

# FY2023



# ANNUAL REPORT

## BANCROFT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

MISSION STATEMENT	LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE 2025 - 2029	LIBRARY RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING	GRANTS	FACTS AT A GLANCE
----------------------	--	--	--------	----------------------

### Our Mission

THE BANCROFT MEMORIAL LIBRARY WILL PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN A VARIETY OF FORMATS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING WHILE FOSTERING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION IN A VIBRANT PLACE THAT IS FREE AND WELCOMING TO ALL.

### July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

#### Library Staff:

- Tricia Perry – Director
- Elaine Kraimer – Youth Services Librarian
- Keely Bethel-Penny – Senior Library Assistant/Technical Services
- Jean Hill – Library Assistant
- Katheryne Sheehan – Library Assistant
- Vineet Kaushik – Library Page

The Town's Annual Reports provide an opportunity to feature noteworthy highlights, accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities of current and historical interest to the

community and future generations. As we reflect back on FY2023, we are very much aware that history was made this year in Hopedale.

2023 marks the 137th year of public library service to the residents of Hopedale; and, thanks to the support of the Hopedale community, we look forward to serving the residents of Hopedale for many more years. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hopedale community for their support of the Proposition 2 ½ Override at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 16, 2023, and the subsequent ballot approval for the Override on the Special Election Ballot of May 23, 2023. With your support, Library users, Trustees and staff can look forward to a 138th year of service! The stakes were very high this year; with approval of a Proposition 2 ½ Override required to fund the Library and other town departments. It is worth noting that failure to pass this Override would have led to the closure of the Library in July 2023, elimination of all library staff positions, loss of access to library and network services and resources, elimination of borrowing privileges at other libraries, and loss of state certification.

We are very appreciative of the number of residents who voted in favor of this critical Override. With your support, the Library is able to maintain its state certification and deliver a wide variety of library services and an active community presence, providing free Internet access, accessible community spaces, as well as educational and recreational materials, resources, and programs for adults, teens, and children.

### **LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE 2025 - 2029**

In April, the Library distributed copies of a community survey as the first step in the Strategic Planning Process. Copies of the survey with links to the online option were inserted into the April edition of the Hopedale Local Town Pages newspaper, which is delivered to every household in Hopedale. Surveys were also made available at the Post Office, Town Hall, Hopedale Council on Aging, and the Library; with dedicated collection boxes located at these locations as well. “Next Steps” in the planning process will include the formation of a Community Focus Group with discussion moderated by Kristy Chadwick, a consultant at the Massachusetts Library System. When completed, the Strategic Plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for their review and approval.

### **CELEBRATE LITERACY AWARD**

In April, the Library Director (Tricia Perry) was awarded the Celebrate Literacy Award from the Massachusetts Reading Association. This award recognizes organizations, institutions, and individuals who have made significant contributions to literacy. Special thanks to all of the individuals and community groups who have collaborated with the Library on so many of our shared literacy initiatives.

### **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

The Statue of Hope received much-needed conservation work in the fall of 2023 under the capable supervision of long-time conservator Louise Freedman. Louise has been the principal

conservator of record for the Statue of Hope for many years now, beginning in April 2000 when L.H. Freedman Studios and Art Conservation Associates submitted a joint proposal for the conservation of the Statue of Hope Fountain project. We are indebted to Louise for her assiduous attention to detail and her dedication to the care and keeping of this historic and irreplaceable treasure. The winter protective covering for the Statue of Hope Fountain was erected by Ken Schmitt, of Veterans Scaffold Services, Inc.

## LIBRARY RESOURCES

Library collections continue to grow and evolve, with hotspots and jigsaw puzzles in high demand! E-content, including Overdrive (LIBBY) ebook and audiobook collections continue to expand in response to patron demand. Our OverDrive collection, which is available through C/W MARS, now includes ebooks, audiobooks, as well as 148 online magazines, which may be downloaded anytime. Our in-house collection of books in large print continues to expand to accommodate patron requests for material in this format.

Hopedale residents can use their library cards to access Kanopy, a free video streaming service featuring movies, documentaries, foreign films and classic cinema. The Library also has many online resources including several databases purchased by the Library, as well as those provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS). These are accessible via the Library's website.

**Free Seed Library:** One of the most recent additions to the Library's collections is a new "Free Seed Library." There are many varieties of seeds for garden vegetables and flowers. Special thanks to W. Atlee Burpee & Co., Fedco Seeds, Seed Savers Exchange, and a Friend of the Library for this new initiative.

**Digitization of Town Reports:** In May 2023, Sue Ciaramicoli (Co-Chair of the Hopedale Historical Commission) worked with Library staff and Digital Commonwealth staff at the Boston Public Library to coordinate the digitization of the Town of Hopedale Annual Reports from 1886 to 2022. This resource is of specific importance to the Town of Hopedale, as it represents the sole source of an entire set of Annual Reports for the Town. When the digitization process is completed, Town Reports will be accessible online at <https://archive.org>. (Searchable by keyword: Hopedale Town Report.)

The Library continues to be open 36 hours per week: 7 hours daily Monday – Thursday, and 4 hours on Friday and Saturday.

A lighted display case, located adjacent to the circulation desk, is available to highlight special interests or collections. If you have a collection you'd be interested in showcasing, please contact Keely Bethel-Penny at the Library and we will add you to the schedule! Our 2022/23 Displays included:

- Sept. 2022: Billi Manning: photo cards
- October 2022: Gary Graveson: Pre-1840 Horace Mann books

- November 2022: Andrea DiMartino - Doll House Miniatures
- December 2022: Billi Manning - Holiday Photo Cards
- January 2023: Gary Graveson - Hand-Crafted Cribbage Boards
- February 2023: Elaine Kraimer - Egyptian Artifacts
- March 2023: Keely Bethel Penny - Diamond Art Paintings
- April 2023: Billi Manning - Spring Flower Photo Cards
- May 2023: Sam Catalogna - LEGO Figurines
- June 2023: Dan Malloy - Historical Hopedale Photos and Postcards

## LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

Across the country, there has been an overwhelming increase in the number of materials challenged in school districts and public libraries; with some of these challenges taking place within just a few miles of Hopedale. In the fall of 2022, the Bancroft Memorial Library partnered with the Hopedale Public Schools and the Hopedale Unitarian Parish to offer some information and programming focused on questions about Censorship versus Freedom of Speech and the value of free and open access to information. During “Banned Book Week” (a national event that is typically held towards the end of September or early October), students in Mrs. Mayotte’s English classes at the Hopedale Jr./Sr. High School also participated in very lively discussions about censorship, intellectual freedom, and banned/challenged books led by Mrs. Lindsay Mayotte (English Teacher – Hopedale Jr./Sr. HS); Ms. Mary Margaret Mulroney (Library Media Specialist – Hopedale Jr./Sr. HS), and Tricia Perry (Director – Bancroft Memorial Library).

In addition, a community conversation entitled “Intellectual Freedom – Fighting the Good Fight” featuring guest speaker Martin Garnar was held at the Hopedale Unitarian Parish in December. As part of the program, participants of all ages were invited to join in the conversation as we collectively explored the broad themes of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom and the rights of readers. (Martin Garnar Ph.D. is the Director of the Amherst College Library, chair of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, and editor of the 10th edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual).



# TDP 13

## MOST CHALLENGED BOOKS OF 2022

The American Library Association tracked **1,269 challenges** to library, school, and university materials and services in 2022. Of the **2,571 unique titles** that were challenged or banned in 2022, here are the top 13 most challenged.



1	2	3	4	5	
					
<b>GENDER QUEER</b> by Maia Kobabe <b>REASONS:</b> LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE</b> by George M. Johnson <b>REASONS:</b> LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>THE BLUEST EYE</b> by Toni Morrison <b>REASONS:</b> rape, incest, claimed to be sexually explicit, EDI content	<b>FLAMER</b> by Mike Curato <b>REASONS:</b> LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>LOOKING FOR ALASKA</b> by John Green <b>REASONS:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content	<b>THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER</b> by Stephen Chbosky <b>REASONS:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content, rape, drugs, profanity
7	8	9	10		
					
<b>LAWN BOY</b> by Jonathan Evison <b>REASONS:</b> LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN</b> by Sherman Alexie <b>REASONS:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity	<b>OUT OF DARKNESS</b> by Ashley Hope Perez <b>REASON:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>A COURT OF MIST AND FURY</b> by Sarah J. Maas <b>REASON:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit	<b>CRANK</b> by Ellen Hopkins <b>REASONS:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit, drugs	<b>ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL</b> by Jesse Andrews <b>REASONS:</b> claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity
					



## BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2022

September 18–24

Books Unite Us.  
Censorship Divides Us.



ALA AmericanLibraryAssociation

One of the Hopedale community's projects for this past year was the “One Book, One Town” community reading program, featuring “A Long Walk To Water.” Nancy Verdolino was instrumental in coordinating efforts for this collaborative adventure. The original goal was to raise \$750 to finance a solar-powered well which would provide families with access to clean, life-sustaining water through Heifer International. That goal was surpassed with \$1,920 raised throughout the Hopedale community. This donation will provide funding for two solar wells and go towards other Heifer International resources to help families improve their access to fresh water resources. Kudos to everyone who made this happen!



- Adult and Young Adult Book Selection: *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park

Companion Book Choices (for younger students):

- *Nya's Long Walk: A Step at a Time* by Linda Sue Park
- *The Water Princess* written by Susan Verde and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds (StoryWalk® on the Community House Lawn in November)
- *My Great-Grandmother's Gourd* by Cristina Kressler
- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Brian Mealer/Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon

### First Annual Pumpkin Decorating Contest!







In October, the Library hosted its first annual pumpkin decorating contest! Faux/Foam pumpkins were decorated and displayed at the Library with voting done by contributions of a non-perishable food item. More than 200 votes were counted, and all food items were donated to The Daily Bread Food Pantry in Milford.

The Marjorie Hattersley Children's Room continues to be a busy and popular destination at the Library. In addition to our annual events such as "Check It Out," Owl Moon Storytime, "Take Your Child to the Library" Day, Hopedale Reads! Celebrate Dr. Seuss and the Good Neighbor Mitten Tree, we also continue to expand and promote early literacy outreach. StoryWalks® posted at the Library and on the lawn of the Community House included *The Water Princess* (Written by Susan Verde and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds), *Juna's Jar* (by Jane Bahk), and *Pete the Cat: Rocking in my School Shoes* (Art by James Dean/Story by Eric Litwin). Other activities for children and teens included "One-Up Games," Hygge Take and Make Kits, and Senior Reading Buddies.

In January 2023, in partnership with the 1000 Books Foundation, Bright Beginnings Center, Friends of the Hopedale Library, United Way of Tri-County, and the Middlesex Savings Bank, the Library introduced the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" literacy initiative for children ages Birth – 5 years. The program is a nationwide challenge that encourages parents and caregivers to regularly read aloud to their children. By reading just one book a night, families can reach the 1000-book goal in three years and provide their children essential early literacy skills. The goal of the program is to encourage parents and caregivers to read 1000 books with their child before he or she starts Kindergarten. Reading logs include additional information from the Bright Beginnings Center about fun literacy activities that you might want to incorporate and share with your child at home. Registration began in January, and by June there were 65 registered participants!



**Summer Reading 2022: Read Beyond The Beaten Path:** Each year, the Summer Reading Program provides “bookends” for our Annual Report. Planning begins in early spring with library staff working collaboratively on creating reading logs, organizing activities and special programs, and designing publicity flyers and social media posts for the various events.

In early June, Mrs. Kraimer visits classrooms at the Bright Beginnings Center and Memorial Elementary School; sharing a selection of new titles and authors, as well as information about the Summer Reading Program. This year’s Summer Reading Prizes featured a wide variety of prize basket incentives, with the Nintendo Switch (donated by BestBuy in Milford and the Friends of the Library) proving to be the most coveted reading prize when the entries were tallied in August 2022, followed closely by the “Ride to School in a Firetruck” and the “Ride to School in a Police Vehicle”! Thank you to all of our community partners and sponsors for making this program possible!

**Summer Reading 2023: Find Your Voice:** In March 2023, Hopedale resident Laura Chan began research and planning for her Capstone Project; a community service project that all Franklin Charter School students are required to start planning in 7th grade and complete in 8th grade. Laura was interested in hosting an event that would include a literacy component, and also raise awareness of the work done by the Baypath Humane Society. The project was integrated into our Summer Reading programming, with weekly “Community Read-Alouds” on Saturday mornings featuring therapy animals from AaTs (ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY SERVICES, MA). *Featured in Photo: Riley – one of the Reading Therapy Dogs!*





As part of her service project, she also created a donation drive for pet supplies, with a link to the Baypath Humane Society's "Wish List" of recommended items. Her plan was approved by the school in early April, and then Laura got to work on creating publicity fliers that she distributed at school and around town. Laura also set up 2 donation boxes at the Library, and coordinated matching young readers with therapy dogs (and two cats) ON Saturday mornings. She also helped the children select the books to be read and provided several interesting title recommendations for our library collections (including one of Laura's favorites: *I'll Teach My Dog 100 Words* by Michael Frith!) It was a pleasure working with Laura on her imaginative and very successful community reading project. Laura has already volunteered to coordinate a similar project for us next summer!



## PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

The Helen Symonds Book Club, led by former Library Director Ann Fields, meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 1 pm and new members are always welcome. In March, local poet



Lynne Viti (Poet Laureate of Westwood, Massachusetts) was the featured speaker for the group, which also included participants from Deb McGonnell's Literature Class (Hopedale COA). Lynne shared several of her poems and spoke about her writing process and inspirations.

Books discussed by the Helen Symonds Book Club this year included:

- *Hour of the Witch* by Chris Bohjalian
- *11/22/63* by Stephen King
- *The Paris Architect* by Charles Belfoure
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- *The Maid* by Nita Prose
- *Deacon King Kong* by James McBride
- *The Walk to Cefalù, Dancing at Lake Montebello: Poems, Going Too Fast, Punting, Dreaming Must Be Done in the Daytime and In Louisburgh, County Mayo; and two poetry chapbooks, Baltimore Girls and The Glamorganshire Bible* by Lynne Viti
- *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles
- *Sold On A Monday* by Kristina McMorris
- *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict

New to adult programming this year is "Community Conversations." Sponsored by Hopedale for Change, the group meets monthly at the Library and encourages lively conversation about topics of interest to the community. All are welcome to participate and a Zoom link is provided for remote access. Knovel Knitters continue to gather together on Wednesday evenings; discussing patterns and exchanging stories while knitting and crocheting.

Other evening events sponsored by the Friends of the Hopedale Library included topics such as King Philip's War (Michael Tougias), The Irish in America (Mary King et al.), Wildlife in Your Backyard (Joy Marzolf), Hopedale's Hidden History – Who Is Miss Margie (Linda Hixon), The Doll Maker's Ghost and Stories (Charlotte Anne Dore), and the Winter Stroll featuring the Holiday Harmony Quartet.

## MUSEUM PASSES

Through the generosity of the Friends of the Hopedale Library, community sponsors, and The Hopedale Foundation, the Library offers passes to several museums and area attractions. You can reserve your pass up to 30 days in advance using the "Online Pass Reservation Program" link on the Library website or by contacting library staff directly. In the spring, the Friends of the Hopedale Library also hosted a raffle for passes to Southwick's Zoo. Museum Passes currently available include:

- Capron Zoo (Sponsored by Dewey Pest & Wildlife)\*
- The Ecotarium
- The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
- Mass State Parks Pass\*
- Museum of Science\*
- New England Aquarium\*

- New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill
- Old Sturbridge Village
- Providence Children's Museum (Sponsored by Hopedale Technologies)
- USS Constitution
- Worcester Art Museum

\*Passes available only to Hopedale residents

## GRANTS:

In December 2022, the ARSL (Association for Rural & Small Libraries) Grant Review Team notified us that the Library's application for the ARSL Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant was selected for full funding to fund facility improvements and outreach and programming activities. Grant funds (\$10,000) will allow us to focus on providing easy access to dynamic learning tools and library resources that encourage sensory exploration, as well as cognitive, social and creative development. Funds will also provide for updated furnishings for the Community Program Room, as well as sensory tables, supplies, and updated technology.

The Library also received several other grants this year including

- Seven Hills Foundation: \$5,000 to the Library for literacy initiatives
- The Hopedale Foundation: \$1000 for Library Programming

The Library staff and Trustees are grateful to the many individuals and organizations which support and sustain Library programs and events. We are especially grateful to the Hopedale Cultural Council and The Hopedale Foundation for their support of Library programs and museum passes. We are privileged to have several adult and teen volunteers who regularly contribute many hours assisting with library tasks on a weekly basis.

We are grateful to all of the members of the Friends of the Hopedale Library who work tirelessly on behalf of this institution and look forward to partnering with them on new projects and initiatives. Membership in the Friends of the Hopedale Library is open to anyone who uses and loves our Library, and volunteers are always welcome.

And a special thank you to the Library staff -- who are truly the most valuable resource in the Library! We are confident that library staff will remain poised and prepared to embrace new initiatives and enhanced opportunities, and look forward to welcoming you in person at the Bancroft Memorial Library.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Bancroft Memorial Library Board of Trustees**

**Christine Seaver, Chair**

**Marie Riddell, Secretary**

**Frederick G. Oldfield III**

## Facts At A Glance - FY23



FACTS AT A GLANCE: Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023				
	FY21	FY22	FY23	% Change FY21-23
<b>Number of Registered Borrowers</b>	2,799	2,759	2,544	-9%
<b>Total Collection Size</b>	201,401	217,079	238,774	19%
Books and Print Materials	27,637	27,641	26,208	
Audio/Visual (Audiobooks, Music CDs, DVDs)	3,782	3,490	3,042	
Downloadable EBooks	120,318	120,962	129,319	
Downloadable Audio/Video	49,566	64,831	80,058	
Subscriptions/Museum Passes/Misc.	98	155	147	
<b>Total Collection Use</b>	20,110	24,900	32,612	62%
Total Print Circulation (Children: 6166/7889/12385)	12,688	16,404	22,591	
Total Audio/Visual Circulation	1,868	2,389	2,069	
Downloadable EBooks	3,447	3,153	3,752	
Downloadable Audio/Visual	2,020	2,507	3,511	
Non-print materials/Miscellaneous	87	447	689	
Materials Borrowed From Other Libraries	2,821	2,380	3,483	23%
Materials Provided to Other Libraries	5,531	5,249	5,415	-2%
Total attendance in the Library	1,440	8,731	12,418	762%
Number of programs (in person & virtually)	26	114	173	565%
Number of attendees at programs	430	1,039	1,514	252%
Number of "hits" on Library website	14,835	14,984	9,074	-39%
Number of uses of public computers	156	364	416	167%
Number of wireless sessions	282	382	410	45%

## Bancroft Memorial Library

**Address:** 50 Hopedale Street, Hopedale, MA 01747

**Phone:** 508-634-2209

**Website:** <https://www.hopedale-ma.gov/bancroft-memorial-library/bancroft-memorial-library>