



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Monroe Township Public Library

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From the Library Director

Greetings!

The Monroe Library had a very busy 2022! Here are some highlights from the past year.

In 2020 the Monroe Library applied for and was awarded a Library Construction Bond Grant for the replacement of the boiler, HVAC units, and upgrades to the fire alarm system. Due to supply chain issues related to COVID, work finally began in March 2022 with the installation of a new boiler and in the summer with the replacement of two air conditioning units. In September, work began on the fire alarm upgrades with all work to be completed in 2023.

During the winter months, AARP Tax Preparation held appointments for the first time at the Library, assisting over 250 residents with their taxes.




Summer saw the launch of the Monroe Township Farmers Market. We at the library were stunned and amazed by the community's reception of this event. The Market opened

Thursday, June 30 from 2 pm - 7 pm and was held weekly through September 15 with twenty confirmed vendors. The vendors were so excited about the success of the Monroe Market they requested there be a "Harvest Market" in November, which was held on November 20.

"We at the Library were stunned and amazed by the community's reception of [the Farmers Market]."

- Leah Wagner

The summer also saw the dedication of the Mayor Tamburro Memorial Garden, located on the island of trees between the entrance and exit of the Library. It is the perfect place to sit and quietly



enjoy a sunny day. Many thanks to the Mayor's family and The Monroe Township Library Foundation for their contributions allowing the library to create a delightful garden spot for everyone to enjoy.

The Monroe Township Friends of the Library often work quietly behind the scenes supplementing programs and services at the Library. One of the ways they make their presence known to the community is through their yearly High School Scholarship for graduating seniors. The Friends also support the ever-popular museum pass program, mobile hotspots and numerous programs throughout the year.

The Annual Jewels of New Jersey Jewelry show returned after a three-year hiatus. Hosted by the Monroe Township Library Foundation, the show and sale is held on the second Sunday of November. This year there were over thirty New Jersey artisans highlighting their handcrafted jewelry and wearable art.

The Library Speaker's Consortium is a new service added to the Library's program schedule. Each month the Library Speaker's Consortium live streams three or more author talks for viewing. Authors Geraldine Brooks, Kate Quinn, Alka Joshi, Simon Winchester and many others were highlighted in 2022. Not only are the talks live streamed but also archived for later viewing.

Watch for more new and interesting programs, events and of course the return of the Farmers Market on June 22, 2023. See you at the Library!

Leah Wagner

DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 2023

Monroe Township Farmers Market

Many attended the Monroe Township Farmers Market throughout the summer season. Vendors sold fresh produce, local honey, prepared foods and baked goods, soaps, dog treats and more!



Circulation

2022 was a great year! The Library had 336 operating days and circulation of library materials saw an increase of 17% from 2021. We opened 2,350 new library cards, 676 of which were opened during our two busiest months: July and August. We ended the year with over 26,000 registered patrons! The only area we saw a decrease in usage was our curbside service. This is a good indication that people are comfortable coming inside the Library once again.

As the community of Monroe continues to grow, the Library continues to adjust to meet the community's needs. All Circulation staff became notary publics. Notary service hours have been extended into evenings and are now offered 7 days a week.

Circulation staff began using a new reservation system for the free Museum Pass Program called MuseumKey. Along with MuseumKey, the Library also implemented LendingKey, software which allows patrons to reserve Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspots, American Girl Dolls, and portable CD players from home.

Plans to renovate the Circulation Desk have been taking place for a few years. The goal of the renovation is to create a more open and modern look and make the Circulation area more accessible for all. This past year a lot of progress has been made and a timeline put together. We hope to see this project come to fruition in 2023.

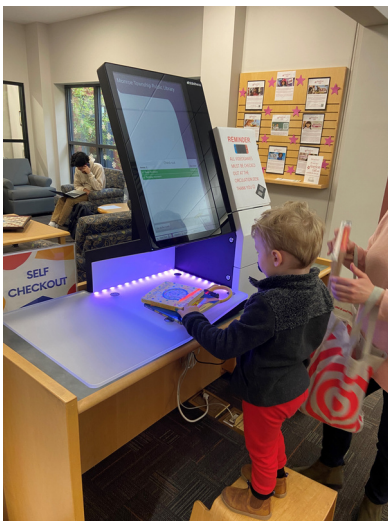
The Circulation Department looks forward to all of the positive changes in the year ahead. Staff will continue to provide exceptional customer service in 2023!

Updated Self-Check Using RFID

In order to more efficiently circulate all Library materials, the entire Library collection was tagged with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) stickers. Staff in every department participated in the conversion. The process included updating collections with more current titles and removing some items that were outdated or no longer accurate. As books, DVDs, games and more items were tagged, staff were able to shift and rearrange materials to allow more space for growing and popular collections.



New RFID self-checkout machines were installed. We began using the RFID self-checkouts on May 17, 2022. There are two machines across from the Circulation Desk, one in the Children's Department, and one in the Young Adult Department. They have been a huge success. The most popular self-checkout is the one located in the Children's Department.



Adult Services

Library visitors and callers kept Reference Librarians and Welcome Desk staff members busy in 2022. Reference Staff answered more than 20,000 questions!

In-person programming returned as more COVID restrictions eased. However, Library staff continues to offer hybrid programming for people who are unable to visit the Library for any reason. Staff also offered an in-person watch party format for patrons that may want to watch a virtual event with others or may not have access to technology at home.

Monroe Township Library participated in NJ Health Connect which addresses health inequities in the community. The initiative provided iPads preloaded with apps and links to telemedicine sites for doctor appointments, multilingual health information, low literacy health resources, places for mental health support for adults and teens, the latest COVID updates, and crisis hotlines in New Jersey.

Library staff renewed and developed partnerships and collaborations with the following organizations in 2022:

- Hosted and partnered on numerous events with the Monroe Township Cultural Arts Commission.
- Hosted an on-going series of environmental related programs with the Monroe Township Environmental Commission.
- Visited the Monroe Township Senior Center to provide health and technology education programs, as well as a monthly Book Café meeting.
- Partnered with the Monroe Township Tax Office to make appointments at the Library for ANCHOR application assistance.
- Partnered with AARP to make appointments at the Library for tax filing assistance.

Youth Services

Children's Services

In 2022, an Early Literacy Center was formed with tools for both parents and children of our community. This has given the Youth Services Department the phenomenal opportunity to showcase its collections and build programs that help parents and children gain literacy skills.

Summer 2022 brought many young people to the Library. In total, Youth Services presented 80 summer events with 2,828 children attending. Our summer reading club, “Oceans of Possibilities” had 645 children participating and they read over 6,350 hours collectively.

Our partnerships with schools, media specialists and community groups were revived. The Youth Services staff visited schools and provided outreach at events and reconnected with our young patrons. The Youth Services staff partnered with the schools for “Brownies & Books” in December and over 200 people were in attendance. This was one of the biggest programs the Department offered and it was nice to have so many young people in attendance!

Collection Development was very important to the Youth Services librarians. We weeded, cleaned and ordered many new items and our yearly statistics reflect this change.

In 2022, the Department welcomed a new Children’s Librarian, Tara Deaver. Tara is already a huge asset to our team and we are looking forward to starting 2023 with her!



Teen Services

It was a fun and busy year in Teen Services. We truly have some amazing young people in our community! 177 volunteers completed 2,441 hours of service, including teen-led programs on Internet Scams, Hoopla, Math and Reading Buddies, and middle school math and science help.

Our Craft Club made amazing props for a murder mystery party and the Puppet Show Players performed for little ones. There were 5 information sessions on preparing for college, as well as 3 SAT practice tests and one for the ACT. Each month we made a new recipe together, and teens took home 375 craft kits.

Our newly-formed Teen Advisory Board, made up of seasoned volunteers, meets monthly to help create programming and build the collection for their peers.



At the end of every year I have the opportunity to reflect on the past year, however it has never been more important to focus on the future. As the severity of the pandemic lessens, literacy in all its forms is re-emerging as the primary goal of the Youth Services Department."

- Lynnette Fucci, Head of Youth Services

Studio M

The Library's mobile hotspots were upgraded, and five additional units were added to our inventory. The update was necessary because the Wi-Fi network of the old devices became obsolete. The Friends of the Library generously funded the acquisition of the five new devices.



Earlier in the year, a weekend-long event, March Maker Madness was held. Attendees were able to make STEM projects and encounter technology available at the library. There were over 200 attendees.

The 3D printer was used regularly. There were many requests from the community to have designs and projects printed out. Projects were also done for members of the community utilizing the heat press, portable green screens, and video editing software.

Monroe Unmuted, the official podcast of the Monroe Township Public Library began this year, with six episodes available for listening.



We were also chosen to participate in the Libraries as Launchpads initiative; an initiative to better connect with entrepreneurs. Only five participants were chosen from among New Jersey's libraries.

Technology Highlights

The Library strives to keep current with computers, apps, and databases for patrons and staff.



Device Advice

Technology assistance for Library patrons returned in the form of Device Advice. These one-on-one sessions are always popular when people need help with their devices!

LMxPressPlus App

LMXPressPlus app now has a customized Monroe Township Library template! The app is available for both Apple and Android devices.



5 Year Plan

A 5 Year Plan computer replacement schedule has been created which will ensure that patrons and staff have up-to-date and modern equipment.

Outreach

Bookmobile

The Bookmobile had a busy year as visits to residential neighborhoods continued to be exceedingly popular. Our busiest stop at Gateway and The Arbors averaged 45 patrons in just 1 hour and 15 minutes! After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Bookmobile returned to the aftercare programs offered at all of the elementary schools. Students are welcome to board the Bookmobile to browse the collection and check out items. There are currently 75 students signed up to visit the Bookmobile, 48 of whom are new library card holders.



We were excited to offer outreach at many community events. Library staff marched in Jamesburg's Memorial Day Parade and decorated the Bookmobile in lights for the Township Holiday Car Parade. Alongside the Youth Services Department, outreach staff promoted library services at National Night Out and Octoberfest to a total of 1,120 visitors!



At Home Services

The At Home Services Department continued to provide delivery service on a three week rotation to ninety (90) residents who are physically unable to come to the Library. The patrons enjoy regular and large print books, magazines, DVDs, and so much more!

Those who are visually impaired receive books and magazines downloaded to a flash drive that can be used on a reading machine from the New Jersey State Library. Notary services for select documents are provided in the home or at the Assisted Living Facilities. Some patrons take advantage of the Library programs that are available to be viewed virtually by watching them on their computer or device.

Although they might not be able to come to the Library, the At Home Services Staff keep the patrons involved with Library activities by bringing reading lists and contests for them to enter. New Release flyers are distributed monthly to help give patrons reading ideas and to keep them up-to-date on the hottest books. Quarterly puzzle packets include fun games and puzzles as well as helpful information such as how to recognize scams and how to avoid becoming a victim.

All of the At Home Services patrons receive birthday cards to celebrate their special day. This year our birthday club celebrated the milestones of two patrons who turned 100 and 104 with beautiful birthday flowers!

Middle school and high school volunteers decorated bookmarks during the various holidays and seasons that always bring a smile to our patron's faces!



Mayor Tamburro Memorial Garden

When Mayor Gerald Tamburro passed away on December 31, 2020, the family requested donations to the Monroe Township Library Foundation in lieu of flowers. As donations rolled in, we worked with the family to determine the best way to honor Mr. Tamburro's decades of service to the community. Both Mr. & Mrs. Tamburro were great champions and supporters of the library. Mrs. Tamburro passed away on May 28, 2019.



A pergola surrounded by plantings seemed like a perfect addition to the wooded island separating the library's entrance and exit. Since butterflies were very special to the couple, we decided to incorporate a butterfly way station and butterfly garden into the memorial.

A dedication ceremony was held on July 18, 2022. Current Mayor Stephen Dalina and members of the Township Council attended. All six of the Tamburro children along with their families, including nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren, from Monroe to California, gathered for the moving ceremony that concluded with a butterfly release in the pergola.



Staff Recognition

There are a few new faces and a few faces in new places at the Library during 2022.

Ray Shirley, who many will remember from the Welcome Desk, is the new Technology Training and Support Specialist. Ray is hosting Device Advice assisting people with their phones and devices. He also provides staff technical support and training.

Jennifer Rojas became the Adult Services Coordinator. Jennifer joined the Monroe Township Library in 2006 as a part time Reference Librarian. As the Adult Services Coordinator, Jennifer oversees the Reference/Welcome Departments and coordinates programming for adults.

The Welcome Desk has three new staff members. Neetu Commar joined the staff in January. Jennifer Serafin formerly worked at the Circulation Desk, and Kristen Lloyd was hired in September. All three can now be found at the Welcome Desk helping people find their next great read and providing general library assistance.

The Library also welcomed the following staff:

- Youth Services - part time Children's Librarian, Tara Deaver
- Reference - part time Reference Librarian, Jasmine Hodgett
- Circulation - part time Library Assistant, Shalini Bhavnani



MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY 2022 YEAR END STATISTICS



26,134

The Library registered 2,350 new patrons in 2022!

We ended the year with 26,134 patrons!

Adult programming had a total of 15,977 attendees!

Adult program attendance increased 151% from 2021. Our most attended event was the Farmers Market held every Thursday, June-September.



380 Museum Program passes were checked out.

The most borrowed pass in 2022 was Jenkinson's Aquarium.



Circulation of the Juvenile Fiction collection increased by 25%.

The Children's Department had the greatest increase in circulation of Library materials during 2022.



The total amount of items circulated in 2022 was 402,866.

Circulation of Library materials increased almost 10% from 2021!

