

GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY (GPL)

FREE and OPEN to All • Vanessa Abraham, Director

GPL.ORG • info@gpl.org • Open Tue-Wed-Thu 10-9, Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5, and Sun 1-5 (Sept-May)
Main: 978-448-1167 • Children: 978-448-1168 • Reference: 978-448-8000 • Fax: 978-448-1169

Top Actions and Accomplishments in 2022

Full library services were restored following two years of pandemic and budgetary disruptions. Normal hours resumed January 1, 2022. The library was open **276 days** (75% of all 365), 48 hours per week, and 52 hours per week after Sunday hours returned in September.

Users Returned. Foot traffic returned slowly at the start of 2022, but as the year progressed, so did the volume. Numbers continued to climb throughout winter and spring, returned to normal summer bustle, and matched pre-pandemic levels in the fall. Additional storytimes had to be added to alleviate overcrowding. After-school hours were hopping as kids came back in droves.

Record-Breaking Program Attendance of 12,937—12% more than our previous high of 11,485 in 2018! Library staff offered **821 programs** for all ages—an average of 3 programs every day and **24% more** than in 2019. Most programs for kids and teens were held in person, while adult events were offered in all formats to serve the needs of each group, citizen, and presenter.

Book Circulation Rebounded, returning to pre-pandemic levels, with **126,711 books** borrowed—**5% higher** than in 2019! Children's book circulation was the highest since 2013 at **80,394**, a 14% increase over the past 10-year average. Digital circulation (e-books, etc.) continued its upward trend—helped by the improved ease of use and expanded offerings—but physical circulation remained king at 84% of all **188,336** items borrowed.

Phenomenal Year for Adult Programs, with over **4,000 adults** attending events—**35% more participation and 37% more programs** over the average of the past 10 years! Second sessions had to be added for nearly every hands-on arts and crafts event to meet demand. Lifelong Learning series were well-attended, offering in-depth topics such as art history, foreign policy, birds, climate change, and more. Spice Club and Trivia Tuesdays continued as fan favorites. Popular adult groups (books, film, Spanish, cookbooks, knitting, plant-powered) held strong, with new groups added for parents, reading ramblers, and a *Let's Talk About It* group designed to foster positive, respectful, and productive discussions on a wide range of challenging topics.

Early Literacy & School Readiness. GPL's Children's Dept. promotes early literacy with Books for Babies, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, interactive play, storytimes, activities, singing, and movement. Staff provide materials, knowledge, and support for caregivers for getting children ready to read and developing language skills and school readiness. Reading aloud can be intimidating at first for children and reading to a non-judgmental dog (Shiver or Blitz) can often be the perfect audience for practicing. Parents of young children connect at GPL.

School-Age Activities. With the wide variety of after-school, vacation week, and summer clubs (cursive, comics, Lego, books, coding), combined with always available crafts, puppets, and play areas, there is something for kids to do every day at GPL. Staff match caregivers and kids with the best books at the right reading level and interest to spark and nurture a love of reading.

Connecting & Engaging Teens. GPL's Teen Librarian provides activities after school Tuesday through Friday and Saturdays—opportunities for safe, structured exploration of many topics, whether books, writing, film, arts, crafts, food, robotics, coding, or games. Teens from different grades have bonded over shared interests and become lifelong friends. Older teens volunteer, serve on the Teen Advisory Committee, and have created their own debate, writing, Dungeons & Dragons clubs, and more. GPL's busiest days are middle school half-days as kids swarm to the library and Llama Lounge for activities and to hang out. The **new Middle Grade Collection** of age-appropriate books for younger teens has also been a big hit with parents.

School Visits & Outreach. A highlight of the year was the return of elementary class visits, as students enjoyed tours, storytimes, and fun instructional activities on finding information in the library. It was especially delightful when the first graders returned in the fall, as some students received their very first library card! Children's and Teen Librarians were also out in the community, reaching out to school classes, preschools, daycare centers, PTYC, teachers and parents at school nights, and special events to promote library services, resources, and reading.

Education & Job Support Partner. GPL provides support for all students—from GDRSD students seeking homework help to the needs of less traditional learners (remote students, homeschoolers, etc.) to job seekers or adults changing careers, starting a business, or returning to school. The library offers many spaces for meeting, tutoring, or quiet work or study.

Adult Services. GPL serves adult needs at every age and stage of life, whether supporting ESOL, language, technology use, or providing free access to resources and equipment. Need 24/7 Wi-Fi? Want to borrow a hotspot or croquet set? Looking to save money with a museum pass? Need to fax a document? Want assistance finding your next book or film? We're here for you!

Community-Wide Events. Groton Reads & Eats returned with all-new food-related programs. As events were so popular, we collected participants' favorite recipes and created a cookbook. Outdoor events at Town Field were also well-attended this summer, with over 100 people at the Juneteenth jazz and dance performance. Live concerts continued (indoors) in the fall.

Major Technology Changes. Technology planning was a priority project for 2022. For 25 years, technology management at GPL can best be summarized as "Jeff." But with Jeffrey Pike's 2023 retirement, combined with the transformation of the Technology Librarian position into an Assistant Director, GPL needed technology services to change from requiring specialized knowledge to more general skills and abilities. To remove the need to maintain three servers, we migrated 20 years' worth of staff files into a cloud-based system. We set up an internal staff website, implemented new security protocols and maintenance routines, and replaced aging equipment (staff and public computers, laptops, and self-check systems) with the help and support from our MVLC network, Town IT Dept., and state aid funds. The new online host(s) for the Town Diaries, Groton Herald, and other digitized historical documents will debut in 2023.

Respectfully Submitted by The Board of Trustees of the Groton Public Library:

Mark Gerath, Chair; Kate Bettencourt, Vice-Chair; Jane Allen*, Secretary; Helena Altsman (11/14-), Member; Kristen von Campe, Member; Nancy Wilder, Member; David Zeiler, Member

**We mourn the loss of 17-year Trustee Jane Allen on August 1.*

PICTURES:



Pictured: FanFest Summer Reading Kick-Off Event with Face Painting in the Garden, June 15, 2022



Pictured: Children's Librarian Lauren Sanchez at Flo-Ro Literacy Night, May 26, 2022



Pictured: Dan Shaughnessy speaks about his Celtics book at Town Field, June 15, 2022



Pictured: Wreath-making night at GPL, December 8, 2022



Pictured: Impromptu meeting and discussion of books in the Teen Area, December 2022