

2020 - 2021

LIBRARY
PERSONNEL
ANNUAL REPORT



THOMASTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



LIBRARY STAFF

Caroline Ward-Nesbit
Melissa Harjula
Caitlin Theroux
Blake Donaldson
Diane Giese

40 DAYS OF SUMMER STAFF

Toby Mergendahl
Daniel Dickey
Melissa Harjula

VOLUNTEERS

Paula Michaud
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Last year, 2020, was a challenging year for everyone, and the Library was no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic required us to pivot from our usually robust slate of in-person programming to offering take-home projects for kids and virtual book clubs. The community has been incredibly supportive, however, and the Library is delighted to report that circulation is up and though 40 Days of Summer looked much different than usual, it was our most successful year in the history of the program. We provided an exciting and fun take-home project as well as two meals to an average of 32 kids each day for eight weeks, for a whopping total of 2,762 meals! Knox County Gleaners also provided fresh, local produce for us to distribute to local families to help further alleviate food insecurity. We are hard at work planning our eighth annual 40 Days of Summer for 2021 with more take-home science experiments, art projects, games, and crafts, and we also hope to have a few safe outdoor activities throughout the summer.

In September, we had an absolutely perfect fall day for our outdoor community event and Friends of TPL fundraiser, Chili & Chowder, Books & Bakes, and we are planning another outdoor event for the spring to raise funds for 40 Days of Summer.

We were awarded a grant from The Anonimo Foundation in December to create additional take-and-make projects for kids, which we are offering weekly through the winter and at least early spring. We've also safely resumed our Senior Exercise Classes with Sandy Bodamer from the YMCA, available both in-person on Tuesdays and Thursdays and as a video recording online, and we are also now offering a Tai Chi group on Saturdays with local practitioner Daniel Saucier!



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Janet Bosworth, President
 Greg Hamlin
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 Harold Willey
 Diane Giese

Though none of our book clubs have met in person since last March, all are alive and well, with thanks to Zoom! Mystery Book Club, Let's Talk About It, and Intergenerational Book Club all have an active and steady attendance. A silver lining of the current circumstances is that it's easier for folks at home and in other parts of the world to participate in our programs - one of our book clubs recently had guests from Virginia! - and we welcome anyone to join.



FRIENDS OF THOMASTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jeff Carty, President
 Amanda Shortall, Secretary
 Diane Giese, Treasurer
 Janet Bosworth
 Janet Dwelley
 Davene Fahy
 Mimi Zwick

This year was also bittersweet for the Library as Diane Giese, our beloved Head Librarian of six years, announced her retirement at the end of December, and we celebrated her (in true COVID-19 style) with a car parade through the parking lot! We are thankful, though, that she plans to remain active with the Library as a member of both the Board of Trustees and the Friends of Thomaston Public Library. The Board of Trustees appointed Caroline Ward-Nesbit as Head Librarian and Melissa Harjula as Assistant Head Librarian, and having these longtime staffers in their new leadership positions has meant a very smooth transition for the Library.

Did you know that for every \$1 the town invests in Thomaston Public Library, the community gets \$6 back in value?

The Library offers not only print books, audiobooks, ebooks, and DVDs to borrow, but also a wide variety of community programs, meeting room space, public access computers, tech assistance, research help, and so much more!