

WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION FY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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PUBLIC LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Since 2003, the Worcester Public Library Foundation has worked toward having an impact on the community through our efforts in support of the Worcester Public Library. And, even as we all began to adjust to post-pandemic life, this past year has been no different. Our focus on advancing the cause of the library remains as energetic, exciting and enthusiastic as ever.

Now in our 20th year, the Foundation continues to be so very fortunate to have such dedicated partners and colleagues at the library. From WPL Executive Director Jason Homer and the entire WPL team to the WPL Board of Directors, the Friends of WPL, and the City of Worcester, we all work together in support of this great institution. As my tenure comes to an end, it is my honor and pleasure to share with you, for the final time, this brief note on the Foundation's recent efforts to advance the library.

With our successful capital campaign, the main branch renovation and grand opening of the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center behind us, the Foundation spent the last twelve months focused on building on those achievements and expanding our capacity to do more. Beyond establishing new goals and objectives for our traditional programs, initiatives and activities, we launched a new fundraiser, the inaugural mini golf event. The event brought in some new faces, showed off our newly renovated spaces, and raised money at the same time! On behalf of the Foundation's Trustees, Corporators and staff, we greatly appreciated the generous support we received for this new event, especially from the business community, and are already looking forward to doing it again.

This past fiscal year we are very pleased to report that we raised more than \$500,000 in gifts and pledges. I continue to be inspired by all of the people who give so generously despite the challenging times many faced. This annual support will benefit many outcome-driven activities, initiatives and programs at the Worcester Public Library.

Our supporters make all the difference in the Foundation's ability to provide library patrons with new and necessary library services. On behalf of our Foundation Board of Trustees, Corporators and staff, allow me to express our enormous appreciation to the many individuals, foundations and organizations that have provided philanthropic support for our work 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 very grateful to you for making the library and its patrons as much your priority as it is ours.

Warm regards,



Timothy Loew
President

Worcester Public Library Foundation



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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.

LIBBY BOOKMOBILE SERVICE TURNS 10!



On June 4, 2022, Libby Mobile Library service turned 10 years old! Libby's birthday was celebrated at the Summer Reading kickoff at the Main Library, complete with giveaways and Libby-themed arts and crafts! Libby's sponsor, the **College of the Holy Cross**, hopped on board 10 years ago and has been supporting Libby's operations ever since!

HISTORY OF WPL'S BOOKMOBILES

The Worcester Public Library's first mobile library was launched in 1940 under the leadership of Head Librarian Emerson Greenaway. The vehicle carried 2,700 volumes on its first run and by the end of the first week, 2,500 of them had been checked out! Initially, the bookmobile employed a staff of eight and made 21 scheduled stops per week. Within a year, the bookmobile was experiencing the stresses of wartime. Gasoline rationing, along with male drivers joining the armed services, threatened to ground this popular service. However, the vehicle drove on in the capable hands of women who were determined to keep people reading!

During the 1950s and early 1960s the Worcester Public Library grappled with the challenges posed by the baby boom. The burgeoning school-age population often taxed the resources available through the bookmobile. During this time, the library sought to increase staff, and in 1954, the original vehicle was replaced by a "new and improved" model, produced by the Thomas S. Moroney Company of Shrewsbury.



The bookmobile's popularity continued to increase and was replaced again in 1968. In 1969, circulation through the service exceeded that of any branch library. In line with WPL's ongoing commitment to providing "more than books," the bookmobile began showing films each day at the last stop on its route during the summer of 1969.

Vehicles were replaced. Librarians were hired. Drivers retired. Stops were added and dropped, and populations changed. Through it all, the bookmobile served the citizens of Worcester for years. By the early 1980s, however, with the passage of Proposition 2 ½, the service was in jeopardy and operations ceased in 1982. A limited service aimed at children and older adults was reinstituted in 1987, visiting schools and nursing homes until the early 1990s when the mobile library ground to a halt.

In 2012, the **College of the Holy Cross** was approached by WPL to see if they would be interested in helping fund the reinstatement of the bookmobile after years of suspended service. Holy Cross agreed, a naming contest ensued, and Libby was born on June 4, 2012! Over time and years, wear and tear got the best of the vehicle and in 2018, a fancy brand-new Libby was relaunched to serve the community!



LILLY HITS THE ROAD - BOOKMOBILE SERVICE EXPANDS

In 2014, it was determined that an additional bookmobile was needed, and Libby's younger sibling Lilly was launched thanks to **Quinsigamond Community College**; the **QCC Foundation**; **Worcester State University**; the **United Way of Central Massachusetts**; and the **UMass Chan Medical School**. Fortunately, with the support of the City of Worcester and the generosity of our community partners, WPL has been able to bring back Mobile Library services to the people of Worcester.



Our children's group
read an impressive total
of **308,454** minutes!

Our teens read an
incredible **459** books!

Our adults read an
amazing **2,634** books!



GET OUT AND READ!

Our Summer Reading theme this year, "Read Beyond the Beaten Path," combined camping, outdoor adventure, skill development and literacy programming with a goal of encouraging children, teens and adults to read at least 20 minutes a day in order to curtail the summer setback of academic progress between grade years. Some of our most exciting and well-attended programs this summer were the Summer Reading kickoff events at all of our locations. Over 600 participants enjoyed shows by Jungle Jim, Mike Bent's AbraKidabra, Bubbles McGee, Wingmasters and more!

Activities throughout the summer included many different outdoor experiences such as bear hunts, camp crafts, ghost investigations, s'mores, scary stories, sing-alongs and even camping on the moon with a NASA ambassador! Gaming, tie-dye and creating cryptid terrariums were some of the popular programming aimed at teens, but the highlight for one teen was the end of summer neon party where he exclaimed, "This has been the best day of my life!"

Other highlights included off-site programming at Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center & Wildlife Sanctuary as well as librarian visits with book giveaways to the Boys & Girls Camp at Great Brook Valley/Worcester Housing Authority.



"I always appreciate how the summer challenge keeps me motivated to read during such a busy time of year when I might otherwise fall off the wagon!"

- Summer Reading Participant



Readers earned prizes and participated in reading challenges throughout the summer, including adult readers who enjoyed receiving local restaurant gift cards as prizes for their reading efforts! Summer Reading closed out with the very popular, second annual WPL Community Block Party with over 2,075 in attendance!

Thanks to our generous sponsors for supporting this program! **Greater Worcester Community Foundation; UniBank; Mattina R. Proctor Foundation; Country Bank; Walmart; Cornerstone Bank; District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.'s Office; Price Chopper's Golub Foundation; Bob's Discount Furniture; bankHometown; and Friends of the Worcester Public Library.**



"I enjoy taking my family to the library. I love that both the kids and I can do a reading challenge. It keeps us motivated to read more!"

- WPL Parent



CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS AT MAIN LIBRARY PRIORITIZE PLAYFUL LEARNING

Since opening in August of 2021, the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Children's Center has been delighting families with its state of the art features and Worcester-themed elements. The five children's librarians that oversee this fantastic area are just as critical to the overall experience as the room itself! These five friendly faces welcome children 11 and under and their families into this space of playful learning opportunities.



Storytimes, which often feature songs as well as stories, have become wildly popular since the Pappas Children's Center opened its doors. Weekly programs such as Baby Bounce, Toddler Time, and Stories & Songs offer literacy fun for children 5 years and under. Our multi-lingual staff enable the library to offer bilingual storytimes as well! "Pollito Chicken," a fun Spanish/English storytime with music, was a recent favorite! For school-aged children, the librarians conduct well attended STEM programs. STEM Labs, in which children perform various experiments and building challenges, and Crazy Eights Club, a fun math program, have regulars coming back each week for more! By making learning fun, the creative children's librarians have children and their families flocking to our new program room!



"Your Baby Bounce Program was so engaging and developmentally appropriate! I have attended many other programs like this in the area and yours is by far the best!"

- WPL Parent and Educator

The Playscape in the Edward M. Augustus, Jr. Ellipse is a space where children have the opportunity to build and practice executive functioning skills needed for healthy development. The space offers fun, rotating themes with toys and playthings in order to encourage playful learning. Kids love to come play in the science lab, construction zone, and the farm & forest!

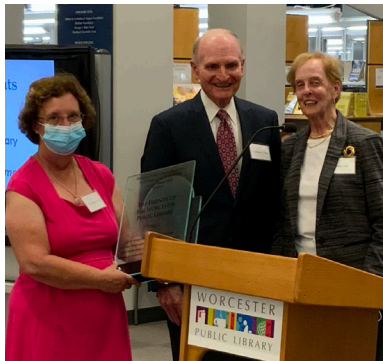
The Pappas Children's Center is a great space for parents and caregivers too. It offers a place where adults can socialize and support each other while their children play and learn. The space also has a parenting section for adults and caregivers as well as a professional section which offers educational books for teachers.

"From helping kids and caregivers find just the right book, to presenting creative, educational and fun programs, the children's librarians excel at providing services that will appeal to kids and caregivers of all ages and interests!"

- Cynthia Bermudez, WPL Youth Services Coordinator

ANNUAL MEETING

The Foundation's Annual Meeting was held on September 23, 2021 at the Main Library. As part of the program, the 2020 Dr. Richard E. Greene Founders Award was presented to the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Foundation in recognition of their inspirational support of the library's Children's Center. The 2020 Dr. William F. and Betty O'Neil Service Award was 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 was also awarded to Denise E. Nangle (posthumously) in recognition of her generous bequest, as well as her long-time volunteer service to WPL. Friends and family of the award recipients were present to celebrate these honors!



FRIEND-LY SERVICE AT WPL

The Friends of the Worcester Public Library, Inc. is a non-profit organization of volunteers who help to enhance the library's programs and services for the people of the Worcester community. Founded in 1956 to originally rally public support for a new Main Library building, the Friends have since played a vital role in enhancing WPL in a variety of ways. With proceeds from their volunteer-run Friends Bookstore, they help fund programs not included in the library budget; they advocate for legislative support of WPL and its programs; they help through volunteer efforts with many important library tasks and projects; and they sponsor the museum pass program, which offers discounted passes to various museums throughout New England. They are known for their huge annual book sale, their gifts to the library, their lectures, programs, contests and special projects. Through advocacy, volunteer services, and fundraising, the Friends enrich the Worcester Public Library in many ways!





CELEBRATE OUR LIBRARY!

Masks may have hidden some smiles, however, the joy and excitement could still be felt as library supporters gathered in person on November 4, 2021 at Mercantile Center for our annual fundraising event. After a forced year off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were ready to *Celebrate Our Library!* more than ever!



This year's author panel included **Amy Quan Barry**, the author of six books of fiction and poetry, including her most recent novel *We Ride Upon Sticks*; **Jane Green**, the author of twenty-one novels including eighteen *New York Times* bestsellers, one cookbook, and various short stories; and **Elin Hilderbrand**, *New York Times* bestselling author with twenty-eight novels. We were thrilled to welcome back our beloved and well-read moderator Stephanie Pasha, then-President of the Worcester Public Library Board of Directors.





In addition to the lively author panel discussion, the program included the presentation of the 2021 Dr. Richard E. Greene Founders Award to City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr. for his long standing support and advocacy of WPL, and the 2021 Dr. William F. and Betty O'Neil Service Award to WPL Associate Director Sulma Rubert-Silva for her leadership and management of the library's renovation project throughout the pandemic.



After viewing a video about the Great Brook Valley Branch, which demonstrated its impact on our community as well as its need for improvement, our auctioneer Che Anderson entertained guests as we worked together to raise funds for this great cause!

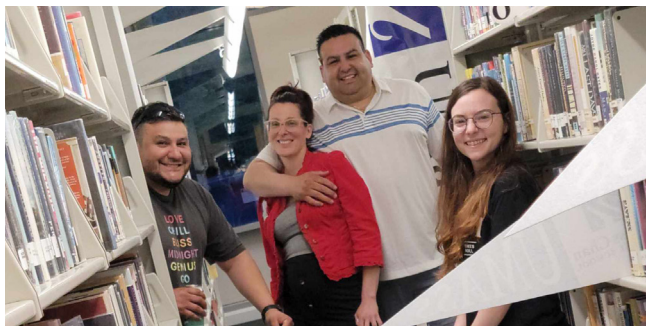


We are grateful for our event sponsors who helped make this evening such a success: **The Kirby Foundation; AbbVie; Saint-Gobain; UniBank; Bartholomew & Company, Inc.; Bay State Savings Bank; Coghlin Electrical Contractors; College of the Holy Cross; Consigli Construction Co., Inc.; Fidelity Bank; Fontaine Bros., Inc.; LLB Architects; Markos Jewelers; RE/MAX Vision; UMASS Memorial Health; Webster Five Foundation; and Wegmans.**



TEE OFF FOR WPL!

We set out to do something different and fun to raise funds for WPL, while at the same time show off our newly renovated library - and we succeeded! On a hot spring weekend in May, the Main Library was transformed into an 18-hole mini golf course with greens winding through the stacks and our first ever *Tee Off for WPL!* Mini Golf fundraising event was born. Our generous sponsors were responsible for decorating their mini golf holes - and we sure did see some creative ideas!



Thank you to our sponsors for their creative efforts and support: **Berkshire Bank; Bay State Savings Bank; Worcester State University; Baystate Financial; ComputerVault; Workers Credit Union; George's Coney Island; M.R. Boatwright-McEvoy; Carr Financial Group; Massachusetts Pirates; Quinsigamond Community College; Shi-Shi's Lounge; Mountain, Dearborn and Whiting, LLP; RE/MAX Vision; LEI Corporation; UMASS Chan Medical School; and Robert Sorrenti's golf hole** which was dedicated to the staff of WPL.





Friday night was the adult only **Mini Golf After Dark**, which offered a diverse selection of delicious food provided by the latest class of the Worcester Regional Food Hub. Redemption Rock Brewery and Decanted Wine Trucks offered beer and wine while musicians Matt & Marty Acoustic Mayhem entertained our guests. Raffles were offered and yard games were played for some added fun! Laughter could be heard throughout the evening from new faces and faithful supporters alike.



On Saturday, our course remained open for the **Family Fun Day of Mini Golf** event. Families and patrons of all ages had a great time golfing and visiting the Pappas Children's Center!



We called on our attendees to vote for the Best Decorated Mini Golf Hole and the winner was George's Coney Island! Coney Island owner, Kathy Tsandikos, was presented the award trophy, which was made on the 3D printer from our very own Fletcher Family Innovation Center!



We are looking forward to bringing this fun event back again next year!



COMMUNITY FUN FOR ALL AGES AT THE BLOCK PARTY

WPL hosted our second annual Community Block Party with free activities and entertainment, plus food trucks and over 60 craft and non-profit vendors. The City of Worcester also provided free parking for attendees! Thousands of people came out to attend and enjoy all the fun, and WPL is looking forward to doing it again next year!



OUR NEXT CHAPTER...

MESSAGE FROM WPL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JASON HOMER



We marked the end of the renovation to the Main Library in 2021, and with society finding its footing in a COVID-19 world, it finally feels like we here at the Worcester Public Library are ready to close that chapter and turn to the next.

I am aware, however, that this next chapter will not be without its own significant challenges. Aside from the day-to-day challenges of operating an urban library, we in the

“library world” are seeing more organized attacks on our institutions than we have in recent memory, and a desire to control who has access to our programs and services. Around the world, book bans, board subversion, and even threats to librarians and educators are becoming alarmingly frequent. In this time we are reminded that attacks on our libraries also mean that the opposition sees libraries and librarians as a force to reckon with and a threat to their agendas - and there is great power in recognizing that we, in libraries, have the strength to help overcome these threats.

The good news is that the public library is a great equalizer; empowering every citizen regardless of race, gender, religion or class to become a better and more informed version of themselves. At the core, the public library is designed to enrich the life of every member of its community and continually strive to give access to all, especially underrepresented and disadvantaged populations. Every day, librarians come into work with the goal of helping their community and working towards a better tomorrow.

The mission of the public library is more important than ever, but the work ahead is not work of librarians alone. Every member of the community must do their part to ensure the library has the support it needs to create access for all. Encourage everyone you know to learn how the library can positively impact their lives, and the lives of others in their community. Whether you are taking unique creator and maker classes in the Fletcher Family Innovation Center, utilizing the Digital Studio or Library of Things, using our numerous online research services, or seeking traditional library services, the Worcester Public Library has something for everyone and we need you to help us spread the word.

Our next chapter will end with a better tomorrow, and that is only possible with you!



GREATER WORCESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION - WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION AGENCY FUND

When the Library Foundation received a generous gift as part of its recent \$4.1 million capital campaign, our Board of Trustees decided to create a permanent endowed agency fund through the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. Named the *Worcester Public Library Foundation Fund*, this fund provides annual income to benefit and support capital needs of the library including equipment, furnishings and facility needs, such as repairs and replacements to ensure the WPL continues to be strong and robust for decades to come.



NATHANIEL WHEELER TRUST HELPS BEAUTIFY OUR OUTDOOR SPACES

Thanks to a generous donation from the **Nathaniel Wheeler Trust**, we have begun to make beautification enhancements to the exterior landscaping of our Main Library! Stay tuned for additional transformations next spring!

GENEROSITY THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

Many thanks 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 vital to enhancing and supporting the services and operations of WPL.



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