



ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2022–
June 30, 2023

+ Youth Summer Fun 2023

OUR MISSION

is to inspire lifelong learning and discovery in a welcoming place with exceptional resources, programs, and services.

OUR VISION

is to be the community's vibrant hub for engagement, discovery, and creativity.

About the Library

Dedicated in 1898, the Old Lyme–Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library is a private, independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization. It is owned by the Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library Association, Inc., and governed by its Board of Trustees. The day-to-day operations of the Library are managed by the Library director and 11 staff (total FTE 8.5). As the Town of Old Lyme's designated public library, the Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library receives some funding from the municipality (42% of budgeted FY22-23 income). This municipal funding combines with income from the Association's Endowment, the proceeds of the Library's annual fund drive, income from the Friends of the Library, and various grants to fund the Library's annual operating budget. The Library is a long-standing member of the Libraries Online, Inc. Consortium (LION).

From developing fun, interactive story times for infants and toddlers to hand-delivering books to homebound patrons, the Library continues to provide opportunities for residents of all ages to learn and grow. Our core services include providing access to a variety of print and digital books, audio-visual media, and research tools; assisting with technology and encouraging the development of information literacy; supporting the public school curriculum; conducting early literacy training and fostering an enduring interest in learning and reading among our youngest patrons; and offering programming that informs and engages the community.

Introduction

2022–2023 marked the 125th year of Library operations and the first full year in the newly renovated Library without significant COVID-19 protocols in place. It was fabulous to welcome so many smiling faces into the Library and to witness the Library humming with activity again. We had so much fun hosting our first annual minigolf event in the Library and commemorating the 125th anniversary with the *Rock the Phoebe* event on June 23rd. Foot traffic in the building increased by over 30% compared to 2021–2022 and the use of library materials increased by over 20%.

Behind the scenes, Library Staff and Board members continued to make significant headway on major projects, including the completion of a new Strategic Plan (see page 3) and the migration to fiber internet thanks to grant funding from the State Library. We invite you to explore the following pages to discover the full breadth of the services offered this past year.

We're so very grateful for all of the many people who, directly or indirectly, contributed to our work this year. But most of all we're grateful for our patrons, who inspire us to keep moving onward and upward—THANK YOU!

pictured, right: Board members and staff pose in front of the new griffin statue



Library Staff

Katie Huffman *Director*

Linda Alexander *Public Services Manager*

Katie Balocca¹ *Development Assistant*

Julie Bartley *Children's Librarian*

Nike Desis *Tween/Teen Librarian*

Kristine Ferguson *Access Services Manager*

Katy Klarnet *Reference Librarian*

Allie Lang² *Community Engagement Librarian*

Evelyn Morgen *Administrative Assistant*

Kathy Sharp³ *Library Assistant*

Jessica Steding *Reference & Tech Librarian*

Mary Talbot *Circulation Assistant*

¹ After 12 years of service, Development Assistant Katie Balocca bid farewell to the Library in January 2023.

² Community Engagement Librarian Allie Lang joined the staff in February 2023.

³ In fall 2022, Kathy shifted her focus from circulation to youth services.

Board of Trustees

Ken Biega *President*

Mary Dangremond *Vice President*

Jane Cable *Secretary*

Thomas J. Britt *Treasurer*

Jamie Alpha

Wil Bradford

Susan Fader

Claire Griffin

Sondra Griswold

Barbara Hack

Wen He

Heather Richardson

Liz Rubitski

Skip Sibley

Eddie Vautrain

Tara Ward



New Strategic Plan

After several years of discussions and gathering data, the Library Board and Staff were pleased to unveil a new, succinct strategic plan in March 2023. This document will serve as a framework for the creation of annual plans for the next 5 years.

This new plan was made possible by Strategic Planning Committee members Thomas Britt, Julie Bartley, Jane Cable, Nike Desis, Kristine Ferguson, Katie Huffman, Alan Poirier, Kirsten Sicuranza, Jess Steding, and Markus Warlitz. We're grateful to the many community members who responded to survey prompts and spoke with us during the planning process.

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

OUR MISSION

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OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Promote literacy and a love of learning
- Support intellectual freedom
- Protect patron privacy
- Advance racial, gender, and social equity
- Support civil discourse and democracy
- Model kindness and compassion
- Strive for excellence

BUILD COMMUNITY

Attract new patrons through outreach and collaboration in new and unexpected ways.

Improve and promote services to all age groups through continued customer service excellence.

BUILD ACCESS

Upgrade library technology to improve patron and staff experience and interactions.

Identify and address workflow obstacles for patrons and staff.

Improve accessibility for patrons by removing physical and virtual barriers.

BUILD CURIOSITY

Deliver relevant, diverse, responsive, and collaborative programming for all age groups and communities.

Increase meaningful participation through hands-on and active learning for patrons of all ages and abilities.

Expand purposeful opportunities for understanding the complexities of the human experience — past and present.

DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION

Improve financial stability with a diverse set of revenue streams and sound resource management.

Create and maintain inclusive, relevant, and up-to-date policies, practices, and procedures.

Foster an internal culture of learning and communication.

125th Anniversary Celebrations

The Library officially celebrated its 125th anniversary on June 23, 2023! To commemorate the anniversary year, the Library Board and Staff collaborated on several special projects and events:



NEW GRIFFIN STATUE

In spring 2023, the Library Board of Trustees commissioned a celebratory bronze statue of a griffin, a mythical creature half eagle and half lion, by sculptor Michael McLaughlin. The nearly 200 pound bronze griffin stands by the Library's entrance with an open book at her paws. Board members and staff hope visitors will find her friendly and inviting and that even the youngest visitors will be inspired to give her a pat.

The Library's griffin was made possible thanks to private financial support from the Library's Board of Trustees and others, with special thanks to Board Member Wil Bradford, chair of the Library Board of Trustees' Public Relations Committee, for orchestrating the project.

HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

Drawing on the success of last year's *Tales of the Phoebe*, the Library undertook another historical film project. The resulting 14 minute film provides an overview of the Library's remarkable 125 year history—beginning with the Battle of the Books in 1718 and culminating with the 2019-2020 renovation and the Phoebe of today. This project was made possible thanks to the tireless work of the Public Relations Committee members, including Wil Bradford (Chair), Mary Dangremond, Michaelle Pearson, Katie Balocca, and Katie Huffman, with support from Community Engagement Librarian Allie Lang.



ROCK THE PHOEBE

After a multi-year delay due to Covid-19, the Library was thrilled to host an in-person celebratory fundraiser in the Library. The event was catered by Ani's Table and featured music, mingling, live and silent auctions, and a photo booth. Over 100 attendees filled the transformed space and helped mark the anniversary.

This event was made possible by the collaborative work of the Development Committee and the Friends of the Library, including special committee members Beth Cote, Mary Dangremond, Suki Fader, Sondra Griswold, Barbara Hack, Katie Huffman, Allie Lang, and Martha Shoemaker.



pictured, right: (top) the new griffin statue; (middle) guests listen at Rock the Phoebe; (bottom left) Wil Bradford prepares for the photo booth at Rock the Phoebe; (bottom right) guests mingle at Rock the Phoebe

All Together Now: Summer Fun for Kids



ALL TOGETHER NOW!

Summer 2023 was the summer of peace, love, and libraries! Children ages 6-11 completed fun activities to earn groovy badges and raffle tickets for nifty prizes. Of participants ages 6-11, those using the app Beanstack earned 169 badges by completing 315 activities and pen-and-paper players completed 191 challenges. Children ages 5 and under joined in the fun by using a sticker chart to track their summer reading progress. Fourteen children returned the sticker chart challenge and earned a bubble wand.

SUMMER FUN PEP RALLY AT MILE CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In anticipation of the beginning of summer, Children's Librarian Julie visited Mile Creek Elementary School for a special Summer Fun Pep Rally! 300 eager participants learned how to earn badges for completing reading and activity challenges and all about the summer's special activities.

TUESDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

Exciting and educational live programming was held every Tuesday morning throughout the summer. These events accounted for 405 visits from thrilled kids and their caregivers:

Rainbow Pasta Workshop with Food Explorers
Comedy Juggling with Bryson Lang
Paws & Pages with the CT Humane Society
Celebrating the Family Table with The Kellogg Environmental Center
Let's Glow Crazy Disco Party!
Cuddly or Creepy? A Choose Your Own Animal Adventure with Xen's Creatures
Buildwave: STEM Creativity Lab
 A visit to the Old Lyme Fire Department
Lawn Games at the Phoebe

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & CHALLENGES

Throughout the summer, kids participated in a variety of hands-on activities intended to foster community and kindness. Activities included, but were not limited to:

Phoebe's Friendship Chain

Children and adults were encouraged to add their names to Phoebe's Friendship Chain which was on display in the Children's Room all summer.

Be the "I" in Kind Photo Op

Children were invited to pose as the letter "I" and be a physical manifestation of kindness.

Pen Pal Program

Children and families were invited to correspond with our friends at the Scarborough (Maine) Public Library through various writing prompts, notes, postcards, and letters.



Children's Services

THE CHILDREN'S COLLECTIONS are intended to stimulate and satisfy the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children through the elementary school years. They include 8,000+ print books, nearly 4,000 e-books and audiobooks, and over 12,000 streaming videos. In 2022-2023, several new additions were made to the collections, including:

Bilingual Picture Book Collection: This new themed picture book category contains side-by-side stories featuring both English and other languages such as Spanish, Korean, and Arabic.

Magical Creatures Picture Books Collection: This new themed picture book category hosts a variety of stories featuring magical creatures such as dragons, mermaids, unicorns, and more.

HER Story Picture Books Collection: This new themed picture book category contains a variety of stories highlighting women's history and women's contributions to our society.

I'm Your Neighbor Collection: This new collection features stories about immigration and the new American experience. Using children's literature, which is accessible to many language abilities, patrons can share stories and develop understanding to create connections with new voices. The collection was made possible with gifts from the CT State Library.



Read to Welcome Read to Belong

Explore stories about our New Arrival and New Generation families. These immigration titles are for all ages and backgrounds. ImYourNeighborBooks.org.

CHILDREN'S EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES

provide an opportunity for kids to develop early literacy skills. The five best ways to prepare your child to read are talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. To support the development of these skills, the Library provided:

Story Times: These weekly sessions are ideal for children ages 3 and up. Each session features songs, stories, and a craft or activity followed by free play.

Phoebe's Wee Readers Play Group: This weekly meet-up is designed for infants and toddlers up to age 3. Participants share stories and songs followed by free play.



"We're really happy to get [baby] some socialization. It's been hard moving to a new town and meeting people."

pictured, left: (top-bottom) kids dance at Let's Glow Crazy; kids get close to one of Xen's creatures; kids experiment at the Buildwave lab; families gather at the Old Lyme Fire Department; the friendship chain greets visitors to the Children's Room
pictured, right: (top) the new I'm Your Neighbor collection; (bottom) a young patron shows off her new Take & Make bunny headband.

Take & Make Kits: These kits are freely available to all interested in a hands-on activity to go. They are often paired with a special themed picture book reading and provide an excellent opportunity for caregivers to help children develop their motor skills and creativity. Library Assistant Kathy and Children's Librarian Julie created and distributed nearly 1,000 kits over the course of the year.

Music with Margie: Families engage in music, rhythm, and rhyme activities in these quarterly, celebratory events hosted by songwriter, recording artist, and storyteller Marjorie Warner.

Open Play Space: As part of the 2019-2020 renovation, the library created a special story time and play space within the Children's Room. In 2022, after years of restricted activity, the library officially opened the play space with a new light table and a variety of corresponding toys, including magna tiles, colorful translucent blocks, and translucent letters and numbers.

Sensory Activity Boxes: These new activity kits provide excellent opportunities for free play and sensory awareness. Some of these kits were put to great use at the Tool Time Story Time and Baby Builders at Old Lyme Hardware in May 2023.

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL EVENTS provide opportunities for kids to discover something new and have fun! The Library strives to provide unique opportunities throughout the year with a special focus on providing engaging, hands-on activities during school vacation weeks for those families who are unable to travel.

Petting Zoo
Circle K Farm created a mini-farmyard on the Library's front lawn for this wonderful hands-on fall event. 75 attendees visited and petted alpacas, goats, and bunnies.

Phoebe's Haunted BookCellar
The Library joined in on the Lyme Street traditional Halloween celebration with the return of Phoebe's Haunted BookCellar after a 3-year hiatus. Over 400 kids were spooked and thrilled on the lower level, transformed for the season by teen volunteers.

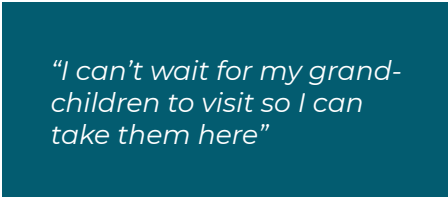
Nocturnal Animals
Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center helped mark the shorter days by teaching children all about nocturnal creatures. Seventeen participants got hands-on time with an albino corn snake, frog, and screech owl!

Lunar New Year Celebration
Stephanie Sum from Asian Performing Arts enchanted participants with a Lunar New Year presentation featuring music, traditional sayings, dancing, and a craft.

Take Your Child to the Library Day
Held during the February school vacation, this event provided a chance for participants to engage in a library-wide scavenger hunt to learn all about the services provided by the Library. Over 50 kids joined in!

Mr. Magic
Rich Rothstein, aka Mr. Magic, delighted and astounded over 50 participants with his tricks during April vacation week. One of our young patrons even opened the show with a wand trick of her own that she practiced at home!

pictured, right: (top-bottom) kids build at Old Lyme Hardware; kids greet an alpaca on the front lawn; Stephanie demonstrates Lunar New Year dances
pictured, far right: (top-bottom) presenter Gabby Shea shares tattoo art; teens doodle on the entrance to the Teen/Tween Room; teens prepare to knead dough with Food Explorers



Let's Get on the Same Page: Summer Fun for Teens & Tweens

LET'S GET ON THE SAME PAGE
Summer 2023 was the summer of creativity and a celebration of reading, writing, and art for teens! Participants were able to complete activities, earn badges, and score raffle tickets as they moved their way around the challenge map. Lucky winners won a record player, a squishmallow, a Pokémon terrarium, gift certificates, and more! All told, 51 individuals played the game, submitting 279 tickets!

7TH GRADE FIELD TRIP
As the school year came to a close, Teen Librarian Nike welcomed the entire 7th grade during a field trip to the Library arranged by the ELA teachers. Students learned about the summer reading program and volunteering, visited the BookCellar, checked out books, and personalized the glass entrance to the Teen/Tween Room. Approximately 60 library cards were issued.

WRITING AND DOODLING CLUB
Participants met weekly to express themselves, gain confidence, de-stress, and meet new people. Each session of the Writing and Doodling club presented a loose theme and structured activity such as ekphrastic writing, DIY stickers, letter writing, and tattoo design. Youth writers and illustrators were encouraged to share any works in progress, make edits, and get feedback too. This 6-week endeavor was made possible thanks to grant support from Lymes Creative Arts.

VOLUNTEER WORK
16 youth, ages 12-17, volunteered in the Teen/Tween Room over the summer months. Volunteers assisted with the Children's Pen Pal program, helped rearrange the space, prepared materials for this year's field trip to the Queer/Trans Zinefest in Providence, RI, and provided support for teen activities.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Teens participated in special events offered each month throughout the summer, including a Rainbow Pasta Workshop with Food Explorers, Cuddly or Creepy? with Xen's Creatures, and Visible Mending with Fiber Artist Sophia De Jesus. The latter was made possible with grant support from the Katherine Forest Crafts Foundation.



BEANSTACK

The Library introduced Beanstack, a new reading website and app in summer 2023. Beanstack is an easy way for readers of all ages to log their reading and activities, get reading recommendations, and earn badges toward challenges such as the 2023 Summer All Together Now program. With this new software, the Library will begin offering year-round reading challenges for kids, teens, and adults. This service was made possible with support from The Friends of the Library. Scan the QR code to get started with Beanstack today!



Teens & Tweens



TEEN & TWEEN VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer program provides a supportive, hands-on, collaborative opportunity for teens and tweens to help create a fun and engaging space for all. Participants engage in a variety of activities based on their interests, including, but not limited to, helping out with crafts and displays, assisting with community outreach, designing flyers and informational material, creating thematic book displays, and assisting with the development and implementation of larger-scale projects such as art exhibitions, zines, and a teen magazine. Youth completed nearly 500 volunteer shifts between July 2022 and June 2023! In February, Teen Librarian Nike hosted an Awards Dinner in recognition of all of the amazing work completed by the teens and tweens.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

A wide array of special events and activities were planned throughout the year to help build community and spark creativity and learning. Many of these events were successful thanks to the enthusiasm and ingenuity of the volunteers.

2022 Queer/Trans Zinefest

After months of preparation, twelve teens met Teen Librarian Nike at the Steel Yard in Providence, RI, to staff a Library table at this day-long annual zine and small works festival. This amazing experience provided the teen volunteers with leadership and project management experience, an opportunity to engage with the creative process and work with others, speak for the Library in a public space, and experience a rich cultural experience beyond Old Lyme. Sales from the event netted nearly \$500 and will be used to support future youth-led initiatives.

Haunted BookCellar

This spooktacular event was back after a multi-year hiatus thanks to a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work by teens. In addition to planning the “exhibits” and creating many props, during the event teens acted as tour guides, bodies eaten by spiders, a Frankenstein creature, a ghost puppeteer, two jump scarers, and a few shrouded shriekers.

Libraries Rock! Merch

Teen volunteers assisted in the creation of 70 new *Libraries Rock!* tees and totes. Proceeds from the sales provided financial support for future teen activities and initiatives.

Extended Exam Hours

The Library extended its hours for high school students during midterms and finals weeks. In addition to offering study space and snacks, the Library partnered with Project Paws to provide opportunities for de-stressing with therapy dogs. High School Media Specialist Lucy Trost helped spread word of the extra study hours at the High School.

Block Printing

Local artist Margarita Hernandez Maxson shared her passion for Mayan Astrology and Indigenous folklore through a hands-on block printing activity for teens and adults.

pictured, left: (top-bottom) teens gather for an Awards Dinner at the library; teens gather at their QTZ Fest tent; a volunteer designs the Haunted BookCellar

pictured, right: (top-bottom) a teen experiments with a retro typewriter; a volunteer prepares the vinyl record display; teens play games at the lock-in; teens gather round to learn at Old Lyme Hardware; teens play chess after school

Retro Tech Tuesdays

During the winter, a variety of old school technology was made available for teens and tweens to interact with, including, but not limited to, a CD/Cassette/Radio player, a portable 8 track and cartridges from the 70's, a manual typewriter, a digital camera from early 2000s, slides, a record player with records from the 1960s, and a rotary phone. This resulted in story sharing and amazing interactions between youth and adults who were drawn into the space by the display.

Vinyl Record Display & Listening Party

Drawing on the great success of Retro Tech Tuesdays, Teen Librarian Nike issued an open call to patrons to share vinyl album covers from their personal collections for a special exhibit. 10 participants shared over 70 albums, and the resulting exhibit sparked fabulous stories and sharing among patrons of all ages. A vinyl listening wrap party likewise drew a multi-generational audience.

Teen Lock-In

Teens had the Library to themselves in this fun, after-hours event featuring food, games, crafts, movies, and more!

Modern Toolbox with Old Lyme Hardware

Participating teens met up at Old Lyme Hardware for this hands-on, life-skills demonstration of common tools and repairs provided by daughter-father co-owners Jessica and Richard.

College Admissions Prep

High school students and their parents learned about insider tips, tricks, and trends from Big Green College Prep.

COLLECTIONS

The Teen & Tween Collection aims to meet the reading interests of middle and high school youth while inspiring life-long learning, discovery, and creativity. Here's a sample of collection-related projects from 2022-2023:

Book Boxes

Participating teens received personalized book boxes containing a selection of curated books, snacks, and bookmarks in advance of the November break.

Manga Collection

A new, separate space for manga was created on the shelves to improve the browsing experience.

Teen Curated Displays

Throughout the year, teen volunteers, with staff assistance, created book displays—examples include a New Adventure, Don't Judge a Book by its Movie, Black History Month, Stories of Teen Heartbreak, and Green Light (patron recommended books)—but the highlight of the year was a teen-curated read alike display for Taylor Swift's newest album, *Midnights*.

Genrefication

In an effort to improve browsing, a sample of the collection was reorganized to highlight 5 popular genres: Historical, Mystery/Thriller, Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Relationships.

Censorship/Banned Books Interactive Display

During Banned Books Week 2022, the entrance to the Teen Room hosted an interactive display defining censorship, outlining the collection development process, and identifying the type of content most regularly challenged. Patrons were encouraged to answer the question, “How does censorship affect us?” on the display wall.



Your volunteer program provides a safe, respectful, engaging environment for the student volunteers to gather and learn to give back to the community.
—a parent



The Library is a nice place because it is a place to chill. [...] Kids need a place to unwind from all the stress from school.
—a 6th grader

I like that we do lots of different things and everyone always wants to do something/help out. But it is not just the work, it is the environment . . . it's very open and peaceful. It's a nice place to come. I wish I could come more.” —an 11th grader

Adult Services

GENERAL SERVICES

From assisting with informational needs to offering one-on-one tech help to finding the next perfect read, Adult Services staff Linda, Jess, Kristine, Allie, Katy, and Mary provide a wide range of daily assistance to patrons and ensure collections remain up to date. In addition, staff organized an assortment of events and activities designed to delight, inspire, and inform, including, but not limited to:

Building Community

As part of its vision to become a community hub, the Library offered a variety of opportunities to connect with neighbors, engage with community, and have fun:

Phoebe's Morning Meditation: Led by Director Katie, this new, weekly group meets on Fridays in the native garden, weather permitting, or in the Community Room, for a 20 minute recorded guided meditation.

Writers' Studio: Led by community member Jon Day, this new, weekly group is open to writers looking for positive feedback in a friendly, collaborative environment.

Musical Bingo! Participants brought their listening ears to this fun-filled musical bingo night featuring a DJ and a taste of Connecticut provided by SeaSide Wine & Spirits.

True Crime Trivia Night: Community Engagement Librarian Allie tested participants' knowledge of the terrifying world of true crime at this convivial event for adults.

Phoebe's Morning Book Chat: Led by Librarians Linda and Jess, this monthly book group met at the Library to discuss a wide-range of fiction and nonfiction books, both contemporary and classic.

Contemporary Classics Book Discussions: Led by community member Marsha Bansavage, this monthly book group met via Zoom to discuss contemporary books receiving high critical acclaim.

Mahjongg Group: Participants gathered weekly on Wednesdays to play this exciting game and socialize.

Author Talks

Connecting readers to books and their authors is at the heart of library programming. The Library hosted several local author talks this past year, including David Handler, *The Lady in the Silver Cloud*; Luanne Rice on writing, inspiration, and life in Old Lyme; Skip Hine, *Memories in Hine Sight*; Laurette Klier on dementia care; and Marcos Lopes, *War Zone*. The Library greatly expanded access to author talks with the addition of a new online platform providing 2-3 live, moderated talks each month from national best-selling authors thanks to financial support from Stephen and Susan Bates.

pictured, left: (top-bottom) Phoebe's meditation group gathers in the garden; friends gather for musical bingo; participants enjoy charcuterie boxes and listen to bestselling author Luanne Rice

pictured, right: (top-bottom) plants await new homes; participants showcase their freshly-made fall centerpieces

The Natural World & More

The Library was pleased to partner with a variety of local organizations, to provide these educational opportunities to discover something new:

Birding at Lohmann Preserve

The American Chestnut Tree with Jack Ostroff & Jack Swatt

History of Watch Rock

Landscape Photography with Charles Gurche

All About Owls with the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center

Birding on the Patio with the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center

Light Pollution with Misha Semenov-Leiva & Alan Sheiness

Water Resources 101 - Connecting Water to Land
with Denise Savageau

6 Months Sailing around the World with Her Majesty Queen
Elizabeth II with Micheal Perks

Sharing & Caring

Librarian Kristine, with assistance from others, orchestrated a variety of passive events designed to encourage resource sharing and to spread kindness: 3rd Annual Houseplant Giveaway, 1st Annual Community Perennial Plant and Bulb Swap, and three Community Kindness giveaways—zinnias, daffodils, and azaleas.

Let's Get Crafty

The Library offered several hands-on opportunities to get crafty and creative throughout the year. In late fall, Librarian Kristine taught hands-on floral arranging workshops in celebration of Autumn and the Winter Holiday Season. In January and April, local residents Christina Gotowka & Linda Angelica offered hands-on workshops on how to upcycle greeting cards.

ADULT COLLECTIONS

Library staff were pleased to add the following resources to our adult collections in 2023:

Memory Care Collection: This new collection provides books and activities to patrons experiencing dementia and their caregivers.

Adult Graphic Novels Collection: This new, growing collection provides a variety of popular-interest graphic novels for adult readers.

Way-finding Signs: These new signs are designed to improve browsing and known-item searches in the nonfiction collection.

pictured, below (l-r) musical bingo groups listen intently for the winning song; a participant learns how to use scrap booking tools; crafters make selections during the card upcycling workshop



"Libraries are important institutions and this one in particular has gone far and beyond to make this place a safe space for an array of people."



"My husband and I are extremely grateful for the wide variety of in-person and online books and resources available. (. . .) I have had nothing but positive and welcoming interactions with all members of the library staff."



Phoebe's Book Bike

Phoebe's Book Bike arrived in late spring 2023! The book bike was made possible by financial support from the Town of Old Lyme's Community Initiative Grants funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Book Bike allows the Library to provide local outreach for issuing library cards; circulating books for children, teens, and adults; and engaging in community-wide events throughout the year. While not in use around town, the Book Bike serves as a pick-up point for Take & Make Kits.



Phoebe's Native Garden

After planting nearly 4,000 plants in the garden in July 2022, ArcheWild Nursery returned in late spring 2023 to complete the installation of the lower meadow. New plant markers, complete with both botanical and common names, were installed throughout the garden. Patrons delighted in watching the garden transform through the seasons, and Library staff are planning a variety of related educational programming for the fall and future seasons.

This multi-year project was made possible by Garden Committee Members Diana Drake, Sondra Griswold, Katie Huffman, Eleanor Hufford, Liz Rubitski, and Kirsten Sicuranza, as well as pro-bono services provided by Judith Heintz and Napat Sitisara of *sassafras55*. Friends of the Library and community volunteers have provided many helping hands to maintain the garden.



"Thank you for bringing this joyous thing into all of our lives. I love working here and seeing the butterflies and birds. It's just marvelous."

MiniGolf in the Library

In February 2023, the Library hosted its first Annual MiniGolf Event! A temporary 18-hole course was erected in the Library, and 16 generous sponsors decorated holes to create a course destined to delight. This fun-filled event drew in over 200 players and many more observers. The daytime portion was a huge hit with families, and the adults-only evening tee-time resulted in lots of friendly competition. This successful event was made possible thanks to a collaborative effort of the staff and the Development Committee, members of which include Skip Sibley (Chair and event bartender), Katie Balocca, Ken Biega, Mary Dangremond, Suki Fader, Sondra Griswold, Barbara Hack, Wen He, Katie Huffman, Evelyn Morgen, Heather Richardson, and Eddie Vautrain.



Thanks to our MiniGolf Event Sponsors

Benchmark Wealth Management
Phoebe's Friends of the Library
Essex Financial Services
Duck River Garden Club of Old Lyme
Electrical Wholesalers, Inc.
Susan & Stephen Bates
Noble Construction & Management
Old Lyme Fire Department
Orthodontic Associates of SE CT
Quality Printers
Mary S. Dangremond
Kristine & Jason Ferguson
The Pan Family
Scott & Martha Shoemaker
Sheree & Skip Sibley

New & Noteworthy

NEW EXTERIOR SIGN

A new sign, featuring the Library's new logo, was hung on Lyme Street in September. The previous sign was donated to the Old Lyme Historical Society.

NEW FIBER INTERNET

Technology Librarian Jess worked throughout the year with Director Katie Huffman to plan for and implement the installation of new high-speed fiber internet. This new service was made possible by grant funding provided by the CT State Library.

NEW EXTERIOR LOCKERS

New, exterior lockers were installed. These lockers allow for the pickup of reserved Library materials during non-business hours and, along with homebound services provided by Librarians Kristine and Linda, greatly expand access to Library materials. The lockers were made possible by ARPA funding provided by the CT State Library.

pictured, left, top: (l-r) Phoebe's Book Bike in action at the Memorial Day Parade, the Midsummer Festival, and with Take & Makes in the lobby

pictured, left, bottom: (l-r) Phoebe's native garden (photo by DL Drake); a young visitor inspects a chrysalis

pictured, above: (l-r) teens gather to play minigolf; adults socialize at the 21+ minigolf event

pictured, right: the new exterior sign is installed



Community Collaborations

The Library is grateful for a variety of community partners. In 2022-2023, the Library collaborated with the Old Lyme Land Trust, Lyme Land Trust, Old Lyme Historical Society, Old Lyme Arts District, LYSB, Lyme Art Association, Duck River Garden Club, Lymes Senior Center, Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center, Florence Griswold Museum, Estuary Magazine, and Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology. Particular projects of note included:



3RD ANNUAL WITNESS STONES INSTALLATION CEREMONY

On June 2nd, partners and community members gathered on the Library lawn to commemorate the third installation of Witness Stones in Old Lyme. Eight new stones were placed on the triangular green at the intersection of Buttonball and Old Shore Roads commemorating George, Cornelia, Neptune, Phyllis, York, Jack Freeman, Hagar Jeffrey, and Prince Griswold Crosley. The program offered music, poetry, and words from community partners. Guest speakers included Connecticut's Poet Laureate Antoinette Brim-Bell; author, anthropologist, and genealogist Vicki Blue Sky Welch; and community historian and genealogist John Mills, as well as the Lyme-Old Lyme High School Select Singers.

PROJECT PAWS

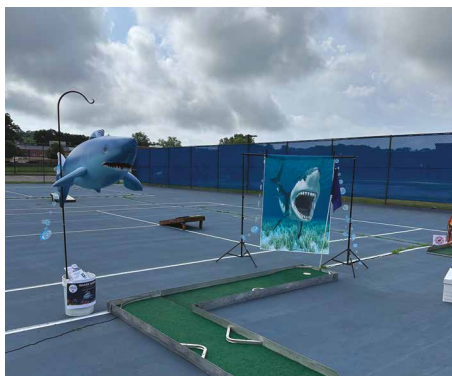
In fall 2022, the Library embarked on a long-term partnership with Project Paws, an ongoing service of the local Tim Buckley Project non-profit, which provides education and resources for bringing Animal Assisted Activity and Animal Assisted Therapy to organizations. Through Project Paws, the Library began offering monthly therapy dog visits from Nemo and others, in addition to special story times featuring Nemo. Project Paws also provided support for the high school extended exam hours.

LYME-OLD LYME MIDDLE SCHOOL: THE BOOKIES AWARDS

In addition to the 7th grade field trip to the Library, Teen Librarian Nike was invited to participate in an amazing effort coordinated by 7th grade educators—the Bookies Awards Ceremony. 7th grade students created book trailers—videos promoting a book of their choice—which were judged in several categories. The nominees for multiple categories were recognized and screened on the big screen in the middle school auditorium. The entire 7th grade was in attendance, and the performance included a special trailer featuring the Library's Teen Summer Fun Program!

OLD LYME FIRE DEPARTMENT 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The Library and the Old Lyme Fire Department shared commemorative anniversaries in 2023! After the Fire Department created an amazing minigolf hole at the Library's MiniGolf Event, the Library was thrilled to decorate an outdoor golf hole at the Fire Department's Celebration in summer 2023.



Behind the Scenes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTRIBUTIONS

Library staff participate in ongoing professional development and are active in a variety of committees within the Libraries Online Consortium (LION), of which the Library is a member, and the Connecticut Library Association (CLA). Several staff members participated in especially noteworthy endeavors this past year:

National Conference for Community and Justice Equity Leadership Alliance

Librarians Nike and Kristine were one team of 15 chosen from a pool of 43 across the state to participate in this free, six-month cohort program designed to directly support the role and responsibilities of leaders driving DEI in the workplace. Participants will focus on the coexistence and intersectionality of nine social identities: ability, age, body size, class, gender, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Connecticut Age Well Collaborative Community Leaders Fellowship

Librarian Kristine was selected to participate in this program, led by the Connecticut Age Well Collaborative, to collaborate with peers on how to combat ageism and provide safe accessible living for our community members.

CLA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Children's Librarian Julie has worked throughout the past year with 35 other librarians from around the state to re-brand Banned Books Week for CT Libraries in October 2023.

LION Governance Committee

Director Katie worked with the Executive Director of LION, Joe Farara, and other LION library directors to update the Consortium's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation. This project was made possible with legal support provided by Dechert LLP through Pro Bono Partnership.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Library's Building Committee worked throughout the year to address a variety of maintenance issues, including fine-tuning the HVAC systems, planning for the replacement of the main exterior doors and parking lot lights, and developing long-term plans for a replacement of the historic slate roof. Thanks to committee members Ken Biega (Chair), Mary Dangremond, Katie Huffman, Evelyn Morgen, Heather Richardson, and Eddie Vautrain.

pictured, left: (top-bottom): community members gather on the front lawn to commemorate the third installation of the Witness Stones; Nemo from Project Paws takes a break; the Library helps celebrate the Old Lyme Fire Department's 100th Anniversary.

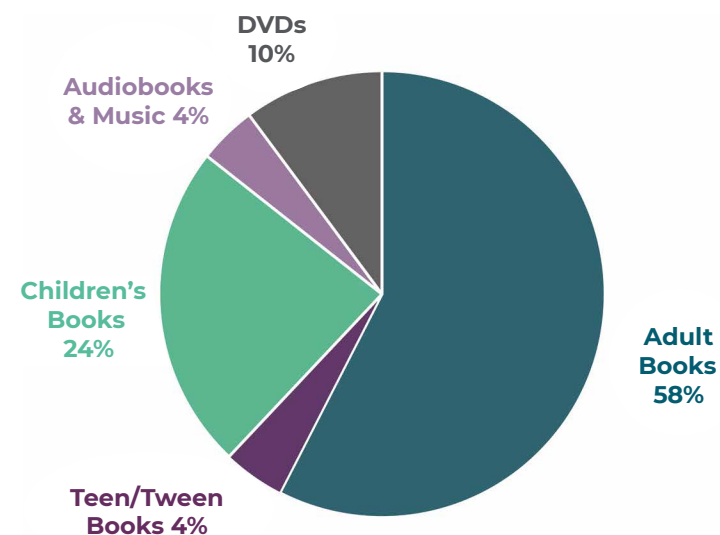
Book Challenges

In May and June, the Library Board of Trustees received letters from a group of 135 community members requesting a review of content in the Teen & Tween Collections. The Director completed a formal review of the materials and submitted her findings to the Board, which voted at their July meeting to retain the materials in the Tween/Teen Collection. During the review process, over 600 community members voiced their support for the Library's policies and collections. Visit oldlymelibrary.org for more details.

By the Numbers: SERVICES

PHYSICAL COLLECTIONS

42,000+ print items & media items



SHARED DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

- 16,000+ ebooks
- 6,000+ downloadable audiobooks
- Nearly 5,000 online magazines
- Over 50,000 streaming videos
- 45 online databases & tools

LION DELIVERY

The Library's membership in Libraries Online, Inc. grants patrons access to over 2 million physical titles across the region. In 2022–2023, LION delivered over 6,000 items to Old Lyme patrons for local use.

LIBRARY CARDS

Nearly 3,500 residents have active library cards plus an additional 500 out-of-town patrons. The Library issued over 500 new cards in 2022–2023.

VISITORS

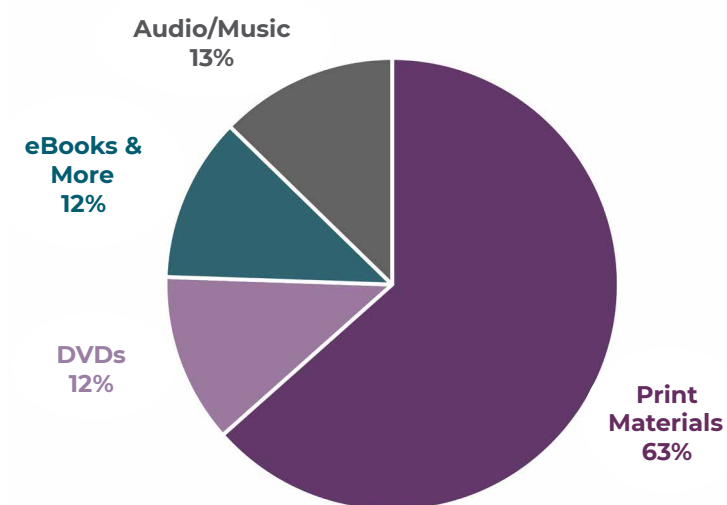
Visits increased by 32% in 2022–2023 compared to the prior fiscal year for a total of nearly 27,000 visits over the course of the 12-month period.

COMMUNITY SPACES

The Library's three study rooms were booked 1,441 times, and local groups gathered in the community room for meetings 88 times.

USE OF COLLECTIONS

Over 65,000 items were checked out by patrons



CHILDREN'S EVENTS

- Patrons viewed 11 on-demand events 3,325 times.
- 2,463 patrons attended 108 in-person events
- Over 1,000 Take & Make activity kits were distributed

TWEEN & TEEN EVENTS

- 1,091 patrons attended 46 programs
- Teens completed over 500 volunteer shifts

ADULT EVENTS

- 1,526 patrons attended 141 in-person events
- 21 live, virtual programs were attended by 66 patrons
- 3 on-demand events were viewed 780 times

REFERENCE TRANSACTIONS

Library staff assisted patrons 2,531 times with research assistance and hands-on technology help. Staff placed over 2,000 holds on materials for patrons.

PUBLIC COMPUTERS

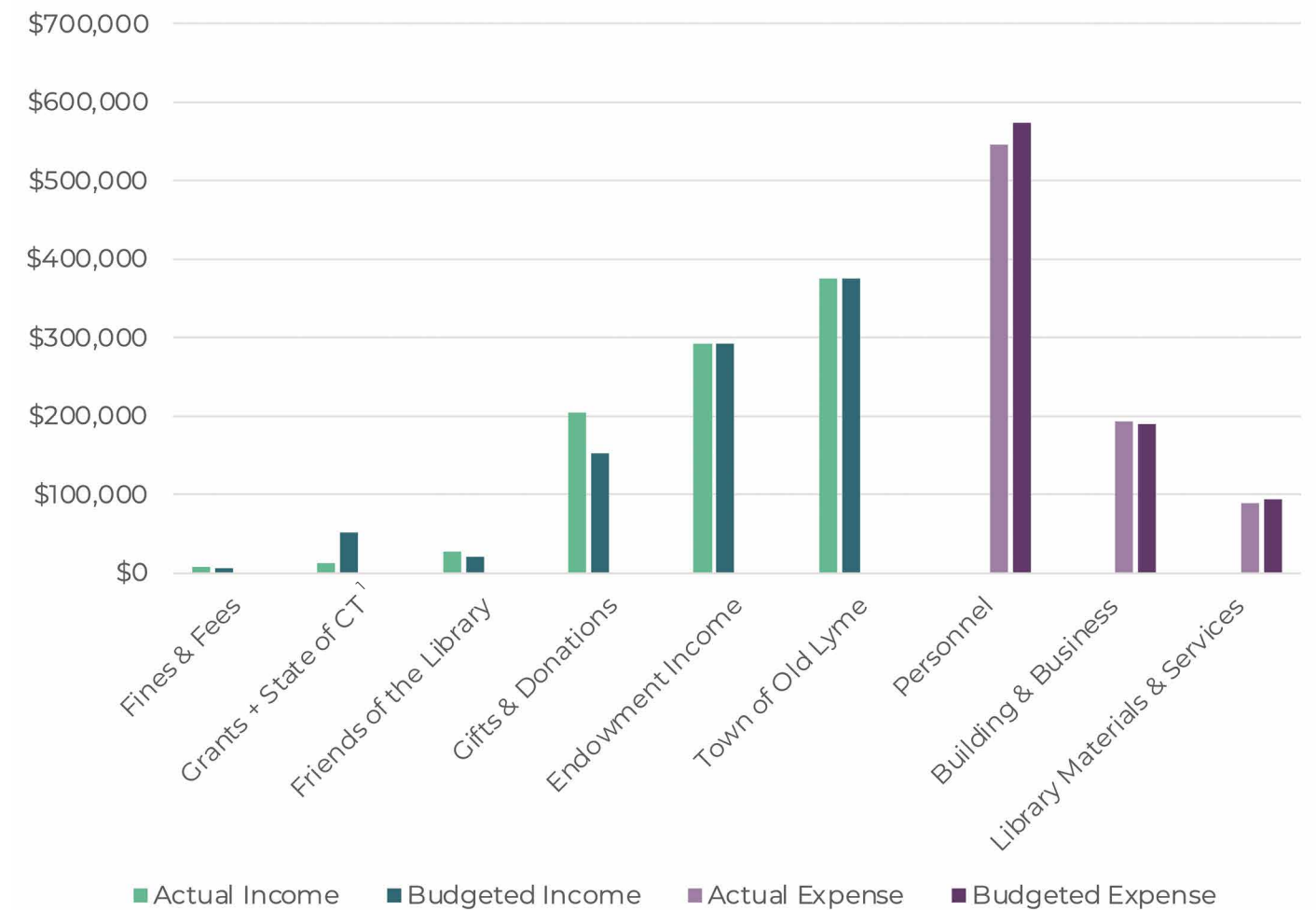
The Library's 8 public computers were used 2,657 times with the average session lasting 45 minutes.

PASSPORT SERVICES

Passport Agents Kristine and Jess processed 156 passport applications on behalf of community members.

By the Numbers: FINANCES

Operating Income & Expenses 2022–2023: Budgeted vs. Actual



Endowed Funds Report

The Library Endowment was established in 1899 with \$10,000 in gifts from the Ludington & Noyes families. Over the next 125 years, additional funds were contributed by Old Lyme residents committed to supporting the long-term success of the Library. Today, the funds comprise a variety of investments; some are restricted funds, designated to be spent on particular categories of books, materials, & services, while some are unrestricted and are used to cover a portion of annual personnel and building expenses.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, withdrawals from the Endowment represented 31% of the Library's total operating actual income. Contributions from the Town of Old Lyme accounted for 41% of the operating income and donations and gifts represented 23%. During the fiscal year, the Endowment investments portfolio returned 8.60%.²

¹Grant income was lower than expected due to a delay of anticipated state grant funds. The balance will be reported in FY23-24.

²For comparative purposes, the S&P 500 Index returned 19.59% over the same period, the MSCI Developed EAFE Index returned 20.40%, and the Bloomberg Barclays Aggregate Bond Index returned -0.94%.



HONOR ROLL

We are grateful to acknowledge all those who supported the Library from July 2022–June 2023

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Jac Lahav, in honor of the teen librarians & all the wonderful, diverse, inclusive, & positive LGBTQ programming.

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We are grateful to acknowledge these organizations and individuals for their donations of goods & services in support of the Library *Rock the Phoebe* Fundraiser in June 2023

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The Fenton Family
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We are grateful to acknowledge these companies that have matched donations to the Library

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Phoebe's
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Old Lyme Library

We are grateful for the continued support of Phoebe's Friends of the Library and Phoebe's BookCellar. All donations to the Friends directly support the Library's collections.

IN MEMORIAM

We are honored to help remember these loved ones

In Memory of Betty Bail

Joan & David Henderson
Terence & Jeanne Munnelly

In Memory of Nancy Baldwin

Victoria, Luisa, and Jim Dillingham
Tiffany Manville

In Memory of Joanne Bishop

Pat and Gary Bieniewicz

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In Memory of Richard (Dick) Hopkins

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In Loving Memory of Kathy Feakins

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In Memory of Richard M. "Riley" Ryan

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In Memory of William Smith

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Old Lyme Landscape Garden Center

Phoebe's BookCellar Managers Claudia Condon and Joan Overfield present Library Director Katie Huffman with a new easel given by the BookCellar volunteers in memory of William Smith, a long-time volunteer and friend. They also purchased a landscape painting of the Lieutenant River by Cathy Castonguay in memory of William. The new painting is on view near the Adult Fiction collection.



The 2022–2023 Annual Report
was produced and designed
by Library staff.

