

## REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

The Avon Free Public Library had a very active year, with changes on the staff and the board of directors, exciting new programs, innovative additions to the collection and a next generation computer system that simplified and streamlined our online catalog and self-checkout experience.

Our Board of Directors welcomed three new members this year with the addition of Betsy Bougere, Anne Fitzgerald and Paula Schwartz. All three made an immediate impact by playing an important role in developing the library's new strategic plan. This plan will be our guide for the next three years, and focuses on initiatives to improve the library's collections, technology, partnerships, community space, and support of lifelong learning. By capitalizing on existing strengths, we expect to offer convenient access to excellent programs, quality services, and relevant collections for all in the Avon community.

In addition to looking to the future, the Board had opportunity to reflect on the tenure of its President, Mary Suter, when she was honored by the Association of Connecticut Library Boards. Mary received one of the ACLB's annual awards for excellence, recognizing her efforts to raise money and support for the library expansion that concluded in 2012.

Several key staff positions changed this year, with the addition of Jessica Palmer as our new Technology & Technical Services manager and the hiring of Leona Mae Page as Library Secretary. The children's department also brought on the multi-talented Tim Guay as a Children's Services Specialist and we created a new position of Library Technician which was filled by Becky Bridges. All four of these new staff members have been an asset as the library continues to evolve and grow into our new space.

In the era of Google, Kindle, and Netflix, the Library has committed to making our programming a central part of our mission, and this year was a great start. The number of programs offered more than doubled and over 20,000 people attended those storytimes, lectures, films, book discussions and classes. The traditional children's and teen summer reading program was revamped to include weekly raffles, special programs and an online reading log to track progress towards each child's reading goal. During the summer of 2013, 1,125 children and teens registered for the program and read an impressive 14,178 books!

A few months later, the library went from quantity to quality with the Avon Reads: One Book project, where we encouraged everyone in town to read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, an award winning non-fiction book about a woman who died over 60 years ago, but whose cells have lived on and been responsible for a surprising number of medical and scientific advances. A series of programs covering the scientific, medical, ethical, historical and racial aspects of Henrietta's story was held at the library and this series culminated in visit from her daughter-in-law and great-granddaughter, both of whom addressed a crowd of over 250 about her life and legacy.

Another special series of programs this year was our commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War. The Library partnered with VFW Post #3272 in this endeavor and we found an audience eager to hear the stories of local veterans. This project led to a continuing partnership with the VFW that is proving fruitful. The Library has provided this group with a venue to display their Post's awards and commendations and they have provided the library with detailed service histories of Avon residents who served their country, to be preserved in our local history collection.

Aside from programs, the library added a number of unique new items to our collection this year. Thanks to a grant from the Fisher Foundation, the children's department created Roaming Reader packs this year. These colorful backpacks are filled with a preselected mini-collection of high quality picture books on a single theme, such as colors, dinosaurs, animals or school. Roaming Readers are developmentally appropriate and perfect for daycare centers, pre-schools, and parents who want to promote school readiness.

For lifelong learners, the library introduced LyndaKiosk this year. LyndaKiosk offers online, self-paced courses on software, creative, and business skills taught by respected authorities in the fields. Popular topics include Microsoft Office, WordPress, and Photoshop. LyndaKiosk is available on a dedicated workstation in the library.

A collection of ten iPads for in-library use was also added. The iPads can be used to try out our e-book, e-audio, and digital magazine collections, and have been integrated into some children's programs as well. The iPads are stored in a locked charging station that also erases all personal data and restores the device to its default settings after each use.

For those who love the Friends of the Library's annual book sale, there's no need to wait for fall anymore. The Friends introduced a Booktique this year, which is a year-round ongoing sale. There is a great collection of fiction, non-fiction, children's and teen titles on shelves near the circulation desk. Most books sell for \$2 or less and all money goes to benefit the Friends of the Library and the library programs and services they fund.

On June 2, Avon, along with 29 other libraries in the greater Hartford area, migrated their online catalog to a new platform. The new catalog, called Encore, offers a Google-like single search box, enriched content including reading recommendations and book reviews, plus the ability to pay your library fines online via credit or debit card and an option to retain your reading history or other book lists in your online account.

### LIBRARY STATISTICS

Library Use	FY 11/12	FY 12/13	FY 13/14
Resident Card Holders	8,395	8,738	9,111
% of Population	47%	49%	50%
Library Visits (door count)*	N/A	N/A	155,952
Visits per capita	N/A	N/A	8.5
Circulation			
Adult Collection	112,222	152,892	144,978
Children's Collection	81,626	117,462	125,955
Young Adult Collection	9,950	13,416	15,523
Total**	211,888	290,058	297,784
Circulation per capita	11.98	16.40	16.29
Library Programs	18	564	1,233
Attendance	1,189	13,000	20,902
Reference Questions	24,983	20,737	30,222
Internet Usage	7,042	15,931	27,400
Database Searches***	190,430	353,142	103,283
Website Visits	N/A	121,300	123,160
Library Collection			
Print Collection	85,727	98,636	104,660
Non-print Collection	10,713	11,667	13,302
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	6,955	6,375	7,610
Non-print Collection	1,201	1,220	1,415
Magazine Subscriptions	248	261	246

*On-going construction activity, occasional closing of the parking lot, as well as the library being closed to patrons (9 weeks) has affected the activity indicators for FY 2012/13.*

*\*Door count unavailable for much of 2011 & 2012 due to ongoing construction.*

*\*\*Total includes downloads of e-books, e-audio, and digital magazines.*

*\*\*\*Database searches are being calculated in a new way beginning FY 2013/14.*

