

## REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

The 2014/2015 fiscal year brought exciting changes to the Avon Free Public Library, including a new president of the library's Board of Directors, innovative programs, and cutting edge technology. All these changes helped the library continue to fulfill its mission to serve as the center of enrichment for the Avon community, providing free and convenient access to information, literature, culture and the arts through a variety of media and technologies.

Mary Suter stepped down as President of the Board after a tenure of more than a dozen years as a Board member, and Carin Salonia was unanimously elected to succeed her. Other changes on the library board included the resignation of Treasurer Tom Iezzi, after he moved out of Avon, and Board member Jerry O'Brien, due to business commitments. Vincent LoPresti and Fred Lin were appointed to fill those two vacancies and immediately took an active role on the board. This was the first year of our new strategic plan, and the board worked with library staff to implement the initial goals in this plan. Among those initiatives was the drafting of a formal technology plan to help guide the library's use of technology.

Our summer programming in 2014 was anchored by a Farmers Market that was held each Monday at the library. Through July and August, the market drew 4,956 people to the library to browse not just books but locally grown fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. Many regular library users were thrilled to see this creative use of the library grounds, and many non-users were introduced to the library by coming for the market.

In addition to the Farmers Market, last summer saw 1,287 children and teens sign up for our summer reading program. That group then read over 12,500 books collectively! Eager young readers were rewarded with prizes donated by dozens of local businesses, as well as participating in the myriad of programs offered by our children's librarians.

Once school started in the fall, the children's and teen services department shifted gears to a slightly more academic, but still fun, program of services. A study bar was added along one wall of the children's library, with a colorful world map adhered to the wall. A Study Study Hall (SSH!) program was held each school day afternoon in the group study rooms on the children's level of the library, allowing high school students the opportunity to study and collaborate in small groups. We regularly saw 50 or more teens visit the teen room after school, and that usage is supported by the increase in circulation of teen books in a year when we saw overall book circulation decline slightly.

Other new additions to our offerings for children included an art studio, yoga programs, and Teen Speed Reads. After receiving training from the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, children's staff developed a new service philosophy, centered on openness, that allows participants to focus on the process of creation rather than the a predetermined result. The carpet and tables were changed in one storytime room and now children, often side by side with parents, are guided by the materials provided and simple direction from staff to create something special. Children's & Teen Services Manager, Kari Ann St. Jean, received training on yoga instruction for youth and began integrating yoga into her storytime sessions. Our teen librarian introduced Teen Speed Reads, a collection of duplicate copies of high demand books that circulate for one week only, with no holds or renewals. Envisioned as "impulse buys" for the teens, these books are shelved near the teen room entrance and circulate briskly.

Innovative programming was not limited to the children's library. Our adult services librarian Tina Panik envisioned leveraging our new collection of graphic novels into an event as exciting as ComicCon. A few months later, we were ready to advertise AvonCon, Avon's first ever comic book convention. One Saturday in April, the entire library was taken over by superheroes and their arch-nemeses. Almost 700 people attended a day filled with lectures, displays, costume contests, vendors, and projects to make your own cape or mask.

A slightly more serious programming initiative was our Changing America series, which highlighted the civil rights movement from the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 to the

historic march on Washington in 1963. Through lectures, book discussions, films, art and music, the Avon community looked at what civil rights mean to America and how the lessons learned over that 100 year time period can help us make sense of the world today.

Our look at history was not restricted to just the civil rights movement. This year saw the launch of a new local history website, [www.avonhistory.info](http://www.avonhistory.info), dedicated to making digital copies of items from our local history collection available over the internet. Although only a small portion of the collection has been digitized at this point, you can find photographs, letters, and other items of historical importance to Avon on the site, which will continue to grow and eventually be integrated with the Connecticut Digital Archive, a joint project of the University of Connecticut Libraries and the Connecticut State Library.

Avon Library looks forward, as well as back, and this spring we were able to acquire two 3D printers through a grant opportunity. 3D printing is poised to be the next disruptive technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These Cube2 printers melt a thin plastic filament and then draw in layers to create three dimensional objects from a computer file. Lectures, classes and open lab time with the 3D printers have proved very popular.

All of these programs led to a 20% increase in program attendance and recognition for Avon Library as well. The library received two publicity awards (best logo and best video) from the Connecticut Library Association in April, and staff was invited to speak at both the Connecticut and the Rhode Island state library association's conferences. There is something for everyone at Avon Library, and we hope you will visit soon to see for yourself.

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 12/13	FY 13/14	FY 14/15
Resident Card Holders	8,738	9,111	8,594
% of Population	49%	50%	47%
Library Visits (door count)*	N/A	155,952	152,136
Visits per capita	N/A	8.5	8.2
Circulation			
Adult Collection	152,892	144,978	152,752
Children's Collection	117,462	125,955	121,350
Young Adult Collection	13,416	15,523	17,154
Total**	290,058	297,784	291,256
Circulation per capita	16.40	16.29	15.77
Library Programs	564	1,233	1,020
Attendance	13,000	20,902	25,966
Reference Questions	20,737	30,222	29,505
Internet Usage	15,931	27,400	27,943
Database Searches***	353,142	103,283	136,777
Website Visits	121,300	123,160	158,862
Library Collection			
Print Collection	98,636	104,660	106,310
Non-print Collection	11,667	13,302	16,057
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	6,375	7,610	9,200
Non-print Collection	1,220	1,415	5,326
Magazine Subscriptions (includes digital titles)	261	246	307

*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 fiscal year 2012/13.*

*\*Door count unavailable for much of 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 fiscal year 2013/14.*

