

WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



WORCESTER



PUBLIC LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

The past year was challenging for everyone. COVID-19 impacted our daily lives and changed how we lived, worked, learned and played in so many ways. And just as our community began to imagine a post-pandemic world, so did the Worcester Public Library Foundation.

Now in our 19th year, the Worcester Public Library Foundation continues to be fortunate to have such wonderful partners and colleagues at the Worcester Public Library. Working with new WPL Executive Director Jason Homer, we look forward to accomplishing great things with the WPL team, WPL Board of Directors, Friends of WPL, and the City of Worcester, as we foster and enhance the vitality of the institution. As always, it is my honor to share with you this brief note on the Foundation's recent efforts to advance the library.

More than two years ago, the Foundation launched a \$4.1 million capital campaign entitled *Writing the Next Chapter* in support of the recently completed Main Library renovation project. I am pleased and proud that not only did the Foundation reach our goal, we surpassed it. To date, the Foundation has received contributions and commitments to the campaign totaling over \$4.2 million. We greatly appreciate the generous support we received from the community, especially from the Worcester-area philanthropic foundations. We are so thankful to all who played a part in this campaign's success - from the early community briefings to the steering committee meetings to the groundbreaking and the ribbon-cutting - we could not have done it without everyone's help and support.

In particular, on behalf of the entire WPLF Board of Trustees, I would like to extend our most sincere thanks, once again, to Dr. Martha Pappas and the Pappas Foundation Trustees for their incredible generosity in support of the campaign. The Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center, which opened to great fanfare this summer, is an inspiration and destination for young children and families from all across our community. If you have not yet had a chance to visit, please do so. You will love it!

Our supporters make all the difference in the Foundation's ability to provide library patrons with new and necessary library services. Speaking for our Foundation Board of Trustees, Corporators and staff, allow me to express our enormous gratitude to the many individuals and organizations that have provided financial support for each and every one of our programs at the Worcester Public Library. This community support can be seen in the listing of 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.

Best regards,



Timothy Loew
President
Worcester Public Library Foundation



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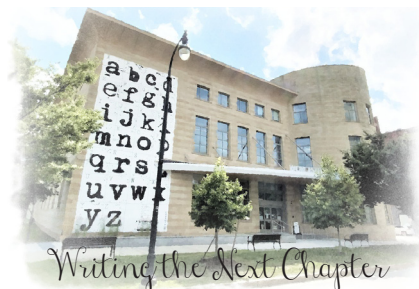
AMY LACHAPELLE, DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enhance the visibility of the Worcester Public Library, and to raise public and private funds to ensure its continued vitality.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN *WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER* CULMINATES IN SPECTACULAR LIBRARY RENOVATIONS



When you visit the newly renovated Worcester Public Library's Main Branch you will not be disappointed! Walk through the new Franklin Street front door to discover a bright, wide open learning commons area, flanked by brand new study and quiet reading rooms, a new Digital Studio (offering every up to date method of digitization) and updated Computer Lab. Proceed

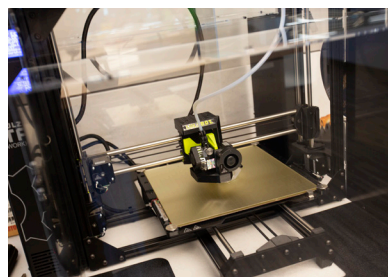
down the main hallway past the updated New Americans Corner, Audiovisual Room, the Fletcher Family Innovation Center (offering all sorts of STEAM equipment and programs for all ages!), the Hanover Teen Space (where teens can be teens), a new Friends Bookstore, and updated Talking Book space with a new conference room.

Follow a brightly painted mural by artist Ryan Gardell of Artifakt Studios up the staircase to the new destination location, the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center on the third floor. This new center, which honors two philanthropic leaders in the Worcester community, is a state of the art space that features updated technology, interactive walls and flooring, Worcester-themed elements, and several unique learning experiences for children of all ages. It is not to be missed!

We are excited to share our new spaces with you. Thanks to our generous donors, through our *Writing the Next Chapter* Capital Campaign, we were able to raise over \$4.2 million! Regardless of your age or interest, there is something for everyone!

FLETCHER FAMILY INNOVATION CENTER

The Fletcher Family Innovation Center is a creative flexible space where patrons of all ages can come explore and learn different STEAM skills. Thanks to support from MassDevelopment, this makerspace offers a hands-on learning approach to using sewing machines, screen printing, virtual reality for gaming or entertainment, DIY crafts, and vinyl cutting, among other STEAM activities. There's even a 3D Printer!



WPL saw an impressive
608% increase
in teen attendance
at programs from
FY 2019 - 2021.

HANOVER TEEN SPACE

The new Hanover Teen Space offers a safe and enclosed area where teens can be teens! Whether they want to relax and read a book in the comfortable new swivel moon chairs, socialize with friends, do homework from a borrowed laptop from the new laptop vending machine, or participate in a popular teen-themed program, this new updated space is a welcoming environment for patrons aged 12-17. And, as teens constitute 13% of library card holders at WPL, these teens need a place of their own where they can feel welcomed, feel valued, and will thrive!



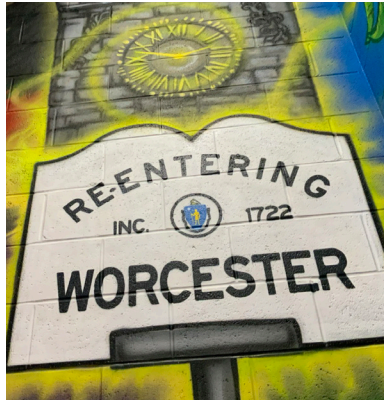
ARTHUR M. AND MARTHA R. PAPPAS CHILDREN'S CENTER

The new Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center fosters independence as well as group engagement with a variety of spaces and activities for children of all ages. The move to the third floor provides a more secure location, with its own restroom facilities and controlled points of entry. This amazing space will inspire generations of children in and around Worcester for years to come! The Pappas Children's Center was made possible thanks to a generous donation from the **Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Foundation**, the **City of Worcester**, and our many supporters.



MURAL ENTICES PATRONS OF ALL AGES

This spectacular Worcester-centric mural by Ryan Gardell of Artifakt Studios entices children and their families up the staircase to the Pappas Children's Center on the third floor. Thank you to **Greater Worcester Community Foundation** for helping to support this masterpiece!



DID YOU KNOW?

You can check out these items from our Library of Things!

- Hotspot
- E-Reader
- Kill-A-Watt
- Laptop and Hotspot Bundle
- Light Therapy Lamp
- Paper Shredder
- Sewing Machine
- Telescope
- Webcam

MOBILE LIBRARIES CONTINUE TO DELIVER!

While mostly off the road during the year due to the pandemic, Libby and Lilly were still able to make an impact by conducting "pop-up" visits at various locations and making deliveries of material to preschool programs throughout the city. Thank you to the **City of Worcester** and the **College of the Holy Cross** for their generous annual support of Libby and to 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** for their support of Lilly.



WPL'S CIRCULATION TEAM IS AT YOUR SERVICE

The WPL Circulation Department at the Main Library is made up of 24 dedicated staff who are the lifeblood of the library. They are the frontline friendly faces who you first see when you walk up to the Welcome Desk, and they are also the behind the scenes team that keep all the library materials on the shelves and circulating. Whether you need a new library card, want to check out or return a book or device, have a general question or need to be referred to a different department for help, the Circulation Team is ready to assist!

When the library had to close its doors to the public due to COVID-19, the Circulation Team didn't miss a beat. They left the safety of their homes to come into work to ensure patrons got the materials they needed. Service points were shifted outside for curbside pickup, as this dedicated team was committed to meeting patrons' needs as safely as possible. Customer service is a priority for this group and going the extra mile to help is what they do every day!

"One day a woman came into the library for a library card," explained Circulation Manager Caitlin Snow. "A requirement of obtaining a library card is to have a valid physical mailing address. I noticed the address she listed was the YWCA, and she explained that she was going through a difficult time. She was nervous that she would not be able to get a library card but when I told her she could, she was so relieved and excited. She said she was so happy to finally have something of her own... This incident has stuck with me and helps me do my job every day. It is very rewarding."



WPL GOES FINE FREE

The WPLF and its generous donors helped the library go Fine Free in the fall of 2020.

This initiative resulted in more than 30,000 patron accounts having their fees waived and their cards unlocked!

BRANCH EMPLOYEES SERVE OUR COMMUNITY

Branch employees were able to serve their patrons throughout much of the pandemic, despite special restrictions placed on them due to their size and locations. They were quickly able to adapt to offer curbside pickup, new library card sign-up, and take and make activities and book bundles. They were some of the first employees to return on-site after restrictions were eased, and lost no time getting back to serving our community.

RIISING DURING CHALLENGING TIMES



Like other similar institutions, the WPL faced many challenges due to the pandemic. The summer of 2020 saw the continuation of curbside pickup of materials at the Main Library and the Branches, in addition to the start of appointment-based services for access to computers, printers and fax services - something our patrons have come to rely on. The library

staff continued to find creative and innovative ways to provide services to take the place of in-person browsing by introducing Grab and Go Book, Magazine, or DVD Bundles, and distributing Early Math Kits. During the winter, Youth Services staff provided 40 Take and Make craft bags and books to families living in shelters and other innovative programs were offered including Bilingual Story Time, Yoga Story Time, and Dial-A-Story for our vision-impaired patrons. Spring 2021 saw the start of limited in-person browsing which slowly transitioned to opening at limited capacity in May.

Dedicated library staff never missed a beat, working hard to keep WPL up and running. Our Buildings and Grounds team, Information Technology Services department, Technical Services, and Administration team continue to work behind the scenes to support our libraries in many vital ways, including ensuring our facilities are safe and clean, our technology is working, materials are organized, and staff have the supplies they need. Throughout this difficult time, WPL kept people connected in ways that brought our community closer. WPL's buildings may not have been open, but the library was never closed!

1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

The pandemic was a perfect time to roll out the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, which encourages families and caregivers to read 1,000 books with their young children before they enter kindergarten. There have been several kids who have completed the program and earned their t-shirts and certificates!



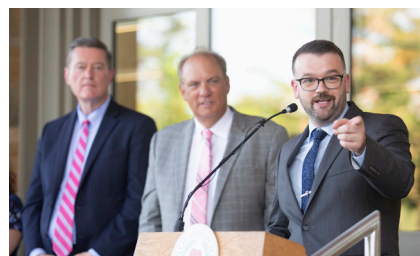
GRAND REOPENING



The Worcester Public Library had a grand reopening to welcome the community back to the spaces that had previously closed due to the renovation project at the Main Library. The project began in 2019, with the bulk of the work taking place over the last year, in the midst of a global pandemic. The library staff are excited to be able to use the new and improved areas to serve patrons.

**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

RIBBON CUTTING



On Thursday, August 12, the Worcester Public Library, Worcester Public Library Foundation, and the City of Worcester welcomed patrons back to the Main Library with a Ribbon Cutting celebration. The ceremony marked the opening of the new front door on Franklin Street, the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center, the Hanover Teen Space, the Fletcher Family Innovation Center, Newspapers & Magazines area, and Digital Studio. It also marked the reopening of several improved spaces including the Friends Bookstore, Talking Book Library, and New Americans Corner.

**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY



The Worcester Public Library threw a huge Community Block Party on Saturday, August 14 at the Main Library to welcome our patrons back to the Library. The renovation and the pandemic limited many library services over the past couple of years, so everyone was ready to celebrate! Patrons were treated to balloon twisting, Hero Kids Sports, face painting, Henna and glitter tattoos, and a petting zoo.

**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

DONOR RECEPTION



The Worcester Public Library Foundation welcomed donors and supporters to a Donor Reception on the fourth floor of the Main Library. The Foundation, WPL representatives, and officials from the City of Worcester were on hand to thank those who contributed to the *Writing the Next Chapter* Capital Campaign, and to celebrate the renovation of the Main Library.

**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

WHAT'S NEXT MESSAGE FROM WPL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JASON HOMER



I am so excited to join the Worcester Public Library as its new Executive Director! We are off to a great start, wrapping up the renovation and developing new programs and events for the community. Worcester has welcomed me with open (and socially distant) arms as well as big smiles behind masks, then without masks, and then behind masks again. Throughout all this uncertainty, the WPL staff, the Foundation, our

Friends, and City officials have created a safe and secure space for our patrons, and I could not be more honored to lead WPL into its next chapter.

During the pandemic, libraries proved we were more equipped to pivot to online and distance learning and programming than many other organizations. Getting right to work, our staff were finding new ways to deliver services. We will take that flexibility and enthusiasm into the coming year to improve services and resources at all of our branches in a system-wide approach. We look forward to increasing library usage throughout the City, and challenging the way Worcester thinks of its libraries. I look forward to delivering world class library services to this community, and I cannot wait to celebrate our success with all of you!

WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES

The Worcester Public Library is fortunate to have seven locations around the City to serve the public. I am looking forward to enhancing these locations over the next few years, so they can continue to meet the needs of our patrons who utilize them. We are especially excited for the major updates coming to the Great Brook Valley Branch, and continue to work towards restoring the interior of the historic Frances Perkins Branch. We also look forward to continuing our partnership with the Worcester Public Schools through the Burncoat, Goddard, Roosevelt, and Tatnuck Magnet Branches.



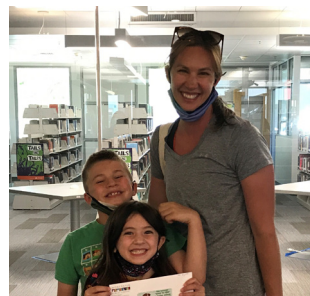
TAILS AND TALES SUMMER READING

For Summer Reading 2021, the WPL focused on “Tails and Tales” with a “Read to Feed” program that benefited shelter animals at the Worcester Animal Rescue League. Program participants met the reading challenge and we were able to donate \$1,000 to WARL thanks to our generous sponsors and our community’s great readers!

Summer Reading offered both in-person and online classes and programs for children, teens and adults, including animal-themed book clubs and storytimes, computer classes, arts & crafts, gaming and much more! After a difficult year of remote learning for many students, and lack of socialization for everyone, summer reading programs and events were a welcome diversion for all of our participants.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER READING SPONSORS:

UniBank, Country Bank, Price Chopper Golub Foundation, The Office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr., Bob’s Discount Furniture, Cornerstone Bank, and bankHometown.



THE IMPACT OF PLANNED GIFT GIVING



Denise E. Nangle
(March 3, 1953 -
April 23, 2019)

When Denise E. Nangle passed away on April 23, 2019, we received notification that the WPLF was a beneficiary of her Trust and that we would be receiving a considerable donation in the amount of \$390,000 from her estate. This unexpected news and curiosity about this woman, prompted us to find out what we could about Denise and how the Library Foundation came to benefit from her generosity. As we learned from her good friends Penny and Christine, Denise had a great sense of humor, was a lover of the opera, the outdoors, dogs, and libraries. She was a voracious reader and a very active volunteer with the Friends of the WPL. It was through this volunteerism at the library that she discovered all the good that the WPL does. Denise’s appreciation of the importance of public libraries is apparent in this significant gift. While Denise’s gift is certainly extraordinary and will make a lasting impact on the WPL community, gifts of any amount can make a meaningful difference. For more information on planned gift giving contact the Foundation office.

WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER CAMPAIGN DONORS

Thank you to the following individuals, organizations and foundations who have contributed to the campaign to date!

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ANNUAL MEETING

The Foundation's Annual Meeting was held virtually on September 17, 2020. As we were unable to meet in person, our annual award presentations were tabled for a later date in order to be able to celebrate together. However, as part of the program, it was announced that the 2020 Dr. Richard E. Greene Founders Award will be presented to the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Foundation in recognition of their inspirational support of the Library's Children's Center renovation. It was also announced that the 2020 Dr. William F. and Betty O'Neil Service Award will be presented to the Friends of the Worcester Public Library for their long-standing commitment, service, and dedication to the Library, including advocacy, volunteer service, and fundraising. The honor will also be awarded to Denise E. Nangle (posthumously) in recognition of her generous gift and long-time volunteer service at WPL.



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Thank you to 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 supporting and enhancing the operations and services of the WPL.

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