

## Another Successful Summer Reading Program!

The theme for this year's Summer Reading Program was *Beyond the Beaten Path*, and the program included a full slate of fun and adventure for all participants from toddlers to seniors.

Preschoolers enjoyed story time sessions on the Town Green complete with outdoor-themed stories and songs. "Campers" in grades K-2 set up a tent, made lanterns, and enjoyed s'mores, crafts, and water balloon games. Older kids in grades 3-5 learned traditional camp crafts and survival skills. They also explored national parks, made flashlights, and went on a hunt for the elusive Bigfoot.

In total, the Library offered 35 different programs for kids, teens and families. These programs were attended by 1,152 people throughout the summer. Children enjoyed a visit from some local animals, built forts, and went on a pirate adventure. The teens had four programs of their own—*S'mores Sushi*, *Amazing Race: Library Edition*, *Pickle Autopsy* and *Line Art Embroidery*. The BenAnna Band (a high energy musical duo), The YoYo Guy and master magician Matt Matthews entertained attendees of all ages.

The Adult Summer Reading Program hosted three multigenerational drumming circles on the Waverly Green led by talented percussionist Mark Zarrillo. Other events for the adults included a paint party in the Mary Flood Room and two online Connecticut Audubon programs on trees and turtles.

Of course, as always, the centerpiece of the Summer Reading Program was books, and lots of reading was going on in Portland this summer. Children and teens in the Program (337 participants) read 20 minutes or more for a total of 5,701 reading days! Prizes included books, collectible animal reading buttons, and tickets for special end of summer raffles.

The adults did plenty of reading themselves. Forty patrons participated in the Adult Summer Reading Program, reading a total of 106,990 pages. Twenty-two patrons logged more than 2,000 pages while one participant read more than 10,000 pages! For the sixth straight year, our Adult Summer Reading Program participants were "reading for a cause." For every 250 pages read by an adult, FPL donated money toward funding instrument rental scholarships for two deserving Brownstone Intermediate School students for the 2022-2023 school year.

FPL is very pleased that, through the generous support of our many loyal members, we were once again able to pay the full cost of the Library's Summer Reading Program. Our funding covered the cost of all events, the Brownstone instrument scholarships and all prizes, program supplies and refreshments. A big "Thank You" to our FPL members for making all this possible. Thank you also to Jenn Renk, Patty Ballou and Beth Kauczka of Portland Library for planning and running these fun and creative programs and to the 41 teen volunteers who assisted them!

## FPL Honors Longtime Donor

FPL expanded its support of early literacy programs in 2022 with the purchase of an AWE Learning All-in-One workstation. The station engages young children with entertaining games that focus on math, reading, science, art and music. These games assist with school readiness, improve fine motor skills and help build computer skills in children who might not have devices at home.

The Friends purchased this learning station in memory of Julie Kobus, a longtime and generous supporter of FPL and the Library. Ms. Kobus, who passed away in March 2022, was an avid reader and a talented artist. As someone who took a particular interest in the Library's Youth Services program, we think she would be pleased with this acquisition made in her honor.

Ms. Kobus's gifts have made a significant difference in the Friends' support of the Library over the years. We will always be grateful for her generosity.



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## FPL Increases Financial Support to the Library

Both Portland Library and the Friends had a busy and productive year in 2022.

The year began with a resurgence of Covid cases, but through careful management, the Library was able to remain open even when the test positivity rate in Connecticut exceeded 25%. As the surge retreated, progress toward "normalcy" was steady. Masks became optional at the end of February. In April, the Library extended its evening hours. As time passed, more and more programs were held in-person, including even Story Times for the Library's youngest patrons. Movies in the Afternoon returned. Community groups began to gather once more in the Mary Flood Room. Art shows also returned, and the Library was finally able to hold its 125th Anniversary Celebration in June—two years late but well worth the wait.

At the same time that the Library has been able to expand its programs and services in 2022, the Friends have also returned to many of our pre-pandemic activities and events this year. We have held regular quarterly Read & Recycle collections and have sponsored three Artist Receptions this autumn--and plan to do many more in 2023. Most importantly perhaps, FPL was able to hold its first Fall Book Sale since 2019.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of our loyal members, FPL was also able to significantly expand its financial support of the Library in 2022. Many of the Library's toys in the Children's Area were 15 years old and "much loved." FPL budgeted \$1,000 for new toys, and the Children's Area now contains a new train table and a very sturdy doll cradle, along with soft giant dinosaurs, a set of wild animals, doll clothing, play food and a large set of soft building blocks. FPL also budgeted \$1,000 as our contribution to the Library's 125th Anniversary Celebration. The money paid for six different performers and artists who helped make the event a resounding success. In addition, FPL purchased an AWE Learning All-in-One workstation, which is an early literacy computer that will be used by hundreds of preschoolers over the coming years. Articles on the Anniversary Celebration and the AWE Learning workstation can be found inside this newsletter.

These expenditures are in addition to the high level of support for Library programs and events that FPL has provided for many years. As always, we fund the Library's DVD collection, as well as purchase many e-books and audiobooks, at a total budgeted cost of \$8,000 in 2022. We also finance the full cost of the Library's impressive Museum Pass program at a budgeted cost of \$2,000 this year (see article on page 2), along with the Library Staff Appreciation program, and the purchase of books for holiday gift baskets given to families served by the Portland Food Bank.

FPL funds the entire cost of the Library's Summer Reading Programs (see article on page 4), along with a wide variety of programs for children, teens, adults and families held throughout the year. This year's offerings included a program on African American heroines from Connecticut, three drumming circles, Connecticut Audubon programs on trees and turtles, and programs entitled *Mysteries of Cats*, *Dogs of Chernobyl* and *Around the World in 80 Gardens*. Other funded programs included a live animal show, several painting parties, a variety of musical performances, many family craft nights, a face painting/storytelling show, a magic show and an interactive yo-yo performance. In addition, FPL also funded the wonderful fall scene created by talented local artist Aleksandra Ola Rucz on the Library's windows. FPL pays for all program supplies and craft materials for the Library's Story Time programs as well as provides refreshments, supplies and prizes for Library programs held throughout the year. All told, FPL budgeted \$13,000 for children, teen and adult programs this year, bringing our total budgeted support of the Library to approximately \$32,500 for 2022.

All of the FPL-funded programs described above are possible only because of the unwavering generous support of our members. Please join FPL (or renew your membership) by sending in the enclosed membership form today. Your donations help make the difference between a good library and a great library. With your help, Portland Library will continue to serve as a center of community, learning and entertainment for our Town in the years ahead.

Check out FPL's website at  
[www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org](http://www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org)

## Museum Pass Program

For many years, FPL has funded the full cost of Portland Library's Museum Pass Program, which allows patrons to visit many local museums or attractions for free or at significantly reduced admission. During the pandemic, the museums were closed and then, as Covid began to recede, they reopened with significant limitations. At this point, however, the museums have been fully open for some time, but usage of our passes remains much lower than pre-Covid levels with many passes having little or no usage. Our Board hopes to continue to offer passes for a wide selection of museums and attractions, but, as responsible stewards of our members' donations, we cannot continue to fund passes that are not used. So please consider checking out a pass today. It's a great way to entertain your family without paying an arm and a leg!

Here is a list of available passes:

### Free Admission

Connecticut River Museum  
Connecticut's Old State House  
The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art  
Florence Griswold Museum  
New Britain Museum of American Art  
New England Carousel Museum &  
Museum of Fire History  
Wadsworth Atheneum

### Reduced Admission

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo  
Lutz Children's Museum  
The Mark Twain House and Museum  
Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame  
Mystic Seaport  
New England Air Museum

Passes can be reserved at [portlandlibraryct.org](http://portlandlibraryct.org), by phone (342-6770) or by visiting Portland Library. Most passes can be printed at home from the Library's website.

## Join Us!

Want to help support Portland Library? Join FPL's Executive Board! We are looking for new members with fresh ideas and a bit of free time. The Board meets once a month and runs FPL's book sales, Read & Recycle Book Collections and Artist Receptions. We also decide how money raised through our Membership Drive and book sales is allocated. Contact Maureen Muir at 203-980-4087 or [MLTSherman@gmail.com](mailto:MLTSherman@gmail.com) for more information. Help us support Portland Library!

## FPL Book Sales—All Year Long

After a two-year hiatus for Covid, many of you may have recently attended the Friends' **Fall Book Sale**, which took place at the Library from October 21-23. It's our signature event of the year, and we are so grateful to the hundreds of members and area residents who come out to support FPL, as well as the dozens of volunteers who help make this major undertaking possible.

But you can buy quality books at bargain prices every day in the Friends' Second Hand Prose Book Sale area of the Library. We have mysteries, general fiction, non-fiction, romance, young adult and children's books, and DVDs. Many items are like new and would make great gifts. Hardcover books sell for \$2.00 and trade paperbacks cost \$1.00. DVDs, mass market paperbacks, books for children and young adults, and discarded books from the Library's collection all sell for only \$0.50 each. New treasures arrive each week.

FPL also holds several targeted book sales in the Book Sale area throughout the year. Next up is the **Holiday Book Store**, our month-long sale of gift quality used books including adult and children's holiday books, which begins on **Monday, December 5th**. During **June and July**, patrons can stock up on paperback books for their vacation reading at the annual **Books for the Beach** sale. At various times throughout the year, we often have a large inventory of discarded Library books.

All proceeds from FPL book sales benefit programs funded by the Friends, including DVD purchases, the Museum Pass Program, Books for Babies Program, Summer Reading Programs, and the purchase of software for the Library.

## Mark Your Calendar

In 2023, FPL will collect gently used books, DVDs, CDs, puzzles and games on the following dates:

- Saturday, January 14
- Saturday, March 25
- Saturday, June 24
- Saturday, September 30

The collections will be held from 10 to Noon in the Library's Mary Flood Room. All donated items must be in "sellable" condition. We cannot accept items that are dirty, moldy or in poor condition. No textbooks, business books, computer books, VHS videos, cassette tapes or magazines, please. Thank you for your support!

## Art Shows are Back!

The walls of the Library's Mary Flood Room were bare for several years during Covid and its aftermath. That situation was remedied this fall with shows by talented artists Sarah Schneiderman and Paula Slym Lee held during September and October. We're excited that the Mary Flood Room will be home to at least four more art shows in the coming months.

**November & December:** Michael Beck, Portland photographer. Reception: Saturday, November 19 from 1-3 pm.

**January & February:** Pamela Hanks, illustrator. Reception: TBD

**March:** Youth Art Month Exhibit featuring the art of talented students from Portland Middle School. Reception: Wednesday, March 16 from 4-6 pm

**April:** Richard Raicik, award-winning watercolor artist. Reception: TBD

Area artists interested in exhibiting their artwork in the Mary Flood Room should contact Amy Giveans at the Portland Library at 860-342-6773.

Please check the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for further information regarding featured artists and reception dates. All receptions are sponsored by FPL. The Friends provide home-baked goods and beverages for the receptions.

## Library Anniversary Celebration

Portland Library's 125th Anniversary Celebration should have taken place in the summer of 2020 but, as with so many other events, Covid intervened. Once conditions improved, the Library Board began its planning anew, and the celebration was held on Saturday, June 11th.

Many Town and community groups, including the Friends, participated in the celebration, which featured games, ice cream and a visit from Portland's police dog, Magnus. FPL board members sold "Mystery Book Bags" and helped oversee the games. We also funded much of the entertainment at the event—three separate musicians, a talented face painter/glitter tattoo artist, a very well-attended paint party and a spellbinding magic show.

Thank you to our members for helping us support such a wonderful community event!

## Helping Portland's Youngest Readers

It's never too early for children to learn the joy of books! That's why FPL supports several early literacy programs that help get Portland's youngest readers off to the best start possible. These programs include

- **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten** - a national reading initiative that encourages parents and caregivers to read aloud daily to their children from birth to age 5;

- **BookFlix** - an online literacy resource that pairs classic video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks to build a love of reading and learning; and

- **Library Story Times** - Miss Jenn and Miss Patty lead story time sessions and other preschool programs throughout the year. These programs help develop early literacy and social skills through stories, songs, games and activities.

In addition to these programs, for many years, the Friends have offered a free "**Books for Babies**" kit to every new Portland baby. Each kit contains

- o A high quality board book
- o Welcome packet for Portland Library's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- o Baby's First Library Card - exchange it at the Library for the real thing
- o *Books for Babies* brochure and bookmark with reading tips
- o *Babies Need Words Every Day* booklist
- o *Babies Love Books: A Guide for Grown-ups* brochure

To receive a free "Books for Babies" kit, please contact

- o Jennifer Renk, Supervisor of Youth Services, Portland Library;
- o Town Clerk's Office, Portland Town Hall, 33 East Main Street; or
- o Marilyn White at [atwmsw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:atwmsw@sbcglobal.net).

In addition, we've implemented two additional ways to reach out to Portland families who might not be aware of this program. Middlesex Health, Portland Family Medicine has kindly offered to distribute kits to Portland families with new babies when they come in for their first wellness visit. Secondly, the Town Clerk's office will send out a postcard (prepared and paid for by FPL) to every family that receives a Portland birth certificate informing them that a free kit is available at the Library. Many thanks to the people and organizations that have helped FPL distribute more than 222 kits to Portland families in the past five years.

FPL pays the full cost of Books for Babies kits, 1,000 Books program prizes and the BookFlix software. We also pay for craft and activity supplies for the Library's story time and other preschool programs. Thanks to our members for helping us help Portland's youngest readers!