

REPORT OF THE WELLESLEY FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

The Wellesley Free Library continues to support its mission “as a community gathering place, cultural destination and gateway to ideas” with high quality programs for all ages, a diverse and up-to-date collection of materials and special events including art shows and the Wellesley Reads Together program. Circulation is growing rapidly with an 8% increase over last year, and there is intensive use of the Internet, databases, and reference services in both the Adult and Children’s Department. Although the budget remains tight, the WFL continues to be resourceful in the prudent use of available funds and implementation of efficiencies to provide the services that Wellesley residents have come to expect. The dedication of the library staff is an important factor in the realization of the Library’s mission.

Budgeting

The Library Trustees begin the budget process every year by an examination of the needs based on statistics and other sources of collected information available to them. The use of RFID technology has allowed the Library to continue to serve patrons well even though the budget for the Library has decreased in the past few years. Budgeting for FY 12 was difficult however because the Library staff contract expired in FY 11 and a new contract is not yet in place.

To provide a longer term planning tool, a five-year service plan has been developed to meet library service needs and a yearly comprehensive review of funding sources (town, private, and state) is conducted. It is clear to the Trustees and Administration that continued development of public-private partnerships and grants is required to provide the exceptional level of service expected by Wellesley residents.

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification System)

The RFID system was installed in FY 12 with an initial test phase beginning in September 2011 and full role out in January, 2012. Patrons of all ages have embraced this technology that allows them to check out materials themselves. At the close of the fiscal year, 67% of all materials circulated were done without the assistance of library staff. This project has enabled the Library staff to continue to serve the people of Wellesley.

Sources of Funding

The Wellesley Free Library receives 78% of its funding from the Town with the remainder coming from supporting organizations and grants funds. The Friends of the Wellesley Free Libraries funds all programs at the Library and the museum pass program. The Centennial Fund supports the purchase of materials that “enhance” the collection of the Library. This includes specialized databases, Ebooks and downloadable audio books. The Wellesley Free Library Foundation funds special projects including computer classes in the Jackie Room and support for branch libraries.

In FY 12, the WFL received a special grant from the Centennial Fund to digitize the Townsman Newspaper from its inception through 1989. This product is now available on the WFL website for anyone wishing to search these archives.

In FY 12, the WFL received a grant from the Fund for Wellesley to begin a formal ESL program for Wellesley residents and people who work in Wellesley needing English language help. The outpouring of participants and volunteers to this program has been tremendous. The Library has secured additional grant money to fund the program for two more years.

The Library also received a two-year grant from the state to improve programs and resources for middle-school and high-school students. Year One of the grant (FY 11) concentrated on services to middle-school students and in FY 12 focus was on better serving the high school population. The increase in programs for middle school students is noted below in the statistics.

Facilities

The Library continued to support the town plan to create a new Facilities Maintenance model for the FY 13 fiscal year. Major projects that were identified in FY 12 were the renovations to the Hills Branch chimney and the front steps of the Main Library. Both projects will be addressed in the coming year by the Facilities Maintenance Department.

Special Programs

The WFL held its first ever community read program “Wellesley Reads Together” in the fall of 2011. The book chosen was Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver and the children’s selection was One Hen by Katie Smith Milway. The Library offered six-weeks of programming in support of these books. With the success of this program, the Library will continue to offer other community reading projects in future years.

Library Usage in FY 12

Total circulation for FY12 was 730,474 items – an increase of 8% over the prior year. This figure includes books, magazines, CDs, audio books, DVDs, and our newest formats of Ebooks and downloadable audio materials. The circulation figure reported above captures one element of Library usage. Other important metrics of usage for FY12 include:

- 102,432 reference transactions;
- 17,483 children attending 583 programs for babies, pre-school and school-aged youth;
- 4,714 people attending 456 general interest programs;
- 751 middle school students attending 54 youth programs;
- 17,895 Wellesley residents with library cards.

The Library's Collection

In FY12 total library holdings included:

- 228,206 books
- 23,807 audio cassettes and CDs
- 15,102 video cassettes and DVDs
- 8,649 ebooks
- 3,650 downloadable audio books.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marla Robinson
Board of Library Trustees