



Date: October 9th, 2024

To: David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees

Prepared by: Angela Zimmermann, Library Director

Administrative and Staff Reports for October 9th Board Meeting

Library Director, Angela Zimmermann

Due to the shorter turnaround time for this report, I don't have entirely too much to share. Since the last Board meeting, Trustees Jared and Anna, and I had a productive discussion about the strategic goals and setting priorities, which I'm eager to continue at this month's board meeting.

Otherwise, September has seen a bit of a slowdown within the library, but we continue to receive positive feedback from the community concerning the extended hours. As always, the library staff has been delivering exceptional service, ensuring that everyone has access to the resources they need.

Personnel

We're pleased to announce that we've filled our Children's Services Specialist position with Olivia, a rising junior at Mt. Greylock High School. She'll be joining us on October 8th, and we're excited to welcome her to the library.

We're also happy to have Douglas back with us. He interned with us this past summer from Williams College and expressed interest in returning to lead our 1:1 Tech Times on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday afternoons. Thanks to the Friends of the Library, we're able to reinstate this program and provide Douglas with a stipend.

Additionally, our Community Resources Services Intern, Val from MCLA, has officially started, and they are doing well. Val is currently familiarizing themselves with all aspects of the library and is working on a community resources guide. They have also connected with Andi Bryant at Remedy Hall to explore potential further partnerships.

Finally, the Marketing and Communications Strategist position is now open, and we are accepting resumes and conducting interviews. The closing date for applications is October 9th, and I hope to begin the interview process the week of the 7th.

Building & Grounds

In the past couple of weeks, we've learned that Boiler #1 is officially out of service. Ashley Swift and the DPW were onsite to assess the situation, and DPW will be recommending how we should proceed, whether through full replacement or repair.

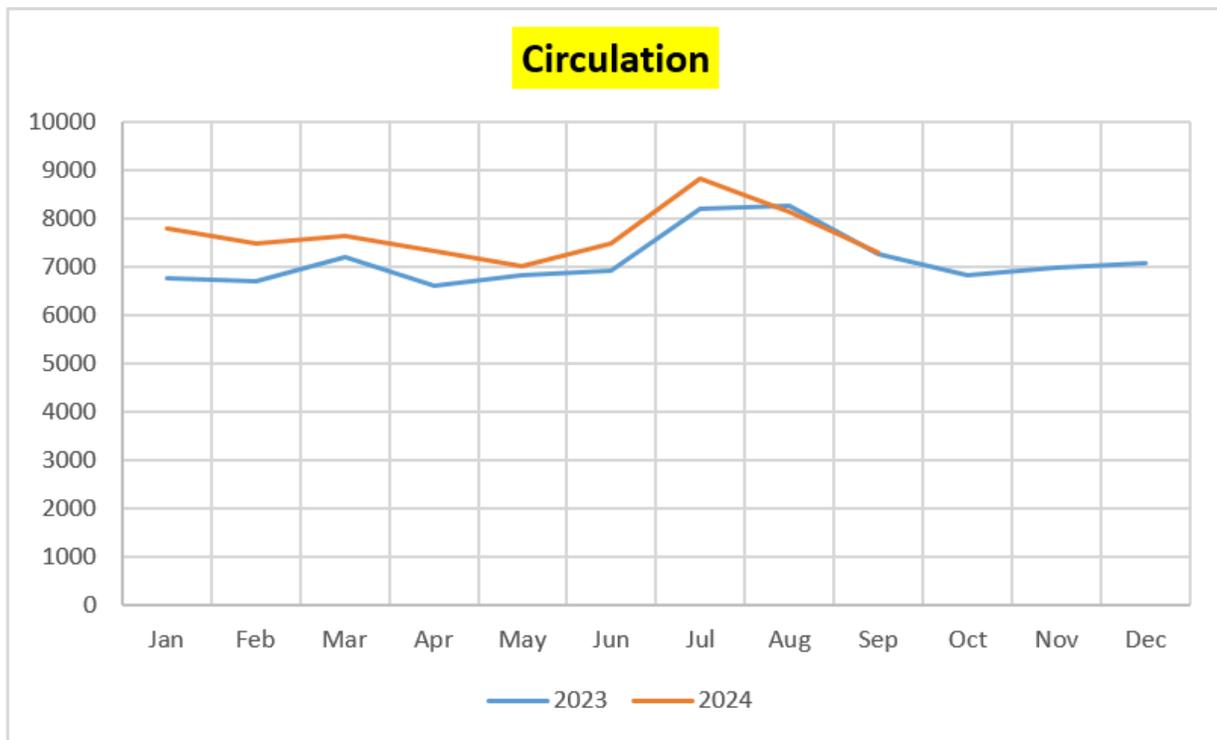
The MakerSpace Committee met for the first time at the end of September, and we made significant progress in our initial meeting. We've identified the meeting room as the location for the upcoming space and are currently compiling a list of equipment we envision for the room.

We also anticipate proposing some infrastructure changes to improve visibility/accessibility to the room, electrical capacity, plumbing, aesthetics, and more. We'll begin discussing some of these infrastructure plans at the Building & Grounds meeting on October 2nd.

Various Projects

I have completed the FY2025 State Aid to Public Libraries Application and Compliance Form. Trustee Chair Micah will have already signed off on it by the time of the Board meeting, as it is due by October 4th. I've sent the form along to be included in the trustees' packet for your perusal. All of the information was also reviewed by the Town's Finance Director and Accounting Clerk.

Milne By the Numbers



	August	September
New Library Card Registrations	54	40
Monthly Door Count	7899	8475
Comics Plus checkouts	34	4
Creativebug (sessions)	4	8

Hoopla checkouts	190	199
Kanopy checkouts	154	191
Libby checkouts	2117	1924
Mango Language total sessions	51	40
Meeting room usage total	68	79
Newsletter total subscribers	2549	2479
Newsletter unique opens	6620	6301
New York Times	30	Requested
Wall Street Journal active users	5	3
Wall Street Journal page views	34	23
Website unique visitors	1742	2021
Website site sessions	3229	3344

Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose

Beyond everyday tasks, I have been busy with:

- Getting the new schedule off the ground and running smoothly.
- Getting used to the new calendar system, ensuring that room reservations are working and that all future events are on the calendar.
- Taking over cataloging of periodicals
- Tracking down invoice issues, and following up with companies over shipping issues.

Circulation Manager, Jenna English

- Kudos to Ella for working all 3 evening shifts!
- I've received a couple of positive comments from patrons about the expanded hours. One was an Out of State patron whose time to visit the library was limited, so she was pleased to have more options. While working last Wed night (9/25), I noticed that the majority of patrons who came in were attending the event going on that night & there was very little activity at the desk. Ella told me that this had been the case on other evenings. It will be interesting to see how busy it gets when there isn't an event.
- Things have slowed down from Aug to Sept, which isn't too surprising. I suspect the run of nice weather we've had recently has people doing more outdoor activities.
- Weeding continues in Fiction.

- I am taking over a few of Jack's duties:
 - Ordering Sci Fi & Fantasy (I already did half of it, now I'll be doing all of it!) & processing those books when they come in.
 - Creating Thingdom cards. The latter has involved some trial & error, but I've thoroughly learned my lesson now.
- More Thingdom observations:
 - The biggest logistical issue that's come up is patrons not bringing the card to the desk when they want to check an item out. This has been an issue w/ the items on the display shelves & the WiFi hotspots specifically. The latter is unsurprising, since they're used to just coming up to the desk & asking for a hotspot. Maybe a sign next to the card holders might help? I've been reminding desk staff to take the cards off the display when this happens.
 - I've created a binder for the Thingdom cards, replacing the previous folder which was getting crowded.
 - The Thingdom's popularity is increasing as it grows. Patrons are looking for new items when they come in. I've noticed some families are checking out new items to try every week. One family checked out both backpacks & then the Turing Tumble.

*From the Adult Services Department:
Adult Services Librarian, Kira Williams*

The September event schedule for adults was very full. The ongoing Dementia-friendly Caregivers Support Group and Berkshire Gamers have attracted a steady, if not high, number of attendees with very welcoming organizers. Unfortunately the job seekers series did not have any local attendees this month, but in contrast, the weekly tango lessons were and still are a big hit. They have had both regular students and new faces attending each week, such that they have just barely enough space and have decided to extend classes through late October. Another repeat event, Tech 1-on-1 Times with Douglas Pineda, have also again been Successful.

Tinky Weisblat, a Western Massachusetts cookbook author, talked about her cooking endeavors and her most recent cookbook, PotLuck: Random Acts of Cooking, provided guests with samples and even sang for everyone. I had high hopes for two other events, namely the College Essay Workshop and the electric vehicle informational event, but the attendance was disappointing despite extensive publicity. Ten people donated their time to the EV program: two sustainability experts spoke and eight EV owners brought their cars to share with anyone considering purchasing one. The talks were excellent and very informative, and the drivers were happy to speak with each other about their experiences with buying, driving and charging EVs in the Berkshires. We also made use of our new OWL conferencing device to include one speaker who attended via Zoom, and it worked like a charm.

The Learn About and 'Check Out' Electric Vehicles, and virtual talk, Reading the Forested

Landscape with ecologist Tom Wessels, were part of Climate Preparedness Week. While the week ended on September 30th, two additional, virtual events take place in October for CPW.

I attended the Wellness Fair at the Harper Center as well with many other wellness-related groups. I'd call it a big success since many people came through, only some of whom were familiar with the library, but we distributed at least 30 October schedules, quite a few library brochures (including the ones in Spanish!) and giveaways such as pens and fidget spinners.

I also attended a national conference in early September that was conveniently held in Springfield, MA: the Association of Rural and Small Libraries' "Libraries Are (r)Evolutionary." I attended eight sessions, two breakfasts with talks by well-known authors (Celeste Ng and Emily Nagoski!), connected with a large group of Western Mass. librarians I had met at the PLA Conference in April, and collected all kinds of information at the Exhibit Hall. Of the wealth of information shared, I was most inspired by the Makers in the Library session who provide libraries with a free toolkit to get makerspaces started; several speakers who reiterated the need for libraries to be instrumental in climate change adaptation, as well as mitigation, by sharing information but also providing shelter; and both the Library of Congress session about their "Chronicling America" website and another about the great need for E-Government services in public libraries such as disaster assistance, food and health benefits, drivers licenses, etc. because almost every government service requires internet access. I'll stop there but please let me know if you'd like more info about what I learned. Thanks to the Friends for making it possible for me to attend this conference!

Adult Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of attendees
Dementia-friendly Caregivers Support Group	4
50+ Jobseekers virtual series	0 (from Williamstown)
Berkshire Gamers	2 adults, 2 teens
Friday Film: <i>All the President's Men</i>	2
Marvel of Monarchs, Laura Bentz	2
National Voter Registration Day	0 (registrants)
Cookbook Talk, Tinky Weisblat	8
Tango Lessons, Dave Gorson (4 sessions)	71, total
College Essay Workshop, Pat Wilk	2
Learn About and 'Check Out' Electric Vehicles	8

Virtual: Reading the Forested Landscape, Tom Wessels	8
Narcan Training	2
1:1 Tech Times (with Intern Douglas Pineda)	5
Outreach: Wellness Fair	30 (# of people spoken to)
Total attendance =	146

Digital Resources Librarian, Jack Sarr

My last month of working at the Milne has spent focusing the majority of my efforts on organising and cataloguing the Thingdom. With some assistance from colleagues, we now have a number of tools, gardening equipment, and STEAM kits available to patrons. Before I depart, I will be training other staff members in the cataloguing process for Thingdom items.

To coincide with the library's Geocaching backpack, a Geocache has been hidden in the library courtyard for people to find. Geocaching is a popular international hobby, and the presence of the library cache is sure to bring some new people to the library!

*From the Children's Department:
Children's Librarian, Debbie Baker*

September is a month for winding down from summer, and finishing up the loose ends. As happens every year, a few of the new sixth graders need help finding book genres to finish their bingo sheets, which is slightly easier now that we have genre stickers on most of the books that need them. (September is also for tackling projects like putting genre stickers on more of the books that need them.) Our Fall Holiday display went up as the Summer Reading Prize pictures came down, and the seasonal book display shelf is all oranges, reds, and yellows.

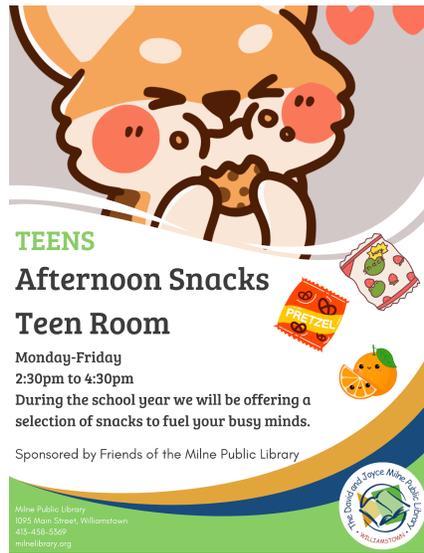
Programming was very light; we ran our usual storytimes with a total of 38 kids over 8 sessions. There was one tween/teen movie with 8 attendees.

We've also been planning this year's Halloween party (which takes a lot of planning!) and I feel confident in saying that it will be at least as much fun as last year's. There is still some debate about the feasibility of a people-sized Candy Land game ... but we'll work it out.

Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

We began our Afterschool Snacks for Teens. Located in the Teen Room, this afterschool program runs from 2:30 to 5:00pm (the poster says 4:30 pm but we decided to expand it!) and

features healthy snacks for our busy teen community. Our estimate for participation for the entire month of September is 53 visitors!



The Teen Movies at the Milne was Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle. 8 teens joined us for this MGRS half day event.

I have changed out the Art Corner in the Teen Room and have put out Origami Animals and a Pop Manga Coloring Book.

We had several displays in September, there is a lot going on in the world! On top of our mid-September *Hispanic Heritage Month Display* we also featured *Harvey Award Nominees Past and Present* and a smaller display for *Environmental Awareness Month*.



Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families	# of programs
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Storytimes	38			8
Teen Movie- Jumanji		8		
Total attendance = 46				

Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron

- We had a wasp nest remediated in the front of the building.
- All nonessential materials and equipment were removed from the back lobby to accommodate the new storage cabinets, and the new cabinets were assembled.
- The two trees and a daylily garden near the sidewalk were removed.
- The emergency light control units were all replaced on the first floor.
- All of the mini-splits have been programmed for automatic operations. Ashley Swift came and made boiler 2 our primary boiler and we are waiting on word from the DPW as to how they would like us to proceed with the repair/replacement.
- And I began the task of removing junk from the basement.