WELCOME TO OUR LIBRARY

Dear Patrons and Supporters,

Bedford Hills Free Library is proud of its 105-year legacy of nurturing literacy, stimulating lifelong learning, and providing essential public services to every member of our beloved community.

Every year, our Board of Trustees and librarians stay faithful to our mission while exploring new ways to meet the intellectual and creative needs of our community. We develop programs and services with a keen awareness of the value we provide to the public, and we appreciate the engagement of so many within our community who recognize the importance of our wonderful Library and support our vision for its future.

This report reflects highlights of programs and services offered by the Library as well as statistics and financial information reported to the New York State Library for the fiscal year January – December 2019. Importantly, we recognize the generosity of our Board of Trustees, Advisory Committee, individual and business donors and sponsors, especially the Town of Bedford. It’s a pleasure to also acknowledge the staff, volunteers, teachers and collaborators who have shared their time, energy and expertise in the service of our patrons and the residents of Bedford Hills and the surrounding area. Thank you!

Mary Esbjornson, Executive Director

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

The Bedford Hills Free Library is guided by the vision and stewardship of our Board of Trustees, with generous support from our Advisory Committee. Our deepest appreciation is extended to these committed volunteer leaders, who contribute their expertise, sense of humor, and passion for our library.

2019 Board of Trustees
Elin Peterson and Terrie Paladino Viola, Co-Presidents
Nathalie Strauel, Secretary
Susan L. Kane, Treasurer
Annie C. Bai
Per Fog
Heide Shilstone

2019 Advisory Committee
Linda Mahon
Greg Palitz
Nicole Giroux Reeber
John J. Stockbridge
Roger B. Vincent
James & Twink Wood
David E. Worby

Our Board of Trustees toasting to the library’s successes in 2019.
MISSION AND GOALS

Founded in 1915, the Bedford Hills Free Library is an association library accredited by the New York State Education Department and a member of the Westchester Library System (WLS).

The mission of the Bedford Hills Free Library is to provide equal and uncensored access to cultural, educational, recreational, and informational materials and services, as well as to offer programs that enhance learning, creativity, engagement, and responsible citizenship.

Our Library is committed to life-long learning, and we provide immersive programming that reflects a range of intellectual resources, evolving technologies, and creative experiences. Many of our programs draw from a wellspring of local talent and expertise, and we often collaborate with other service providers to expand their impact. We hold our collection, services, and programs to the highest standard of quality in response to constituency needs.

As the “heart of the hamlet,” the Bedford Hills Free Library is a gathering place that bridges connections, nurtures the individual, strengthens families, and actively revitalizes our community. Our organizational goals are to:

- **Instill a love of reading, learning, imagination, and connection** for children and families.
- **Stimulate lifelong learning, creative pursuits, and social engagement** for adults and seniors.
- **Strengthen connections** among Bedford Hills’ various community groups and residents of all backgrounds to facilitate dialogue and the sharing of needs and ideas.
- **Celebrate our hamlet’s culturally and economically diverse population** (both historically and today) as a unique strength and foster the positive role our Library plays in supporting all of our residents.
- **Guide patrons in navigating our collection** of materials, information sources, and new technologies.
- **Expand our Library space** to include gathering spaces, areas for quiet study, better access to library materials and computers, and solid safety standards.

OUR COLLECTION AND FACILITY

The Library manages a collection of library materials, which includes books for adults, young adults, and children; audiobooks; films and television programs on DVD; music on CD; newspapers; periodicals; and digital materials. Patrons also have access to the Westchester Library System catalogue and materials available from the collections of all 38 member libraries.

As recorded in our most recent Annual Report to the New York State Library, during the period January 1 to December 31, 2019, the Library was open to the public 45 hours per week and served 2,351 registered card holders and over 21,201 visitors. During this period, the Library managed its collection of over 69,587 holdings and circulated 35,073 books and other materials. In 2019, patrons continued to checkout audiobooks and movies, with a total electronic collection use of 40,499. We also continued to expand a modest collection of bilingual (Spanish/English) story books for young children and adults and with a special grant from the Westchester Community Foundation/Rotary Club of Bedford-Armonk, we purchased a small collection of books on kindness for our Children’s Room.

In addition, the Library engages patrons in programs including Story Times, Summer Reading, the SHORTS series, workshops, book clubs, the Annual Halloween Walk, and special events for children and families. The Library offers a multi-year Early Literacy Initiative, with support from David & Melanie Worby. In 2019 the Library offered 373 program sessions serving over 9,930 attendees. Areas of growth included our early literacy programs serving 3,692 as well as 459 participating in English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs.
In 2019, the Library marked the fourth year of its Early Literacy Initiative, generously sponsored by David and Melanie Worby. The program engages families of young children and keeps them connected to the Library over many years, throughout every stage of their lives. Early literacy begins with infancy, as a child begins to weave together sound, comprehension, and visual cues. Stimulating activities create a strong foundation for all forms of learning and help prepare a child to read. These free programs and services are essential for all children, as is reaching out to those at heightened risk, such as English language learners and children from low-income families.

**Story Times**

Story Times are led by Rachel Izes four times a week for different ages and levels of development: Laptine for Pipsqueaks (6-18 months), Little Folks & Friends (18 months-3 years), and Read More 3s and 4s (3+ years). In 2019, we continued to host a series of informal gatherings for parents to share ideas and resources.

The Library also continued its bilingual programs for children 3-5 years of age, including Fiesta with Flor Bromley, a lively, interactive English/Spanish bilingual program with music, movement, and puppetry; and Los Cuentos/The Stories with Rachel Izes and Ximena Navarro Claros.

**Community Outreach & Welcome to the Library Visits**

Collaborating with leaders from our community, the Library organizes Welcome to the Library events at the Library.

Facilitated by ESOL teacher Ellen Germain, incoming kindergartners from the Bedford Hills Elementary School and their families learned about programs and services in English and Spanish. Librarians showed families library resources and presented kindergartners with their first library card in a small ceremony. We also hosted regular visits by children from the Mount Kisco Head Start program and the Country Childrens Center.

New this year, the Library collaborated with Helen Vidal from the Katonah Museum who presented a program creatively exploring art and nature inspired by the exhibition, LandEscape: New Visions of the Landscape.

Idie Benjamin, Childcare Council of Westchester, returned to the Library to lead a workshop for parents and guardians, Building Language and Literacy Skills through Play, that demonstrated how play, coupled with a creative language environment, can develop strong literacy skills.

**Parent Workshops**

The Library continued its partnership with the Family Center at Neighbors Link by providing presentations of Los Cuentos/The Stories and workshops for parents. Special thanks to Carola Otero Bracco, Executive Director, and Rebecca Benor-Sussman, Director of Parent Education, for facilitating this inspiring collaboration.
PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Summer Reading Program
Our 2019 Summer Reading Program, SPACE: A Universe of Stories, began with a kickoff featuring live music and activities including Aliens in the Library (a QR code scavenger hunt), giant chess, and board games. Refreshments were provided by Nolvi’s Deli & Market and children received a Game Kit to Go (book lists, ideas for activities, toys, and a log to record books read throughout the Summer).

During July and early August, the Library presented over 20 hands-on learning events, within our annual Wacky Wednesday, STEAM Rollers, and Tech Track series. On Saturdays, the Library was open for family fun gatherings and activities. The Library had a presence at the Bedford Hills Memorial Park through our annual Dive into Reading at the Pool, sponsored by Splash Car Wash, Bedford Hills. Offerings included Lunch Bunch at the Kiddie Pool, our book cart stocked with books and magazines for visitors of all ages to enjoy, and the family movie night screening of Muppets from Space, with free popcorn and fun giveaways.

Children’s Book Groups

Books & BowWows
Deb Cooper’s therapy dog, Halle, from Pet Partners, came to the Children’s Room monthly to listen to new readers sharing their books.

Fox Read
Adults and teens joined in the community read of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, by Mark Haddon. Events exploring issues and ideas inspired by the novel were led by Claire McDonnell, Diane Sarna, Thomas Slotwinski, and Michele Zaino.

Board Games, Puzzles & Crafts
The Library is a great destination for families on Saturdays and when the schools are on a holiday or recess. The Library offered special craft workshops and supplies for family fun during these school breaks and on Saturdays.

In addition, Ying Ku, Youth Project Manager, American Go Foundation, was at the Library every month to guide students in playing, GO, the centuries-old strategic board game.
**Halloween Walk**
A perennial favorite for young families is our *Halloween Walk* from the Library through downtown Bedford Hills, followed by not-so-scary stories read by Rachel Izes at the decorated Bedford Hills Train Station. Special thanks to Tara Santorelli DiLuna for organizing local business support and Bennie’s Feed Barn for donating decorations.

Over 160 people attended the event on a sunny autumn afternoon. Participating businesses greeting our trick or treaters included:


**PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS**

**Sci-Fi Book Club**
Initiated and led by Gerardo Mendez, this adventurous book club explores the increasingly popular genre of Science Fiction and includes classic, crossover, and fantasy titles. Among the books read in 2019 were: *Old Man’s War* by John Scalzi; *Ancillary Justice* by Ann Leckie; *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell; *All the Birds in the Sky* by Charlie Jane Anders; *Magic for Liars* by Sarah Gailey; *To Be Taught, If Fortunate* by Becky Chambers.

**SHORTS: Listen, Talk, Go...**
Hosted and moderated by Heide Shilstone, adults gathered monthly to hear great short stories read aloud, followed by a short discussion and refreshments. Readers, who are drawn from our community, select stories that are personally meaningful. In 2019, Mitch Horn read *Lady Tiger* by Nick White; Terrie Paladino Viola read *The American Embassy* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; Chuck Mitchell read *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson; Alan Sklar read *How Far Could It Go* by Lawrence Block; Susan Kane read *Sweethearts of the Rodeo* by Lydia Peele; Clare Murray read *After Twenty Years* by O. Henry; Sally Corbett-Turco read *Hello Kitty & The Parrot and the Potbellied Pig* by David Sedaris; Bill Knauer read ‘Repent, Harlequin!’ *Said the Tickstockman* by Harlan Ellison; and Cora Mitchell read *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut.

**Workshops for Adults**

*English Conversation Practice* was offered to help English language learners improve everyday communication skills. Taught by Barbara Bethea, the sessions were held concurrently with bilingual story time programs for children.

**Museum Pass Program**
The Library continued offering patrons free or reduced admission to area cultural institutions, including the Katonah Museum of Art, Maritime Aquarium, Neuberger Museum, Stamford Museum & Nature Center, Stepping Stones Museum for Children, and the Westchester Children’s Museum.

**Field Goods**
The Library made healthy fruits and vegetables (mostly organically grown) available to patrons by being a pick-up location for subscribers. Provided by over 80 small farms in the region, the produce is distributed by Field Goods.
The Library’s programs and operations are directed by Mary Esbjornson, Executive Director, with staff members Eileen Baer, Assistant Director/Adult Collection; Vicki Kriegeskotte, Children’s Librarian; Rachel Izes, Early Literacy Coordinator; Michelle Tino, Development, and Lauren Gray, Administrative Coordinator.

Circulation/Patron Services Clerks included Victor Garcia, Jennifer Moldow, Amanda Quicci, and Kathy Roche. Heidi Burgunder assisted with special projects.

Volunteers
Special thanks to all the volunteers who help to lead programs, deliver services, and connect with our community.


Elizabeth D. Dalrymple and Mary Graniero provided ongoing assistance in the adult collection and Peggy (Sam) Latino supported the collection and programs in the Children’s Room. Javier Ormazabal translated promotional materials into Spanish. Thanks to Deborah Burman, Rebecca Peselli, and Nina Slotnick for supporting special events. Thanks to Chris Marshall for completing handyman projects.

Thanks to Tony Giardina for providing plumbing services.

Teen Team Leaders Program
The Library offers teens the opportunity to gain leadership experience by supporting various events and projects. Teens are selected through an open application process and earn credit for community service.

In 2019, our team included: Jasmine Barker, Michela Britts-Tannenbaum, Annie Fasulo, Molly Isabella, Ryan Isabella, Katya Juarez, Morgan Kelly, Ying Ku, Daniella Lafuente, Edy Mendez, Rahul Menon, Frannie O’Brien, Rachel Pellis, Jessica Peralta, and Kenny Poor.
SPRING GALA 2019 FEATURES PROFESSIONAL THEATRE PERFORMANCE

The Bedford Hills Free Library Board of Trustees hosted its Spring Gala on Tuesday, June 4. Barbara Chisholm's spectacular performance of *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, directed by Broadway’s David Esbjornson, brought laughter, tears, and a warm standing ovation. An homage to this beloved humorist, the play, by Allison Engel and Margaret Engel, celebrated writing, women, and families.

After the performance, **Elin Peterson**, Trustee from 2006-2019, was recognized for her extraordinary service to the Library and Bedford Hills Community. Elin’s family was present to hear a tribute by Nancy and Roger Vincent and accolades by Jim Wood, Heide Shilstone, and Terrie Paladino Viola.

An award was offered by the Library and a proclamation by Chris Burdick, Supervisor, the Town of Bedford, was read by Phyllis Cohen. Music by Kate Demas, Hubbels Music, and delicious food and drink rounded out a warm and inspiring evening.

Spring Gala Sponsors

**Rare Book**
Anonymous
The Gilligan Family Foundation
*In honor of Terrie Paladino*
Susan Kane & Greg Palitz
Linda Mahon & Robert Saunders
Ted & Nathalie Strauel

**First Edition**
Bill & Linn Jackson
Roger & Nancy Vincent
Jim & Twink Wood

**Signed Copy**
Bedford House
Per & Judy Fog
Gina Lodolini & Neil Capolongo
John & Anita Stockbridge

**In-kind Contributions**
Kate Demas, Hubbels Music
Kim Kelly
Cottage Antiques Home
Robert Siegel Architects

**Gala Host Committee**
Dennis Anderson & Bill Sofield
Ellen Calves
Mary Ann Carr
Ellen & Dan Cohen
Phyllis Cohen
Kate Galligan
Mitch Horn
Bill & Linn Jackson
Sarah & Mark Jeffers
Gina Lodolini
Laura Mack
Colm MacMahon
Michele Miller
Fiona & Chuck Mitchell
Elidieth & Ken Stern

**Gala Steering Committee**
Annie Bai
Mary Esbjornson
Susan Kane
Linda Mahon
Heide Shilstone
Nathalie Strauel
Terrie Paladino Viola
ANNUAL FUND DONORS  
January 1 – December 31, 2019

Public Funds  
Town of Bedford

Foundations  
Crosswicks Foundation  
The Rice Family Foundation  
The Worby Charitable Foundation

Trustee’s Circle  
Anonymous (2)  
James A. Atwood, Jr. & Leslie K. Williams  
Lloyd Bedford Cox  
Judy & Per Fog  
Lisa Gilligan  
In Honor of Terrie Paladino  
Jimmy Greenebaum & Jane Cooper  
Linn & Bill Jackson  
Susan Kane & Greg Palitz  
Gina Lodolini & Neil Capolongo  
Lynne Lovell  
In Memory of Pamela Reynolds  
Gerardo & Melissa Mendez  
Linda Mahon & Robert Saunders  
Nathalie & Theodore Strauel  
John and Anita Stockbridge  
Roger & Nancy Vincent  
Carissa & Gregory Weiss  
In Honor of Rachel Izes  
Twink & James Wood  
David & Melanie Worby

Individual Donors  
Anonymous (2)  
Ann Marie & Samuel J. Abate Jr.  
Roman Adrianowycz & Sarah Hodgson  
John Arons & Mary Neary  
Annie Bai  
Barbara & Brian Barrett  
Marian Belli  
Paul Bird & Amy Parsons  
Aric & Bobbi Bittker  
JM Bogert  
Bobbie Bramson & David Dodge  
Erich & Cynthia Braun  
Kathleen S. Brenner  
Louis Bronico  
David F. Brown  
Chris & Illyria Burdick  
Brian Burke  
Ellen Calves  
Barbara & Jon Cervoni  
Jennifer & Edmund Chang  
Laura & Steve Cohen  
John & Jenny Convery  
Kitley S. Covill  
Jeffrey Crohn  
Ellen Curley  
Elizabeth Dalrymple  
Lucille & Manuel daSilva  
Matthew & Kathryn Dawes  
Carol Delaney  
In Memory of George Delaney  
Flore Desjardins & Keith Dropkin  
Jim & Ashley Diamond  
Gina & Kenneth D’Introno  
Elizabeth Doré  
In Memory of Scott Tinter  
Dina & Giorgio Dublon  
Nancy El Bouhali  
Sarah P. Elliot  
Candice Ermer  
Mary Esbjornson  
Susan Esbjornson  
Elisha Fisch & Maria Alba-Fisch  
Per & Judy Fog  
Tina & Herbert Foster III  
Deborah H. Frishman  
T.S. Ganesh  
Marian Gassman  
Angela & Tony Giardina  
Virginia Gold  
The Gordin Family  
Penelope Graves  
Lauren Gray  
Karen Ann Greco  
Diane Greco  
Christine & Jesse Greene  
Pat & Ned Gurevich  
Joanna & Michael Gustin  
Karen Hanratty  
In Memory of Kay Nelligan  
Patrick Hart  
In Memory of Mary Hart  
Mary Ann & Robert Hawley  
Brian & Whitney Hill  
Douglass Maynard & Kathryn Hoenig  
Isabella Family  
In Memory of Joan P. Farrelly  
Rachel Izes  
Linn & Bill Jackson  
The Rev. Dr. Carole Johannsen  
In Memory of Kathy Storfer  
Connie & Jack Kamerman  
In Honor of Amanda Quicci  
Kent Karlsson  
Ron Kelly  
Kimberly Kelly  
Pat Kessler  
Terry Kirschner  
James Koegel & May Boykin  
Ezriel Kornel  
Virginia B. Krouch  
Patricia Kupetz  
Carol Lancaster  
Lara LeBrun  
David Lederman & Yvonne Kearney  
Lily Lee  
Willoughby Levesque  
Richard Levine  
Susie Lodge  
Marsha Loeb & Paul Policella  
Jeanne Markel & Chris Wedge  
Len Martello  
Dov Matz  
John & Gilda McGarry  
Maureen & Patrick McManus  
David Medd  
Anna & Mark Mergen  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Meyer  
Peter & Anice Mills  
William B. Mitchell, Jr.  
Kathy Lynch & Timothy Mohr
The Morrow Family
Margie Murphy
Nancy & Ted Nygreen
Barbara & Joseph Pansiewicz
Jamie Parish
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy M. Paul
Tristan & Lesley Perich
Chris & Kathy Perry
Elin Peterson
Judy N. Petre
Judith Pilson
Shari and Neil Reig
  In Memory of Kathy Storfer
Marjorie Root
Joanne & George Rosamond
Donna Rose
Nancy & Paul Ross
Linda & Dalin Rowell
Rosann Russo
Sandra Saiger & Roger Goldman
The Salley Family
Marsha Savino
Caroline Saxton
Raina Schild
Deborah Schneider & James Tilly
Craig Schreiber
Ralph J. Schwartz
Stephanie & Don Scott
John & Margaret Scott
Warren Shilling
The Skolnick Family
Chris St. Germain
Steve Stackle & April Taylor-Stackle
Howard & Jenna Stern
Debra & Eddie Still
John & Anita Stockbridge
Martin & Antoinette Sullivan
Rebecca & Jeremy Sussman
Elizabeth Taggart
Lea & Amihoud Tal
Vera Thompson
Susan Tomassi
Kelvin & Diane Tomlinson
Frances M. Torres
Mike & Ria Trinkle
David & Leonor Vermilyea
The Paladino/Viola Family
Max Von Dietsch
Paula & Owen Wallace
Melinda Walsh
John & Phillis Warden

Amber K. Wetzel
Mrs. Harold C. Whitman, III
David M. Whitney & Jessica M. Zink
  In Honor of Beth Mancini
Tina & Ian Winchester
The Winskill Family
Frances & James Wood
Barbara & Michael Worms
Nigel & Brenda Yell
Dale & James Young
Michael Young & Meghan Carleton
The Zutty Family

**Nonprofit Organizations**
Antioch Baptist Church
Bedford-Armonk Rotary Club
Bedford Police Benevolent Assoc.
Stepping Stones Foundation
  In Memory of Bill and Lois Wilson
Westchester Library Services
Women’s Civic Club of Katonah

**Business Sponsors**
AC Designs
Bedford Discovery Early Childhood Center
Bedford House & and Masonry Supply
FB Corporation (The Back Thing)
Field Goods
GoodFellas Auto Body, Inc.
Lloyd Bedford Cox
Motor Classic & Competition
Norbert E. Mitchell, Co
The Paint Box - Gale Harrison
Splash of Bedford Hills

**Corporate Matching Gifts**
AIG
Fidelity
Google
IBM Corporation
Mastercard
UBS

**FINANCIAL AND LEGAL INFORMATION**

The Bedford Hills Free Library is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

Our fiscal year is January 1 to December 31. The Town of Bedford provides primary funding for the Library’s operations. The balance, including capital improvements and program initiatives, comes from earned income and donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations. In 2019, the Library had expenses of $554,360 and revenues of $520,262, with a fund balance of $611,359.

Accounting services are provided by Victor J. Cannistra, CPA.

The Bedford Hills Free Library files Annual Reports to New York State through the Westchester Library System. To request a copy of the Annual Report, our 990, IRS tax exempt letter, or to receive more information about how you might support the Library, please contact Mary Esbjornson, Executive Director at mesbjornson@wlsmail.org.