

Weston Public Library Annual Report  
FY 2021-2022  
Karen Tatarka, Library Director

In FY21-22, the Library began to return to a regular level of service as the COVID-19 pandemic subsided. Meeting spaces were made available to the public, and Library and Friends sponsored programs for all ages resumed in person after meeting patron programming needs virtually throughout the pandemic. Several new services launched during the pandemic proved to be in high demand even after the pandemic, including Grab and Go book pick up, Binge Boxes of librarian-selected Children's materials on request, and hybrid programs that allowed patrons to join either virtually at home or in person at the Library. Staff adjusted their workflows accordingly to meet new community needs.

The Library completed its 2018 State Library Construction Grant after a delay in Bond Commission approval. The most significant portion of the grant supported a remodeling of the Children's Room. All new furniture, shelving, interactive items, and a dedicated office space were installed as part of the remodeling. The Grant also provided for window replacements in the 1980s portion of the Children's Room, upgraded LED lighting in the Community Room and energy efficient ventilation fans for the public restrooms.

The Library received an ARPA Grant through the State Library that was used for COVID related upgrades including portable room partitions, after hours pick up lockers and charging stations. Children's Librarian Petrino secured a Summer Reading Enrichment Grant that allowed her to enhance an already stellar line up of Children's events for the popular Summer Reading program.

Use of the facility returned to near pre-pandemic levels by the end of FY21-22 with gate counts rebounding by May 2022 and a strong and busy start to Summer Reading. With meeting spaces available to the public again, room reservations began to increase as well. The Town invested in significant improvements to the building for the benefit of patrons including repairing the fresh air intake on the HVAC system and upgrading interior WiFi. The Town also completed a roof replacement project over the 1990s portion of the building; a project that had been budgeted for over the course of several years.

Likewise, collection use rebounded. Digital product use including eBooks, downloadable audios, digital magazines, etc. that saw large growth during the pandemic remained steady and use of the physical collection returned to pre-pandemic numbers as well. 15,874 unique digital items and 58,595 physical items circulated in FY21-22.

Significant staff changes in FY21-22 include the retirement of Senior Librarian Nancy Lincoln, who served the Weston community for over 30 years. Adult Services Librarian Anne Mastroianni joined the Library in November to fill the role vacated by Ms. Lincoln.

As the pandemic continues to subside, the Library will continue to track trends in collection use, building use, and program attendance to determine the best ways to meet the changing needs of the community.

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Overview

In FY20-21, the Library continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While services in the physical library gradually expanded, the Library took the opportunity to rethink services and programs that would engage the community based on shifts in use patterns. The results showed that while patrons still wished to engage with the Library physically through the collections and building, they also desired greater engagement with the virtual Library through digital collections and synchronous and asynchronous online programs. While the Library will continue to monitor the success of these new ventures, we expect that the traction they have received over the past year and half will continue, and that these additional virtual services will be a new responsibility that Weston Library's small staff will be expected to maintain.

The Library worked with the Health District throughout the pandemic to provide the maximum services to the community in the safest way possible. In August 2020, the Library building reopened to the public in a limited capacity by appointment, and underwent several additional phases of reopening throughout the fiscal year, gradually expanding access and services. The Grab and Go service provided when the physical building was closed, however, remained popular with patrons. Each week, Library Circulation staff pulled hundreds of books, movies, and other physical materials and processed them so that patrons could quickly and easily retrieve them. As the pandemic subsided, Library staff continued this more labor intensive service to meet demand for convenience as well as safety reasons for those who wished to limit their exposure in public spaces.

As the health of staff and patrons is foremost, the Town invested significant funds to repair the fresh air intake on the HVAC system to ensure the required amount of air circulation in the building. At the completion of this project, the Library was able to lift many building capacity limitations and reopen its conference rooms. While social distancing and masking remained in place, the building became much more accessible to the community by the close of the fiscal year.

The pandemic presented the Library with unique challenges, but it also provided an opportunity to assess services, collections, and the building itself from a completely new perspective. The lessons learned and the community response to new initiatives will have a lasting, positive impact on future projects and endeavors.

Programs

Staff pivoted to maintain a high level of programming throughout the pandemic, much of which was virtual. Moving traditional Library programs online and creating new, engaging virtual programs reflects the skills and creativity of the Weston Library staff. In May 2021, with good weather approaching, the Library also began to offer outdoor programs for the community. Additionally, the Library worked with the Friends of the Library to provide virtual programs for adults and to move their popular in-person programs to a virtual environment.

The community responded to these new methods of engagement enthusiastically. Children's and Teen programs saw 5,380 participants, which reflects a negligible decrease from pre-pandemic numbers and also Children's and Teen Librarian Petrino's ability to connect with her audience regardless of format. Similarly, attendance at Adult programs was 2,470, which reflects a very slight decrease over pre-pandemic numbers and also Library's staff and the Friends of the Library's ability to assess community interests and deliver engaging programs.

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Collections & Patron Assistance

With the budget crisis at the end of FY19-20 due to the pandemic and the sudden increase in demand for digital products, the Weston Library re-thought the allocations in its Materials budget line in FY20-21 to best meet the needs of the community. Collections that saw decreases in use during the pandemic were not developed as heavily and funds were diverted to increasing electronic access. During the pandemic, the Weston Library's Circulation Department issued digital library cards to ensure new patrons could also access digital resources even though it was not always possible to visit the Library physically. 380 new Library cards were issued during FY2020-2021. The community responded well to the shift in budgeting, and eBooks and downloadable audiobook use increased 56.6% from pre to post-pandemic.

Library staff also developed creative ways to engage patrons with physical library resources throughout the pandemic. For example, Children's and Teen Librarian Petrino developed programs such as Binge Boxes, which allowed parents to complete a form to reflect their children's interest. Families were then provided with a professionally curated bag of Library materials specific to their request. This allowed parents to continue to provide educational and recreational resources to their children and keep them engaged in learning throughout the pandemic. It has remained a popular service even with the reopening of the Library.

As a result of the efforts of staff to connect patrons with the physical collections in new ways and develop the digital collections to meet demand, the Library has fared well through the pandemic. Staff will continue to monitor trends to ensure that funds are expended in a way that meets the needs of both traditional and digital library users.

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FY 2019-2020  
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Overview

FY19-20 was a tumultuous year with the Library closing its physical doors to the public on March 11 due to the pandemic. While access to traditional library collections and services were on hold for 3 months, the Library expanded its digital collections and services exponentially, resulting in a year of virtual growth and success. The ingenuity, creativity, and dedication of Library staff allowed for a smooth transition to virtual programs, a complete reinvention of the Children's summer reading program, enhanced digital collections, and increased remote services including issuing virtual Library cards to residents. These residents found themselves in need of access to the Library's broad range of digital services while self-isolating, and we were pleased to be able to extend our services to these new patrons. On June 15, the Library was able to reinstate access to its physical collections through contactless curbside pick-up. Library staff once again showed their resourcefulness in completely reinventing Library operations in order to provide this much needed service.

These successes did come at a cost. With the exponentially higher cost of eBooks over physical books and the pay-per-use model of certain digital products, the Library struggled to meet demand for popular digital items. Expenditure on digital products was 52% higher than in FY18-19, with the majority of that increase occurring in the final quarter of the fiscal year. This necessarily had an impact on other collection areas. Additionally, the success experienced in virtual programming and the staff's ability to continue to work so closely together virtually reflected their dedication to the Library, but was dependent on their access to personal devices that allowed for the creation and posting of digital content. As we have found that many of the methods and models of service and program delivery developed during the pandemic have been beneficial for serving existing patrons and attracting new Library users, we do hope that the Town will invest in, and provide the infrastructure for, these types of services going forward, including staffing to support these much more labor-intensive activities. Weston still trails neighboring communities with .55 FTEs per 1,000 residents compared to Easton at .97 and Westport at 1.33.

While the pandemic shifted staff attention to new service models, ongoing projects continued. In April, after a significant delay, the State Bond Commission released the funds for the State Library Construction Grant that was awarded in 2018. This matching grant will fund renovations to the Children's Room in addition to some smaller Town projects focused on energy conservation. All grant funded work will commence once the Town provides revised cost estimates for the windows and lighting work and a revised budget is filed with the State Library.

Earlier in 2019, the Library was approached with an exciting proposal for an addition to the existing building to house the Offutt Center for Arts and Innovation, to be funded by the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust. Planning for the addition got underway in earnest in November with the first meeting of the Offutt Center Committee.

This year, the Library also noted several staff changes. Library Technology Assistant Anneliese Lomas replaced Abigayel Phillips. Children's Library Assistant Laura Ivy replaced Bobbi Essagof and Nicole Mitchell. Library Assistant Elizabeth Dunn-Aronson replaced Donna Sullivan.

Programs

When the Library closed its physical doors on March 11, staff made a concerted effort to expand the Library's digital presence. Within days of cancelling all in-person programs, Children's Librarian Petrino, with help from Children's Assistant Ivy, had virtual storytimes and crafts available through Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. Librarian Petrino's program attendance increased 1.2% over last fiscal year, showing the traction Librarian Petrino has in the community and the need for educational programming. Librarian Petrino also reconfigured her popular summer reading program to work in the new environment, scheduling interactive performances, creating a town-wide scavenger hunt with local author Nora Baskin, and creating weekly take-home activity kits for participating families.

Adult programming went virtual as well. The Friends of the Library moved book groups and their popular New Yorker Roundtable and Photography Group online and continued to experience success. The Friends also

launched a popular Short Story hour. The Library's Sip and Stitch, Cookbook Club, and Device Advice programs all moved online, with the latter program, spearheaded by LTA Bennett, receiving extra requests as patrons learned to navigate virtual meeting platforms and electronic resources.

Program attendance for the year, in-person and virtual, was over 7,800. Partnerships with outside organizations for program provision continued with such groups as the Beautification Committee, Weston Historical Society, Weston Senior Center, Weston Commission for the Arts, Weston Parks and Recreation, Weston Youth Services, SpeakEASY and SCORE.

### Technology

In November, Library staff was given access to the Town's financial system, MUNIS, for entering requisitions. Staff has modified their workflows accordingly.

Bibliomation moved the Integrated Library System to a web-based client in the Spring. Senior Librarian Lincoln and Library Technical Assistant Bennett received training in the Circulation and Cataloging modules and provided training to remaining staff.

With the help of Library Technology Assistants Phillips and Lomas, the Library's social media presence grew by nearly 50%. The creation of an Instagram presence has opened the Library's marketing to a new demographic. Library Technology Assistant Phillips grew Makerspace programming for children and adults, became proficient in using and troubleshooting equipment, and learned Adobe Creative Cloud, allowing for the creation of additional community marketing and outreach materials.

### Collections & Patron Assistance

Prior to the Library's closure for coronavirus, the Library continued to experience YTD growth in facility use. Gate counts have increased 12% since the renovation and physical collection use has increased 30%, showing an excellent ROI on both the renovation and investment in collections.

The pandemic had a significant impact on collection use with patrons moving toward digital products. Access to eBooks increased 60%, downloadable movies increased 40% and downloadable audiobooks increased over 30%.

The Library also had over 70,000 patrons visit the virtual library at [www.westonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.westonpubliclibrary.org).



Weston Public Library Annual Report  
FY 2018-2019  
Karen Tatarka, Library Director

Overview

FY2018-2019 marks the second full fiscal year in the renovated Library. The response from the community has been positive and use of the facility and collections continues to grow. 67,982 patrons came to the Library this year, a 14% increase from pre-renovation statistics. Patrons borrowed, or used in-house, over 63,000 physical items and accessed over 9,600 digital items. Community groups and members reserved meeting spaces over 350 times. The Library is constantly bustling and has become a hub for recreational, social, and intellectual pursuits in the community.

The Library applied for, and received, a State Library Construction grant in the amount of \$82,500 for renovations to the Children's Room, remediation, and upgrades to ventilation fans, windows, and lighting. Matching funds were in place by January 2019, and the Library is awaiting the Bond Commission's release of the funds to initiate the projects. The public restrooms received a remodeling with funds from both the Board of Trustees and the Town.

This year, the Library noted significant staff changes. Library Assistants Helen O'Kelly and Donna Sullivan left the Library after many years of service. Library Assistants Maureen Johnson and Elizabeth Dunn-Aronson filled the vacant positions. Library Technology Assistant Rose Simpson left the Library for a full time position, and was replaced by Abigayel Phillips. Children's Library Assistant Sheela Satpute resigned and the position was split between Bobbi Essagof and Nicole Mitchell.

Programs

The Library had over 8,000 patrons attend programs this year. Children's and Teen Librarian Petrino offered over 580 programs including storytimes, music and movement, crafts and STEAM experiments. Under Ms. Petrino's leadership, participation in the annual Summer Reading program grew 84% from FY15/16. The Friends of the Library continued sponsoring several book groups, the New Yorker Roundtable, a Camera Club, local author panels, and several of the Library's After Dark programs. In addition, they supplemented the cost of Children's programming, including the Summer Reading events. The Library continued its partnerships for programming with outside groups such as the Weston Historical Society, Weston Senior Center, Weston Commission for the Arts, Weston Parks and Recreation, Weston Youth Services, SpeakEASY (a group of residents offering programs with local high profile people such as Craig Melvin and Tom Scott), and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), among others.

Technology

Due to the generosity of the Friends of the Library, Weston Progress Fund, and individual residents, the Library was able to add additional equipment to the Makerspace including a Cricut, a button maker, a high speed photo scanner, a slide/negative scanner, an iMac, and the full Adobe Creative Cloud. These additional items have proven popular with patrons. Library Technology Assistant Abigayel Phillips has taken charge of all of this equipment in the Makerspace and is becoming proficient in its use, including a new DaVinci 3D printer. She has also launched an Instagram account for the Library and further developed the Library's social media presence.

With the assistance of the Weston Schools, the Library initiated a Chromebook lending program. These Chromebooks, which are monitored and administered by the Schools' IT department, allow students and adult patrons to browse the Internet or work on School issued Google Drive accounts from anywhere in the Library.

The Library launched Lynda.com at the request of patrons. In coordination with the Town, the Library also researched and implemented new photocopiers and printers as the first step in transitioning this service from the Friends of the Library to the Town. Security cameras were installed due to a series of

thefts early in the fiscal year.

The Library began using the Acquisitions module of the Evergreen Integrated Library System (ILS) this year. This allows Library staff to load order records, making it possible for patrons to place holds on books before they are released.

#### Collections & Patron Assistance

The renovation and increased funds for Library collections has had a positive impact on both print and digital circulations. Since FY15/16 (the last full FY before the renovation) circulation of traditional library materials owned by Weston, such as books, DVDs, and audiobooks increased by 28%. Most notably, circulation of Children's and Young Adult materials increased 42% and 58% respectively as a result of Children Librarian Petrino's collection development efforts. Adult circulation has increased 25% since the renovation, and Inter Library Loan has grown 45% due to the Library's increased support of local book groups. The importance of these increases cannot be overstated as most libraries are seeing double digit percent decreases in physical circulations. Access to electronic resources that the Weston Library provides to patrons increased as well, with access to content on our OverDrive, Hoopla, and RB Digital platforms increasing by 76%. Most notably, downloadable audiobook use alone increased 98% from FY15/16, which reflects current market trends.

The Library also had over 71,000 patrons visit our virtual library at [www.westonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.westonpubliclibrary.org), an increase of 25% over FY17/18.

Weston Public Library Annual Report  
FY 2017-2018  
Karen Tatarka, Library Director

Overview

FY2017-2018 marks the first full fiscal year in the renovated Library. The response from the community has been positive and use of the facility and collections has increased dramatically. 62,563 patrons came to the Library this year. Patrons borrowed, or used in-house, over 57,000 physical items and accessed over 9,500 digital items. Community groups and members reserved meeting spaces over 500 times. Through the renovation, increased collections, and increased programming, the Library is reaching its goal of becoming the central social and intellectual hub for the community.

Programs

The Library offered over 540 programs for all ages this fiscal year, with over 6,200 patrons attending. Children's and Teen Librarian Petrino offered over 360 programs including storytimes, music and movement, crafts and STEAM experiments. Children's Library programming now includes regular weekend and evening program with the addition of Children's Library Assistant Satpute late this fiscal year. Library Assistant Simpson launched programming in the Library's new Makerspace, incorporating new equipment such as the 3D printer, 3D scanner, and Cricut, in addition to educational programs on electronics using Snap Circuits and Makey Makeys. Adult technology programs included tablet instruction, and DVD and photo conversions. The Friends of the Library continued sponsoring several book groups, the New Yorker Roundtable, a Camera Club and several of the Library's new After Dark programs, designed as social and educational events to engage the community. The Library also continued its partnerships for programming with outside groups such as the Weston Historical Society, Weston Senior Center, Weston Commission for the Arts, and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), among others.

Technology

As part of the renovation, the Library upgraded its Ethernet wiring to Cat5e and expanded its WiFi by using an open mesh system. The Library's consortium, Bibliomation, coordinated this work with the Schools' IT department. The open mesh system allows the Library to provide additional seats and better connectivity to the Internet on personal devices.

The Library also officially opened its mini-Makerspace. The Weston Education Foundation funded the large format monitor, laptop cart, and educational equipment. Much of the additional equipment in the room was purchased by the Library Board of Trustees, the Friends of the Library, or donated by interested patrons. We are grateful for the support of all groups in making the Makerspace a reality. Please see above for the programs offered.

To assist with the increase in room reservations, programs, and the number of reservable spaces, the Library also implemented EventKeeper. This software gives the Library the ability to maintain an events calendar, accept program registrations, and accept room reservations in an efficient manner.

Collections & Patron Assistance

The renovation and increased funds for library collections has had a positive impact on both print and digital circulations. Since FY15/16 (the last full FY before the renovation) circulation of traditional library materials owned by Weston, such as books, DVDs, and audiobooks increased by 13%. Most notably, circulation of Children's materials increased 23% as a result of Children Librarian Petrino's collection development efforts. The importance of these increases cannot be overstated as most libraries are seeing double digit percent decreases in physical circulations. Access to electronic resources that the Weston Library provides to patrons increased as well, with access to content on our OverDrive, Zinio, and OneClick platforms increasing by 49%. Most notably, downloadable audiobook use alone increased 49% from FY15/16, which reflects current market trends.

Library staff helped answer nearly 7,000 reference and reader's advisory inquiries. The Library also had over 57,000 patrons visit our virtual library at [www.westonpubliclibrary.org](http://www.westonpubliclibrary.org), an increase of 25%.

Community groups reserved the Library's Community and Conference Rooms over 500 times, a 27% increase over FY15/16.

Weston Public Library Annual Report  
FY 2016-2017  
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FY 2016-2017 marked a memorable year for the Library as it underwent significant interior renovations. Lead by the Board of Trustees Space Planning Committee and the Town's Building Committee, the renovation began in June 2016 and was completed in December 2016. The renovation was a joint effort of the Library Board of Trustees, which contributed over \$900,000 to the renovation using funds from the generous Franc Vitale bequest, and the Town, which contributed over \$400,000 including a match for the State Library Construction Grant of \$256,358, resulting in a total project cost of approximately \$1.6 million. The Board of Trustees selected Peter Gisolfi Associates of Hastings-on-Hudson to design the renovated space and honor Joseph Salerno's original design. The renovated Library provides a dedicated teen space, four meetings rooms, a Makerspace, a café, and greatly increases the amount of seating space for patrons. In addition to restoring access to the original patio area, the renovation also included much needed technology upgrades including a mesh WiFi network, expanded electrical access, updated Ethernet wiring, a sound system with provisions for the hearing impaired, and LED lighting in the main part of the building. Both long-time and new patrons have responded positively to the redesigned space.

The renovation would not have been possible without the dedication of the Library Board, especially the Space Planning Committee, lead my Chair Amy Sanborn and supported by members Anne Hunt and Lynne Langlois. The Committee dedicated endless hours to meetings, budget reviews, and architectural and furniture discussions, resulting in a beautiful, user-friendly, and on-budget final project. Additionally, the Town's Building Committee, especially Richard Wolf, Allen Swerdlowe, and David Coprio, ensured that the end result was successful, sound, and aesthetically pleasing.

Although the main part of the Library was closed during the renovation, staff maintained a small satellite Library in the Community Room. With access to only a small portion of the collection, the Library experienced only a 2% decrease in physical item circulations. We are so thankful to the patrons who continued to support us throughout the renovation, and to the staff whose hard work and dedication to the Weston community made our temporary Library such a success.

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Trustees hosted a ribbon cutting for the renovated Library. State Librarian Kendall Wiggin, Director of the Division of Library Development Dawn LaValle, Senator Hwang, and Senator Boucher were in attendance. The Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library hosted a grand re-opening celebration on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, to coincide with the blooming of the daffodils planted in memory of Franc Vitale.

During FY2016-2017, the Library also welcomed Children's and Teen Librarian Alessandra Petrino. Ms. Petrino came to us from the Prospect Public Library and had an immediate impact on programs and collections at the Library. Circulation of Children's books increased nearly 9%, and attendance at Children's programs was over 3,300. Ms. Petrino's new range of programming includes storytimes for newborns through age five, crafts, playgroups, book groups, teen programming and more. We are fortunate to have such an experienced and creative librarian on staff.

We look forward to our first full fiscal year with our new facility and expanded resources, which will help us fulfill the goals set forth in the Library's strategic plan.