

2024 - 2025

LIBRARY  
PERSONNEL  
ANNUAL REPORT



# THOMASTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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## LIBRARY STAFF

Caroline Ward-Nesbit  
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Ward Grafton

## 40 DAYS OF SUMMER STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Tobias Mergendahl  
Connor Theroux  
Leithen Joynt  
Owen Joynt  
Autumn Hill  
Jazzy Shaw  
Addie Usher

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I have had the privilege of writing this report over the past few years, and each time I appreciate the chance to take stock of both our challenges and accomplishments at Thomaston Public Library. I am proud that each year that list of accomplishments grows, because it is indicative of how important the Library is to the community and how we are thriving together.

Our 11th annual summer activities-and-meals program, 40 Days of Summer, was incredibly successful. Our youth librarian, Toby, provided extraordinary mentorship to the teens in the program - staff, volunteers, and participants - and fun and enriching activities for the younger kids. On average, we had 26 kids attend each day and served 51 meals (breakfast & lunch). The most memorable day by far was Superhero Day - the kids turned each staff member or volunteer into a superhero, complete with name, costume, origin story, and special powers (pictured above, top center). The superheroes then competed in an obstacle course, and Ze Plaid Boy - Leithen Joynt - won with a particularly agile crab walk.

Toby's work with many of the same kids has continued into the school year with the Afterschool Program. This free program offers snacks and time to hang out with friends in a safe and welcoming environment from after school until the library closes at 5 pm, and Toby provides structured activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 - 4:30. Wednesdays are a new addition to the program this year, and are devoted to homework help and mentorship.

Our programming partnership with Cushing Public Library has continued, and we wrapped up the second half of 2024 with some of our best programs yet, including author talks from Monica Wood and Jane Sloven, and a joint talk from husband and wife Paul Doiron and poet Kristen Lindquist. We also had a combination performance and history presentation from musician Marc Black on “Growing Up in the Woodstock Generation,” and we were visited by folks and pups from Guiding Eyes for the Blind, who talked about their training programs for seeing-eye dogs. Finally, we can’t forget our children’s authors - Diane Madden came with her adorable tortoise Neeps, and Liza Gardner Walsh taught us how to hunt for ghosts just in time for Halloween.

Our joint program series for 2025 is also off to a roaring start with local birder, columnist, and author Don Reimer giving a presentation about Maine’s corvids to nearly 100 people, and a fascinating and timely talk from author and historian Anne Gass on the Equal Rights Amendment.

We were thrilled when Maine Authors and Publishing took us and the Academy Board of Trustees up on our offer to host their annual Maine Authors Book Festival at our much more accessible and spacious location rather than their lovely but cramped spot up on High Street. We had a beautiful day and so much pirate-themed fun at the festival in August, and helped welcome over 1000 attendees and more than 100 authors to Thomaston. What a success! Mark your calendars for 2025's festival!

Of course, we also continued offering the other regular programs our community loves and expects including the Senior Exercise Class (co-sponsored by the Recreation Department), weekly playgroup with Healthy Kids for infants to age 5, Saturday Storytime, TPL Poets’ Corner, 3 monthly book groups, Crafters’ Club, Family Movie & Pizza Night, Communi-Tea, and Trivia Nights with the Knox Clinic.

We’re also hard at work making our collection more accessible and browsing-friendly for our patrons by taking an organization strategy similar to what we started in our children’s section last year, which has proven popular, through the rest of the collection. We’re letting go of the Dewey Decimals for our nonfiction and moving to plain-language and modern categories and labels, so you’ll no longer have to remember that most sciences are in the 500s but computer science is in the 000s. In fiction, we’ll be separating books by genre, so if you want to read more fantasy after finishing the latest Rebecca Yarros, it will be much easier to find!

Thomaston is a wonderful and growing community, and we love being part of it. Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm!

With gratitude,  
Caroline Ward-Nesbit, Head Librarian

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