



Annual Report 2013

The past year has been an eventful one for the Mountainside Public Library. On the one hand, we have said goodbye to several members of staff and welcomed new faces. On the other, serious issues with the physical plant have had to be reconciled with a diminishing budget. Throughout the year, and despite the many changes and challenges, we have made it a priority to maintain the quality of service for which we are known and which our patrons deserve.

Circulation The circulation of library materials is one important measure of use. 2013 saw a 20.68% drop in the total circulation of physical holdings, in comparison to 2012. This dramatic decrease is due primarily to the six weeks of severely reduced operating hours necessitated by the failure of the air conditioning system on June 4th. While the Library was able to open for at least a few hours each day, many patrons were simply unable to work our limited schedule into their lives. Sadly, the timing of the failure also impacted summer reading, which normally accounts for an increase in circulation in the summer months. A gradual drop in circulation is also in keeping with the trend noticed over the last few years and should be attributed in part to the reduction in purchases of new materials, due to both an ever tightening budget and the 2013 emergency redirection of available funds to heating and air conditioning repairs not covered by insurance. On a positive note, the rising popularity of eBook borrowing, offered through the Library's participation in eLibraryNJ, as demonstrated by a 47.2% increase from 2012 to 2013, has added another dimension to circulation trends. An increasing number of patrons are choosing to download titles to their devices remotely, with their Mountainside library card. 2013 saw a drop in the number of DVDs circulated, in response to the necessary institution of a \$1.00 checkout fee, as of February 1st, 2013. While the initial drop off was steep, checkout rates quickly stabilized at a more realistic level in comparison to the unusually high numbers of the past, and our patrons have adjusted well to the change. Two special "3 for the price of 2" events for July 4th and the winter school holiday proved especially popular, as many patrons took advantage of the savings. The collection of this fee has made it possible for us to maintain currency in our highly popular DVD collection and saved us from having to reduce spending on this category of materials, as we have had to do elsewhere.

COLLECTION	TOTAL '13	Total '12
ADULT		
Books	18752	21648
Audiobooks	1321	1593
CDs	2527	2832
DVDs	5755	13111
Periodicals	601	807
<i>subtotal - Adult</i>	28956	39991
JUVENILE		
Books	21486	20330
Audiobooks	284	433
CDs	255	215
DVDs	2188	6070
<i>subtotal - Juv</i>	24213	27048
TOTAL	53169	67039

New Library Cards In December we launched a new, convenient key fob library card, sporting our brand new logo. New patrons will automatically receive the card upon registration, but this desirable feature is also available to existing patrons at the nominal charge of \$1.00, to cover the cost of a replacement card. As the Library's computer system will begin to require the presentation of a card for all transactions as of February 1st, 2014, patrons with lost cards will want to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Reference Interactions Our Reference librarians fielded a total of 6014 inquiries in 2013. This represented a slight decrease of 1.5% from 2012, which is easily attributable to the seven week shortage of reference staffing following the director transition in mid-February and the six week period of shortened operating hours during the air conditioning failure. One very important function of our Reference service is Interlibrary Loan. Any items which have been released for more than six months and are not in our collection can be requested for Mountainside residents from other libraries, through Interlibrary Loan. While there is very occasionally a charge levied to the patron by the lending library, the service is mostly free and patrons may choose not to borrow where a fee will be charged. Almost any item imaginable is available and past items have come from as far away as Alaska, Texas and Oregon. In 2013, Mountainside residents borrowed a total of 586 items through Interlibrary Loan. The Mountainside Library also lent a total of 138 items to other libraries across the country, for a total of 724 Interlibrary Loan transactions during the course of the year. Our online database offerings constitute another important aspect of our Reference service. These databases are accessible 24 hours a day with your Mountainside Library card. Sadly, some of our database subscriptions have had to be discontinued due to lack of available funds and in some cases, insufficient use to justify the continued cost. In 2013 we were forced to cancel our subscriptions to the New York Times, Heritage Quest, the New York Times Historical and Mango Languages databases. Thanks to private funding from the Ryan Patrick Faella Foundation and a generous subsidy from LibraryLinkNJ, we have been able to replace the Mango Languages database with Pronunciator, which offers language instruction in over 80 different languages. Other database subscriptions, available to all New Jersey libraries through the State Library, were cut back in July, due to budget cuts at the State Library level. Despite these cuts, general database use remains strong and use of the in-house network computers has increased by 15.84% from 2012 to 2013. While there is no way to quantify it at the present time, empirical observation also indicates a definite increase in the use of laptops, tablets and devices on the Library's wireless network over the course of the last year. The Library's Reference staff welcomes all of your inquiries and looks forward to assisting you with answers to your questions.

Programs Programs are an increasingly important aspect of the services offered by the Library and their attendance represents another important measure of use. This year, our regular adult programs have included lectures, musical performances and the Shakespeare Summer Theater. We have also continued the very popular Tuesday Night movies and Friday Opera Series and launched a Friday Film Series and a Monday Game Afternoon for adults. For children, in addition to our many regular Story Times, Squiggle Club, Origami, Kindergarten Story Time Theater and Chess, we introduced a Story Time at the Mountainside pool in August and a Lego Club in the fall, to great acclaim. Despite the early closures in June and July, most children's Summer Reading programs were held as scheduled, much to the appreciation of the families who attended. In 2013 we held 396 programs, attended by 6995 patrons, despite the limitations imposed by heating and air conditioning failures, a flood in the meeting room and assorted weather closures. This represents a 12.5% increase in programs and a 0.5% increase in attendance over 2012.

Summer Reading The summer reading theme for 2013 was "Dig Into Reading" for our younger readers and "Beneath the Surface" for Middle School students. While some programs had to be cancelled due to the air conditioning failure, the two hired performers went on as scheduled. A total of 94 spectators enjoyed Cy Young's Aesop's Fables and Roger Robert's Puppets. 1,131 titles were read by 18 family reading teams, and 51 individual readers from Kindergarten through 8th grade read for 38,010 minutes or 634 hours. Prizes were given to the younger readers and raffle tickets for gift certificates to the older ones, with a wrap up party for 4th through 8th grade students, at which each participant received a new book as a gift. The Summer Reading program was sponsored by the Friends of the Mountainside library.

Patron Registration 282 new patrons were registered by the Library in 2013, of which 191 were residents of Mountainside. In addition, the library issued 105 replacement cards.

Collection Management Continuing the trend noted in 2012, spending on materials has had to decrease, in response to an increasingly tight budget. This was further exacerbated by the need to divert significant funds to cover the cost of unexpected but necessary heating and cooling repairs. As of the month of June, the Library had no choice but to limit book purchases to those financed by the Friends of the Library and by private, memorial and community donations. Special collections were taken on the Library's behalf by the residents of Ridge Drive and Heckel Drive and the Newcomers' Book Club, each of which displayed a rising public awareness of the Library's need and testified to the importance of the Library's role in the community. Our DVD collection was fortunately able to continue to grow at a steady rate, thanks to the new \$1.00 fee which allowed for the purchase of new items to keep this very popular collection fresh.

Special Shelving Projects In order to improve our use of space and accessibility of library materials, several collections were relocated and expanded.

1. Our entire Adult collections of Biography, Non-Fiction, Fiction and Mystery were shifted to maximize the use of shelf space. This back-breaking job was undertaken by former Library page and current college student Steven Ruggiero, as a volunteer summer project. We owe him an enormous debt of thanks.
2. As outdated print reference materials were retired from the collection, the space gained was allocated to the New Non-fiction section, formerly housed in amongst the DVDs. This collection is now prominently displayed and much easier to browse.
3. With the relocation of the New Non-fiction, we were able to dedicate more space to our popular and growing DVD collection and separate it into sub-categories, such as Documentaries, Musicals, Foreign Films and TV series, to very positive response.

Technology Use of the library's computers is on the rise, with 8334 logins in 2013, as compared to 7194 in 2012. At the same time, our patrons' technology needs are expanding, as communication becomes increasingly electronic. In addition to the growing number of patrons who use our wireless service for their own portable equipment, many more patrons are using the Library's computers on a regular basis, for everything from email to online course work. There is a growing demand for the ability to download and print large PDF files and for duplex, color and wireless printing. Patrons have also been frustrated by the limitations of the old server which manages the public computer sessions, as it has slowed down with age and increased user traffic, trapping some in tedious login loops before finally allowing them access, or ending their session without warning in the middle of their work. A more modern and powerful public computer and print management solution is needed, to respond to this change in demand. There is also an urgent need to replace the Circulation and Public Access Catalog computers, which are still running the Windows XP operating system, before the deadline of April 8th 2014, when Windows will completely cease to support all XP applications. In the face of this need, the library has sought funding assistance to help with the cost of these improvements. Thanks to a generous grant from the Watts Mountainside Community Foundation, work on the first phases of our Technology Improvement Project has begun and our patrons may look forward to significant improvements in 2014.

Website An important improvement in the service offered by the Library came in September of 2013, with the launch of our new and far more user-friendly website. The new simplified site reflects the spirit of the Mountainside Public Library, welcoming users in and offering enhanced ease of navigation, as well as a fully synced mobile site for use with tablets and smartphones. The site can also be modified and updated remotely, allowing for the rapid posting of emergency notices and important announcements. The design, development and maintenance of the site were sponsored by the Friends of the Mountainside Library.

Buildings and Grounds Several unfortunate heating and air conditioning equipment failures caused the Library both serious inconvenience and considerable expense in 2013. Operating hours were forced to be curtailed and funds had to be diverted from the purchase of materials, to pay the repair costs not covered by insurance. Despite these inconveniences, the Library had 52, 207 visits this year, resulting in 53, 166 checkouts, valued at \$1, 108, 042. 12.

1. Both of the circulating pumps for the Library's boiler suffered mechanical failure, one in March and the other in April of 2013, necessitating their replacement before the onset of the heating season this past fall.

This was an unfortunate and unexpected expense and could only be covered at that late date with funds originally budgeted for the purchase of Library materials.

2. The hot water coil in the Meeting Room heating unit sprang a sudden leak on June 4th, interrupting the Tuesday Night Movie and putting the room out of use until the carpeting was dry. Fortunately, both the scope of the damage and the cost of the repair amounted to less than initially feared.
3. On June 4th the compressor to the Library's central air conditioning failed, resulting in six weeks of high heat and poor air quality in the building, as well as an increase in humidity which caused warping of many books in the collection and damage to the ceiling tiles, which are currently being replaced. As a result, hours of operation had to be shortened, with the library closing at noon every day for the last three of the six weeks. To offset this inconvenience, the library opened to the public at 9AM each morning, instead of 10AM. Library staff rose to the challenge and worked unusual hours under difficult conditions.

Friends of the Mountainside Library The Friends of the Mountainside Library raise funds throughout the year, to be used to enrich and enhance the Library's offerings to the community. In addition to their annual fall membership drive, the Friends maintain a busy schedule of activities all year long. In 2013, the Friends hosted not only their spring and fall book sales, but also a highly acclaimed Spring Tea and a very successful Holiday Boutique. Such projects require enormous advance planning and effort and the Library truly appreciates their dedication and hard work. The Friends have made possible all of the following:

1. The Wowbrary database, which highlights new additions to our collection on the Library website's home page, is sponsored yearly by the Friends of the Library. In addition, in 2013, the Friends of the Library also generously sponsored the design and development of our new, more user-friendly, website.
2. In this year of particularly restricted materials spending, the Friends of the Library have donated generously to help us purchase new materials. In response to popular interest, the Friends of the Library have also sponsored the purchase of several highly-acclaimed television series on DVD, from PBS favorites to the blockbusters of Showtime and HBO.
3. While some of our program presenters offer their services free of charge, many earn their living at it and do charge a fee. These paid programs offer our patrons an extra level of enrichment and are generously sponsored by the Friend of the Library. All of the performers, activities and prizes in the Summer Reading program are sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Board of Trustees Trustee Clark Landale was reappointed to the Board of Trustees in December of 2013. His term will run until December 31st, 2018.

Personnel In February we said goodbye to Michael Banick, our Director of six years. The position is now filled by Lynn Favreau, already known to the community as a member of the Library's reference staff for some time. We welcomed Barbara Madurski to our reference staff at the end of March. Barbara Parisi and Janet Webber joined our circulation staff at the end of April and Lisa Thornton in October. In November, we wished Kathleen Flath well, as she retired after 20 years of service.

Looking Ahead We expect 2014 to be an exciting year, with a focus on the completion of our Technology Upgrade Project. While the budget will continue to be very tight, the Mountainside Public Library has the good fortune to be one of only three libraries in Union County whose minimum allocation has not decreased for the year 2014. Fundraising efforts will continue to be of the utmost importance to our mission to serve the community to the best of our ability and in the way in which it deserves. We count it a privilege to be your Library and to play such an important role in the life of the community.

Thank you for your continued support,
Marilyn J. Favreau
Director

Accepted by the Board of Trustees, February 24th, 2014.