

GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY (GPL)

Vanessa Abraham, Library Director

Open Tue-Wed-Thu 10-9, Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5, and Sun 1-5 (Sept-May)

Trustees Meetings: 2nd Tuesday at 7 pm

Circulation: 978-448-1167 • Children's: 978-448-1168 • Reference: 978-448-8000

GPL.ORG • info@gpl.org

Mission: The Groton Public Library provides free access to collections, services, and programs that enrich the lives of all in our community. Library services are provided in a professional, friendly, and confidential environment that also promotes the joys and benefits of reading and lifelong learning.

Programming: The biggest news of 2023 was in programming, with a record-breaking **18,010** people attending **1,648** programs. Attendance numbers:

- Children's: 8,400, a 26% increase over 2022
- Tweens & Teens: 2,890, a 30% increase over 2022
- Adults: 6,720, a whopping 65% increase over 2022

Adult Programs: Adult programs have expanded more than ever before because of the ability to offer many virtual events as well as in-person, and due to new partnerships. Our program coordinator is partnering with three other libraries to offer virtual programs every Monday-Thursday evening, with GPL hosting only once per week.

Operations: Normal operations resumed after the pandemic disruptions, and we enjoyed a bustling and busy return of regular users, especially in the Children's Room. We expanded preschool storytimes because of demand. T(w)eens returned in full force and it's been a terrific year of program attendance, with activities nearly every day after school, as well as a safe place to hang out, read, and study.

Personnel: The biggest change was the retirement of Jeffrey Pike, after serving 25 years as our technology & reference librarian. With the Town, this position was re-envisioned as a more general assistant director role, which has long been needed for an organization of this size and complexity. Sarah Breen was hired as our first assistant director.

Technology: We completed the three-year process of transitioning all library technology so it could be managed by non-specialized staff. The three servers running everything in the library were removed and replaced with a new acquisitions system, hosted website, and Office365 cloud storage. Staff are managing day-to-day issues and utilizing our network (MVLC) and the Town for advanced IT support.

Reading: Groton joined the statewide student reading challenge in June, with 181 teens participating. Our summer and winter reading programs were a hit with 841 kids, teens, and adults participating. The top circulating books of 2023 were *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict for adults, *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman for teens, and *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney for kids.

Groton Reads: In honor of the Groton Garden Club's 100th anniversary, gardening was the theme of this year's annual community-wide reading event. Two books were selected: *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy and *Gardening in Eden* by Arthur Vanderbilt II. It was a huge success, with an enormous spike in adult program attendance, doubling the highest attendance ever recorded for the month of March.

By the Numbers:

- 160,683 physical items borrowed
- 35,523 digital materials (ebooks, audio, video, music) borrowed

- 8,393 Groton residents hold library cards
- Research databases searched 21,870 times, up 33% over 2022
- 82,747 people visited the library, up 8% over 2022
- 1,369 public uses of GPL meeting rooms, up 42% over 2022
- 9,608 wireless internet sessions, up 18% over 2022

Outreach: Children’s and teen librarians returned to the schools to promote summer reading. Busing to the library returned, with elementary classes visiting the library for a tour, school assignment, storytime, and, for several first graders, to get their first library card! The children’s librarian is also visiting the PTYC every month to bring and check out library books to kids in the afterschool program.

Special Events: FanFest on June 23 was our biggest program of the year and our best Summer Reading kick-off yet, as over 300 kids, teens, and families came for Bluey outdoor storytime, face-painting, a comics workshop, cosplay contest, video gaming truck, and more! Our second biggest event of the year was the high-flying dogs in June with 250 kids, teens, and adults in attendance.

Grades 5-12 Youth Survey Results: We surveyed 5th-12th graders at the end of 2023. It was promoted at area schools, around town, on social media, and in the library. We received 248 responses, double our goal. All grades were represented, with the highest number of respondents in the 6th and 7th grades. Of all respondents, 79% visited the library regularly (weekly to monthly), with 40% attending library programs regularly (weekly to monthly). The survey focused on library usage and programming interests.

Respondents said the most important library services were: Borrowing Physical Materials (64%) and a Relaxed Hangout Space (57%), followed by Activities on School Half-Days (40%), Use Wi-Fi/Computers/Printing (35%), Place for Study/Group Projects (31%), Summer Reading Program (30%), Library Programs (29%), and Librarian/Staff Assistance (23%). Creativity-focused activities were the top interest for programming at 54%, and school is the best way to let t(w)eens know about library programs and services (51%).

Favorite quotes: “I love all of the library clubs and especially the summer reading it’s so fun! I will continue to do it every summer.” “Thanks for giving us a good learning environment 😊 Thanks you ❤️” “I love the summer and winter reading programs. They are my favorite to attend!” “I love the library, it is a great place to hang out and relax and read.” “I think the summer programs are very fun and I love going to the library with friends” “I think you guys are doing awesome - thank you for keeping the library running so well!” “The library is great! Thank you!! =)” “The activities at the library are amazing, I wish I could attend more of them! The librarians are so friendly as well!” “I love the library!!!!!!!!!!”

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Trustees of the Groton Public Library:

Kate Bettencourt, Chair

Kristen von Campe, Vice-Chair

Helena Fruscio Altsman, Clerk

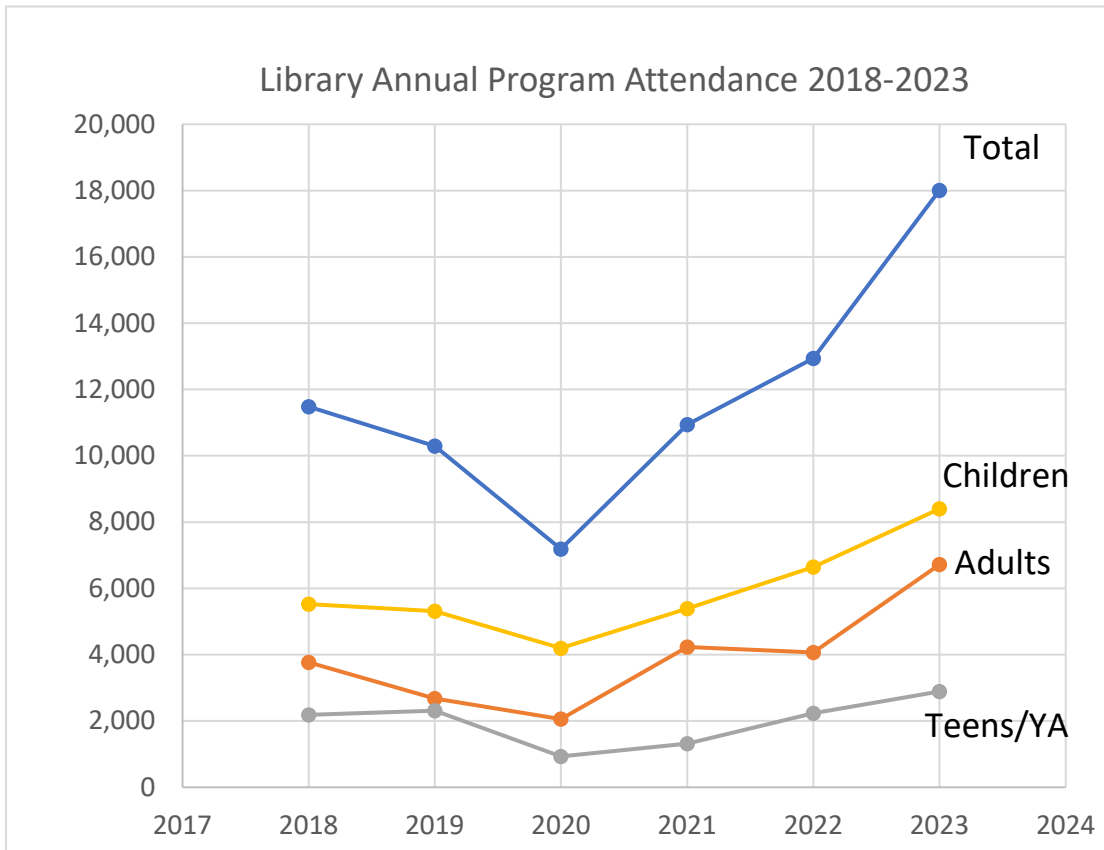
Mark Gerath, Member

Jennifer Petersen, Member (11/6/2023-)

Nancy Wilder, Member (-6/15/2023) – *We thank Nancy for her 16 years of dedicated service as Trustee*

David Zeiler, Member

PICTURES:



Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Teen Volunteer Amy Loveless explaining the Escape Room Challenge to Kids & Teens 9/16/2023



Packed crowd for growing your own mushrooms in Sibley Hall on Sept. 14, 2023

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Learning table manners at etiquette camp, July 26, 2023

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Bluey storytime with Miss Jacquie in the garden as part of FanFest, June 23, 2023

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



"Pikachu" signing up kids for summer reading in the Children's Room during FanFest, June 23, 2023

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Reading in the stacks

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Touch-a-Truck event at the library, July 6, 2023

Additional Photos of Library Use for the 2023 Town Annual Report



Snuggling in the children's room, 2023