fall.

The Library responded to the community tragedy in October by providing grief resources for parents and children; materials were generously loaned by all of the libraries of the Old Colony Library Network

to supplement Abington's collection. A program for parents promoting resilience and coping skills with grief expert Maria Trozzi was held in November.

The Friends of the Library dedicated a lovely print for the Children's Room to long-time Friends' president Rosie Walls in May. The Friends conducted fund raising activities including their annual membership drive and the spring book sale, as well as maintaining their popular "Everyday Sale Shelf" in the Library. The group provided museum passes and funding for children's, teen and adult programs. The Friends continued their very successful daytime literary fiction book group, and also fund the popular evening mystery book discussion group.

The community was again generous to the Library in 2019. A donation was received from the estate of A. Grace Avery; this donation will be used for new ornamental trees in the parking area in 2020. A gift was received from the estate of Joan Donovan; a portion of this bequest will be used to expand language learning resources in 2020. Gifts were received for children's programming in memory of long-time library trustee Melba Smith, and from the Anderson Foundation. The Abington Lions Club continued funding the family pass for the Boston Children's Museum; this pass has been funded by the Lions for more than 30 years. Timber Lanes Bowling Center again donated a family pass for Zoo New England. Gifts were received in memory of long-time library borrower Grace Avery. A donation from the proceeds of Jack and Kathy Bailey's daylily sale again supported Sheila's Garden. The Abington Bank continued to fund bookmarks. Many individual residents made donations for library materials, including the many members of the community who contributed to the Donation Jar, which provides additional funding for children's materials.

The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) continued to meet and to guide program offerings for teens. Barn Babies made their annual visit to the library and the teens spent an afternoon playing with baby farm animals. Board games became a big hit, and the library hosted two board-game afternoons- one over February break and the other during April vacation. Several after-hours programs were offered this year. In June and November, the popular Chopped programs were held on Friday evenings. Heather Beck returned to the library in June for a successful metalsmithing workshop. Additionally, the Pop-Up Art School returned to run a painting workshop for adults and teens. TAB members also worked on programs for younger children, running family movies and assisting with craft workshops. A large group of TAB volunteers supervised activities including a temporary tattoo station, and crafts and games during the Summer Reading Program Kickoff event. TAB members also volunteered to maintain the records for the Summer Reading Program.

In summer 2019 the Library, once again, hosted several children's cultural programs generously funded by the Anderson Foundation. Large audiences enjoyed Act!vated Story Theater's interactive renditions of classic fairy/folk tales as well as musicians Hugh Hanley, Mama Steph and children's band Rolie Polie Guacamole. Pop-Up Art returned to the library for another art workshop which was also made possible by the Anderson Foundation. The Hampstead Stage Company returned to the library to perform *The Jungle Book*, which was funded by donations made in memory of Melba Smith. The Friends of the Library funded performances by Scott Jameson and the Museum of Science. With the help from the Police, Fire and Highway Departments, the library also hosted another Touch-a-Truck. The Friends of the Library and the Joyce Lee Bumpus Fund continued to provide for the library's preschool and toddler story times, Lego Club, after-school story craft and science activities, the popular book discussion clubs for children and teens, additional performers and the summer reading program. 266 children and teens registered for the summer reading program, reading for a total of 1,248 hours.

Overdue fines were eliminated in January 2019. Studies have shown that punitive overdue fines do not encourage the return of library materials, and fines provide a barrier to library services, especially for children. Library borrowers, especially students of all ages, found the fine-free policy enabled them to better use resources and library materials continue to be returned appropriately. The Old Colony Library Network added two new service options in 2019. Automatic renewals allowed patrons to choose to have the system generate renewals for borrowed materials, and emailed receipts are environmentally friendly and easier for borrowers who prefer electronic records.

The Library Trustees and Library Director thank the many generous residents who donated to the Friends of the Library and provided direct financial support for Library services.

Trustees Gerry Haas, Carrie Murray and Laura Nuttall were re-elected in April.

The Trustees and Director recognize the dedication and professionalism of the Library Staff: Sandy Bumpus, Ann Bunszell, Susan Donovan, Susan Durand, Heidi Hernandez, Amy Hindle, Barbara Libby, Kerri Lohnes, Lynne Nickley, Joanne Plunkett, Sarah Roberts, Linda Sampson, Elizabeth Shea, and Terry Taylor.

Selected 2019 Library Statistics

Circulation: 111,963

Registered Borrowers: 6,297

Abington Public School Class Visits: 98

Total programs offered: 394

Total program attendance: 7,068

Total patron visits to the Library: 78,912

Library Budget for 2019: \$513,897 (½ of the FY19 budget + ½ of the FY20 budget)

Respectfully submitted,
Henry DiCarlo, Chair
Betty Henderson, Vice Chair
Laura Nuttall, Secretary
Gail Bergin
Mary Gillis

Gerry Haas
Barbara McLaughlin
Carrie Murray
John O'Neill
Deborah Grimmer, Library Director