

## Watertown Free Public Library

Library Director: Leone Cole

Library Trustees: Tim Tracy, Chair  
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### Mission Statement

The Watertown Free Public Library extends beyond its walls to connect people to ideas, information, education, creative opportunities, and to each other. While preserving the rich history of Watertown, the Watertown Free Public Library embraces the advancement of library service, inspires personal development, and promotes community. The library provides free recreation, entertainment, and enrichment. It welcomes and serves everyone.

### WFPL by the Numbers

	FY17	FY18	% change
Total holdings (number of items in collection)	201409	221019	9.74%
Physical Circulation (books, movies, cds, etc. checked out at the library)	597571	610382	2.14%
Digital Circulation (ebooks and other digital content checked out through an online app)	41055	49125	19.66%
Programs	2037	2435	19.54%
Program Attendance	39433	53205	34.93%
Reference Questions	27529	29250	6.25%
Service Questions	18574	19632	5.70%
Door Count	433896	440780	1.59%
Registered borrowers	24218	24425	0.85%
Registered resident borrowers	19320	19568	1.28%

### Collection development and maintenance

The total number of items in the library collection is 221,019. This includes books, movies, video games, magazines, newspapers games, toys, and any other item the library makes available for the public use either for circulation or in-house use.

A library's collection is a crucial component to library service and WFPL staff constantly review the ways in which we collect and connect patrons to the materials. Of particular note is the topical displays that

librarians create to help patrons discover titles they may have otherwise overlooked. The positive feedback about these displays is constant. A sample of what we've heard includes"

"A woman came into the library to thank us for having a display about transgender people with a sign saying, "We will not be erased." She said that that sign meant the world to her."

"Two middle grade girls in the children's room (both in hijab) were looking at the comic talk display, one of them picked up a copy of Brave by Svetlana Chmakova and pointed to one of the characters on the cover who also wears a hijab and told her friend, "she looks like us!" and they both checked out a copy."

"A patron told me that she loves coming here because she always finds a great book on the express cart on the 1st floor or upstairs from a staff display, and really appreciates how much effort we put into displaying new and interesting books. She said it makes all the difference and she can tell how invested we are in getting people to read something they wouldn't normally pick up."

Librarians are responsible for the selection, purchase, classification, and deselection of library materials as defined in the library collection development policy. In addition to the regular maintenance of the collection some noteworthy changes in 2018 are detailed below.

### *Youth Collections*

In February, the Watertown Children's Book Award was given to Grand Canyon by Jason Chin, The First Rule of Punk by Celia Perez, and Jabari Jumps by Gaia Cornwall. This award is given annually to a picture book, a nonfiction book, and a chapter book and is selected by the children's librarians.

The Teen librarians created a new fiction collection early in the year called "middle school selects" (MSS). The intent of this collection is to provide a starting point for new middle school patrons and/or their caregivers in finding books that are at their reading level and are of interest to them. By the end of the year MSS had proven successful, particularly for parents of middle schoolers. Teen librarians often field questions from parents of sixth graders who are used to children's books and who are looking for titles to bridge the gap between the children's and teen rooms.

As part of a Library Journal webinar on diversity in library collections, Supervisor of Teen Services Carey Conkey-Finn initiated a diversity "audit" of the Teen New and Express Fiction collections (about 650 titles). The audit analyzed collection data to determine whether the collection includes a wide variety of points of view, experiences and representation. The intent was to quantify if library materials reflect the diversity of Watertown in terms of race, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ persons; it was also a way to determine whether the collections have adequate authors of different ethnicity. The results were good, though we need to work on collecting books by Hispanic/Latinx authors and have more books with protagonists who are persons with disabilities. The exercise was a good impetus to try to be consistently mindful of collection choices and more cognizant of looking for diverse titles beyond those that are reviewed in library publications.

### *Adult Collections*

The Adult Department streamlined the reference collection, which is traditionally a collection of reference books that are for library use only. Many volumes were moved to the circulating collection so patrons are able to borrow them, and outdated materials have been removed. Where available,

replacements have been ordered, but there is an undeniable downsizing taking place as more publications become available online only.

## Programming

The library provides frequent opportunities for engaging programming for all ages. Funding for all programming comes from the Watertown Free Public Library Building Committee, The Charles Burke Fund, or other grants or special gifts made to the library.

### Highlights

#### Children's Highlights

The children's department is a powerhouse of programming for children in grade 5 and under, including infants. Regular storytimes, baby nursery time, music programs, and general entertainment are provided regularly throughout the year.

- Children's librarians worked with the Hosmer PTO to provide an afterschool book club as an enrichment program for students at Hosmer. There were sessions in spring and fall.
- "Read to a Dog" invites emerging and struggling readers to read aloud to our volunteer dog Destiny. This is a hugely popular weekly program and patrons love their time with Destiny.
- "Danger Club" was a new addition in the fall that allowed children in grades 1 and 2 to learn how to safely use adult tools like screws and hot glue guns.
- Special programming was designed for children with sensory processing disorders along with their neurotypical peers to provide opportunities for children to participate in library programs in a gentler environment than they may sometimes find at our larger and louder programming.
- The ever-popular Barn Babies was back in November. As always the traveling petting zoo event was booked up almost immediately. Over 220 children and their families were able to participate.

#### Teen Highlights

Throughout the year teen librarians offer a variety of craft, gaming, education and other creative programs for teen users (grades 6 through 12). Of note this year were:

- Girls Who Code was an eight-month long weekly course on coding taught by local volunteers. This national program is an initiative to bridge the gender gap in the computer field by having middle and high school girls exposed to the different coding languages in a fun and structured way. Eighteen girls graduated from the program in May.
- The third week of October is Teen Read Week, but this year the department decided to celebrate reading for a month. During the four weeks 39 participants visited the library 90 times. Participating teens won chances for one of three backpacks filled with new books. They earned chances by registering for a new library card, checking out a YA book or audiobooks, reading for fun for an hour or asking a librarian for a reading recommendation.
- Voter registration was encouraged for teens eligible to register. Librarians helped teens (and others) that were interested in registering so they could participate in upcoming elections.
- Summer reading programs brought a fun variety of high tech and low tech options to teens including: Apocalyptic Game nights, scavenger hunts, retro video game afternoons, craft programs such as make your own candy sushi, button making and more.

## *Adult Highlights*

The adult services department provides programs for adult library users 18 and older.

### *Technology Instruction*

It's a common misconception that "everyone these days knows how to use a computer." There is still a large part of the population that have either never used a computer, or are computing novices/beginners. To that end the library provides computer classes for the most basic user as well as enrichment classes for those who are more techs savvy. Some popular technology programs offered throughout the year were:

Basic: Intro to Excel, Intro to Google Docs, Intro to Library Catalog and Accounts, Intro to Library Digital media and Streaming Services, Drop-in Tech help, etc.

Intermediate or advanced: Programming using Python, Podcasting, Privacy Basics, Intro to Social Media, Cloud 101, Coding, etc.

Targeted audience: Library resources for Job seekers, Smarter Holiday Shopping Online, VIBRANT, a monthly program created in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, for facilitated assistive technology training for seniors with visual impairment.

### *Health and Wellness*

The library seeks to enrich the whole person providing a variety of health and wellness programs including weekly yoga, regular 1:1 sessions in the library with Watertown's Social Services Resource clinicians, guided urban foraging walks, mindfulness workshops in collaboration with Live Well Watertown, self defense seminars, an insomnia seminar, also with Live Well Watertown, and more.

### *Literature, Books, and Reading*

One Book One Watertown (OBOW) is the biggest annual "book event" for the library. Every year we choose one title and invite the entire community to read along with us. We kicked it into high gear on March 1<sup>st</sup> with a Persian dinner and an appearance by Dina Nayeri, the author of *Refuge*, our One Book title. There were 106 copies of the book circulating, and they went out 348 times with 129 renewals during the duration of our One Book celebration.

Additionally, Watertown author Cara Marcus celebrated her new book with a multimedia tour of *Watertown Square Through Time*. Our regular "cook the books" program continued exploring recipes and their cookbooks of origin with a monthly potluck of foodie readers. Finally, we invited would-be novelists to write along with us during November for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)

### *Civics*

Early in 2017 we developed Democracy Talks. This series of events was designed to illuminate the democratic process and create space for conversation. Our expert speakers grapple with the thorniest issues of our time, providing much-needed context and suggesting paths to engagement. Some 2018 topics included: Democracy in Iran, Defining, Developing, and Legislating "Fair" Housing, Civil and Uncivil Disobedience, and Inequality and Public Policy.

### *General Entertainment*

There's room for fun and levity at the library, too. We offer programs to entertain including the popular Movie Mondays, a winter concert series, regular craft programs, and of particular note this year a Harry Potter Escape Room. The Escape Room was the culmination of many months of planning and creation by a small team of staff members. Registration for all 12 sessions filled up almost immediately, and patrons across all age groups were eager for more. We received so much wonderful feedback about this event, and many people requested that we do it again.

### *Project Literacy Highlights*

Project Literacy provides classes and 1:1 tutoring for English Language Learners. Beyond language education, Project Literacy offers opportunities for enrichment, connection and cultural skills. New offerings this year include "Exploring American Culture", a course for advanced students who wish to discuss different aspects of American culture and life. 15 students participated. Next was "Writing from Memory," a shorter course, which had students, write short essays about their lives. This is Project Literacy's first advanced class that focused on writing skills

We also started a once a month open house for parents with young children that we are calling Morning Chat. This is an opportunity for English language learners with young children to get a chance to be social and practice their English while their children also get a chance to play.

### *Hatch Highlights*



Halloween by Hatch was a fun costume fashion show and competition hosted at the Plumbing Museum. Contestants walked the runway in their homemade/Hatch-made Halloween costumes and were judged by a panel.

Hatch had an excellent showing at the World Robot Olympiad. Three teams practiced and built Lego EV3 robots and participated in the Boston Regional Competition. The Elementary team, Robot Chicken, placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in their category and the Senior Team, Plasma Robotics, placed 1<sup>st</sup>.

Refresh Bolivia, a global health organization based out of Harvard University, came to Hatch for "Sew for the Flow" and taught participants how to create re-usable menstrual pads that will be distributed to rural women in Bolivia through their new health clinic.

### *Summer Reading*

Summer Reading started out as a preventative effort to help children maintain their reading skills and avoid the "summer slide" during school vacation. Recent years have seen summer reading become a whole library event, not just for children and teens.

This year children entering Grades K-5 were invited to play Book Bingo in which they meet different book challenges such as "read a book outside" or "read a book about something scientific" to fill up a BINGO card. Students are eligible to win up to 2 book prizes for getting Bingo. Approximately 735 students played Bingo with us this summer.

Summer Reading for the teens was called Level Up! Teens challenge themselves to win prizes, get free books and earn chances for gift cards at the end of the summer. This year teen librarians and middle school teachers agreed to make participation in Level Up! one of the “challenges” the students are required to do over the summer. To make this library-middle school integrated program work, librarians created a reading list to go along with the middle school’s One Book title; by reading an additional book from this list and writing a “reading response” the students complete the challenge. The Teen Department also acquired over one hundred copies of the Middle School’s One Book title to support the sixth through eighth grade students.

Similar to the children’s department, the adult department ran Book Bingo during the course of the summer and patrons loved it. Hundreds of Book Bingo cards were distributed--some patrons even filled in entire cards rather than just completing a row.

## Outreach and Community Collaboration

It is essential for a library to seek opportunities for collaboration to stay informed of what the community wants and needs. Below are collaborative efforts made in 2018 that were not mentioned previously in this report.

### *Watertown and Local Schools*

Librarians made a presentation to the high school English and Language Arts department giving them exposure to the Library’s digital resources, many of which the teachers can use with their students to meet curriculum needs and also their own professional development.

The Children’s Department worked with Hosmer PTO to organize an after school book club.

The Teen department has an ongoing relationship with the Cotting School. The School is located in Lexington and serves adolescents with multiple disabilities. Students were welcomed for four visits in which they learned how to download ebooks and about other library services. Every week students from Perkins School for the Blind visit. One Perkins student is learning how to process books for withdrawal.

October 22-26 was STEM week in Massachusetts. Hatch supported Watertown High School's initiatives, by hosting a Civics class for a design challenge: create a concrete prototype of your method to get the youth out to vote (in the context of the high school's mock election). Four teams presented four distinct ideas with the help of Hatch volunteers and State Representative John Hecht. Liz Helfer participated in a STEM panel at the high school, moderated by WBUR journalist Bruce Gellerman. The panel, made up of Liz and three young engineers, addressed an audience of 60 high schoolers on the topics of workforce development, the college search, the role of failure in growth, and STEM-specific concerns about a changing economic landscape.

### *Community*

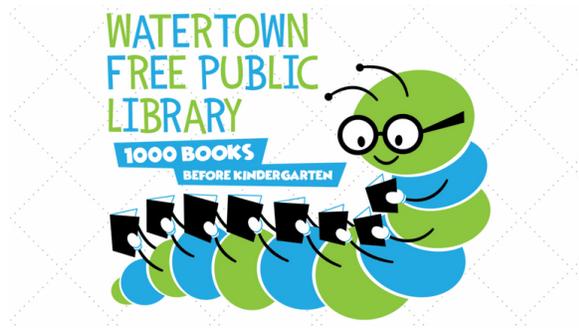
The library was well represented at Faire on the Square hosting a used book sale and a mini maker faire led by a group of Hatch volunteers. Project Literacy staff and board members attended as well.

Library staff once again made monthly visits to the Watertown Farmers market throughout the summer.

Hatch partnered with Watertown Friends of Bees for a seasonal workshop “Insect Hotels” in which participants learned about native bee populations and built pollinator homes.

Hatch made a stop at the Watertown Housing Authority's Health Fair to make the case for lifelong learning. Hatch also made an appearance with Lego robotics activities at the LigerBot Maker Fair in conjunction with the First Robotics competitions held at Newton North.

## Innovation



Any family with a child younger than 5 years old is welcome to join our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. It's just as it sounds: parents read any 1000 books with their children before they child begin Kindergarten. Reading together at home promotes vocabulary development and school skills so children will begin school ready to learn. Participants receive a tote bag to track each book and there are prize (free books) incentives at 250, 500, 750, and 1000 books.

## Professional Development

Library staff is encouraged to develop their skills by attending webinars, conferences, workshops, and other opportunities that help them stay current in their jobs. In addition to the independent activities, we provide skill builds and other in-house training opportunities

A major focus in staff development this year was Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. A small group of staff explored EDI to begin targeted work that ensures the library is truly considering all experiences of our patrons so that each person has an equitable experience at the library. This was the first step of what we expect to be a long process. In 2018 we were able to provide an a half day workshop on Racism and Implicit Bias led by Community Change Inc. Internally we developed a skillbuid on microaggressions that all staff attended.

In the fall all staff were required to participate in at least one workshop at Hatch. Hatch Coordinator Liz Helfer created staff-only workshops on the laser cutter, vinyl cutter, 3D printers, sewing machines, and woodworking tools.

## Financial

Project Literacy and Hatch were awarded at total of \$8,500 in grants from the Watertown Community Foundation.

Project Literacy received a \$1400 Watertown Saving Bank Customer Choice Award.

The Massachusetts Office on Disability awarded the library \$28,780 in grant funds to make ADA improvements to the building. The improvements include expanding the front patio to allow for wheelchair clearance and installing automatic door openers on the teen, children's, and Watertown Savings Bank Room doors. The project must be completed by June 30, 2019.

## Hatch

Hatch is the library's off-site makerspace. Established in 2014, Hatch is a public workshop (makerspace) that provides tools, equipment, and instruction for people to create and learn technologies and skills to which they may otherwise not have access. 2018 was the first full year that the library employed a full-time Hatch Coordinator, allowing us to expand our offerings and provide a regular schedule.

Noteworthy for Hatch in 2018:

- Offered regular, uninterrupted hours of service beginning in June
  - Monday through Thursday, 1-9
  - Friday through Sunday, 1-4
- Secured \$3500 in funding from the Watertown Community Foundation to provide what has become considered the “core classes” that are offered monthly.
- Community collaboration with other Watertown departments and cultural institutions to create a public mural based on Kingian non-violence principles. Hatch hosted 3 separate workshops to help community members participate in the creation of this mural.

## Customer Service



John (pictured left) recently traveled all the way from Florida to our library on a mission to map his family ancestry. After rifling through records in our local history room, our reference librarian Jill Clements traced John's family line back to the 1600s and the founding of Watertown.

The Teen department offered patrons the opportunity to register to vote. Sixteen-year-olds can register now and vote in their first election with they turn 18.

A new computer time and print management system – TBS Singlecard was installed and deployed in December. The new TBS services significantly enhance our customer experience by providing credit card payments, faxing, integration of the PCs, iMacs, and scanstation, and simple wireless print capabilities. This system can do so much more than our previous system, and we're thrilled to offer cutting edge technology to our patrons.

In order to provide more space and resources for teens to study, the Teen department designated three public computers as homework-only machines.

## Appreciation

Library staff record feedback from the public so that we know where we're shining and where we need to grow. As a staff we are always looking for ways to improve our service and make the library experience better, but we're happy that while we do this work our patrons are satisfied with what they're getting from us now.

From the staff--

"A regular patron who struggles with technology stopped by the Ref Desk following our drop in tech help session to say that Brita was incredibly helpful and patient with him. He wanted us to know that he's grateful for our help."

"I've been coming here since I was a girl at the East Branch. I love this library--the programs, the movies, the technology. Sometimes I like to sit in the corner and read--it's so cozy. It's an important resource."

"Patron came to visit the library for the first time in decades and was impressed by all of the changes: the self-check out machines, the circulating canvas bags, and how quickly we can check out books at the front desk with the new pads. She was especially impressed with how clean our bathrooms were, and asked me to pass along that praise to the custodians! "Your bathroom is cleaner than my office bathroom!"

"An older man was thrilled to learn that we not only have study rooms, but that they're free to reserve! He didn't believe me when I told him the rooms are free and told us that we're a wonderful place full of great people."

"I had two different patrons stop me in Starbucks this morning to thank us for the programming and services we provide in the children's room! One specifically mentioned baby and toddler programs, and the other spoke more generally."

"A woman stopped by the desk having just scanned something on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, and said, "God, I love my library. Really. Every time I come in here I am just so thankful that my tax dollars pay for this for all of us. And the fact that it's a beautiful space is icing on the cake! Thank you for being here."

"A patron had an affordable housing application due in a few minutes and had to scan and email it to get it approved. She was very nervous that she wouldn't be able to send it in time, so I directed her upstairs to the scanner and explained how to use it. She came back downstairs a few minutes later and thanked me and told me to tell the reference librarians how helpful they were. "You and the upstairs ladies helped me in my time of need, this was so important, thank you so much."