

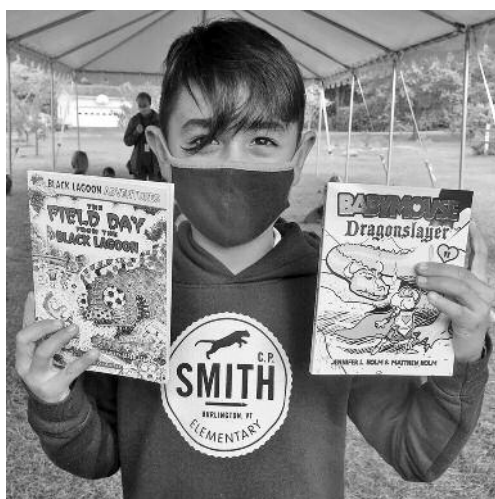
Fletcher Free Library



Mary Danko
Director

AS THE LARGEST public library in Vermont, our mission is to inform, enrich, and nurture a community of lifelong learners. The Fletcher Free Library exists as a place to learn, listen, share and grow. Those goals are unachievable when valuable lives and voices are silenced by racism. We commit to using our space to disrupt structures of oppression. We commit to dismantling racism and to partnering with organizations working toward this effort.

During this challenging year, the Library has increased outreach and book distribution to support the community. We have flexibly and creatively adapted according to the Governor's guidelines to continue access to Library services during the pandemic.



YOUTH SERVICES boosted the 2019 Summer Challenge Program by adding PAL camp, a collaboration between FFL, Burlington City Arts, and Burlington Parks Recreation and Waterfront, in late summer, when other camps had ended. The continued growth of the Summer Challenge Program has been possible because of the generous support of the Amy E. Tarrant Foundation. Grants from the Children's Literacy Foundation and the Vermont Department of Libraries provided summer performances. A grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation received in the spring of 2020 helped provide funding for a full-time outreach worker during the 2020 Summer Challenge Program. The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, which began at two Champlain Valley Head Start preschools, added an in-house program for families. This program received grants from the Children's Literacy Foundation and the Vermont Community Foundation Spark! Throughout the spring of 2020, during the pandemic, the Library provided free books to youth at meal sites throughout the City, as well as on the Library Lawn. A new program held on Saturdays called Family Playshop was started last fall. This a program of play-based learning designed to promote school readiness.

TEEN DEPARTMENT purchased a 3D printer, with the support of grants from the Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering (VASE) and Google, and offered a class in Designing Your Future. The Teen and Youth Services Departments teamed up for the second annual Harry Potter Party.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING continued the popular Food for Talk: a Cookbook Book Club, In Translation Series, and ELL and language classes. A grant from the Yiddish Book Center launched a new book club series. The Vermont Racial Justice Alliance and Fletcher Free Library partnered to bring the 1619: Arrival of the First Africans Traveling Exhibit from the Hampton History Museum (VA) to Burlington. In April we had phone in for a "Poem for the Day." Barbara Shatar, Partnerships and Programming Librarian, worked with the city on getting the word out about the Census.

Statistics

Programs & Events

- Programs were offered to the community in FY20, benefitting community members, including:
 - 354 Early Learner, Youth Programs & Teen Programs with 21,318 participants
 - Approximate 122 Adult Programs with 722 participants
 - Approximate 354 Teen Programs were offered with 629 participants
- Books distributed to youth to keep during FY20, including during the early pandemic: 3700.

Programming and Department Highlights

FY20 was a year of new challenges and opportunities to reach the community in safe and different ways.

CONNECTIVITY from providing curbside pickup to offering outdoor (masked and distanced) programs on our lawn, the library transitioned to the needs and regulations at each step along the way. We provided outdoor seating, boosted our WiFi to the parking lot and provided charging access outside the building.



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DIGITAL SERVICES expanded greatly in the spring. Existing platforms, Libby and Hoopla, were expanded to provide more ebooks and eaudiobooks. Special attention was paid to titles that focused on themes of anti-racism and racial justice. We've also added two new digital services. Press Reader offers a wide array of magazines in numerous languages. Novelist provides in depth book reviews and book suggestions based on a multitude of themes.

OUTREACH continued to our senior communities with book deliveries and book discussions. The Outreach Department partnered with the Friends of the Fletcher Free Library for Little Free Library Meetups. Folks who have Little Free Libraries were invited to come and get free books and meet fellow LFL owners.

THE EARLY LITERACY OUTREACH PROGRAM (ELOP) continued to develop its network of literacy volunteers, training and matching them with home child cares to bring curriculum-based story-time sessions. Grant funding from Northfield Savings Bank, the Vermont Federal Credit Union, and the Irving Foundation supported ELOP.

FEASIBILITY STUDY with CPG Enterprises, Inc., provided valuable information for the Friends and the Library as we plan for the future. Last summer we also did a survey to refresh our Strategic Plan. Consulting with CPG continues to provide guidance for the Friends and the Library for sustainable future growth.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT strengthens staff's knowledge and ability to serve community needs. The Friends proudly funds opportunities to enhance the skills of Library Employees.

HIGHLIGHT, Burlington's New Year's Eve celebration, included several events and activities at the Fletcher Free Library, including crafts and music.

COMPUTER WORKSHOPS in addition to the usual offerings of Microsoft suite classes, the Library continued to provide one-on-one support for patrons.

THE LIBRARY OF NON-TRADITIONAL THINGS (LONT) expanded during the year, adding new cooking equipment, musical instruments, tools, and games.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL & SMALL LIBRARIES (ARLS) CONFERENCE was held in Burlington last September. The Library was delighted to host 400 librarians from all over the country for an evening reception on Wednesday, September 4th. The staff had a great time answering questions about our services and showing off our beautiful library. Several staff attended the conference and two staff presented at the conference.

CITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE Library staff had a great time participating in the first ever City-wide Innovation Challenge. We were lucky to be a part of 3 opportunities that received funding to move forward: The Burlington StoryWalk®, an in-house Office Supply "Store," and an Equipment Sharing System for cross-departmental use.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AWARD – The Library was presented with the Burlington 2020 Martin Luther King Jr. Award on Sunday, January 19th. The special speaker for that day was Steven Reed, the first African American Mayor to be elected in Montgomery, Alabama. We are very honored to have received this award.



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Staffing

In July we welcomed Rachel Muse, Technical Services and Digital Content Manager. Michelle Lee became the new Circulation Manager, replacing Emer Pond Feeney, who became the Assistant Director of the Library. Rebecca Thompson continues her role as Coordinator of the Early Literacy Outreach Program, but also assumed the part-time position of Communications Assistant, replacing Annie D'Alton, who reduced her hours, continuing her role as Tech Center Assistant.



We've had two staff help on city-wide initiatives during the pandemic: Barbara Shatarra was a part of the Mayor's Analytics and Research Team and Alyssa Pierce, former Outreach Librarian, helped with the Resource & Recovery Center.

I am very grateful to our entire hard-working staff. I would also like to thank all of the wonderful interns and volunteers who contribute their time and energy in all departments of the Library. The Library would not be the welcoming, inclusive space that it is without the dedication of these individuals.

Library Commission

The Library Commission consists of Trustees and Commissioners who volunteer their time to help the Library form policies and strategies to reflect community needs throughout the year. These dedicated volunteers kept the Library moving ahead toward goals in the strategic plan. The Commission include 30% BIPOC members as well as two student liaisons and a staff member.

Friends of the Fletcher Free Library

The mission of the Friends is to encourage community support for the Fletcher Free Library, raise money for its needs, promote cultural and literacy programs, and sponsor educational and enrichment programs for all ages.

The Friends administer the grants for many library programs and raises funds from book sales, merchandise, and book stall sales. During FY20 their March and June book sales were cancelled. The Friends' plan for the first Library Mini Golf event, scheduled for April, was also cancelled due to COVID-19. The Friends hope to reschedule this exciting event when it is safe to do so. When these dedicated volunteers were able to resume their efforts, they began hosting pop-up book sales on the Library lawn. They also continued their eBay sales of rare books, raising monies to support the library during these difficult times. The Friends' ability to adapt to new protocols and maintain a can-do attitude and ability to pivot to new activities has been especially impressive.

Together We Create Community

I would like to express my appreciation to the community for your support, resilience, and energy. Thank you!

