



Bill Library
718 Colonel Ledyard Hwy
Ledyard, CT 06339
860-464-9912



July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

www.ledyardlibrary.org



Gales Ferry Library
18 Hurlbutt Road
Gales Ferry, CT 06335
860-464-6943

As champions of lifelong learning, libraries are a place to access technology, indulge curiosities, and explore new ideas, hobbies, and careers. At the Ledyard Public Library, our focus is centered around carrying out our mission, achieving our strategic plan goals, and continuing to make the library a welcoming and accessible place for all. We are beyond grateful for our patrons who enjoy library services that are made possible through funding from taxpayer dollars, support groups, and individual donors. All of these generous contributions enrich library services and change lives.

Mission: Ledyard Public Library provides valuable resources, friendly, knowledgeable service, and free access to a diversity of ideas, information, and experiences. We strive to enhance the quality of life in our community and encourage the love of reading, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

I am very proud to share that Ledyard Public Library was selected to receive a national grant this year to help us make our community an even greater place for everyone. Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities. With this grant, we have improved how members of our community access these important library services. This competitive \$40,000 award will help the library increase the accessibility of facilities, services, and programs for the entire community.

This LTC grant funding made the following library enhancements possible:

- Installation of an **automatic door** opener at Gales Ferry Library
- Upgrade to **technology** including three new iPads and a wireless portable microphone system for programming use
- Additional **programs** offered - Sensory Storytime series for children, Learning American Sign Language series for teens and adults, Drumming Music Therapy for teens, and We Make Music series for families
- **Enrichment to the collection** such as adding a new Large Print section for children and teens, expanding the Large Print offerings for adults, selecting children's materials highlighting diverse characters with disabilities, and more than doubling the size of our board book collections in both buildings to include sensory friendly titles and a new way to display this collection
- A **new front service desk at Bill Library** that meets ADA requirements and includes a book return (coming in FY 2025)

With the constant evolution of library trends, services, and collections, our dedicated staff deserve kudos for their commitment to providing excellent library services to our community. We have a great group of approachable, hardworking people ready to help our patrons with their library needs. Library staff are always willing to assist whether it be lending an extra hand at a program, creating an eye-catching display to highlight our collections, or providing important feedback about a new service. Our team adapts to meet new circumstances which is evident by all the new collections and workflow changes made over the last few years.

New and expanded collections include world language titles written in Spanish for all ages, large print books for all ages, graphic novels for adults, Wonderbook read-along selections for children, and sensory friendly board books. In addition, we are excited to announce a new Toy Library and board game collection are soon to be unveiled! We are so grateful to bring this new circulating collection to our community as we realize the importance of play during the early years of childhood development. Not only are we positive this new collection will attract families, children, and teens, to the library, but it will also help ease the economic burden by offering equitable resources. We believe in the importance of building early literacy skills such as talking, reading, singing, playing,

and writing every day. Children experience the world through play while also developing fine motor skills, cognitive concepts, language, and social skills. Teens use play to interact and socialize with their peers, thus strengthening their mental and physical health. This new collection will enrich the library experience for children, teens, families, and our community as a whole. The Toy Library collection has been created in collaboration with Traveling Toys, Inc. with generous funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut.

Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

1. Community Needs Goal: Develop creative ways to meet community needs

Objective 3 – Explore ways to improve the facility

- Libraries Transforming Communities grant funding supported the following facility/building enhancements:
 - Automatic door opener at Gales Ferry Library
 - Custom designed ADA front service desk at Bill Library

Objective 4 – Address the request for a better collection

- Libraries Transforming Communities grant also funded additional resources to the collection which include:
 - Expansion of our Large Print offerings for adults
 - Creation of a new Large Print collection for children and teens
 - Additional sensory friendly materials to double the size of our board book collections at both library buildings
 - Selection of picture books positively representing diverse characters with disabilities

Objective 5 – Provide programming that meets community interest

- The Libraries Transforming Communities grant made it possible to offer additional library programming which resulted in a 60% increase in our program offerings including:
 - Sensory Storytime series
 - We Make Music series
 - Music Therapy – Drumming for teens
 - American Sign Language series for both adults and teens

2. Collaboration Goal: Collaborate with town and regional organizations

Objective 1 – Identify town activities the library can participate in to support the community

- This past year, the library worked in partnership with the following town groups:
 - Ledyard Senior Center
 - Monthly Senior Book Discussion
 - Ledyard Parks and Rec
 - Summer Camp visits
 - Trunk-or-Treat
 - Ledyard Social Services
 - Holiday Giving – Adopt a Family
 - Ledyard Farmer's Market

Objective 2 – Collaborate with the schools to encourage and support literacy

- Youth Librarian visited three different Preschools on a monthly basis to present storytime
- Provided an informational letter and promotional video about our Summer Adventure Program to all Elementary schools to encourage participation over the summer
- Library representatives attended the Back-to-School Open Houses and Literacy Nights to provide families with a personalized explanation of library offerings pertaining to their interests and distribute free books for their home libraries
- Provide Ledyard educators with the option to sign up for a teacher library card

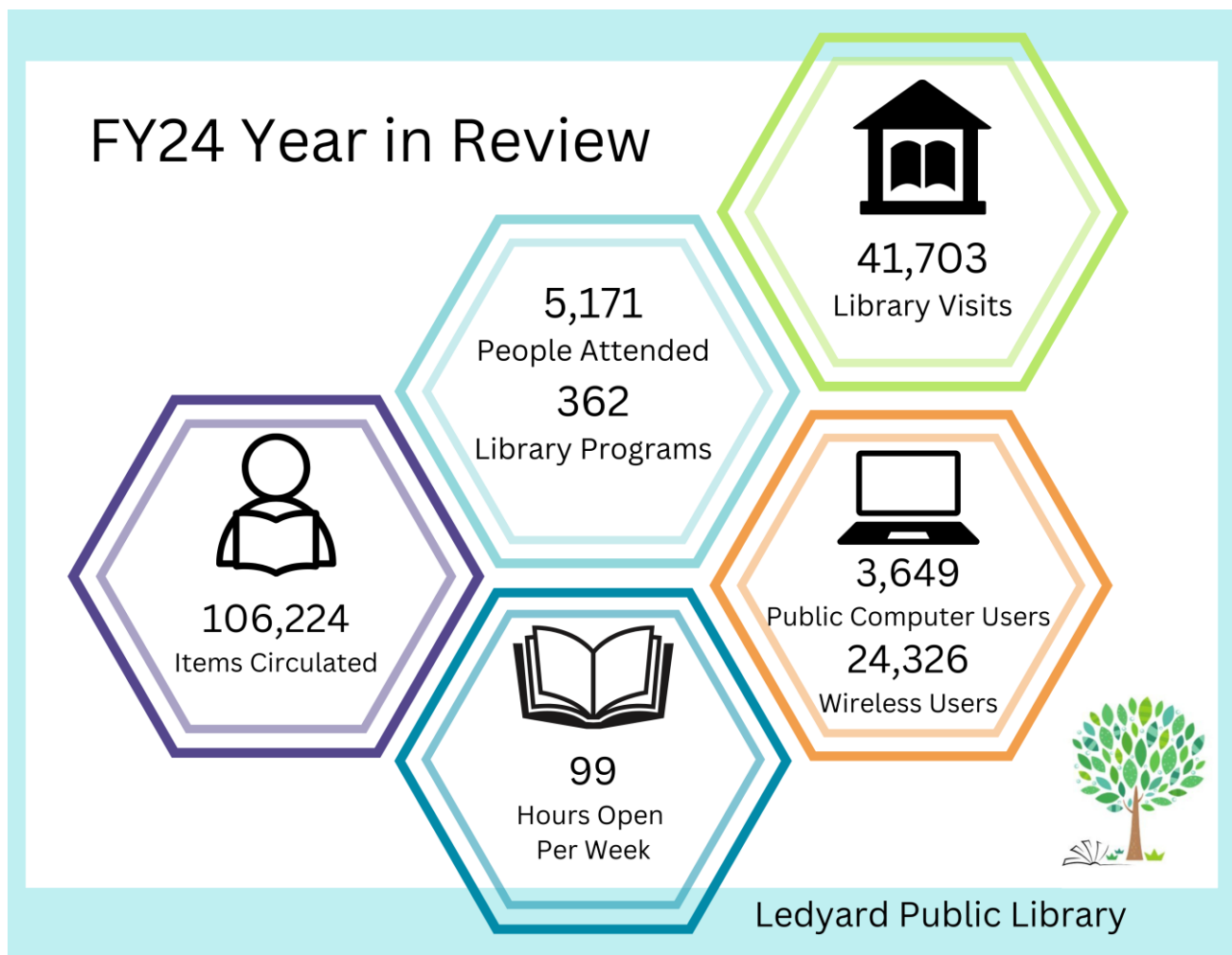
Objective 3 – Collaborate with local organizations for community activities

- Veterans Coffeehouse with TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.)
- Connecticut Library Association - Passport to Libraries program
- Ledyard Rotary Club – guest speaker and grant recipient
- Ledyard Lions Club – Library Director attended the Lions Night of Giving and accepted generous funding to support our new Read-along collection. We also have eyeglass donation boxes in each library.

3. Marketing Goal: To increase community awareness of library services

Objective 2 – Increase library's social media presence

- Staff created a process and timeline for posting to Facebook and Instagram which consists of regular “this week at the Ledyard Public Library” program reminders along with “New Book Tuesdays” and “What to Watch Wednesdays” to name a few
- In total there were 200 new Facebook followers and nearly 80,000 post reaches while Instagram had 169 new followers with over 3,000 content interactions
- Email newsletter subscribers have grown to 1,780 individuals who receive monthly library updates to their inbox



Statistics Summarized (compared to Fiscal Year 2023)

- Overall circulation of materials increased over 10%
- Programming offerings increased 60% and more than 1,200 additional people attended programs
- Library visitations increased more than 16%
- Service hours open per week remained consistent
- Public computer users stayed comparable while WiFi users increased by 5%

Youth Services – written by Stacey Burt

Fiscal Year 23-24 was a year where everything really started coming together for our Youth Services Department. The Youth Services Assistant role was created and filled the previous year, but it was fiscal year 23-24 where their contribution became evident. First and foremost, having more than one person provide programming and services to our Children and Teen departments has been invaluable. We began offering additional regular programming such a much-needed Baby Storytime and additional monthly programs that are scheduled on the weekends. Jadzia Childs was hired for this position in February 2024 and she is doing a fantastic job! One of the areas that we are focusing on with this new position is our Teen programs. We are working hard to find what our teen patrons want and to offer them the programs and materials that will encourage them to visit the library. Jadzia splits her time doing tasks for children and teens while also cataloging all of the materials purchased for each library. To say she's busy is an understatement and we are very fortunate to have her on our team.

Our Youth Services Department received numerous grants in the 23-24 Fiscal Year. Rotary Club of Ledyard, Lions Club of Ledyard, and Kiwanis Club of New London gave us funds that allowed us to buy 36 Wonderbooks. This new collection wouldn't have been possible without the help of our community. Every Wonderbook read-along is a children's print book with a pre-loaded audiobook player permanently bound to the inside cover. Children press play to read along with their favorite books and then switch to learning mode for literacy learning and fun. Caregivers have the option to check out a charging cord, but these Wonderbooks have around 50 read-along plays before needing to be charged. In addition to our Wonderbook grants, we received a grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut for a toy library. Children's libraries are important for helping children learn to read and develop their language skills but by providing access to other items and media we help children gain the skills they need to succeed in all areas

of their development. Plus, it's just great business for the library! Having the toys and new audiobook options will only increase our patron involvement and their satisfaction for what we offer the community.

Early childhood literacy is very important to us. It is in childhood and youth that all kinds of literacy skills are best built. To this end, in the 23-24 fiscal year we were pleased to offer an enhanced, sensory-friendly board book selection. We were able to acquire new shelving units to house this collection and our efforts have paid off! In fiscal year 22-23 we circulated 1,875 board books and in fiscal year 23-24 we circulated 3,342 board books. This is an increase of 78.24%! We are very pleased with this trend and will strive to keep the board books and other genres up to date so that we can continue to build this momentum.

Programming for children and teens continues to go very well. Using our Summer Adventure program as a snapshot, in fiscal year 23-24 there were 43 programs and activities offered for ages 0 – 11 with attendance totals of 6,113. Additionally, we offered 14 programs and activities for teens in our Summer Adventure Program and there were 537 attendees. Since these numbers represent the programs and activities we offered during the summer months, you can be assured that our programming numbers across the board are exceeding our expectations. The goal of youth programming for Ledyard Public Library is to give the children and teens a feeling of belonging. We want them to feel at home in our libraries and give them a place where they can grow into confident and well-rounded people. We feel that we are meeting this goal, and we look forward to continuing to offer programming that benefits the community.

Adult Services – written by Matt Novosad

Fiscal Year 2024 was a year of growth for Adult Services at the Ledyard Public Library. Major projects were completed in order to better serve our patrons and to better help library staff with their work behind the desk. First among these projects was reworking our Library statistics. Annually, we report to the State Library many aspects of the library's health, such as patron visitation, circulation, and programming. Over the course of Fiscal Year 24, our statistical reports were improved to ensure that we are collecting accurate data that we can then apply to purchasing and programming decisions. Excitingly, our digital circulations have increased 35.45% from the previous year, rising from 20,656 circulations in Fiscal Year 23 to 27,657 in Fiscal Year 24. Correspondingly, both patron visitation and physical item checkouts increased in the same period. Patron visitation increased 16.36%, rising from 35,840 visitors in Fiscal Year 23 to 41,703 visitors in Fiscal Year 24. Physical item circulations increased more modestly at 3.65%, increasing from 75,722 circulations to 78,484 circulations.

Adult Services hosted a number highly successful programs this year. Highlights include the regular Senior Book Discussion and Cookbook Clubs, as well as the Fall 2023 Fly Tying for Beginners classes, Henry Bill's 200th Birthday Bash, and the CLA Library Passports Program. In total, we hosted 115 programs for adults and attracted 668 patrons through all of them. Our slate of programming is designed to be varied, attracting different interests, age groups, and genders to help make the library a welcoming place for all. We were able to continue the successful Seed Library program and near the start of 2024 season, we expanded the seed library to host a selection at Gales Ferry to make it easier for all of our patrons to access this resource.

Adult collections at both buildings have undergone weeding and expansion to ensure that our collections are up-to-date and reflect the needs of our community. As a part of this larger project, the Gales Ferry Adult Fiction collection was reorganized. The reorganization allowed for shelf space to be better utilized and part of the audiobook collection to be moved to standing shelving units rather than the smaller units on the floor and we were able to remove one of the smaller shelving units from the floor. This opened up extra space, which enables us to offer adult programming in the main library space. Any programming held there is accessible for all patrons and does not require staff to book the Community Center. This change helps make Gales Ferry a more open and accessible environment, giving patrons more space to move around the floor. Similarly, Bill has undergone a reorganization of the public tables to ensure more access to outlets and space. Overall, Fiscal Year 24 was filled with exciting growth and opportunities for the Library and its patrons.

Library Commission

The Ledyard Public Library is advised by the Ledyard Library Commission, which typically meets on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at alternating library locations. The public is welcome at all meetings. The Commission agendas and minutes are posted on the Town's webpage at www.ledyardct.org under "Agendas and Minutes."

Library Commissioners focused their efforts this year on creating a new Consortium Working Group to evaluate our membership with the LION Consortium. In February, the Library Commission put on a "Love Your Library" fundraising event. Commissioners also participated in Library Giving Day again this year, raising \$1,175 from 12 different donors.

Members of the Commission are:

John Bolduc, Chair
Elizabeth Rumery, Vice Chair
Ellin Grenger, Secretary
Ralph Hightower, Treasurer

Barbara Candler
Brian Cronin
Peter Diette (Commissioner starting in April)
Carol Ganz (Commissioner through March)
Rebecca Nash (Chair through November)
Rolf Racich

The Friends of the Ledyard Library continue to support library services through all their fundraising efforts. A few of the big fundraising events for the Friends include the annual Bill Library Book Sale and the Snowflake Festival. Their efforts allow them to fund programs for all ages, purchase museum discount passes available for checkout, and help sustain online library resources such as the very popular Hoopla. Overall, the Friends approved a Fiscal Year 24 budget of \$18,643.52, which made a critical impact to our library offerings. We are very grateful for the Friends volunteers and appreciate all they do to provide additional support for our Library.

The Bill Library Association, Inc. presented a scholarship this past year to graduating senior Olivina Arsenault. Trustees continue to keep with tradition and gather in October for a potluck-style dinner followed by the annual meeting.

Volunteer support totaled over 1,735 hours, which averaged out to approximately 33 hours per week! A few of our most dedicated volunteers included Laura Norcia, Jan Dawson, Roberta Levandoski, and John and Claire Bolduc who assisted with the Seed Library, fundraising efforts, rain garden maintenance, and the ongoing book sales at both library buildings. We appreciate all our volunteers hard work and commitment to the library throughout the year.

Grants/Bequests

American Library Association – Libraries Transforming Communities (Round 1 and Round 2)
Avery Family Memorial Fund
Book Voyagers through CT Humanities
Eastern CT Community Gardens Association (ECCGA)
Joan D. Hauptfeld Fund
Kiwanis Club of New London
Ledyard Rotary Foundation
Traveling Toys, Inc.

Gifts from community members in support of our mission or grants requested for specific programs support the collection, honor an occasion, or remember a loved one who has passed away. We also collaborated with Ledyard Social Services to collect donations, allowing us to distribute brand new books to local children and teens for the holiday season. Nearly 100 books were distributed to our local families in need, which aligns with our goal to make sure books are present in households. Studies show when books are in homes, children are more likely to succeed in school and beyond.

Gifts Donated by groups

Glenwood's Book Club
Ledyard Garden Club
Ledyard Lions Club
United Methodist Church of Gales Ferry

Gifts In Memory of

Thomas Lees
Joseph Torres

Gifts Donated by individuals

Amante de la Biblioteca
Anonymous
Alicia Beebie
John and Claire Bolduc
Mary Jane DuBack
Marie and David Engelman
Christopher Frye
Ellin Grenger
Curren Landsiedel
Robert and Beth Nemchek
Elaine Peterson
John and Elaine Porter
Erin Quada
Barbara Savage
Jean and Robert Scialabba
Nancy Strawderman
Tainter Family
Lynmarie Thompson
Harry and Marie Tobiassen
Gayle Wilson

Library Hours

Bill Library

Monday – Wednesday 9-8
Thursday Closed
Friday – Saturday 9-5
Sunday (seasonal) 1-5



@LedyardPublicLibrary – 2K followers



@LedyardPublicLibrary – 810 followers

Library Staff

Jennifer Smith, Library Director
Matt Novosad, Assistant Librarian II – Adult Services
Alyssa Drake, Assistant Librarian I – Adult Services
Stacey Burt, Assistant Librarian I – Youth Services
Jadzia Childs, Library Technician II – Youth Services
Erica Christofferson, Administrative Assistant – Library
Jackie Bacon, Library Technician I – Reference
Cathy Davis, Library Technician I – Reference
Laura Norcia, Library Associate
Lorraine Healy, Library Associate
Stephanie Akers, Library Associate
Raymond Roch, Library Associate
Beth Nemchek, Library Associate
Drue Chappelle, Library Associate
Kim Pendleton, Custodian

Gales Ferry Library

Monday – Tuesday 9-8
Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday 9-5
Friday & Sunday Closed





SUMMER 2023 LEDYARD PUBLIC LIBRARY

We love coming to the library! Everyone is so nice and fun!

I love getting books and attending storytime! Always lots of programs to participate in and staff is always so helpful!



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

368

ADVENTURES AND READING LOGGED

6,082

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

72

NUMBER OF PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY ATTENDEES

2,242

Children, Teens, and Adults who participated in our summer programs strongly agreed and agreed that they...

Felt welcome at the library 100%

Got help from the library 97%

Plan to take part after summer 92%



I love the adult summer reading program. The additions this year are fun and creative. Thank you to the entire staff for being so welcoming, helpful, funny, and kind.



SUMMER READING 2024 LEDYARD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The librarians are very friendly and helpful and the selection of books and materials are great!

Very welcoming, lots of great books, fun programs!



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

408

ADVENTURES AND READING LOGGED

5,572

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

58

NUMBER OF PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY ATTENDEES

1,892

Children, Teens, and Adults who participate in Summer Reading strongly agreed and agreed that they...

Felt welcome at the library 100%

Got help from the library 95%

Plan to take part after summer 96%



We ran summer programming for:

Early Childhood
Children
Teens
Adults

