



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

The Mountainside Public Library experienced both changes and challenges in 2014, including significant staff turnover, a comprehensive technology upgrade and a complete HVAC system replacement in response to the air conditioning failure of 2013. Throughout the year, and despite the many disruptions, we made it a priority to maintain the quality of service for which we are known and which our patrons deserve. In October of 2014, we were in fact the proud recipients of the first annual LUCCy Award, given by the Libraries of Union County Consortium (LUCC) to honor excellence in library service. This award acknowledges the extra lengths to which a library has gone to maintain a high standard of service to the community, even in the face of economic challenges and difficult situations. We are very proud indeed, to have earned such recognition from our colleagues.

Circulation The circulation of library materials is one important measure of use. 2014 saw a 14.8% drop in the total circulation of physical holdings, in comparison to 2013, continuing the downward trend from the prior year. This continued decrease is due primarily to a second summer in a row of severely reduced operating hours necessitated by the replacement of the air conditioning system from late June through mid-August 2014. 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 an ever tightening budget, as well as an increase in the use of electronic titles, rather than printed books. In fact, the borrowing of eBooks and audiobooks offered through the Library's participation in eLibraryNJ, which has shown a dramatic increase in the last few years, rose by a further 6.9% from 2013 to 2014, as an increasing number of patrons are choosing to download titles to their devices remotely, with their Mountainside library card.

Collection	Total '14	Total '13
ADULT		
Books	15982	18752
Audiobooks	1136	1321
CDs	1925	2527
DVDs	4194	5755
Periodicals	452	601
<i>subtotal - Adult</i>	23689	28956
JUVENILE		
Books	18505	21486
Audiobooks	199	284
CDs	192	255
DVDs	1352	2188
<i>subtotal - Juv</i>	20248	24213
Young Adult		
Books	1310	*
Audiobooks	45	*
<i>subtotal - Young Adult</i>	1355	*
eLibraryNJ	1551	1450
TOTAL	46843	54619
2013 YA included	in Juvenile	statistics

While circulation of DVDs has slowed down a little this year, two “3 for the price of 2” events for the 4th of July and the winter school holiday were very popular and many of our patrons took advantage of the offers. Audiovisual materials have generally shown a slight drop in circulation this year over last, but they do remain a very popular and important part of our collection.

Reference Interactions Our Reference Librarians fielded all varieties of questions in 2014, from artwork identification to research assistance and computer tutorials. The retirement of long-time Adult Services Librarian Cathie Wagner in March brought about a transition in Reference staff, with part-time Librarian Barbara Madurski taking her place and the hiring of two new part-time Librarians to cover evenings and Saturdays. Circulation staff assisted to the best of their abilities, to cover gaps in Reference service occasioned by the transition. One very important and increasing 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. In 2014, Mountainside residents borrowed a total of 510 items through this service. The Mountainside Library also lent a total of 321 items to other libraries across the country, for a total of 831 Interlibrary Loan transactions during the course of the year, reflecting a 14.78% increase over 2013.

Year	Items Borrowed	Items Lent	Total Transactions
2013	586	138	724
2014	510	321	831

Our online database offerings constitute another important aspect of our Reference service. These databases are accessible 24 hours a day with a Mountainside Library card. In 2013 budget cuts at both the local and State levels necessitates the discontinuation of some of the lesser used subscriptions. Still more database subscriptions, available to all New Jersey libraries through the State Library, were cut back in July 2014, due to further budget cuts at the State Library level. For the last two years, 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. Despite cutbacks, general database use remains strong. 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 all libraries and their attendance represents another important measure of use. Some of our presenters offer their programs free of charge, while our paid programming is generously subsidized by the Friends of the Library. In 2014, our regular adult programs have included everything from lectures to live musical performances. We have also continued the very popular Tuesday Night movies, showing recent releases, and the Friday Opera Series. Our monthly Career Networking Group, a joint effort of the Scotch Plains and Mountainside Libraries, has been recognized by both the State Library and the New Jersey Library Association. For children we offered our many regular Story Times, Squiggle Club, Origami and Kindergarten Story Time Theater and the ever popular Lego Club. In addition, 90 children and 23 adults attended the 4 Story Times offered at the Mountainside pool in August. Despite the early closures from late June through mid-August, most children’s Summer Reading programs were held as scheduled, much to the appreciation of the families who attended. In 2014 we held 370 programs, attended by 6110 patrons, in spite of an unusually high number of winter weather closures and the prolonged reduction of summer hours due to the HVAC replacement. Despite these challenges, this represents only a 6.5% decrease in programs and a 12.6% decrease in attendance over 2013.

Year	Number of Programs	Total Attendance
2013	396	6995
2014	370	6110

Summer Reading The summer reading theme for 2014 was “Fizz, Boom, Read!” for our younger readers and “Spark a Reaction” for Middle School students. A total of 187 spectators enjoyed Presley & Melody’s kick off concert, Robert Roger’s “Little Leonardo” puppet show, Mad Science’s “Spin, Pop, Boom!” show and a Magic Show: an increase in attendance of 99% over 2013. 95 titles were read by 17 family reading teams, and 49 individual readers from Kindergarten through 8th grade read for 43,737 minutes or 729 hours. Prizes were given to the younger readers and raffle tickets for gift certificates to the older ones, with a wrap up party and movie 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 266 new patrons were registered by the library in 2014, of which 173 were residents of Mountainside. In addition, the library issued 83 replacement cards.

Collection Management Continuing the trend of the last few years, spending on materials has remained low, in response to a consistently tight budget and rising fixed costs. Fortunately, this regrettable but necessary reduction in spending on Library materials was alleviated in part by contributions from the Friends of the Library and by private, memorial and community donations. The Newcomers’ Club raised funds for the library’s collections in August with a car wash, which saw even tiny tots wielding soapy sponges. This fun-spirited event displayed a rising public awareness of the library’s need and testified to the importance of the library’s role in the community.

In order to improve our use of space and accessibility of library materials, several collections were relocated and assessed for ongoing relevance.

1. As outdated print reference materials continue to be retired from the collection and reference sources lean increasingly to the electronic, the remaining print items in that collection have been condensed to the shelves on the Reference Desk side of the area. The space gained has been allocated to the Large Print collection, which has grown significantly since the disbanding of the Large Print Circuit in 2013. This collection is now prominently displayed and much easier to browse.
2. With the relocation of Large Print, the New Jersey Collection has been moved to the shelves in the Periodicals Reading Room.
3. The cookery section of the Non-fiction collection is one of the most popular and in constant use. These books have been moved to a separate area of shelving, along the back wall of the Adult stacks and have been re-catalogued into much more detailed and clearly-labelled sub groups, resulting in a more user-friendly collection, with “bookstore style” display.
4. Another collection which is growing in both size and popularity is Young Adult, both Fiction and Non-fiction. To allow for best use of the limited space, the paperback and hardcover Fiction titles have been co-mingled. Added shelving, donated by the Friends of the Library, has also allowed for the expansion of the Non-fiction section which is growing quickly and is of increasing importance to the school curriculum.

Technology Thanks to a generous grant from the Watts Mountainside Community Foundation, our Technology Improvement Project was completed in 2014, providing significant improvements for both patrons and staff. Not only had the old patron server slowed down and begun to fail, it was discovered to have been providing inaccurate usage reports for some time. Contrary to the impression created by comparison of the 2012 logins (7194) and the 2013 logins (8334) with the 2014 logins (3833) use of the in-house network computers remains strong and appears to be on the rise. Analysis of the numbers generated by the old server highlights their improbability, when divided by the number of computers they represent and the number of days per year the library is open. In 2014 the failing patron server was replaced by the Envisionware patron computer session and print management software system, allowing for faster and more reliable computer use for our patrons. Three of the patron computers, four catalog

computers, both Circulation desk computers and four staff workroom computers were systematically upgraded from Windows XP (unsupported as of April 2014) to Windows 7 machines. The old patron printer was replaced with a new print release station and a more powerful, color-capable printer. In addition to being able to use our computers for everything from email to course work, patrons may now download and print large PDF files and select duplex, color or black and white printing.

Furthermore, while there is no way to quantify it at the present time, empirical observation continues to indicate a steady increase in the use of laptops, tablets and devices on the library's wireless network over the course of the last several years, with a pronounced increase in 2014.

Buildings and Grounds Tremendous thanks are due to the Borough of Mountainside this year for two important upgrades to the facility. The library has been equipped with a powerful generator, which will keep us running during power outages and allow us to serve as a heating, cooling and charging station for the community in times of need. The old HVAC (air conditioning) system has also been replaced. While the work required an adjustment of our summer operating hours until the new system was up and running, the results will have been well worth any temporary inconvenience.

Despite prolonged, construction-related disruptions, the library had 45,095 visits this year, resulting in 45,292 checkouts, valued at \$939,779. 80.

Friends of the Mountainside Library The Friends of the Mountainside Library raise funds throughout the year, to raise funds to provide programs for our patrons of all ages and to enhance Library services, which are still feeling the effects of the lingering economic downturn. In addition to their annual fall membership drive, the Friends maintain a busy schedule of activities all year long, including their spring and fall book sales. This year, in November, renowned saxophonist and local resident Allen Won generously designed and performed a wonderful, classical "informance" style concert: an event sponsored by the Friends. This event was a resounding success, both in terms of enthusiastic audience response and effective fundraising. 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. Both our website and the Wowbrary database, which highlights new additions to our collection on the library website's home page, are sponsored yearly by the Friends.
2. 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 Friends. All of the performers, activities and prizes in the Summer Reading program are sponsored by the Friends.
3. 2014 Memorial donations to the Friends, in memory of Scott Schmedel, have added to our collection some high quality children's books and several more highly-acclaimed television series on DVD, from PBS favorites to the blockbusters of Showtime and HBO.
4. Contributions from the Friends have made possible a much-needed update of our Travel collection, as well as additional shelving for the increasingly popular Young Adult collection and proper storage shelving for several staff areas in the building.
5. Proceeds from the November concert went towards the replacement of the well-loved and much used AWE Early Learning Station computers in our children's department.

Community Support This year, in addition to the Ryan Patrick Faella Foundation, which provides our Pronunciator language-learning database, several local groups have also joined the effort. During the summer, the Newcomers' Club hosted a very successful car wash to benefit the library's Children's collection. This fall, many Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts have worked to groom and landscape the property, cleaning up landscaping stones and planting bulbs. Watch for a show of beautiful flowers next spring!

Board of Trustees Trustee Dona Osieja announced her intention to step down from the Board of Trustees at the end of her term in December 2014. She has given generously of her time and talent to the library and its community for 24 years and her contributions will be sorely missed. Her place will be taken by Kristen Ciccimarra, whose term will expire in December, 2019.

Personnel Long-time Reference Librarian and Head of Adult Services, Cathie Wagner, retired at the end of March. The position is now filled by Barbara Madurski, already known to the community as a member of the Library's part-time reference staff. Both Ian Allcock and Kim Pallant joined our reference staff at the end of March, to provide evening, weekend and substitute coverage. Lisa Thornton left our Circulation staff at the end of May and Barbie Slaugh joined our Circulation staff in September.

Looking Ahead We expect 2015 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 the few libraries in Union County whose minimum allocation has increased, if slightly, for the year 2015. 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