

LIBRARIES

ROBBINS AND FOX LIBRARY

Mission

The Robbins and Fox Libraries are vital community centers that connects people with traditional and technological resources for life-long learning, intellectual pursuits, and leisure. The Library responds to residents' needs with services and activities in a welcoming setting built on a history of free and equal access to information for all in Arlington.



Both adults and children alike utilize the library to access the Internet, either with their own computers via the wireless network or with the library's computers

The Libraries continued the pattern of previous years with increases in circulation of library materials and again experienced the highest circulation in its history in Fiscal Year 2012. The number of visits to the library increased to over 325,000 while many residents from home remotely accessed the wealth and variety of resources offered. The circulation of electronic content, including downloadable ebooks and downloadable audiobooks, more than quadrupled in Fiscal Year 2012. As in the previous year, residents increasingly relied on the Library for its free services in this time of continued economic hardship. All ages enjoyed Library programs, computer workstations for access to the Internet and electronic databases. Job seekers utilized the computers for resume writing, employment opportunities, and online job applications. Professional librarians at the Reference Desk, in the Children's Room, and at Fox Branch assisted the public in meeting their informational needs through the Library's book and periodical collections and with electronic resources. Although the Robbins Library continued to be closed Thursday mornings, the public enjoyed Sunday afternoon hours funded through private donations. Library staff worked diligently to meet the growing demands of usage while maintaining the same high level of excellent service that our community has come to expect from the Libraries.

Library Usage	FY 2011 Actual	FY 2012 Actual
Circulation of materials	641,994	665,437
eContent Circulation	2,213	8,902
Interlibrary loans processed	130,309	141,439
Reference questions answered	78,280	92,274
Children's programs	331	460
Adult and YA programs	85	119
New items ordered and processed	18,276	20,885
Website Pageviews	326,613	387,176
Website Unique Visitors	83,806	87,207
Visits to Robbins Library	321,898	325,550
Uses of Meeting Rooms	997	1,053

Accomplishments

Strategic Plan

Library administration and staff continued to strive to implement the goals that were identified in the long-range plan for FY 2011-2013. Many of the accomplishments of 2012 were a direct result of this plan.

The Library continues to provide excellent service to the community during a year that saw a change in leadership, as Ryan Livergood, the former assistant director/head of adult services, became the new Library director.

Library recorded the highest circulation in its history (665,437), a 23% increase since 2002.

Continue to offer a very successful summer reading program for all ages, including a new format for children's summer reading that was greatly appreciated by the community, and a Community Read series in the fall.

Continue to provide a wide variety of creative children's programs with funding from the Anne Russell Fund.

Increased the number of both teen and adult programs offered by the library, including programs to assist patrons with accessing downloadable ebooks, several book groups, adult story times, and a gaming night.

Continue our very successful series of programs targeted to adults age 50+ through securing private sponsorship funding from a local business.

Fox Branch Library circulation increased 25% overall from the previous fiscal year.

Fully implemented marketing plan developed in 2011 to better inform the public about library services.

Funding from the Friends of Robbins Library made it possible for the library to add and enhance technology services for the public. The library introduced an innovative laptop lending service unique to the country

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with the installation of a vending machine that can accommodate laptops or tablets. The system includes 12 lockers with a kiosk that communicates with the Minuteman Library Network database so that laptops can be checked out and returned on customer library records like other library items.

Funding from the Friends of Robbins Library made it possible to upgrade the Robbins Library's existing wireless network hardware, as well as provide additional access points to extend and improve the range of service.

Provided a full year of Friday hours at the Fox Branch Library with funding from the Friends of Fox.

Started a project to digitize a portion of our local history collection through the support of the Digital Commonwealth.

Continued to utilize social media to promote library programs and services through email announcements, Facebook account, blogs, and Twitter.

Continued the process of re-barcoding thousands of materials for streamlined processing through the state-wide delivery system.

Reviewed and updated library policies affecting the public.

Provided books and audiovisual materials, art prints, databases, computer equipment, museum passes and programs for the Robbins and Fox Libraries with funding from the library trust funds and Friends of the Robbins Library.



Thousands of meetings and events are hosted every year at the library, such as this event above, sponsored by the Friends of the Robbins Library

Services for Adults

Adults and young adults of middle and high school age utilized the services provided by the librarians in the Adult Services Department for school, work, and personal life. The Library continued to staff the Reference Desk whenever the Library was open to the public and tried to provide two librarians whenever possible during busy hours. Sixty-five online databases were provided by municipal funding, the Minuteman Library Network,

the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and the Massachusetts Library System. The databases reflected a wide variety of subject areas including biography, literature, business, careers, consumerism, downloadable audio, exam and test preparation, genealogy, health, history, language learning, local history, newspapers, politics and scholarly journals. With the public workstations in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet, electronic databases, and with computer troubleshooting.

Again the Library sponsored a summer reading program for adults and young adults with a raffle for gift certificates funded by the Friends of the Library. Many local organizations also took advantage of the Library's exhibit space in the lobby to publicize their organizations and to present informational displays.

The ever-popular Speed Read collection provided the opportunity to browse this small collection of new and popular materials for which there was a significant demand. The Library continued its efforts to assist English Language Learners by increasing that collection and offering a quarterly English Language Learners newsletter.

The "Plugged In" series of programs resumed again in 2012, continuing to provide active adults aged 50+ with the opportunity to remain active, enriched, and connected in the next phase of life. These programs included possibilities and challenges of life after 50, wellness, networking, home office organization, cooking, and downloading library econtent assistance. The series is now completely funded through the sponsorship of Watertown Savings Bank.

Arlington residents enthusiastically participated in the tenth annual Arlington Reads Together program, which promoted closer ties among community members through reading *The Fault in Our Stars*, by award-winning author John Green. Arlington Reads Together consisted of a variety of events including book discussions, a community writing contest for all ages, storyteller Norah Dooley in the beautiful Robbins Library Reading Room, speaker Bridget Spence, and the independent documentary film *FEAT* on the lives of children and their families battling a life-threatening illness. Arlington Reads Together was sponsored by the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the Diversity Task Group of Vision 2020.

Several author programs were enthusiastically received. In the spring, our annual local author panel featured Arlington authors Adam Pachter and Miriam Stein, whom visited the library to share with the community readings and commentary. In August author Nichole Bernier joined Adult Services Librarian Jenny Arch for a book talk, and, later in August, author Margot Live-say joined Jenny in providing another book talk on the best summer reads for our community. In November the Robbins Library supported many writers in our commu-

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nity by turning the Library into a collaborative space for writers during National Novel Writing Month, also known as “NaNoWriMo”, by hosting several “Come Write In” events. National Novel Writing Month was capped off by a discussion between historical fiction authors Margot Livesey and Adam Braver on the research and writing processes, and the ethics of writing historical fiction.

The Community Room and Conference Room were used by approximately 100 local organizations for a total of 1,053 meetings. In addition, the two study rooms were in constant demand by students and tutors and the Local History Room received heavy usage by researchers with Independent Research Cards. The Reading Room was also the site of several art exhibits and continued to be a popular space for rental by citizens for private functions when the library was closed.

Services to Young Adults

Young adults in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Reference Desk staff assisted students with class assignments and bibliographic instruction and offered orientations to classes from the Ottoson Middle School. Teens continued to make use of the young adult area, enjoyed the teen blog and Facebook page and borrowed items from the book, books on CD, Playaway, and video game collections. In addition, a new “Fast 5” reader’s advisory service for young adults was introduced in 2012. Young adults participated in the programs planned by library staff and the Young Adult Advisory Committee including writing workshops, crafts, Dr. Who Party, Hunger Games movie release party, and costume contest, Teen Gap Year information session, animation workshop, Buffy Musical Singalong, summer preview fashion show, gaming, crocheting, cake decorating, movies, murder mystery night, and assistance with the children’s book sale. At the end of June the library collaborated with over half a dozen community organizations to coordinate and sponsor “Celebrate and Support Arlington Teens,” a teen concert and art show. Over 200 people attended and enjoyed the seven amazingly talented teen performers who played jazz, rock, acoustic, and solo musical sets. The event was attended by a range of Arlington youth agencies that set up tables on the perimeter of the Whittemore Robbins House Lawn to offer information and support. We also had an exhibit of teen art in the community room including the works of late teens Gracie James and Shaira Ali, both beloved library patrons who died in the past two years. It was a beautiful collaboration of community. Teenagers participated in the summer reading program and had the opportunity to win raffle prizes funded by trust funds, Friends of the Robbins Library, and local businesses. Multiple copies of titles on the middle and high school summer reading lists were available for students.

Services for Children

Children from infancy to fifth grade enjoyed the materials and programs offered by the Children’s Department. Materials included books, magazines, books on tape, music and spoken word on CD, Playaways, DVDs and videocassettes, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 460 activities at the Libraries including storytimes in English and Spanish languages, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, craft times, toddler programs, workshops, and various performances. The children’s librarians offered assistance to children, parents, and teachers in researching homework assignments and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. The public continued to request the very popular graded and subject booklists that are updated and created annually by library staff. The Library continued to prepare Quick Pick boxes with thematic picture books to assist parents who do not have time to browse the shelves.



Children’s reading room

The public and school libraries continued their cooperative efforts, although the ongoing lack of elementary school librarians continues to negatively impact this partnership. The Robbins Library maintained collaboration with the schools through letters to teachers, attendance at elementary school faculty meetings, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, Library tours, and preparation of curriculum kits. The children’s librarians presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes at the Robbins and Fox Branch Libraries as well as preparing the summer reading list titles for the elementary schools. Staff worked with the reading specialists at the schools to support at risk readers in the summer, presented a mini-class for early education students at Arlington High School and instructed library aides in the elementary schools on matching non-fiction materials with the new Common Core educational initiatives.

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Russell Fund

The Library is very fortunate to have the Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund, which sponsors many special programs for children that could not be afforded through the municipal budget. In 2012 these included: chess for kids, popular children's author Jarrett Krosoczka, magician David Garrity, Mud Eye Puppet Company, crafts, Mad Science, several concerts including the Arlington Philharmonic, the Boston Bubble Guy, Top Secret Science, Boston Museum of Science Animal Invaders, Thai Festival of Loy Krathong, Triveni Dance Troupe, KNEX, and Habitat Live, just to name a few. Over 1,500 children and adults attended five concerts on the grounds of the Library during the summer. The Russell Fund also finances the very popular infant-toddler sing-a-longs. The fund continued to provide kindergarten packets to children to introduce them to the Library and baby bundle packets to new parents with information on library services for infants and toddlers.

Behind the Scenes

Library staff worked diligently to offer quality services to the community. The number of items borrowed from and loaned to other libraries continued to increase. Despite the fact that the public can request items electronically, the staff must still locate the materials and process them for loan and return. The Adult Services, Children's, Fox Branch, and Technical Services Depart-



ments selected, ordered, cataloged, and processed 20,885 new items including books, magazines, music compact discs, books on CD, DVDs, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys.

The Circulation Department checked out and returned 665,437 items to the shelves, coordinated the volunteer program, re-labeled the paperback collection, maintained the books in good order on the shelves and shifted collections, updated the periodical list, checked shelves for missing items, and continued to work on special projects to automate the serials check-in and to add duplicate barcodes to the front cover of all materials to participate in the statewide automated delivery system. The Library collected \$54,614.69 in overdue fines and lost book money in Fiscal Year 2012 that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Technical Services Department processed all new materials, updated the records in the automated catalog, maintained selector accounts, set up the back end for a new streamlined ordering process, and processed books that need re-binding.

Board of Trustees

Pictured are Heather Calvin, Frank Murphy, Kathy Fennelly, Barbara Muldoon, Joyce Radochia, and Diane Gordon

The seven-member Board of Trustees continue its commitment to administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community, raise private funds to augment the municipal budget, and advocate for adequate staffing and delivery of essential Library services. Several Board members continued to serve on a Town-wide advisory committee to develop a policy for all Town



Many young patrons enjoyed a visit from author Jarrett Krosoczka, author of the popular Lunch Lady graphic novel series.

Edith Fox Library and Community Center

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy branch library services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Fox Library. 2012 marked the first full calendar year the library was opened every Friday with funding from the Friends of Fox. Circulation at the Fox Branch Library was up 25% overall in Fiscal Year 2012 from Fiscal Year 2011. Children and parents enjoyed a number of wonderful programs, including story times, sing-a-longs, craft programs, drop-in play, a Chinese New Year party, movie night, workshops on how to read to infants, and the summer reading program. Elementary and nursery schools brought classes to the Fox Branch Library for stories and instruction. All ages enjoyed the monthly book displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and the schools.

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trust funds. The Board approved funding in FY2012 for materials for the adult, children's, young adult, and Fox Branch collections. These included reference and circulating books, books on CD, playaways, music CDs, non-fiction DVDs, playaways, foreign language literature, language learning, local history, and art prints. Other services funded included the summer reading programs, activities for children, Community Read, author program, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. It also coordinated the efforts to raise private funds in conjunction with the Friends of the Library for Sunday openings from September 2012 to May 2013 and will continue this endeavor next year. Board members participated in Town Day by staffing a table providing information on Library activities and resources.

Foundation

Steps to form the Arlington Libraries Foundation were taken in 2012. It is in the final stages of forming a board and looks forward to launching in 2013.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library, with a membership of over 500, continues to assist the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. This vital support group raises supplemental funds for materials and equipment not provided through the municipal budget including travel and gardening books, Chinese books and Chinese DVDs, audiobooks, music CDs, language learning audiobooks, Playaways, children's materials, online databases, shelving for the Reading Room and paperback areas, website maintenance, and a self-service laptop vending machine. They also sponsor the family museum pass program and provide books and small prizes for the adult, teen, and children's summer reading programs. The Friends conducted a mail solicitation of individuals and businesses to raise funds for library collections. The Friends hosted a wide variety of programs, including performances by the Delvena Theater



Pictured are Heather Calvin, Frank Murphy, Kathy Fennelly, Barbara Muldoon, Joyce Radochia, and Diane Gordon.



Thanks to the initiative of Drake Village resident Graciela Correa, the Friends of the Robbins Library were able to donate books to reestablish a resident library at Drake Village. Pictured at the grand opening ceremony Graciella Correa from Drake Village, Ryan Livergood, Linda Dyndiuk, and Ellen Porretta from the Robbins Library

Company, Murder Mystery Authors night, genealogy, and antique appraisal with Skinner's, just to name a few. The annual Children's/Young Adult book sale, co-sponsored by the Russell Fund, with able assistance from members of the Library's Youth Advisory Board, helped raise needed funds. As part of the Town Day celebration in September book lovers once again flocked to annual book sale. Many visitors also regularly peruse and make purchases from the ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the Library. The rental DVD collection continues to draw many users to the convenient location on the first floor. The library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends Board of Directors and part-time coordinator who plan many activities in support of the library.

The Friends of Fox continue to support the Fox Branch Library with programming and fundraising efforts. They supported the Library by funding Friday hours at the Fox, sing-a-longs, non-fiction children's books, reupholster of furniture, and new signage. The Library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends of Fox Board who do so much to support the Fox Branch Library.

Acknowledgments

Staff Resignations

Maryellen Remmert-Loud, who worked for the Robbins Library the vast majority of her career, including 27 years as Library Director, retired in April. Her many major accomplishments include the 1990s addition to the Robbins Library and introducing a digital catalog for the library collection. She will be greatly missed for her dedication, leadership, and commitment to providing the highest level of service for the community.

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Bob James, who served the Library for over 22 years as Adult Services Librarian, retired in February. Liza Halley, who was the Russell Fund Coordinator for many years, left the position in 2012 as well. Both Bob and Liza were valuable members of the Library team and will be greatly missed.

In Memoriam

Andy Ananthkrishnan died tragically in an auto accident in June of 2012. Andy was an accomplished scientist and an active Friends Board Member for several years. He brought valuable skills and a delightful, caring personality to the Library community and is greatly missed.

Donations

In FY2012 citizens, businesses, and organizations donated over \$64,000 for general purposes, materials, and opening of the Robbins Library on Sundays. The Library acknowledges with appreciation these gifts that allow for the purchase of books and audiovisual materials, which would be unaffordable through the municipal budget alone. As in previous years the programs and services of the Anne A. Russell Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund have enriched the community. The Library is also grateful to Arlington resident Richard Duffy who continued to donate the profits from the sale of his book, *Arlington Then and Now*, to the Library.

The Friends of the Library donated over \$77,000 to the Robbins and Fox Libraries for programs, membership to fifteen museums, library materials, website design, Community Read, equipment, shelving and raffle prizes for the summer reading program.

The Library is grateful to the Friends of Fox Library and the volunteers at the Little Fox Children's Clothing store for funding all day Fridays at the Fox Library and for children's programs and shelving.

Volunteers

Again this year the Library system benefited from the work of dedicated volunteers. The Library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who

donated over 3,400 hours assisting with many aspects of Library operations. Beverley Brinkerhoff and Page Lindsay gave significant hours to operate the important homebound delivery program. Also deserving of special note is Anne Honeycutt who has facilitated the popular book discussion group for more than a decade. Liz Eagan, Richard McElroy, Ave Rangone, Dinesh Gupta, Nancy Ashley, and Sybil Carey maintained the ongoing Friends of the Library book sale on the fourth floor.

Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Glen Barnes, Ryan Bartoloni, Khoula Bhatti, Susanne Blair, Bill Bradley, Susan Campbell, Sandra Canzanelli, Janet Casey, Graciela Correa, Duane Crabtree, Noreen Cronin, Dena Davis, Ginny Gardner, Jonathan Gilbert, Kim Haase, Carol Hoover, Ann Honeycutt, Michelle John, Vivian Juusola, Ben Kleiman, Maxim Litvinov, Mary Lynch, Janet MacMillan, Cynthia McGinty, Brad McKenna, Anne Macchi, Barbara Middleton, Debbie Minns, Kristen Oleson, Matt Olson, Marjorie Willis and Christine Wiseman. The Library also acknowledges the efforts of the following students, many of whom volunteered at the Robbins Library to fulfill their community service requirements for high school: Olivia Ambo, Suchana Chauhgain, Jasmina Coggins, Amy Curren, Kendra Davie, Grace Gutierrez, Sara Gutierrez, Anne Higgins, Corie Mikita, Mary Morrison, Elizabeth Scannell, Natasha Singh, Edie Voges and Aidan Wilcox. The Library is grateful for the work of participants in the Town's Senior Citizen Community Service Reimbursement Program.

The Fox Branch Library is grateful to volunteers Debbie Hayes, Joanne Burns, Joanne Piepol, Gabi Toth, Jennifer Troy, Melissa Saggerer, and Matt Todd for their efforts. The Fox also acknowledges the efforts high school students Grace Hognlund and Jennifer Nguyen who volunteered at Fox to fulfill their community service requirements for high school.

Special recognition is given to volunteers Joanne Burns, Susanne Dorson, and Amy Weitzman who started the Little Fox Children's Shop at the Fox Library and who are assisted by their many volunteers.



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Library administration and Trustees are very grateful to the Friends of the Robbins Library Board members for all their support: Andy Ananthakrishnan, Susi Barbarossa, Andrew Fischer, John Gearin, Robert Johnson, Nancy Knoff, Amy McElroy (Coordinator), Richard McElroy, James Milan, Sally Naish, Judi Paradis, Betsy Singer, Skye Stewart, Wendy Watson, and Timothy Wilson. Library administration and Trustees are also very grateful to the Friends of Fox Library Board members for all of their support: Pam DiBona, Susan Dorson, Amy Ellentuck, Jim Foster, Elizabeth Halley, Jack Hurd, Hilary Rappaport, Scott Weaver, and Shunsuke Yamaguchi.

The library is also appreciative to the many volunteers assisting with the Town Day or Youth book sale.

Future Goals

In 2012 the library intends to continue its commitment to implementing the goals identified in the strategic plan. Among the goals to be achieved are:

- Increase programs for children, teens and adults that reflect their needs, interests and expectations.
- Continue to secure funding for the Plugged In series that offers programs targeted at adults age 50+.
- Continue efforts to ensure that the library provides a welcoming, useful and aesthetically pleasing environment by reviewing the need to replace/reupholster furniture and improve lighting throughout the building
- Conduct a study of library configuration to improve the layout of collections and services.
- Evaluate existing procedures for the selection, ordering and processing of items for the library collection to ensure efficiency.
- Expand efforts to form partnerships with community organizations.
- Continue to implement strategies including social media to market library resources and services.
- Seek funding for potential digitization projects including the local history collection.
- Move forward with innovative, high value computer/electronic services utilizing effective technologies to improve staff productivity and customer service.
- Provide support to the Robbins Library Foundation that was established in FY 2012 to develop and conduct a comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- Continue to work with the Friends of Fox to secure private funding to supplement the municipal budget.
- Create a new strategic plan for FY2015-2017.
- Complete a feasibility study for the implementation of RFID technology in the future.



A path along the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden located between the Robbins Library and Town Hall