

REPORT OF THE AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GLENN GRUBE, *Library Director*

The grand opening of Avon Library’s renovated courtyard in October of 2023 restored a wonderful resource and community space to the library grounds. Immediately adjacent to the Community Room and the reading area in our atrium, the courtyard has been embraced by our community as a beautiful and flexible space to read, study, and meet with friends or colleagues outside of the library building but within the range of our high-speed wireless internet connection.

Other improvements to the library facility include a dual-port electric vehicle charging station and an upgraded security camera network. The ChargePoint EV charging station was paid for with a mix of grants, library support, and Town funding and is the first public EV charging station on municipal grounds in Avon. This level 2 charging station has seen steady use over its first six months of availability and provides a revenue stream to pay for both the electricity used and service contracts on the hardware. The improved camera network includes newer cameras with higher resolution as well as an updated server for additional features and increased storage capacity for footage.

New technology was not limited to just facility improvements. Avon Library added updated hardware, software, and services to our collection of technology available to all users this year. Dozens of public computers were loaded with new versions of Microsoft Office and other productivity software and additional wireless access points were added to provide more complete coverage for those bringing their own laptops and tablets to the library. Thanks to the support of the Friends of Avon Library we also added a new streaming service for Avon cardholders. Kanopy provides a library of hundreds of classic films, documentaries, and international movies and television shows always available to stream on your smart TV, computer, or other internet accessible device.

Programming also took center stage this year, with more than 45,000 people attending over 1,200 library sponsored programs! Highlights included a return of AvonCon, a year-long series of multi-cultural programs for grade school students, partnerships with the Avon Clean Energy Commission and Simsbury Public Library, and continued participation in community-wide events celebrating Juneteenth and Pride Month.

AvonCon, Avon’s very own comics convention, is a celebration of fandom in all its forms. For a day in April the library was taken over by over 1,000 lovers of anime, sci-fi, and live action roleplay. Thanks to the support of the Town of Avon and the Friends of Avon Library, we even had Sparkles the Unicorn participate in this return of a favorite annual event from the 2010s. We look forward to continuing the AvonCon tradition, so save the date for April 26, 2025, when AvonCon returns!

The Scholars Educational Enrichment Directive (SEED) was the brainchild of two Avon residents who approached library staff about being a fiscal sponsor for their idea of bringing multi-cultural programming with a STEAM emphasis to children in the grades K-4. Each month, a different culture was represented in programming that included movement-based activities, arts and crafts, food, and of course, books! Generous support

from the Avon Greater Together Community Fund allowed the library to present these programs at no cost to the participants or the library.

Another productive partnership was our Creative Aging series. Working with partners from Simsbury Library and financial support from the Connecticut State Library, a series of hands-on creativity workshops for senior citizens were held in the fall of 2023.

The Avon Clean Energy Commission along with the Connecticut Horticultural Society were co-sponsors of a *Nature’s Best Hope* series of lectures, programs and book discussions on environmental issues at Avon Library. The series keynote program was a talk by noted ecologist and conservationist Doug Tallamy. Hundreds of Avon residents and others enjoyed these programs either in-person or online.

Aside from presenting programs in the library, staff were present at a variety of community events throughout the year. Most notable were the Pride Block Party held at West Avon Congregational Church and the regional Juneteenth celebration, held at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center. Avon Library was proud to represent our community at both events and give out hundreds of free books to program participants.

LIBRARY STATISTICS			
Library Use	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24
Resident Card Holders	6,206	6,957	7,553
% of Population	33%	38%	40%
Library Visits (door count)	80,405	116,003	133,442
Visits per capita	4.2	6.3	7.0
Circulation			
Adult Collection	95,417	88,737	95,306
Children's Collection	126,244	137,450	140,952
Young Adult Collection	17,798	16,575	16,064
Downloadable Collection*	32,684	35,546	42,762
Total	272,143	278,308	295,084
Circulation per capita	14.3	15.2	15.7
Programs & Services			
Library Programs**	979	885	1,211
Program Attendance**	27,669	31,757	45,354
Reference Questions	22,300	27,723	31,291
Internet Usage*	7,705	5,925	7,648
Database Searches	93,464	130,170	158,561
Website Visits	113,310	126,254	253,811
Library Collection			
Print Collection	92,312	93,485	92,827
Non-print Collection	109,600	117,190	122,207
Added to the Collection			
Print Collection	9,139	7,878	7,553
Non-print Collection	13,000	12,952	11,767
Magazine Subscriptions- <i>includes digital titles</i>	3,325	4,898	5,399

*Total includes downloads of e-books, e-audio, streaming video and digital magazines for all age levels

**Includes online programs and attendees