

WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION
2019 ANNUAL REPORT



WORCESTER



PUBLIC LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



Great cities have great libraries and as the Worcester Public Library Foundation begins its 17th year, that statement has never been truer.

Our organization is privileged to have wonderful partners and colleagues at the Worcester Public Library. Together with the WPL Leadership Team, WPL Board of Directors, Friends of WPL, and the City of Worcester, we all work to support, foster and enhance the vitality of the institution. That said, it is my honor to share with you this brief report on the Foundation's fundraising efforts to advance the library.

As you may know, the library has embarked on a \$12.7 million renovation of the Main Library. In support of the project, which is scheduled to be completed in early 2021, the Foundation launched a \$4.1 million capital campaign entitled *Writing the Next Chapter* this past spring. To date, the Foundation has received contributions and commitments to the campaign totaling over \$3.4 million. We are very thankful for all the support we have received so far from the community, especially from the local Worcester foundations. We cannot express our appreciation enough to everyone who has been a part of the campaign - from the early community briefings to the steering committee meetings and the groundbreaking - we could not have done it without you all.

In particular, the Board wants to extend its heartfelt thanks to community leader Warner S. Fletcher for his incredible efforts in support of the campaign. We wouldn't be where we are today - nor would so many other important Worcester institutions be where they are - without him.

In addition to the capital campaign, we are very pleased to report that we have raised, for the benefit of the Worcester Public Library, more than \$185,000 in gifts and pledges over our past fiscal year in annual support of many outcome-driven programs, initiatives and activities.

Much of the Foundation's annual support goes toward improving access to resources and the availability of library services for every resident of Worcester. Be it the mobile libraries Lilly or Libby, our Frances Perkins and Great Brook Valley branches or our *One City, One Library* locations, our goal is to continue to feed the community's ever-growing appetite for library services.



This past year, in total, the Main Library and all the branches welcomed close to 600,000 visitors and circulated close to 900,000 items, including books, hotspots, DVDs, telescopes and much more. These numbers tell the story of the important role that the Worcester Public Library plays in providing access to information and other services to the Worcester community.

Our donors make all the difference in the Foundation's ability to provide all library patrons with cutting-edge and necessary library services. On behalf of the Foundation Board of Trustees, our Corporators and staff, allow me to express our enormous gratitude to the many individuals and organizations that have provided financial support for all of our programs at the Worcester Public Library. Please see the evidence of that generosity within our community in the listing of the donors in this report.

To all our donors, we at the Foundation are so very grateful to you for making the Library and its patrons as much your priority as it is ours.


Timothy Loew, President

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OUR MISSION



THE MISSION OF THE WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION IS TO ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF THE WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY AND TO RAISE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO ENSURE THE CONTINUING VITALITY OF THE INSTITUTION.

PRESERVING OUR LIBRARY'S HISTORY



Born in 1784, Dr. John Green was the son, grandson, and great-grandson of physicians who practiced medicine in Worcester County for more than 100 years. Green grew up surrounded by 10 brothers and sisters. His extended family, some whom made their home on what is now known as Green Hill, included Andrew Haswell Green, considered the “father” of modern New York City, Samuel Swett Green, a long-time head librarian at the Worcester Public Library, and Samuel Fiske Green, who practiced medicine for many years in what is now Sri Lanka.



Dr. Green and his wife Dolly lived a quiet, albeit busy, life. Green was a well-respected physician whose faithful services were indispensable to the welfare of the burgeoning Worcester community. Apart from his medical practice, his passion was collecting books. On December 23, 1859, the Worcester City Council accepted Dr. Green’s gift of 7,000 books which was the genesis of the Worcester Public Library. Before his death in 1865 he added 5,000 more volumes to what is now known as the Green Reference Collection.

For years, Dr. Green had collected books with the idea of founding a free public library. In addition to patronizing book dealers in Worcester and Boston, he had

an agent in London, who purchased books and sent them to Worcester. Since the users of his collection were to be the general public, he consciously collected books that covered every topic imaginable, including theology, history, politics, the arts, literature and the sciences. His collection included an early edition of Sir Isaac Newton’s *Principia*, considered one of the single most important works in the history of modern science; *Cosmos: A Sketch of A Physical Description of the Universe*, which was originally published in 1850; and *Introduction to Astrology* written by William Lilly and originally published in 1647. Author Douglas Brinkley writes that as a young boy, Robert Goddard scoured the shelves of the Worcester Public Library for books on the physical sciences. It is possible that the father of modern rocketry learned from books that were originally part of the Green Collection.





Despite the best efforts of the Worcester Public Library's staff, the ravages of time have taken its toll on these somewhat fragile materials. Over the past 160 years, moisture, and excess light have done damage, and simply handling the items has weakened bindings, and has resulted in detached covers and pages. Over the years, our librarians have endeavored to preserve the collection. However, the overall condition of the materials has too often prevented the public from viewing these historically significant works.

In 2017, the Worcester Public Library received a Conservation of Library and Archival Materials Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, in the amount of \$30,000 that enabled the purchase of 1,500 custom-fitted, pre-labeled, acid-free boxes designed to stabilize a small portion of the collection. Library staff carefully selected the most appropriate works to be preserved in this manner, but there are still thousands of books in need of this treatment. The cost to preserve the entire collection may be close to \$100,000 and it is safe to say that the library will be hard at work, seeking additional funding to support this important initiative.



-Thank you to Genealogy & Local History Librarian, Joy Hennig, for her significant contributions to this article.



FRANCES PERKINS BRANCH LIBRARY AT GREENDALE

The Worcester Public Library Greendale Branch was built in 1914 with funds provided by Andrew Carnegie and on land provided by Worcester industrialists. Carnegie himself came to Worcester for the laying of the cornerstones for the new building. As busy as this branch was, due to drastic budget cuts, the Greendale Branch was closed in 1990. In response to this unwelcomed



decision, and as a result of public outcry and support, the branch was refurbished and reopened in 1992. The spirit of civic cooperation by the neighbors and businesses to clean books, polyurethane bookshelves, wash windows and otherwise prepare for the library's reopening in 1992 still persists today. In 1994, the WPL Board of Directors voted to recognize the lifelong contributions and achievements made

by Worcester native and workers-rights advocate, Frances Perkins, by rededicating the Greendale Branch Library on its 80th birthday as the Frances Perkins Branch Library at Greendale.

Despite a refresh in 2017 which included the front façade being cleaned and refurbished, the front doors being refinished, the installation of a new exterior book return and a new sign, and the addition of new landscaping and trees, the structure pretty much resembles how it looked when it first opened in 1914, with its dark wood, original fireplace, and original front tiled entry. Today, this traditional, neighborhood library stays current with all of its services and offerings and, like most libraries, has seen many changes in the manner in which visitors utilize library services. Technology has become increasingly important to library patrons, many of whom come to use the library's computers or take advantage of its wireless internet access. Museum passes, Kindles, and wi-fi hot spots are also in high demand by patrons. Frequent visitors include students from Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School who walk across the street after school to do homework and meet up with friends.

People like to come here for its personalized service: visitors are greeted by name, there is no self-checkout, and there are lots of friendly conversations between patrons and staff. For years, it has served as an active and engaging neighborhood community center for people of all ages. It is the only local branch that is open until 9 p.m. on Friday nights, which makes it a popular place for families looking to entertain their kids! The Frances Perkins Branch enjoys a loyal constituency of dedicated library users, many of whom have been lifelong patrons of this branch, including one who some believe to be a resident friendly ghost!



Frances Perkins Branch by the Numbers FY 2019

Circulation

90,789

Visitors

65,199

Programs

137

Program Attendance

1,731

Ten Best Things About Greendale Library

– Sixth Grade Students from Greendale School.

Taken from a page of the 1994 Frances Perkins Rededication Program Book.

1. When we have the "Science Fair" they put out all kinds of books on many subjects.
2. The Library has free passes to the Science Museum.
3. Instead of renting a movie, you can borrow records, tapes and books for free.
4. It's pretty inside.
5. It has the whole collection of Nancy Drew Books.
6. You don't have to go downtown to get a book if they don't have it. You can order it and they'll get it for you.
7. Nice people work there.
8. They have a lot of books about ghosts.
9. It has the name Greendale Library, like our Greendale School.
10. It has been around a long time.

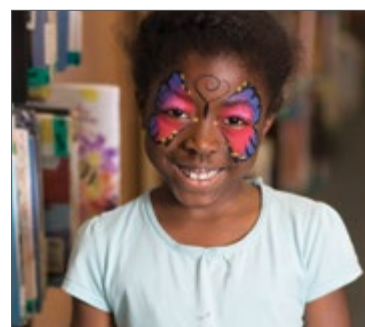


"Frances Perkins Branch is a multi-generational branch. We have elderly patrons that have been coming here since they were babies. They remember coming here as kids, they have brought their own kids, and now bring their grandkids. It is full of nostalgia!"

– **Robin, Frances Perkins Branch Circulation Supervisor**

"One day, an older gentleman came in with a jury summons. He needed a deferment from jury duty, but they'd only allow him to apply for it online. He said he didn't own a computer or know how to use one. He was beside himself with worry. We took him over to the computer and talked him through the process. He said we made his day."

– **Rebecca, Youth Community Services Librarian at Frances Perkins Branch**





AN OUT OF THIS WORLD PROGRAM!

This year's Summer Reading Program, *A Universe of Stories*, was out of this world with programs and activities centered around exploring the universe! The program began with blast-off parties at each library location, including Galaxy Mini Golf and painting galaxy coasters. Patrons were wowed by visitors from the David Clark Company who displayed a space suit built for NASA and an expert from the Aldrich Astronomical Society who presented space memorabilia! Registered participants were encouraged to read during the summer months with incentives ranging from a space rubber ducky to a grand prize of EcoTarium passes! New this year, participants were able to "Read Away Your Fines" to reduce or eliminate overdue book fines by signing up for Summer Reading online and logging reading minutes. Fines waived were close to \$1,000 and 40 previously blocked library cards were unblocked!



Libby is made possible by the generous support of the **City of Worcester** and the continued generous annual support of the **College of the Holy Cross**. Lilly is generously supported by the **City of Worcester, Quinsigamond Community College, the QCC Foundation, Worcester State University, the United Way of Central Massachusetts, and the University of Massachusetts Medical School.**

The goals of the Summer Reading Program are to encourage reading among Worcester's children, teens and adults, improving reading skills during the summer set-back months and to generate interest in the library and books. With over 2,000 registrants and 247 free programs offered across all of our locations, the library surely did just this!

Many thanks to our sponsors this year: **Greater Worcester Community Foundation; UniBank; Country Bank; The Office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr.; Bob's Discount Furniture; Cornerstone Bank; Walmart; and Price Chopper's Golub Foundation.**

LILLY AND LIBBY CONTINUE TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Lilly and Libby, WPL's two mobile libraries, continue to serve some of Worcester's most underserved populations. They travel the city streets, providing access to information, resources, services and materials for people of all ages who would otherwise be unable to access library services. For many in our community, a lack of transportation impedes their access to information.

The Worcester Public Library is committed to providing access to every member of our community, and Lilly and Libby are helping to fulfill this need. Together, the two libraries on wheels make close to 800 stops annually at places such as elementary schools,



preschools, after school programs, Head Start, public housing communities, senior housing complexes, special events, and camps.



WPL has been able to visit 31 Worcester Public elementary schools, as well as private and charter schools, once every four weeks throughout the school year. Libby brings library services directly to the public at after-school programs, public apartment complexes, day programs for physically and developmentally challenged people, senior housing, as well as neighborhood and community centers.

In fiscal year 2019, together they welcomed close to 24,000 people on board and loaned 40,491 items! Mobile libraries offer most services that patrons find in

library branches. Aside from borrowing books or movies, visitors to the mobile libraries have access to trained library staff, can apply for a library card, and can learn about all the programs and services provided throughout the library system. As a vital extension of our libraries, these mobile libraries help keep us connected, providing a space for people of all ages and demographics, delivering them information they might not otherwise have access to.

A CELEBRATION OF AUTHORS

On October 25, 2018, 200 guests gathered in downtown Mercantile Center to support the programs and services of the library. They mingled, ate and drank, while enjoying a lively conversation between four award-winning authors, led by moderator and WPL Board President, Stephanie Pasha. Featured authors were Ann Hood, Gregory Maguire, Roland Merullo, and Randy Susan Meyers. A highlight of the evening was an inspirational speech given by nineteen-year-old Agnes N., whose family immigrated to Worcester from Uganda when she was eleven years old. Agnes recounted her struggles with communicating in English when she arrived and how she spent hours reading and socializing in the library in order to improve her language and literacy skills. In her own words: "The library has taught me English, kept me safe, and has provided entertainment. It has given me job experience, and is helping me enhance my education and succeed as a freshman in college. The Worcester Public Library community continues to be a positive influence in my life that has helped me learn and grow as an individual and has made me the person I am today." Bravo Agnes!

Thanks to the following event sponsors, we were able to raise money for the purchase of laptops for the Teen Zone!: **The Kirby Foundation; UniBank; Bartholomew & Company; Bay State Savings Bank; Berkshire Bank; Coghlin Electric; College of the Holy Cross; Fidelity Bank; LLB Architects; Location, Inc.; Markos Jewelers; Quinsigamond Community College; RE/MAX Vision; Saint-Gobain; UMass Memorial Health Care; Webster Five Foundation; Wegmans; Worcester Polytechnic Institute; and Charter TV3.**



GENEROSITY THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

We are grateful for **Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute** for their ongoing voluntary payments to support the Worcester Public Library. These funds are essential to enhancing and supporting the operations and services of the Worcester Public Library.

PUBLIC SERVICES TEAM STRIVES TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



WPL's Public Services Team is made up of twenty-five dedicated, passionate frontline librarians with a wide range of strengths, skills and diverse backgrounds. They are the hub of democratic engagement and civic involvement, curating and cherishing the library's current and historic collections to honor, protect and promote literacy and the history of the library and city. They help people with their informational, educational, technological, bureaucratic, social,

psychological, and entertainment needs. They align the library's goals with the data-proven needs of the community to serve everyone regardless of their economic status, race, gender, age, national origin, or ability.

Public Services is made up of a loyal group, with some staff having worked at WPL for over 40 years. In addition to holding their Masters in Library Science, this team holds three other advanced degrees in Theology, Leadership & Organization, ESL and also includes a certified resume writer. They speak eight languages other than English and represent five other countries of origin!

These librarians work tirelessly to improve and add services to meet a wide range of the needs of a diverse patron base. Various classes and programs are developed and implemented based on what the community needs. They work closely with the community through outreach and partnership to share resources and services. Some of the more popular patron needs include the desire for more computer classes and tech help to bridge the digital divide, in addition to assisting new immigrants, job seekers, small businesses and disadvantaged populations.

Last spring, the City of Worcester recognized the Public Services department with the Eleanor Riik All-Star Teamwork Award. Twenty-five librarians were honored for the work they do in reference, programming, collection development and management, and building community partnerships. Through their hard work and dedication, this team makes a profound impact in our community!





WPLF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: *WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER*

At a groundbreaking on June 12, 2019, the Worcester Public Library Foundation kicked off the public phase of our \$4.1 million capital campaign - *Writing the Next Chapter*. To date, \$3.4 million has been raised towards the \$4.1 million goal.

The campaign is chaired by community leader Warner Fletcher, and includes campaign steering committee members Paul Belsito, Jeff Burk, Vaughn Calhoun, Sarah Sanders, Patty Eppinger, Dr. Richard E. Greene, Anne Lang, Tim Loew, Stephanie Pasha, Sherri Pitcher, Gail Randall, Dr. Robert Sorrenti, and Tina Sullivan.

Writing the Next Chapter is a multi-year capital campaign to support the \$12.7 million renovation of the Worcester Public Library's Main Library. The project includes the creation of a new entrance on the building's north side, which faces the Worcester Common, and the enclosure of the covered walkway running along Salem Street. The newly enclosed space will create 8,000 additional square feet of space for programming and casual seating.

One of the most exciting aspects of the renovation is the relocation of the children's room to the third floor, creating an opportunity to build a state-of-the-art space that provides children and their families with several unique learning opportunities. The space will feature interactive walls and flooring, a celebration of several Worcester landmarks, updated technology, and much more.

This renovation project is important to the over 600,000 visitors who come to the library in search of information, support and community. We are excited by the opportunity to more fully integrate the library into the new retail and residential development occurring around the Common.

This campaign is off to a fantastic start and we are grateful to the many generous donors who have already stepped up to support this important project. There is still work to be done, as we still need to raise \$700,000 to reach our goal. In the coming weeks and months, we will be appealing to those who care about and support the library with the hope that our entire community will rally around this important cause and help complete the project. To date, several individuals, businesses and foundations have stepped forward to lead this fundraising effort and we are most grateful for their support.

The Foundation's 2018 Annual Meeting was held on September 27, 2018 at the Main Library. During the program, the Dr. Richard E. Greene Founders Award was presented to Paul Belsito of the Hanover Insurance Group Foundation in recognition of Hanover's many years of partnership, in-kind services and financial support they have provided for the betterment of the library and its constituents. The program also included guest speaker Dr. Charles Steinberg, President of the Pawtucket Red Sox, who enlightened the crowd with his famous storytelling and display of World Series Championship rings!



Thank you to the following individuals, businesses, and foundations who have committed to the campaign to date!

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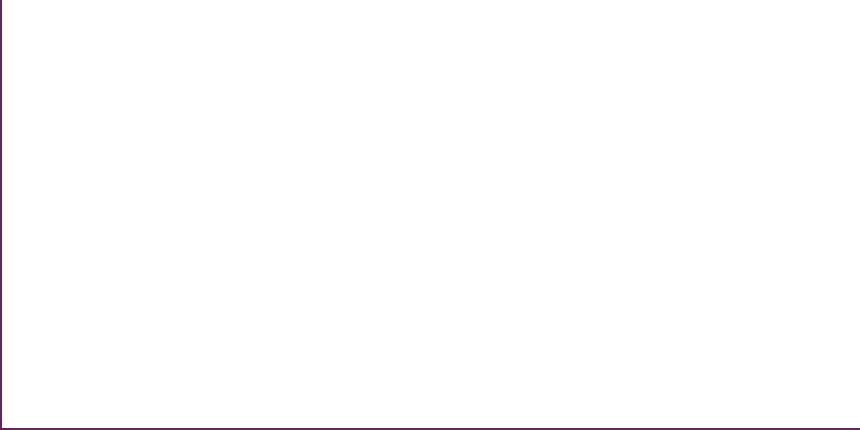
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