



ROCKINGHAM
FREE PUBLIC
LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 was another extraordinary year at the Rockingham Free Public Library. The Library continued to grow, with a 9% increase in the number of Library card holders. 48,598 items were lent out and 340 programs were attended by a total of 10,383 children and adults. In these challenging economic times, it's clear that our Public Library is more valuable and relevant to the children, adults and families of Rockingham than ever before. Every day, people of all ages come together to connect with books, online resources and with each other.

These connections change lives – It happens when a child connects to a librarian who sparks a love of reading, when neighbors meet through Library workshops and thought-provoking discussions such as *Vermont Reads*, or when a laid-off worker lands a new job because of his ability to use the Library's computers to seek employment. The Rockingham Free Public Library is a unique place where hundreds of community residents walk through the doors of the Library every week, to obtain the tools to enrich, improve and transform their lives.

Early Literacy – Helping children discover the joy of reading is one of the most important things we do, as it is critical to laying a foundation for academic achievement and success later in life. The Library's interactive programs and book collections engage children, parents and caregivers, and encourage reading and early learning. Last year's programs included *Make a Splash* Summer Reading activities, as well as weekly Story Times, Family Fun Night, Lego Club, Dungeons and Dragons, Something Cool After School, and Sensory Friendly Film series.



Children came to the Library to check out books, for homework help, to borrow DVDs, audio books, magazines and music, and to use the public access computers. The Public Library is a primary youth access point for technology, helping them to connect with each other around their interests, and building skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy and creativity.

Teens – Using a mix of traditional and new media, the Library's programs are designed to inspire teens to create with digital media, while supporting learning through reading, research, problem solving and teamwork. Pepsi and Price Chopper awarded the Library a \$2000 grant to fund *Teen Techie Tuesdays*, a series of programs which emphasized technological skill development through gaming events. Presentations were included on *How to Get a High-Tech Education*, *Emerging Career Fields*, and *Working in Technology*. Workshops included: *Be a Video Game Programmer*, where teens learned how to create an online video game based on their favorite book; *Booktrailers*, where teens created a short film to promote their favorite book; and *Hi-Tech Hide and Seek*, using GPS technology and historical resources to create a treasure hunting game.

Technology & Reference Services – The Library served to bridge the digital divide for all ages, providing critical services and resources such as computers, online access and wireless Internet, as people relied on the Library to use the Internet for email, filing taxes, genealogical research, job applications, college research and business opportunities.

The Library’s website, www.rockingham.lib.vt.us, was used to access online resources including the Library’s catalog, the downloadable audiobook service called *Listen Up Vermont*, online reference help, and reference databases made available by the Vermont State Library.

Many card holders made use of the *Inter-Library Loan* program to borrow books, audiobooks, DVDs, and magazine articles from other libraries.



Activities – The Library, in partnership with the Rockingham Historical Commission, hosted an evening with Lance Gunberg, documentary filmmaker of *Historical HETTY GREEN: Beyond the Myth*, and writer Charles Slack, author of *Hetty Green: The Genius & Madness of America’s First Female Tycoon*. A standing-room-only crowd attended the program, held in the Masonic Hall.



Several Vermont Humanities Council Programs were presented, including *Town Photographer*, *Theatre Curtains*, and *Vermont Reads*, the statewide, community reading program which explored Katherine Paterson's novel, *The Day of the Pelican*. Authors and Writing programs included visits from Cheryl Wilfong, Elayne Clift, Tom Wessels, Deb Luskin, and Peter Galbraith.

Other programs included Job Search workshops, tax help, genealogy classes, spinning yarns, scrapbooking, *Socrates Café* discussions, a wide variety of health topics, and travel programs on Palestine, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cambodia.

Nature programs were presented in conjunction with the Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society and the Nature Museum at Grafton, on topics including birding, backyard habitats, wildlife gardens, bats, mammal tracks, and local rivers.

The Library made available day passes to *Vermont State Parks*, *Vermont State Historic Sites* and *The Nature Museum at Grafton*. The *Friends of the Library* also donated passes to the *Vermont Institute for Natural Science (VINS)*.



Building Concerns – Last winter a water pipe burst on a Sunday and when the Library opened on Monday, the Local History Room was flooded and water was streaming down the walls and over the books. The staff acted fast and within hours 38 crates of bound volumes of histories and



genealogical archives were loaded onto a refrigerated truck (a precaution against mold) and sent to Munters, a facility that specializes in saving water-damaged documents. Some documents were sent to the local business, Works-On-Paper, to be treated by Carolyn Frisa, a paper conservator. Most items were salvageable, and even though some showed signs of the ink bleeding, they are still legible. Plans were made to re-plaster the walls, repair the wood floor, and upgrade the electrical wiring.

Renovation Project – In 2009, mold and asbestos remediation was completed in two basement rooms, which led to a thorough conditions assessment. A Renovation Committee was then formed in 2010, and a professional architectural firm, SMP Architecture, was hired to help plan for these goals: 1) Repair the building and prevent further deterioration; 2) Make the building healthy, safe and up to code; 3) Provide handicapped access to enable the use of all rooms and floors by everyone; and 4) Insulate the building and install energy-efficient heating and electrical systems for cost savings.



In April, tours of the Library were provided to educate residents about the building issues, and the proposed solutions and plans. On May 9, an Informational Meeting was held at the Library, and on May 17, Rockingham residents voted for the \$2.97 million bond to pay for the Library renovation, which will completely modernize and restore the historic 100-year-old Carnegie Library.

Plans were begun to hire a construction management firm to work with the architects and the Library Renovation Committee to finalize the design and project specifications, in preparation to go out to bid in early 2012. Construction is estimated to run from April to November, 2012.

Due to the coming renovation and the consolidation of the historical items, the Historical Collection Committee wrote a collection management policy, with an emphasis on preservation of Rockingham-related items. An inventory was then begun in preparation for a careful evaluation of the collection. Future plans include the use of glass cabinets to display historical items, as well as a smaller room to store the rest of the collection.



Budget Concerns and Fundraising Efforts – Last year the Library was again faced with level funding from the town and it was necessary to cut back in some areas, including a decrease in the purchase of books and audio-visual items (down 22% since FY 2008-09). Despite these decreases, unavoidable rising costs such as oil heat, technology and insurance created a total shortfall of \$27,700, which had to be paid for from the Library’s savings account.



Since these funds have been heavily used over the last few years, it has meant the Library Board had to address the challenge of raising additional funds to help pay for operating expenses. The Board worked in partnership with the *Friends of the Library* (a non-profit organization whose mission is to “focus public attention on Library services and needs, promote the use of Library resources and programs, and enhance Library services by providing funding and volunteers”). Efforts included an annual appeal, a holiday raffle of a quilt created and donated by Julie Patrick, sales of book bags and historic calendars, the spring plant sale and book sale, sightseeing trips to historic Newport and to the Broadway show *Memphis*, and the annual Gala Fundraising Dinner held at Vermont

Academy. The great success of all these activities was due to the hard work of the Library Board and staff, the *Friends of the Library*, and a great number of other generous donors, including many local artists, organizations and businesses.

In addition, dozens of individuals volunteered their time to work with the staff on various tasks, and provided help with programs, such as story time and genealogy classes. Generous donations of time, talent, books, memorial gifts and other financial contributions, all served to enrich the Library for everyone's benefit.

The community's decisive vote to support the Library's upcoming renovation demonstrated just how highly Rockingham residents value this beautiful landmark, *and* the public service it provides...from education to cultural enrichment to technology access, it continues to serve as a vital community center for our town.

Céline Houlné, Director

STATISTICS

July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011

COLLECTIONS

Books	36,484
Audio Books	1,468
Videos	2,386
Magazines & Newspapers	84

SERVICES

Hours Open	2,352
Library Card Holders	4,520
Items Checked Out	48,598
Research Answers	39,780
Computer and Internet Users	22,204
Events and Public Programs	340
Program Attendance	10,383
Library Visitors	52,884

