

Brooks Free Library
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www.brooksfreelibrary.org

Vision

“a world without limits in the heart of the community”

Mission Statement

The Library will promote full and equal access to information and ideas, the love of reading, the joy of learning, and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Board of Trustees and Library Director respectfully submit our Annual Report for calendar year 2012. Established in 1881, Brooks Free Library is a municipal library and is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. This year Trustee Elizabeth Drewes did not seek re-election when her term ended. We would like to express our appreciation for her many years of service to the Library as a Trustee, member of the Building Committee and with the Friends of Brooks Free Library. Incumbents Kathleen Remillard and Jeannie Wheeler were re-elected this year and former Trustee Joan McCarty was elected to the Board in May.

Overview of Library Services

We're delighted to report Brooks Free Library continues to be one of the busiest libraries on the Cape and Islands. We provide materials, programs and services for all segments of the community - young children, families, seniors, working-age adults, teens and 'tweens, people with disabilities, year-round residents, second homeowners and visitors. Our primary function continues to be lending books, but recent years have seen tremendous growth in other areas of library use. Residents and visitors come to the Library to read newspapers and magazines, participate in story-times or book discussion groups, ask a reference question, use a computer or attend a concert, presentation or lecture. Many services and resources can be accessed from home and don't require a visit to the Library. A spreadsheet of statistics is provided at the end of this report.

This February will be the 15th anniversary of the completion of the Library renovation project. We expected an initial increase in library use, but we've been very pleased that the volume of activity continues to grow. As the result of budget cuts in 2005, the Library is open one less day per week than we were in 1998, but in spite of that, the number of items checked out continues to grow. 235,597 items were checked last year - more than 2 ¼ times the number checked out in 1998. We have 12,573 active library cardholders, 35% more than in 1998. Of these, 8,814 are year-round Harwich residents. We have 81,688 items in our collection; nearly double our 1998 holdings. Our patrons can borrow over 1.6 million books, movies and other materials through CLAMS (Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing) and millions more from across Massachusetts through the Virtual Catalog. We also provide electronic resources such as Ancestry.com, Mango languages and Consumer Reports and databases for articles from local and national newspapers, scholarly journals and

magazines. Our patrons have access to over 6,000 e-books and 4,000 downloadable audiobooks. E-books, e-audio and use of electronic resources are the fastest growing areas of library use.

In the years since the renovation, technology has significantly changed our reference function. A decade ago some people speculated the Internet would reduce the need for reference services. As our statistics demonstrate, this hasn't been the case. Last year we responded to 15,861 reference questions. The volume of information available online often makes it difficult for people to find what they're looking for. We continue to provide traditional reference services, i.e., locating and providing information to patrons, but we also show patrons how to target an online search to narrow their results and to find reliable sources of information. We make them aware of resources they don't know about and show them how to use them. Our traditional "information literacy" function of teaching people how to locate information and to evaluate sources continues even in this digital age. In addition, reference questions patrons ask today are often related to technology with questions about, for example, digital cameras, email, operating systems and computer hardware and software programs.

As a public technology center, the Library provides access for people who would otherwise have only limited access or no access to computers and the Internet. Patrons used 30,794 sessions on our public computers last year - over 592 sessions per week - a 600% increase since 2000. Today we have 24 computers for patrons to use for email, searching the Internet, conducting research, using the CLAMS catalog, typing a resume or term paper, applying for a job or filing for government benefits. Unfortunately, many of our computers are now quite old, so we'll be seeking funds to implement our Technology Replacement Plan.

We've operated a wireless hotspot since 2005, providing free 24/7 Internet access for users with laptops and mobile devices. Wi-fi continues to be a big draw, attracting many residents and visitors to Harwich Center. They can be seen at all hours of the day and night, sitting on benches and Adirondack chairs during warm weather or connecting to the Internet from inside their cars. There were 9,722 sessions of wireless use in FY2012 - nearly double the use our hotspot received when we began providing this service seven years ago.

Our innovative VITAL (Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library) program is now in its tenth year. Not only do we make assistive technology available for public use, we also provide free, one-on-one instruction to teach people with vision loss to become independent users of computers, assistive software programs and equipment. Up until this point, we've known of only one other public library in the nation that offers this instruction. That's changing, we're happy to report. This year we've provided in-depth assistance to the Chicopee Public Library, which received a state grant to replicate our instructional program. We've also provided assistance and training to staff members from the Holmes Public Library in Halifax, who are working on a smaller assistive technology project, as well as a staff member from the Vineyard Haven Public Library. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is now offering digital books for download on their Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) website. To help with this new service, this year we expanded our instructional sessions to include teaching people with vision loss or other print disabilities how to download the books and to use the new digital

player. We also provide on-going help by downloading books for patrons who aren't comfortable doing so themselves.

Programming has become much larger part of Library service since the renovation. We provided 894 free educational, cultural, informational and recreational programs in FY2012, with 11,990 attendees. Some programs, such as our books groups, writers group, Knit-Lit, Story-Times and Creative Movement - meet on weekly or monthly basis. These on-going programs help build a sense of community because they allow people to get to know community members they don't know from their neighborhoods, workplace or church groups. We offer several story-times per week as well as a weekly Creative Movement program for our younger patrons. Our Homework Center is crowded with young people every day and we offer free after-school activities. With funding from gift and trust funds and the Friends of Brooks Free Library, we also provide one-time programs - concerts, lectures, author talks, craft programs and performances by magicians, storytellers and puppeteers.

Highlights of 2012 Activities

In January we responded to patron's increased interest in e-books by expanding the number of E-Book Help sessions offered. Staff members are scheduled off-desk at these times so they're able to provide individual assistance to teach patrons how to download free library e-books to their device. In December we held a Gadgets, Gizmos and Gifts workshop at the Community Center to allow people to test and compare e-readers and other devices prior to the holiday gift-giving season. In January 2013 we're holding an E-Books and Tablet workshop to provide an overview of the various devices.

This year we expanded our collection of Cape Verdean materials and we worked with the Harwich Historical Society and Cape Verdean Historical Trust on the So Sabi exhibit. In May we hosted a program on Cape Verdean history, culture and language, and in October we collaborated on a program on Cape Verdean genealogy.

In the spring of 2012 we began a new program for young people - Teen Library Corps. This teens and 'tweens group meets several times a month to plan youth activities. Members help plan library programs and volunteer at events, providing face painting for children at movie nights and helping with Santa's annual visit, for example.

We also began a new program for adults in the spring - Mah Jong. We started with a six-week instructional session and then began holding weekly play sessions. Another six-week instructional session was offered in the fall. Weekly sessions to play Mah Jong continue on Thursday mornings and are open to novice and experienced players.

In June 2012, after several months of work, we launched our re-designed website. The layout hadn't changed since 1998, so this update was long overdue. The new design is more appealing and the content is better organized. The site has a text-only mobile version that's accessible to people using screen-readers. A full mobile version will go live in 2013. The homepage features a large calendar showing programs scheduled for the next few days. Clicking on the calendar opens the full event calendar so you can see what programs are coming in the days and weeks ahead. The homepage also has a scrolling display of new items that will make it easier for users to find out what new books, DVDs and other materials have

arrived. Users can sign up for weekly e-newsletters about new items. "Like us" on Facebook or "follow us" on Twitter to receive posts about upcoming events and other news.

This summer we began a new venture - "Brooks Free Cinema" - outdoor movies in Brooks Park. Several Cape communities have outdoor movies and we decided our residents and visitors deserved them, too. The movie nights were held on Thursday evenings in July and were very successful. The movie was projected on a large screen hung on the gazebo and the picturesque setting in Brooks Park became quite magical as the sky grew dark. Many parents told us this would be one of their families' favorite summer memories. In September we held another outdoor movie in the park for the Chamber of Commerce's Fall for Harwich series. Plans haven't been finalized yet but we hope to offer an expanded number of weeks for summer 2013. We're grateful to Selectmen Ed McManus and Jeremy Gingras, Director of the Chamber of Commerce for sharing their expertise with event planning and outdoor movies and to Youth Counselor Sheila House, the Youth Consultation Committee and Harwich High student Gerald Reid for helping us staff the movie nights and set-up equipment each week.

In October we started our newest book group, The Greatest Generation Meets. This group meets on the 4th Friday of the month at 1 pm and focuses on books related to World War II and the Korean War. The Council on Aging is providing transportation for Harwich residents who need a ride. Our other book groups consist of a Morning Book Group that meets (2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:30), an Evening Book Group (1st Tuesday at 6:30), Literary Diners (4th Tuesday at 6:30 pm) and two book groups for Home-schooled youngsters (1st Thursday at 10:30 and 11.) The book selected for each group's meeting is always in variety of formats (large print, audiobook, etc.) and can be checked out at our Circulation Desk. Our Knit-Lit meets Wednesdays at 12:30 to discuss knitting books while knitting and sharing advice and patterns, and our Writers Group meets Wednesdays at 10:30.

In November CLAMS went live with a mobile app that reformats the CLAMS catalog for your smart phone or mobile device. It also provides handy information on the hours, phone numbers, websites and email address of libraries near you. A popular feature, Book Look, allows you to take a picture of a book's barcode (or type in the standard book number on the back of the title page.) The app automatically searches the CLAMS catalog for the book and you can then place a request. This feature is great when you're out and about and see a great book - no need to buy. Place a request and borrow it from the library.

This fall the Friends of Brooks Free Library generously purchased an assistive listening system people with hearing loss for our meeting room. Wireless microphones amplify sound for everyone in the room, but the system also uses neck loop receivers to transmit sound directly to the person with hearing loss. Side conversations and other noises in the room no longer interfere with the person's ability to hear the program or speaker.

In December we held our 13th annual Holiday Fine Amnesty, waiving overdue fines for patrons who contributed food for the Family Pantry or a new book for the Children's Center, an affordable childcare program of the Harwich Ecumenical Council for the Homeless. Patrons were very generous, donating over 3500 cans of food for the family Pantry and filling a large bin with new picture books for the Children's Center's classrooms.

Administrative Notes for 2012

In April, police officers responding to our call for assistance discovered a patron who'd just stolen six library books. This arrest uncovered the wider theft of older, historic books a number of Cape libraries, which appeared to part of an organized effort that had been going on for some time. Several thieves were selling the stolen books to an antiques dealer who was re-selling them online. A total of 74 volumes had been stolen from 9 Cape and Islands libraries. Many were still in the dealer's possession and they were returned to the owning library. Law enforcement investigations resulted in additional charges against the individual who'd been arrested at Brooks Free Library and he was convicted in November.

Major building maintenance projects this year included extensive repairs to the air conditioning and ventilation system, funded by the Cape Light Compact. The project ran into significant problems, which resulted in the third summer with temperatures well into the 80's and high humidity, a major concern in a library due to the possibility of a mold bloom. The chiller and other major components were replaced or repaired and work was completed in November. The heating system was not addressed in this project, however, and additional repairs will be needed. Other projects included the installation of a new emergency lighting system and the reconfiguration of the parking lot to add an exit ramp from the upper lot. The Cape Light Compact replaced 226 problematic compact florescent light fixtures with a model that doesn't overheat and will be more efficient. The Friends of Brooks Free Library funded a beautiful wooden sign with a changeable message insert by the Main St. entrance. While the portable sign had received all necessary approvals, the new sign is a great improvement. The Community Preservation Act funded preservation work on the exterior of the Brooks Block will begin this winter, with Highway and Maintenance Department staff members cutting and preparing new decorative shingles. They have also been working on the installation of the new lights in the unlit upper parking lot and should be finished with that project shortly.

Friends and Volunteers

The Friends of Brooks Free Library continue to support the Library in many ways. Their "First Sunday" series provides free musical performances, art demonstrations, lectures and other programs once a month from October through May. The Friends welcome the donation of gently used books for their on-going and special book sales. Funds from their book sales are used to provide for Summer Reading Program activities for children. The Friends lease additional copies of bestsellers to reduce the time patrons have to wait for popular items. They pay for the purchase of passes for discounted or free admission to museums and attractions. The Friends also manage "Books on Wheels," a homebound delivery service that uses volunteer drivers to bring books to Harwich residents who aren't able to come to the Library due to health or illness. The Friends' Board meets at 10:30 am on the third Friday of the month from September through June and welcome anyone interested in supporting the Library to attend.

Over 100 volunteers help us by shelving books and other materials, keeping the books in order, serving as program coordinators and discussion leaders, registering patrons for library cards, and making phone calls to let patrons know an item is here for them. The Harwich Garden Club cares for the rejuvenated island in our parking lot and the blooming barrels and they provide a beautiful arrangement for our lobby each month. The Chatham-

Nauset Lions Club continues to support our VITAL program financially and to provide volunteer instructors. We can't thank the volunteers enough for all that do! It is much appreciated!

Library Staff

Library Director:	Ginny Hewitt
Public Services Librarian:	Suzanne Martell
Reference Librarian:	Jennifer Pickett
Youth Services Librarian:	Ann Carpenter
Assistive Technology Coordinator:	Carla Burke *
Admin/Reference Assistant:	Nicole Hansen/Emily Milan *
Senior Library Technicians:	Gordon Benoit *
	Joanne Clingan *
	Nicole Hansen*
	Phil Inman *
	Emily Milan *
	Pam Paine *
Library Technicians:	Lisa Eagar *
	Lee Kelley *

** part-time employees*

This year our substitute Circulation Assistants were Chardelle Davis, Matt Dilts-Williams, Adrienne Eldredge, Cathy Howard, Sarah Idman, Christine Kaufmann, Vince Kraft, Jackie Leach, Christina McManus, Judy Nichols, Linda Quinlan and Melissa Stello. Students Jarek Lenda and Shannon Grossman served as part-time Library Pages for the summer of 2012.

Trustee Meetings

The Board of Trustees welcomes your input at our meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm. The agendas, minutes and reports are posted on our webpage, www.brooksfreeibrary.org. You may also contact us about any issues or concerns by writing to: Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees, 739 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

Mary Warde, Chairman

Joan McCarty, Vice Chairman

William D. Crowell, Treasurer

Diane Schoenfelder, Secretary

Jeannie Wheeler, Chair, Building & Grounds Committee

JoAnne Brown, Building & Grounds Committee

Kathleen Remillard, Building & Grounds Committee

Ginny Hewitt, Library Director

Brooks Free Library Statistics 1998 - 2012

	Open Hours	Items Checked Out	Circ per Open Hour	Interlibrary Loans	Items in Collection	Active Cardholders	Full-time Residents w/ Library Card	Reference Questions
FY1998	1937	103910	53.6	6118	42603	9322		2472
FY2000	2060	111872	54.3	9624	51984	12313		3955
FY2002	2076	128462	61.9	14677	58439	10867		6053
FY2004	2066	145212	70.3	29264	55784	11661	7838	11416
FY2006	1848	156630	84.8	37849	63041	13108	8043	12126
FY2008	1980	193024	97.5	52435	68620	14298 *	8457	13183
FY2010	1978	225385	113.9	65829	72620	12606	9014	15471
FY2012	2004	235597	117.6	94261	81688	12573	8814	15861

* Note on cardholders: Large purge of inactive cards FY01 & FY08. Smaller yearly purge since FY09.

	Public Computer Sessions	Wireless Sessions	Adult Programs	Attendance Adult Programs	Youth Programs	Attendance Youth Programs	Childrens Programs	Attendance Children's programs
FY98	n/a		8	1430			119	3419
FY00	4395		10	335			172	4769
FY02	14722		71	673			234	8255
FY04	22784		341	2592	<i>Counted</i>	<i>w/ Adult</i>	284	6759
FY06	22124	5460	602	2608	<i>until</i>	<i>FY2010</i>	254	7317
FY08	26400	7265	323	2460			286	8306
FY10	28342	10260	575	4047	42	273	317	6541
FY12	30794	9722	534	4340	30	519	330	7131