

Director's Report to the Board of Trustees & the Easton Community For the Year Ending December 31, 2023

I am so proud of our little library! There was a huge amount of activity at the library last year following the pandemic, and people wanted to get out of the house and connect with the community. We experienced a large increase in both attendance and number of programs scheduled in 2023. These included weekly programs, such as the pre-school story hour, osteobusters, mahjong, and knitting, as well as a variety of solo programs. The Friends of Easton Library purchased a new sign for the library last summer to help us promote upcoming events. Easton Library is an important community hub.



Miss Nadia serving milk & cookies at Story Hour with the help of Washington County Dairy Princess Alternate Serena Drost



New sign purchased by the Friends of Easton Library

The number of circulations, or physical items borrowed, increased from 4,401 in 2022 to 4,510 last year, while ebook and audio downloads rose from 947 in 2022 to 1,276 in 2023. Registered cardholders also increased from 286 to 323. 3,558 people visited the

library last year, 487 more than the year before. Computer usage expanded, and there was a 38% increase in visitors to our website.

An important service Easton Library provides to its patrons is interlibrary loan through Joint-Automation from SALS. Our patrons clearly appreciate this benefit because the number of interlibrary loans brought into our library in 2023 was 833, an increase from 720 in 2022. The number of items that our library loaned to other libraries in the Southern Adirondack Library System was 2,011, an increase from 1,932 items in 2022. There was a total of 4,510 items checked out at the circulation desk in 2023.

Easton Library has a total of 328,155 items in its collection, encompassing print material, non-electronic material, and electronic material. The electronic material comprises 311,434 of the total number of items and includes access to Overdrive and hoopla. Overdrive allows SALS library cardholders to borrow many ebooks, audiobooks, and eMagazines. Easton Library cardholders have additional access to nearly a million free ebooks, audiobooks, movies, TV, comics, and music via hoopla. Other electronic materials available to library patrons include access to Ancestry, Heritage Quest, Easton Stories, and a Newsbank subscription on our library website.

In January of 2023, an adult literacy group, teaching English as a second language, began meeting weekly at the library. This group is affiliated with the Tri-County Literacy Center, Inc., located in South Glens Falls, and is comprised of one to two volunteers and one to two students. The total attendance for the adult literacy group during 2023 was 56, and they met a total of 29 times.

The fundamental purpose of the Farm-2-Library Program (that has been at the library since 2022) is to suppress hunger, reduce food waste, and promote adult literacy. This program and the adult literacy program described above work in tandem to advance Easton Library's commitment toward the health and well-being of our community. In 2023, the Farm-2-Library program had 2,166 users over a 52-week period.

In 2023, 1,898 people attended live programs at the library. There was a total of 386 programs, the first of which began in January, with the *Happy Mail Club*, in which 6 children, assisted by Abby Henderson, made bird feeders for seniors. Tim O'Shea and Friends held an Irish folk music concert at Burton Hall, and entertained 70 people of all ages. Bliss McIntosh taught a small group about gardening at the end of March. April Fool's Day saw the library host a highly requested 6-hour defensive driving class for 30

people, that was taught by Victor Bujanow at Burton Hall. 27 people attended Samantha Allen's *Growing a Cut Flower Garden* class at the end of the month.



Happy Mail Club making bird feeders for seniors



Tim O'Shea and P'adraig Timoney playing Irish Folk music to a crowd of 70 people at Burton Hall on March 25th

Howard Romack engaged 10 people in an educational talk about *Invasive Species in Your Backyard or Not?* in the month of May. Mr. Romack showcased invasive plants, insects, birds, fish and even a live lamprey!



Howard Romack teaching the listeners about invasive plants



Director Jennifer DeCarlo, Treasurer Peter Read, Vice President Mary Jane Connor, and Trustees Abigail Henderson & Kevin Sheehan at the March 21st Annual Meeting

The library's annual meeting was held on March 20th. The board members looked ahead to plans and programming during the summer months, and toward hosting an Open House for the general public, which occurred August 9th. 60 people attended the Open House to learn about the library, meet board members and staff, and enjoy free ice cream supplied by Stewart's Shops. The library offered book raffles, door prizes, and craft making. Best of all, there was a ribbon cutting ceremony to present our new Community Mural created by artist Kendra Farstad during the *All Together Now* summer reading program.



Trustees Abigail Henderson & Nellie Lovenduski preparing Stewart's Shops ice cream sundaes to serve at the Open House



Muralist Kendra Farstad at the Open House ribbon cutting ceremony

The library hosted a *National Good Neighbor Day* on September 28th where 28 people gathered to enjoy snacks provided by the library, chat, group color, meet neighbors, and play board games and puzzles. This national holiday was signed into law in 1978 by then-president Jimmy Carter.



Library goers enjoying good conversation & coloring together on *National Good Neighbor Day*



James Borden reading a good book and working on a puzzle on *National Good Neighbor Day*

For a third year in a row our library and the Greenwich Free Library have joined together to work on the *Great Give Back*. This year I encouraged our libraries to try something new. Our goal October 14th through October 28th was to ask friends, neighbors and patrons to "give back" by donating NEW pet items to help support local volunteer-run animal rescue groups in Washington County. 188 total items were dispersed between Salem's Community Cats, Lucky Puppy Rescue, and Our Best Friends Rescue.



188 items were collected for the *Great Give Back* for local animal rescue organizations



Director Jennifer DeCarlo, Greenwich Free Library staff member Warren Schultz, & Greenwich Free Library Trustee Kathy Nicholas-Tompkins sorting donations from the *Great Give Back*

4 youngsters in the *Happy Mail Club* decorated pumpkins for seniors of Easton in October. The first *Community Trick or Treat* hosted by Easton Library was held at Burton Hall. 88 people in various costumes visited tables sponsored by community members, including one directly sponsored by the library, each holding various types of Halloween candy, treats and prizes. The *Annual Tree Trimming Party*, hosted by the Friends of Easton Library, concluded our programming for the year on December 2nd, with 19 people to help decorate the tree, sing carols, listen to a Christmas story, enjoy snacks, and make reindeer food to take home.



Happy Mail Club decorating pumpkins for seniors of Easton



Trustee Mary Jane Connor hosting Easton Library's treat table at the *Community Trick or Treat* held at Burton Hall



Some tree decorators with Mrs. Claus at the Annual Friends of Easton Library *Tree Trimming* event in December

Easton Library collaborated with the Washington County Fair and Stewart's Shops for the *All Together Now* Summer Reading Program, which involved all ages, birth through adult. There were 14 children, 2 teens, and 11 adults who completed the reading program in 2023. 108 people attended 7 live events as part of the special summer reading program activities, including *Poster Framing for the Fair*, taught by Abby Henderson; *Photography on the Farm*, instructed by Clifford Oliver Mealy; *Paint Your Pet*, taught by artist Emily Crawford; *Silent Wings* (A Live Raptor Program), presented by wildlife educator Trish Marki; and the Community Mural painted by artist Kendra Farstad.



All Together Now summer reading progress in front of the circulation desk



Two youngsters learned how to frame their posters for the Washington County Fair



Clifford Oliver Mealy instructing *Photography on the Farm*



Paint Your Pet with Emily Crawford



Trish Marki presenting *Silent Wings*, a live raptor program, to 53 people at Burton Hall

The Community Mural was a special project for the *All Together Now* summer reading program in which the community was invited to join the muralist, Kendra Farstad, both in discussing ideas for what images to sketch, and as part of a team effort in painting those images on the wall. Most of the images were inspired by characters taken from a selected "mural reading list." This project spanned four weeks and concluded with a beautiful Ribbon Cutting ceremony at the Open House held on August 9th. Now the stairwell leading to the children's reading area and two walls in the children's room are colorful and bright with images of stories and animals in faraway places, as well as right down the road!



Kendra Farstad and friends sharing ideas for the *All Together Now* mural



Artist Kendra Farstad finishing the *All Together Now* mural in the library's stairway & children's reading area

Both the mission and vision statements from the Easton Library's Long Range Plan were met in 2023. Collectively, programs at the library provided our community with opportunities to engage socially, expand neighbor relationships, enjoy cultural events, gain educational information, increase literacy, and reinforce the library's role as an important community hub.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer DeCarlo



Easton Library

2023 REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY



Highlights

Easton Library hosted adult literacy classes with English as a Second Language (ESOL). The grand total of attendance: 56 and there were 29 total sessions.

We shared food with 2,166 people for 52 weeks in 2023.

This year the Great Give Back supported local animal rescue groups. Friends, neighbors, and patrons joined the library by donating food, leashes, collars, toys, and health supplements to local volunteer-run animal rescue groups in Washinton County. Those groups were Salem's Community Cats, Lucky Puppy Rescue, and Our Best Friends Rescue.

There was the addition of our colorful community mural that was artfully painted by Kendra Farstad during our "All Together Now" summer reading program.

