

Metuchen Public Library

2017 Annual Report



2017 Key Library Statistics

- Visits to the library: 120,981
- Items checked out: 122,854
- Number of library cardholders: 6,995
- Library-sponsored program attendance: 10,623
- Number of library-sponsored programs: 702
- Community programs and meetings: 215
- Attendance at community programs and meetings: 3,561

Summary

The Metuchen Public Library reached a number of goals in 2017. For the first time since 2014, the library has been able to open on Sundays (1 to 5 pm) from Labor Day to Memorial Day. Program offerings and attendance increased greatly, with more than 10,000 visits for library-sponsored programs, continuing an upward trend and surpassing 10,000 visits for programs in one year for the first time on record.



Buildings & Grounds

Throughout 2017, the Library Board of Trustees and director worked with architect firm Arcari Iovino to develop preliminary basement renovation plans. The plans were presented at the November 14 board meeting. The Library Construction Bond Act was also passed by NJ voters in November, and funds for matching grants for construction projects will be made available from the State Library in 2018 or 2019. The library plans to apply for these funds.

Finance

The library's "one-third mill" funding (the legal minimum) has continued to increase since 2014, reaching \$767,951 in 2017. Although this trend is positive, the level of funding remains below

levels in 2009 (\$792,618), but it is still significantly higher than the recent low point of \$698,943 in 2014. Funding for 2018 decreased slightly to \$766,583. Adjusted for inflation using the *United States Bureau of Labor Statistics* calculator, the 2009 budget amount of \$792,618 would be worth \$936,811 as of March 2018.

Library Board of Trustees

Three Library Trustees left the Library Board at the end of 2017—Laura Stibich, who served as Co-President at the end of her term, Kelly Jaques, who headed the library's Buildings & Grounds committee, and Shannon Wagner, who chaired the library's Personnel, Policy, and Programs committee. All of the outgoing trustees volunteered many hours to improve the library in countless ways.

Personnel

Moira Whittington assumed responsibility for young adult services for the library in February of 2017. Young adult programming, and especially the library's Teen Advisory Board, already robust under previous librarian Kathy Liss, has continued to be well-attended throughout 2017, with more than 30 teens regularly participating in meetings and volunteering for library events throughout the year.

Collection Development

Through a generous \$1,000 donation from law firm Seyfarth Shaw, made to the Friends of the Metuchen Library, the library increased its biography collection for children by greatly expanding its offerings from the *Who Was* series of books.

Collaborations

Literacy New Jersey and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

The Metuchen Public Library has collaborated with Literacy New Jersey to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for many years, but in 2017 the library applied for and was awarded a \$32,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, which allowed the library to offer five ESL classes per week from September 2017 to June 2018. In past years, the library and Literacy NJ offered one class per week.

Friends of the Metuchen Public Library

Every year, the Friends of the Metuchen Public Library raise funds through book sales, special events, and membership drives which support library events, classes, and collections. In 2017, the Friends provided approximately \$20,000 in additional funding, which helped the library offer award-winning cultural programming, language learning, new book and film collections, classes on a wide variety of topics for all ages, and much more. The Friends also beautify the library gardens and grounds, reaching out to the broader community for further assistance.



Friends President Sondra Flite presents Library Director John Arthur with a \$16,000 donation.

Members of the Friends also form the Art Gallery Committee, which has transformed the library's community room into an ever-changing flow of high-quality works from local and regional artists. Through their efforts, we have hosted art gallery openings and attracted hundreds of additional visitors to the library every year.

At the end of 2017, the Friends announced that they would be providing \$16,000 for library programming in 2018, an increase from \$15,000 in 2017.



Garden Club of Metuchen

In collaboration with the Friends of the Metuchen Public Library, the gardens surrounding our library are also planted and cared for by the Garden Club of Metuchen (GCM). Every spring and fall, you can see GCM members in their green shirts sprucing up library garden beds and planters.

Makerspace Committee

The library's Makerspace provides programming based on robotics, 3D printing and design, coding, and numerous 21st century skills to the public, all culminating in an annual Maker's Day event that attracts hundreds of participants. The Makerspace is run by a team of dedicated volunteers—from Metuchen High School students to members of the community who work professionally in the tech industry.

Teen Advisory Board

More than 30 Metuchen middle-school and high-school aged students are members of the library's Teen Advisory Board. These dedicated volunteers help with many library events and classes, work to keep the Young Adult section of the library up-to-date with book suggestions, and create fun promotions to keep Metuchen teens reading throughout the year.

Programs

Program attendance has been dramatically increasing every year. In 2017, attendance increased to more than 10,000 visits for programs for the first time on record. The library offered more than 700 programs during the year, and much of the increase was due to the \$32,000 New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development grant the library obtained and the resulting partnership with Literacy NJ.

Challenges

The biggest challenges facing the Metuchen Public Library stem from financial concerns. The library's budget still has never fully recovered after reaching a peak of \$792,618 in 2009, then steadily dropping for a few years before beginning to rebound. As a result, Sunday hours were eliminated, staffing was reduced, and the library budget for materials decreased. Sunday hours were restored in 2017, but continuing both to fund Sundays and to increase the collection remains difficult. Funds for expanding digital services are also limited. Most library programs are funded by the Friends of the Library or from grants, so continuing to grow depends on how many grants and

donations the library receives. The building requires ongoing maintenance. The original building was built in 1937 and faces such issues as water getting into the basement, as well as outdated facilities for meetings, staff, and for the Friends of the Library and Metuchen-Edison Historical Society to conduct their business. 2017 was also a transitional year, with a new library director and teen librarian stepping into their roles.

Goals

The goals for 2018 and beyond are to continue the upward trend in program attendance and to introduce increasingly high-quality offerings that meet the needs of a wide variety of members of the community. Circulation, both print and digital, also increased from 2016 to 2017, so the goal is to continue to create collections that are useful, accessible, and valuable to the community. The passage of the Library Construction Bond Act may provide the library an opportunity to apply for funding to be used toward renovations, which will improve meeting spaces and areas for the Friends of the Library and the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society to work.



Adult Services Librarian and International Film Festival planner John McBride was awarded an "Oscar" for 25 years of service at the Metuchen Public Library.

2017 Library Board of Trustees

Elizabeth Waldron, Co-President
Laura Stibich, Co-President
Caitlin Mollison, Vice-President
Samina Ali, Secretary
John Koskoski, Treasurer
Kelly Jaques, Trustee
Shannon Wagner, Trustee
Maryrose Little, Superintendent's Representative
Allison Inserro, Mayor's Representative

2017 Friends of the Library Board

Sondra Flite, President
Sharon Taylor, Vice President
Suling Lam, Treasurer
Marilyn Silver, Recording Secretary
Rosemarie Schwartzman, Correspond. Secretary
Linda George, Trustee
Lee Liss, Trustee
Dorothy Obropta, Trustee
Dominic Walker, Trustee

2017 Library Staff

John Arthur, Director
Hsihsi Chung, Principal Librarian
John McBride, Senior Librarian
Glynis Brookens, Youth Services Librarian
Mary Beth Mulligan, Bookkeeper
Michael Cadena, Principal Library Assistant
Moirra Whittington, Youth Services Sr. Assistant
Gretta Boardley, Library Assistant
Lorraine Doyle, Library Assistant
Kathy Gorman, Library Assistant
Vivian Lanciotti, Library Assistant
Ryan Miller, Library Assistant
Raymond Shirley, Library Assistant
Tianjiao Yun-Demato, Library Assistant

Library Financial Statistics, 2013 - 2017

Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
One-Third Mill Funding	\$717,902	\$698,943	\$721,294	\$748,641	\$767,951
Per Capita State Aid	\$5,947	\$5,900	\$5,936	\$5,936	\$5,885
Fines & Fees Collected	\$13,398.15	\$9,367.67	\$9,206.95	\$9,083.99	\$9,502.46

Library Usage Statistics, 2013 - 2017

Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Material Circulation	122,548	109,202	124,140	111,745	122,854
Library Visitors	123,321	131,786	120,713	135,966	120,981
Public Computer Usage	6,924	12,426	19,577	20,587	23,151
Reference Questions	NA	8076	7,814	8,051	10,452
No. of Community Programs & Meetings	110	179	185	167	215
Community Programs & Meetings Attendance	1,728	2,190	4,038	3,353	3,561
No. of Library Programs	336	292	335	545	702
Library Program Attendance	5,459	4,569	6,064	9,031	10,659
No. of Library Card Holders	7,081	7,297	6,960	6,893	6,995

Submitted by:

John Arthur

Director, Metuchen Public Library