

2009 Annual Report of the Mountainside Public Library

Michael D. Banick, Director

Thank you for your interest in the Mountainside Public Library. 2009 was a banner year for the MPL. Not only was it our 75th anniversary, but the year was our busiest year on record, with gains in circulation, reference interactions, computer usage and attendance. This report will highlight some of the events, activities and measures of use of the MPL over the period of January – December 2009

75th Anniversary The Mountainside Library was established in 1934 and 2009 marked our 75th anniversary. The year-long celebration included commemorative displays, surprise giveaways, a poetry contest, and numerous special events, capped by a memorable community celebration held on Sunday, October 4th.

Circulation Our total circulation for 2009 was 78,194 items. **This was our biggest year on record**, an increase of 3% (+2,292 items) over 2008. We were open 292 days in 2009 and circulated an average of 268 items per day.

The average cost per item checked out in 2009 was \$20.87, making the total value of last year's checkouts \$1,631,908.

Some circulation highlights:

<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>TOTAL '09</u>	<u>Total '08</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>% Change</u>
ADULT				
Books	25510	25654	-144	-0.56%
Audiobooks	2738	2478	+260	+10.5%
CDs	4768	4134	+634	+15.34%
DVDs	16600	15760	+840	+5.33%
Periodicals	1070	744	+326	+43.82%
<i>subtotal - Adult</i>	50686	48774	+1912	+3.9%
JUVENILE				
Books	18569	19241	-672	-3.49%
Audiobooks	568	508	+60	+11.81%
CDs	389	335	+54	+16.12%
DVDs	7982	7044	+938	+13.32%
<i>subtotal - Juv</i>	27508	27128	+380	+1.4%
TOTAL	78194	75902	+2292	+3.02%

Reference Interactions There were 5,204 reference interactions recorded in 2009. **This was our biggest year on record**, an increase of 24% (+1,004 interactions) over 2008. This is particularly remarkable because 2008 was our previous high with 4,200 transactions. There are several factors behind this continued increase: pro-active service by librarians; approachability among the professional staff; dedication to reference staffing; and an increase in visitation.

Year	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Total Interactions	2,602	3,594	4,200	5,204
% change		+38%	+17%	+24%

The percent change in reference interactions from 2006 – '09 is exactly +100%.

Programs In 2009, 5,514 people attended 312 programs at the Mountainside Library. **This was our biggest year on record** and represents a 42% attendance increase over 2008 (+1,655) and an overall increase of 73 programs for the year (239 programs in 2008). This is particularly significant in that each of the last three years were record years for program attendance at the Mountainside Library.

Year	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Attendance	2,376	3,279	3,859	5,514
% change		+38%	+17.7%	+42%

The percent change in program attendance from 2006 – 2009 is +132%.

Our average attendance per program increased 12.5% in 2009 to 18. In 2008, the average was 16 and in 2007 the average attendance was 15.

The 2009 Summer Reading Program for children was the best one ever for Mountainside, even beating the records set in 2008. Participation was excellent due in part to our collaboration with the school district.

There were three categories of participation this year: Family Readers (pre – K through first grade), Independent Readers (second grade through eighth grade) and Teen. The following table shows participation by category:

Category	Number of Participants	Total Read	# of Part. Last Year	Change in # of part.	Total Read Last Year	Change in total read
Family	38	1,467 books	30	+26%	974 books	+50%
Independent	74	97,330 min	43	+72%	56,490 min	+72%
Teen	18	38,490 min	0	∞	0	∞
Total	130		73	+78%		

Patron Registration In 2009, we registered 545 new patrons, bringing our total patron count to 6,710. By way of contrast, in 2008, we registered 457 new patrons. This marks a 19.25% increase in the total number of new registrations and an 8.5% increase in our total patron count. Our resident patron count increased by 306 this year with an average of 25 new resident registrations per month.

Collection Management Our collections consist of books, DVDs, books on CD, audio CDs and periodicals. Our collections continue to improve in two ways: through the acquisition of new material and through the careful selection of items for withdrawal. In 2009, we added 5,070 items to our collection and withdrew 4,958 items, bringing our total holdings to 62,240 items.

Additionally, we began to take inventory of our collection in 2009. Prime areas were targeted for completion right away, including all DVDs, music CDs, new books and books on CD. In the coming months, we will continue inventorying our general collection, including all fiction and non-fiction books.

Special Shelving Projects In order to improve our use of space and make browsing the collection easier, the following shelving improvements were made in 2009:

1. **Music CDs.** In January, a new, fourth CD case was added to help house our growing audio collection. In 2009, circulation of our audio collection increased over 16%, justifying the addition.
2. **Audiobooks** were relocated to the area near periodicals. By featuring these items in a more “browseable” area, circulation of this collection increased over 10%. Relocating these items also allowed expansion of our total DVD shelving by 50%

3. Young Adult non-fiction was formerly shelved with the general collection. The YA shelving was expanded to allow us to relocate these non-fiction items into the YA section of the library plus allow room for growth.
4. Juvenile non-fiction. More efficient shelving was installed in September, allowing us to get more material in less floorspace. The new shelving also accommodates tall books, allowing for easier browsing, with book spines facing out. In the final quarter of 2009, the number of Juvenile non-fiction checkouts increased 4.3% when compared to the same period in '08.
5. Juvenile DVDs. With gift money from the Friends of the Library, a new media shelving unit was installed here, replacing shelving that was at capacity and beginning to show signs of wear. Juvenile DVD checkouts were up over 13% for the year.

Friends of the Mountainside Library The Friends continue to be active supporters of the MPL. In 2009, the Friends held two book sales. Both were a success, as was the September membership campaign, which was the most successful drive in the Friends' history.

Through generous financial support from the Friends, we were able to offer many special programs and events in 2009, including the Story Time Theatre series for young children, and the popular summertime "Plays in the Parking Lot."

The Friends also provided the funding for the new music CD display case, the new juvenile DVD display shelving and the early literacy software on the two children's PCs.

Grants The Watts-Mountainside Community Foundation remained very supportive toward the Mountainside Library in 2009. Our first grant of the year funded – and continues to fund – our popular Folk Music Café. Begun in 2008, the FMC has provided a great venue for local musicians and a comfortable event for guests, with live music, fresh coffee and delicious desserts. In total, 287 people attended 10 Folk Music Cafes in 2009. With an average attendance of nearly 29 per FMC, this is one of our most popular programs.

A second grant was received from the Foundation to support the Mountainside Library's 75th anniversary celebration.

A third grant from the Watts Foundation came in November to support our subscription to Wowbrary. This online service generates weekly reports of all of the MPL's new acquisitions and e-mails the list to subscribers. It is a popular service and is a great way to see what's new in the library.

In recognition of all the support the Watts-Mountainside Community Foundation has shown the Mountainside Library over the last five years, the Foundation was honored as "Library Advocate of the Year" by the Libraries of Union County Consortium at their annual trustees' reception in October 2009.

Technology In 2009, there were 10,359 computer logins at the Mountainside Public Library. This was an increase of 5.8% over 2008 (+566), not including staff logins and connections made via the library's wireless network. Logins are done for many reasons and the most popular are: communication (e-mail, Facebook, etc.); job searching and electronic resume submission; professional development (online classes and tutorials, licensing, etc.); product research; news access; and general research on various topics.

In 2009, there were 5,136 queries to our databases, an 11.3% increase over last year. Searches could be conducted in the library or from home by logging in with your Mountainside Library Card. In 2009, online access to Contemporary Authors ceased. Learning Express and eLibrary were added to our array of electronic resources.

In January, improvements to the library's wireless network boosted signal strength and stability. Wireless access is now available in all areas of the building, from wall to wall and corner to corner.

In conjunction with the wireless improvements, an Internet back-up plan has been put in place which will allow the library to maintain connectivity on patron, staff and checkout computers, preserving service and productivity in case of a wired network outage.

Some library computers and printers reached the end of their service life and were replaced with new models under warranty. These machines include two public printers and the reference desk PC.

Library Website Improvements to the library homepage (www.mountainsidelibrary.org) were unveiled on December 1, 2009. All improvements were made in-house, saving the library developer's and consultant's fees. The new look was tested on a focus group and has been well-received by the public. The new page includes a better layout of resources with improved visual cues and includes a sliding widget with scrolling images of our newest acquisitions.

Looking Ahead After such a successful year, the bar has been set high for 2010. Goals for the year include additional website improvements, to ease navigation and maintain continuity of our look. Then, while continuing to serve all in our community, we are looking to improve our outreach to two discrete populations, our seniors and our young adults. This will be done through targeted programming and through expanded collections that will appeal to these customers. Next, several of our public computers have reached the end of their useful life. They are unable to be further upgraded and are out of warranty. Replacement computers will be phased in to meet both community needs and the tech demands of modern multi-media websites. And, like always, we will look to top all of our previous year's statistics: circulation, reference usage, visitation and computer use.

Finally, these are challenging times for all of us, and many of us are feeling the need to stretch every dollar and make every investment count. The same is true at your library. At this time of record use and high demand, be assured that your public library is going to work harder than ever to maximize value and control costs while delivering the service you expect. By negotiating for better prices with our vendors we will get more for our money. To assist with programs and other special needs, the library will continue to seek funding from outside sources, including corporate and foundation grants. We also remain thankful for continued support from our Friends group, and are especially thankful for individual donors who make tax-deductible contributions to the MPL throughout the year.

Thank you everyone for making 2009 such a stellar year at the Mountainside Library. Here's to a successful 2010!

*Accepted by the Board of Trustees
Monday, January 25, 2010*