



Friends of the Fletcher Free Library  
Annual Report FY'21  
July 2020 — June 2021

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<https://charity.ebay.com/charity/Friends-of-the-Fletcher-Free-Library/1789486>



## **Friends of the Fletcher Free Library**

### **Annual Report FY'21**

**July 2020 — June 2021**



**Read, Explore, Discover,  
& Learn All Summer!**  
Fun for all ages; kids, teens, and adults!

**SUMMER  
CHALLENGE 2021**

**Tails & TALES**

**June 1:** Online Reading & Activity  
Challenge begins on  
Beanstack, register via the FFL website.

**June 23:** Tails & Tales Kickoff at FFL! Official start to the FFL  
Summer Challenge. Activity sheets, t-shirts, and more.  
**3 - 6 PM**

**FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER AT:** [fletcherfree.org/summer](https://fletcherfree.org/summer)

Fletcher Free Library



**The purpose of The Friends of the Fletcher Free Library** is to support the Fletcher Free Library (FFL) through advocacy, financial support, and fundraising with the goal of promoting the Library as a literacy and multicultural center for the community.

The Friends raise money through sales of donated books and branded merchandise at occasional sales, sales from the Stall (shelves of books across from the Circulation Desk), and from online sales. The Friends have also raised money through an annual fundraiser. With the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Burlington in 2018, funds outside the City budget spent on the Library generally come through the Friends. The Friends are thus the recipients of contributions from the Annual Appeal and any restricted and unrestricted grant monies received. We again want to express our gratitude to Gale Batsimm, Development Manager for the Library, who is instrumental in making these sources and much more, possible and successful. We are all very grateful for Gale's hard work in support of the FFL and of the Friends.

## **FY'21**

FY'21 was a year of change for the Friends. After holding the office for over a decade, Ann Warrington resigned her position as Treasurer. Thankfully, she continues to sit on the Board. We are all grateful beyond words for Ann's service to the Friends and her involvement in taking the Friends on the journey resulting in ten-fold growth and from mountains of paper to PayPal and Venmo. For years we have all been confident that the books were in good hands and no detail was left unattended to. Franny Seguin, who built the Friends' eBay presence resigned during the year. Her steady leadership and deep understanding of the market was critical to the Friends success in raising money in the COVID year. We will miss her leadership, but she admirably made sure there was someone, John Moore, well trained to step into her shoes.

The Friends revised their bylaws in FY21. Since the time of the signing of the MOU with the City of Burlington and the Friends essentially becoming the exclusive recipient of donations in the service of the Library, there was some confusion between who were members of the Friends and who were donors to the FFL. We modified the bylaws of the Friends to eliminate donor membership per se. Traditional friends, supporters of the work of the Friends, are either volunteers or donors. We anticipate the board of directors to grow as more volunteers strengthen their commitment to the Friends. A Conflict of Interest clause was also added to the bylaws.

As it did for everyone, COVID-19 and its consequences had a huge impact on the Friends. The Library was closed to volunteers, including Friends, during the Spring of 2020, and reopened to us just after the beginning of the new fiscal year. It closed again during the winter months. Lack of access to the building severely limited the ability of the Friends to accept and organize donations and do traditional book sales. The Library was unavailable for indoor book sales and stall sales for the entire year. And again, the plans for Library Mini-Golf were shelved for the year. As it became easier for the Friends to work in the Library, work resumed, on innovative paths to raise money. Book donations started coming back in, resulting in an excellent sufficiency of saleable books, essentially two years' worth in a year. This will serve the Friends very well in the future and provides opportunities for developing new ways to raise money for the FFL. The past year was also a reminder of the not always recognized service the Friends play in providing an outlet for the community to recycle their often treasured books and a way for the community to grow their personal libraries cheaply, all to the benefit of the community itself through their support of the FFL.

During the Summer of 2019, the Friends held a couple of "pop-up" book sales on the lawn in front of the Library. While impractical and not particularly lucrative, they served as demonstrations of feasibility. In the Summer of 2020, several outdoor sales were held and by Spring 2021, thanks to the

intrepid Twerys, Robin and Mark, the process of running lawn sales was streamlined and quite effective in raising money.

Also new to the Friends menu of fundraising opportunities was the development and introduction of local online sales — an online book store where folks can buy books that can be picked up at the Circulation desk. This online store is just in its infancy but has the potential of raising significant amounts of money for the FFL going forward. Thanks very much to Grace Ortelere for creating this!

Our best and most consistent revenue source in FY21 was eBay sales. The combination of community generosity in donating books of significant value and a vehicle for finding homes for them around the country and around the world made it possible for the Friends to meet funding commitments to the FFL. In last year's report, we noted of eBay that "This work will have significant positive impact on revenues in FY'21". That was prophetic. Deep thanks again to Franny Seguin and to John Moore for managing it all.

## Board of Directors

<b>Position</b>	<b>FY'21</b>
<b>President</b>	Jonathan Chapple-Sokol
<b>Vice President</b>	Amanda Hannaford
<b>Treasurer</b>	Joan Conroy (5/21-6/21)
<b>Secretary</b>	Robin Twery
<b>Director</b>	Ann Warrington (Treasurer 7/20-5/21)
<b>Director</b>	Mark Twery
<b>Director</b>	Hilary Silver
<b>Director</b>	Phil Morin
<b>Director</b>	John Moore
<b>Director</b>	Grace Ortelere
<b>Director</b>	Franny Seguin (resigned 4/21)

About 27 Friends volunteers devoted over 1100 person-hours to supporting the Fletcher Free Library. This is fewer hours than in past years, but quite substantial, given that the Library was closed to volunteers for several months. We are thankful for those who worked hundreds of hours and those who contributed just a few. Through the work of Phil Morin, we continue to expand our outreach through new paths of communications, using MailChimp and social media, along with Front Porch Forum and posters to spread word of FFL and Friends activities.

## Financial Support for the Library

The Friends' Board annually allocates resources to the FFL for investment at the discretion of the Library Director. This procedure facilitates the FFL's ability to plan and prioritize programming, professional development, and special project investment more effectively. The Library Director proposes an amount to the Friends' Board based on anticipated programming and departmental needs for the coming fiscal year. The level of funding allocated each year is based on the availability of funds as stated in the Friends' end of year financial statements and Treasurer's report. For FY'21, the Board allocated \$37,000 to support programs and services in eight departments: youth, teen, adult, tech services, circulation, reference, technology, and professional development. The Friends also issued \$25,000 to the City of Burlington as agreed by our Memorandum of Understanding.

	Amount Requested	Notes
Donation to City Revenue Line	\$ 25,000.00	Same as last year
Programming - Adult	\$ 12,000.00	Same as last year
Programming - Youth	\$ 9,000.00	Same as last year
Programming - Teen	\$ 7,500.00	Same as last year
Professional Development	\$ 3,500.00	Same as last year
Technical Services Dept.	\$ 1,000.00	Same as last year
Circulation Dept.	\$ 1,000.00	Same as last year
Technology Dept.	\$ 1,000.00	Same as last year
Reference Dept.	\$ 1,000.00	Same as last year
Museum Pass Program	\$ 500.00	New – May not use depending on Museum openings next Spring
Shredding Contract/\$42.50 month	\$ 500.00	New – This is for recycling books from both the library and the Friends.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$62,000.00</b>	

## Financial Support for the Library

### FY'21 Highlights

**YOUTH SERVICES** *2020 Summer Challenge Program* visited nutrition sites throughout the City, thanks to support from the Amy E. Tarrant Foundation, the Dollar General Foundation, and a COVID-19 Cultural Relief Grant from Vermont Humanities, that supported a full-time summer outreach intern and the materials to create activities and provide books to youth. The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) gave books to youth to build their home libraries and offered a virtual program. CLiF partnerships also awarded Flynn Elementary with a CLiF Year of the Book live event in October and the Burlington Kids Afterschool Program at CP Smith Elementary with a CLiF At-Risk Youth grant to support an afterschool library and storytelling event in October 2020. Youth Services created STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) Kits to provide hands-on learning with support from the Henry S. Beaird Fund. The Library also offered some of its popular youth programs online, such as Stories with Megan and Yoga for Kids, and curated virtual programs on our website calendar. FFL staff created original YouTube videos for families. The Youth Department also provided weekly programming on Town Meeting TV.

**THE BURLINGTON STORYWALK(R)** was installed at Leddy Park, in partnership with BPRW and BCA, through the support of sponsors: Spruce Mortgage, Appletree Bay Physical Therapy, Baystate Financial, Burlington Electric Department, Burlington Telecom, Common Deer, Essex Family Dental, FUSE, Geri Reilly Real Estate, Green Mountain Family Dental, The H Team/Heritage, Hinsdale Properties, Mascoma Bank, NBT Bank, Phoenix Books, Stark Law, Town Meeting TV, and Versus Sports. We thank these sponsors for their flexibility in pivoting from sponsorship of our Library Mini-Golf Event, that had to be cancelled, to this public literacy project at a time when families were particularly seeking outdoor activities due to COVID. The storybooks have changed quarterly with the help of volunteer BTV StoryWalk(R) stewards. The success of the BTV StoryWalk(R) also led to the FFL Story Experience, which features a rotating storybook display in the Library window.

**TEEN DEPARTMENT** created Take and Make Kits for teens and tweens, which proved to be extremely popular and were paired with books. The 3D Printer was set up in the Library window to print jobs for patrons. The Teen Department offered online instruction in D&D character creation and games and other programs, as well as creating YouTube videos for the FFL YouTube Channel. In June, *Telling a Slave's Story: Sharon Draper* provided a special book talk with the Coretta Scott King Award-Winning Young Adult Author of *Copper Sun*. Outreach during the Summer Challenge Program reached teens throughout the City.



**PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING** continued the popular *Food for Talk: a Cookbook Book Club*, Book Discussion Groups, and ELL classes online. By late spring Food for Talk was able to assemble in-person outdoors. The Library partnered with Church Street Marketplace and BCA to create the Wacky Winter Fun in Record-Setting Vermont Scavenger Hunt to encourage people to be outside having fun during the pandemic winter. This window hunt featured prizes and Guinness World Records-themed clues to tie in with the World's Largest Sticker Ball, created by Burlington's own Sticky Brand, housed in the Library Window. During April's National Poetry Month, the Library provided free, stamped poetry postcards, a Library line dedicated to Phone-a-Poem, magnetic poetry Take & Make Kits, a social media weekly Haiku to complete, and more.

Monthly book discussions were held on Zoom for the general public and for members of the Heineberg Senior Center Book Club. Attendance for both groups grew to pre-COVID levels during the winter. In April, the Library hosted a Zoom lecture on Community Science presented by the Birds of Vermont Museum. In June, we held our first indoor program — a Juneteenth panel discussion on the work being done to create an equitable food system in Vermont attended by 85 people.

**THE EARLY LITERACY OUTREACH PROGRAM (ELOP)** continued virtual story times with home-based child cares, and supplied books and learning materials to the providers. Thanks to the Vermont Federal Credit Union for ELOP support.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** strengthens staff's knowledge and ability to serve community needs. The Friends proudly fund opportunities to enhance the skills of Library Employees. This funding supported staff attending American Library Association, New England Library Association, Every Library, UBL, and Indiana University's Lilly School of Philanthropy courses in FY21.

Summary table of Library programs:

Program Type	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
Adult	11	120
Teen	14	30
Youth	78	787

## Financials

### Summary Statement

Revenue (\$)		Expenses (\$)	
Annual Appeal	\$62,161	Program Supplies	\$38,220
Contributions	\$50,873	Stipends/Consultants	\$27,027
Grants	\$29,400	Allocation to City of Burlington	\$25,000
OnLine Sales/eBay *	\$12,298	Speaker/Performer Fees	\$12,930
Book Sales	\$10,018	Equipment	\$12,183
Fundraising Events	\$ 1,151	Marketing	\$ 6,500
Interest Earned	\$ 181	Books	\$ 4,941
Bookstall	\$ 120	License fees	\$ 4,573
Website Local Sales	\$ 33	Staff Development/Training	\$ 2,254
Merchandise Sales	\$ 22	Accounting Fees/Filing Fees	\$ 2,173
		Insurance	\$ 1,213
		Office Supplies	\$ 1,168
		Outreach/Retirement Gifts	\$ 575
		Postage	\$ 370
		Merchandise	\$ 219
Total	\$166,257	Total	\$139,346

\* Discrepancies in reported eBay revenue between accounting systems result from delays between purchases and the receipt of funds in our bank accounts. Also, with our use of PayPal as credit card clearinghouse, all sale transactions passed back and forth between PayPal and eBay charitable funds (PayPal to eBay to PayPal). Some transactions near the ends of the fiscal year appear in one FY in one accounting and the other in another. The figure in the above table is from the actual sales according to eBay, which is adjusted for cost of packaging, shipping, and taxes, where applicable. In the spring of 2021, our online “store” came under the auspices of eBay’s Managed Payments program, allowing for direct transfer of sales to our bank. This will simplify accounting going forward.

### Revenue

FY’21 brought an outpouring of generosity from the community in general donations, and the Annual Appeal exceeded all expectations. The contributions include about \$8000 in restricted donations, but even the unrestricted amount is 40% greater than FY’20. Contributions, including donations *in memoriam*, also provided needed support during this challenging year. The Friends would like to particularly thank the Beaird family for their establishment of the Henry S. Beaird Fund to support the youth department. *In Memoriam* donations are precious to us because they honor a personal relationship between an individual and the Library.

We received non-cash, in-kind support as well, from the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) for afterschool and summer programs. Beyond donations, Development Manager Gale Batsimm’s grant



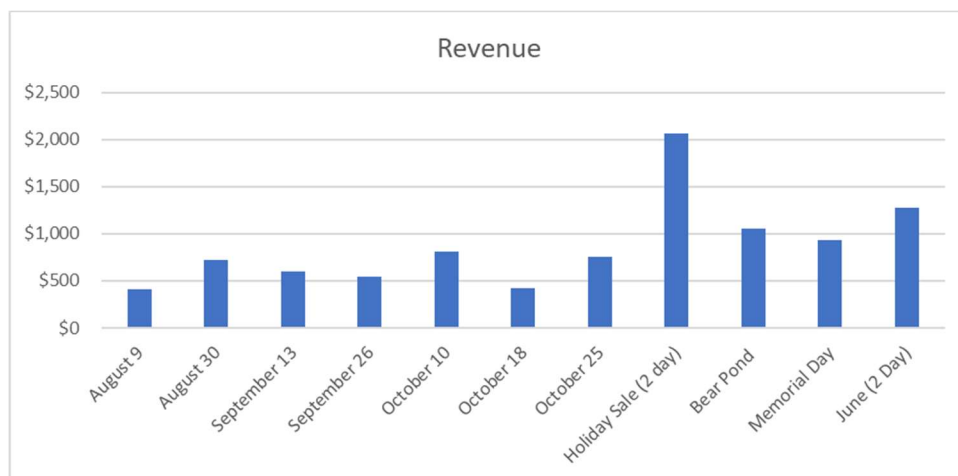
writing yielded almost \$30,000 for use in a variety of Library and outreach programs, a 50% increase from FY'20.

FY'21 was, perhaps paradoxically, a very strong year for individual, institutional and corporate giving. This helped to offset losses in budget revenue from other areas, such as Library Mini Golf, which was cancelled in FY20 and FY21 due to the pandemic. It is by no means clear if this giving trend will continue in FY'22.

The Book Stall, closed for the year, raised virtually no money (a loss of ~\$10,000 potential revenue), and local online sales is in its infancy. In terms of fundraising, the two real engines of revenue were outdoor sales and eBay. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Robin and Mark Twery, consistent support from Hilary Silver and Ann Warrington, and the help of many day-of volunteers, the Friends held 7 lawn sales and participated in the BCA Holiday Sale in December. The lawn sales came almost once every two weeks, and that pace, while good for fundraising, stretched the team to its limits, but still they persisted. Each sale led to lessons learned with more productive and less effortful sales going forward. Adding to book sale revenue was a visit from the owners of Bear Pond Books in May, who bought over \$1,000 worth of books. In spite of conditions and without the customary big September sale, book sales in FY'21 generated about 85% of what they do in normal years!! We anticipate that outdoor sales will play a much larger role in Friends fundraising in the future.

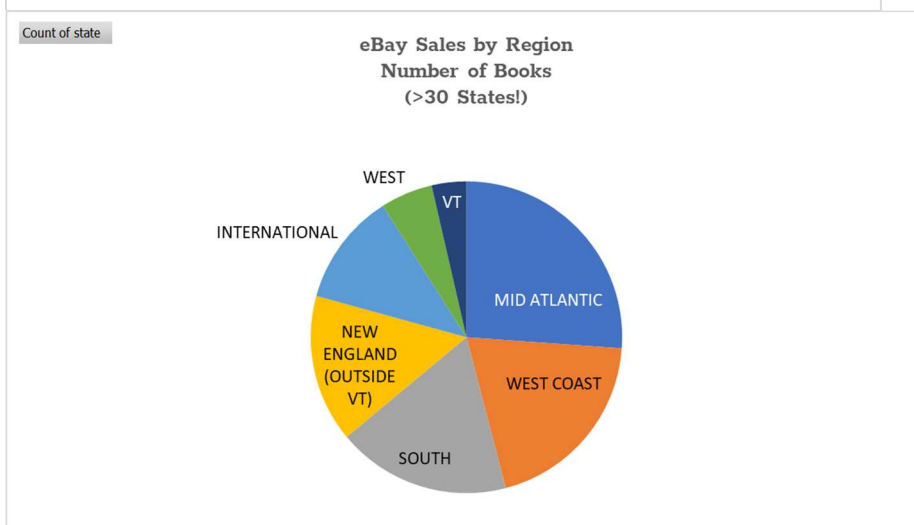
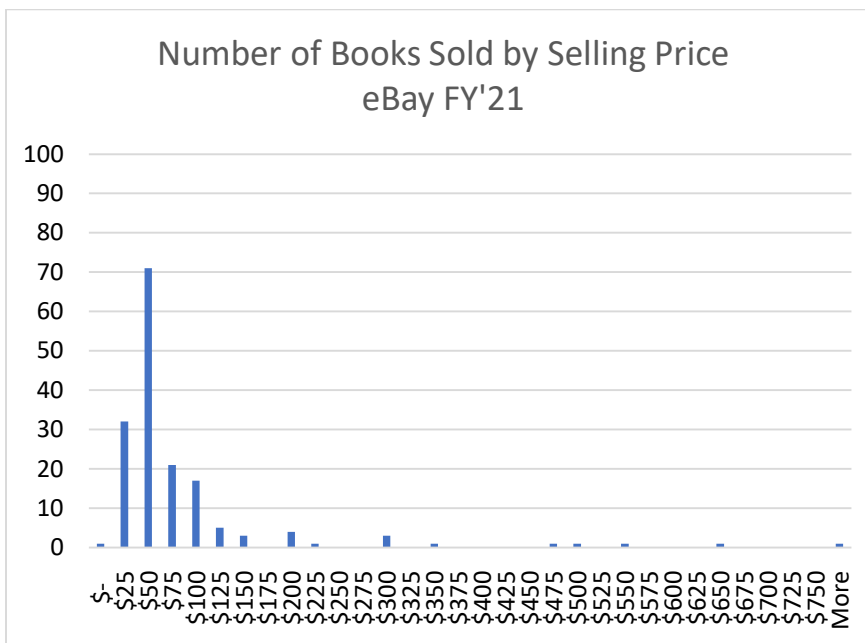
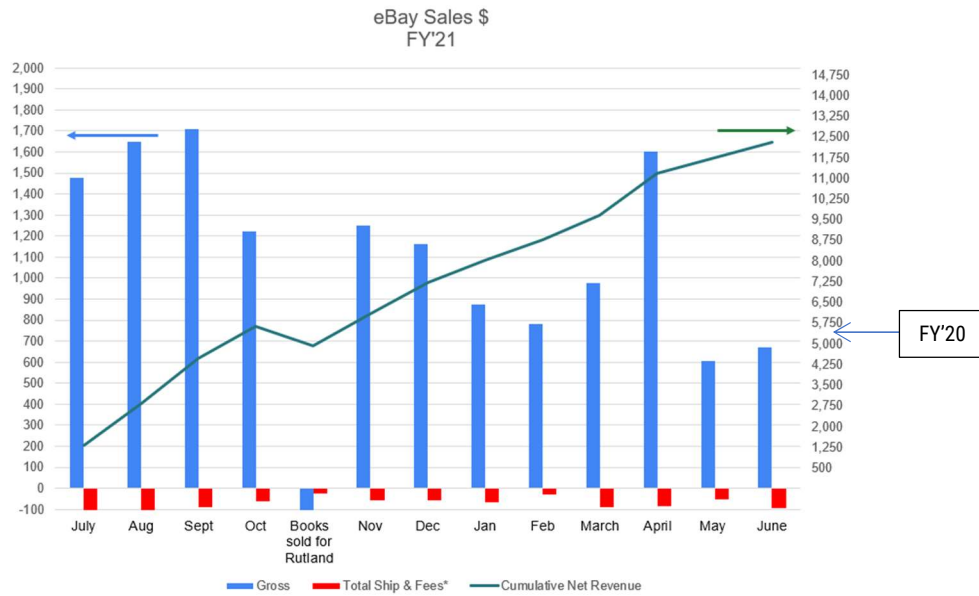
At the June sale, we collected \$50- and 42 pounds of food for Feeding Chittenden. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> year the Friends have invited folks to contribute food in exchange for books. The Friends donated over 100 boxes of books to Goodwill over the year, and also sent books to Better World Books for resale that supports, in part, their effort to fund literacy programs.

## Book Sales



## eBay

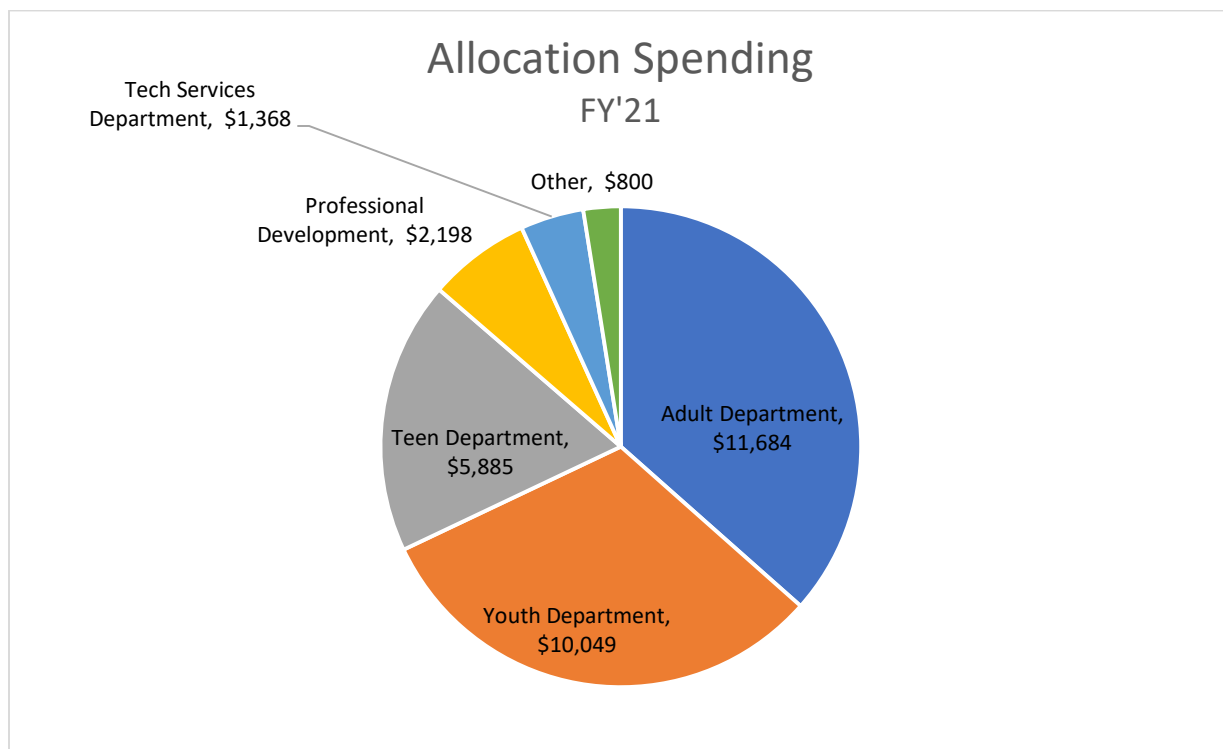
eBay transformed the Friends ability to raise money for the FFL in FY'21. Books we sell at typical in-person sales are priced at \$2-. When the Stall was open, books were priced from \$3- to-\$15-, and the median book sold for about \$4-. This past year, the median sale price for our eBay 'store' was \$45-, and half our eBay revenue came from books sold for more than \$100-, so eBay has dramatically extended our reach in terms of the books we can sell. It has also significantly extended our reach in terms of our market. Books were shipped all over the country -- to more than 30 states and internationally. The charts below give some sense of this reach.



## Fundraising Event

Due to the pandemic, there were no fundraising events besides book sales. As diehard baseball fans are known to say, "Wait 'til next year!"

## Expenditure



Allocation spending recovered significantly in FY'21, as the evolving situation allowed staff to navigate the ins and outs of remote, outdoor, and generally COVID-aware programming. As described in the highlights above, a variety of programmatic innovations were used to continue literacy enrichments services to the community.

Some funds allocated for FY'21 were spent right at the cusp of the FY'21-FY'22 years and will be accounted for in next year's financials.

## Thank You

The Friends are thankful for all the folks who support the Friends and the Fletcher Free Library: Friends volunteers; Library staff; financial and in-kind contributors, individual, corporate and institutional; donors of books; and of course, all the booklovers who come to our sales. Thank you all!