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ROBBINS AND FOX LIBRARIES

Mission

Arlington's libraries are vital community centers for all. Library staff, trustees, and volunteers create opportunities for lifelong learning, personal fulfillment, and enjoyment that make Arlington a great place to live, work, study, and visit. The Library is committed to services that anticipate and respond to the needs and interests of all users.

A total of 300,291 visitors came through the doors of the Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library. Downloadable e-books and e-audiobooks saw heavier use, which accounts for the 9% increase in circulation over last fiscal year.

Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual
Circulation of materials	668,087	735,796
Interlibrary loans processed	142,543	141,725
Reference questions answered (phone/email/chat/ in person)	93,869	87,875*
Children's program attendance	23,852	19,550*
Adult and Teen program attendance	2,408	2,631
Usage of meeting rooms	1,022	1,020
Number of public use computers	41	48

*Negatively impacted by winter of 2015, which resulted in six closures.

Accomplishments

- New circulation hardware and software was implemented as part of a multi-step transition to RFID circulation technology, which streamlines the check-out and check-in process.
- For the first time ever, the Robbins Library was open on summer Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. An average of 400 visitors came

through the doors and checked out about 1,000 items each Saturday.

- The Library was honored with three Massachusetts Library Association PR Awards in 2015: second place for Event (Arlington Book Festival), Logo (Arlington Book Festival), and Poster (promotional database display).
- The popular PLUGGED iN program series for adults age fifty plus continued with funding from the Barry Memorial trust fund. Coordinator Michele Meagher worked with input from library staff to create a high-quality mix of educational and entertaining programs.
- For the first time the Library held a Staff Development Day, bringing all staff together for emergency preparedness ALICE training and team-building activities.
- The Arlington Author Salon series kicked off in 2015, a quarterly reading series held at Kickstand Café and co-sponsored by the Library. The Salon was inspired by the Arlington Book Festival. Each Salon features three local authors reading from recent works.
- By participating in the state-wide Commonwealth E-book Collection, the Library provided access to thousands of e-books and e-audiobooks in addition to the collection available through the Minuteman Digital Catalog.
- With funding from the Friends of the Robbins Library, the Library contracted with Best Bees, Inc. to install and maintain two beehives on the third floor balcony overlooking the garden, for educational and inspirational purposes. The hives gave rise to Arlington's "Beehive Table" poets' group, run by Poet Laureate Miriam Levine.
- The addition of a part-time technology librarian significantly improved computer services for staff and the public.



A scene from the Arlington Author Salon, a reading series co-sponsored by the Library.

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Services for Adults

In 2015 the Local History Room collection of Arlington High School yearbooks was digitized and made available on the open web through Massachusetts's Digital Commonwealth initiative. This effort was coordinated by the Local History Librarian and student volunteers from the high school in conjunction with Boston Public Library staff.

The Library offered entertaining and educational programs for adults throughout the year. A monthly film series spanned June to December, made possible by the Library's partnership with the Arlington International Film Festival. A quarterly series for 20- and 30-something patrons called "Alt+ Library" was successfully launched. The Library offered several book clubs, including the Guys Book Group, Not-So-Young Adult Book Group, Queer Book Group (QBG), and the long-running Robbins Library Book Discussion Group. The twelfth annual Arlington Reads Together program, co-sponsored by the Diversity Task Group of Vision 2020, took place in March with events and discussions inspired by Annabel Pitcher's *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*. The Arlington Reads Together selection is chosen by a committee consisting of Library staff, representatives from the Friends groups and the Trustees, and community leaders.

The Robbins Library Community Room, the Fox Branch Library Community Room, and the Robbins Library Conference Room were used by over 100 local organizations for meetings. In addition, the two study rooms were in constant demand by students and tu-



High School students volunteered for the AHdigitization project.

tors, and the Local History Room received heavy usage by researchers with independent research cards. The Reading Room continued to be a popular space for rental by citizens for private functions when the library was closed. Many local organizations also took advantage of the Library's exhibit space in the lobby to publicize their organizations and present informational displays.

Services for Young Adults

Young adults in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Teen Space fills with teens after school, making it a full and vibrant space for Arlington's youth. Library staff continued to engage teens via the teen blog and social media. "Help Yourself" bookmarks were created to help teens locate books about sensitive topics. Robbins Library has been a leader in offering LGBTQ+ teen programs and community outreach to local LGBTQ+ organizations, and is known in the community as being a safe space for all teens.

Young adults participated in the programs planned by the Teen Services librarian in consultation with the Russell Fund Coordinator and the Teen Advisory Group (TAG). Teenagers participated in the teen summer reading program, themed "Game Hero," where teens turned in punch cards to collect prizes funded by the Friends of the Robbins Library. Multiple copies of titles on the middle and high school summer reading lists were available for students all summer long. Funds from the Arlington Libraries Foundation were used to purchase extra copies of Summer Reading titles, and the Friends of the Robbins Library sponsored the purchase of popular video games. Other noteworthy programs: Winter Explosion and Henna Art, plus ongoing programs like LGBTQ+ Drop in Nights, writer's workshops, movies, and book chats.

The Teen Services librarian continued her outreach efforts through contact with the public and alternative schools in Arlington, offering orientations to various school groups, attending local LGBTQ+ groups' meetings, and being a judge for the 2nd Annual A-town Teen Video Contest. Within the library, a voting jar was added to the teen area to get teens more involved in teen program and service decisions.

Services for Children

The Children's department welcomed 22,000 children from infancy to fifth grade and their caregivers to enjoy library materials and programs. Materials include books, magazines, music, books on CD, books in braille, Playaways, DVDs, as well as toys, games, and puzzles, "Discover It Yourself" collection, American Girl dolls, puppets, and artwork. With expanded weekend hours in 2015, the Library staff introduced summer weekend programming that was very well received by working parents in the community. The D.I.Y. collection grew this year with the addition of a sewing machine, drum, lap harp, and ukulele.

Children and parents participated in many activities at the Library, including story times in English and Spanish, 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 home-

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work assignments and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. Staff started new book groups for middle-grade readers.

Library staff continued community outreach efforts with visits to all seven elementary schools, attendance at monthly school library aides meetings, letters to teachers, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, Library tours, and the preparation of curriculum kits. The children's librarians presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes and prepared the summer reading list titles for the elementary schools. Library staff also held monthly pre-school story times onsite and offsite, including with a group of recently immigrated families where library staff discuss early childhood literacy and provide board books to families.

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 and services for children that could not be afforded otherwise. Program highlights include: food programs, puppet shows, animal and nature programs and summer outdoor concerts.

Edith M. Fox Library and Community Center

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy branch library services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and select Saturdays. The Fox continues to be open every Friday thanks to funding from the Friends of Fox. Children and parents enjoyed a variety of programs including storytimes, sing-a-longs, craft programs, drop-in play, a new "Reading to Dogs" program, 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.



A young patron participates in the "Reading to Dogs" program at the Fox Library.

Circulation and Technical Services

The Circulation Department checked out and returned hundreds of thousands of items, coordinated the volunteer program, maintained the books in good order on the shelves, shifted collections, updated the periodical list, and checked shelves for missing items. Regular activities also included issuing new cards, reserving museum passes, and processing hold requests, which are largely submitted through the Minuteman Library Network's online catalog. The Library collected over \$50,000 in overdue fines and lost book money in Fiscal Year 2015 that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Technical Services Department processed 18,422 new items in 2015, updated the records in the automated catalog, coded vendor bills, and maintained selector accounts. Circulation Department staff and the Tech Services team, along with trained staff and volunteers, tagged and encoded thousands of items for the library's enhanced RFID circulation system.

Board of Trustees

The seven-member Board of Trustees continue their commitment to administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community and advocate for adequate staffing and delivery of essential Library services. The Board approved funding in FY2015 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, foreign language literature, language learning materials, local history books, and art prints. Other services funded include the summer reading programs, activities for children, the Community Read, volunteer and staff appreciation, Staff Development Day, and staff attendance at library conferences and workshops.

Arlington Libraries Foundation

The Arlington Libraries Foundation was established in 2013 to continue the long tradition of supporting the libraries of our community by raising funds. The Foundation seeks to create ways to build a legacy for the Library and create ongoing sources of support. These include an annual campaign to support purchases of materials for the Robbins and the Fox libraries, creating endowed funds and named funds at the request of donors, and providing a structure for bequests. In 2015 the Foundation funded the purchase of books and audiovisual material for the Robbins and Fox libraries, and funded an additional librarian to help meet the demand for children's reference services on Sundays at the Robbins Library.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library, with a membership of over 350, continues to assist the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries with programming, fundrais-

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ing, and advocacy efforts. This vital support group raises supplemental funds for materials and services including maintenance of the library's website and the self-service laptop vending machine. They sponsor the museum pass program and provide books and prizes for the adult, teen, and children's summer reading programs. In 2015 the Friends made improvements to their website, friendsofrobbinslibrary.org, funded the two beehives on the third floor balcony, and hosted a wide variety of programs.



Friends of the Robbins Library sponsored beehives for the 3rd floor balcony.

The Friends' Annual Book Sale took place at Town Day, once again drawing hundreds of book-lovers and raising needed funds. The Friends maintained their ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the Library, curated a themed book sale shelf in the Lobby to promote sales, and partnered with the Garden Club for the biennial Books in Bloom fundraiser. The Library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends of the Robbins Library Board of Directors and part-time coordinator.

The Friends of Fox continue to support the Fox Branch Library with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. They supported the Library by funding Friday hours and select Saturdays at the Fox, and sing-a-longs. The Friends of Fox run the incredibly popular Little Fox Shop, collecting and reselling children's clothing and toys. The annual "Fashion at the Fox" adult clothing sale also raises funds for the Fox Library. 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

After serving on the Board of Trustees for three years, Diane Gordon stepped down in November 2015. Diane was instrumental in successfully advocating for municipal support of Sunday hours and Summer Saturdays at the Robbins Library, extremely popular services that help the community take full advantage of the library.

Donations

In FY2015 citizens, businesses, and organizations gave generously for Library materials and general purposes. The Library acknowledges these gifts that allow for materials and services which would be unaffordable through the municipal budget alone. The Library is also grateful to Arlington resident Richard Duffy who donates the profits from the sale of his book, *Arlington Then and Now*, to the Library.

The Friends of Robbins donated over \$85,000 to the Robbins and Fox libraries, and the Library is also grateful to the Friends of Fox Library and the volunteers at the Little Fox Shop and Fashion at the Fox for their fund-raising efforts.

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, Lanie Cantor, and Ron Sender gave significant hours to operate the important homebound delivery program. Ave Rongone, Susan Gilbert, David Warrington, and Richard McElroy 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: Matthias Beebe, Rick Beeny, Mary Cahill, Patricia Carroll, Graciela Correa, Catherine Farrell, Aileen Grunder, Kim Haase, Mary Kokaras, Max Litvinof, Matt Olsen, Sonan Rambhia, Rama Savitri, Alan Schramm, Shikhar Shere, Brad Sonnenberg, and Carol Sullivan. Volunteers working on the RFID project include: Harold Forbes, Heidi Gilliam, Jain Himanshu, Devika Kakkarr, Donald Mugnai, Judy Nudelman, Susan Patchen, Dolores Schueler, Edda Shaffer, and Maggie Stanley.

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: Brendan Ambo, Kate Barvick, Ofelia Cohen, Sahil Duvadie, Morgan Jackson, Alex Klein, Sebastian Krajenski, Kenny Liang, Nikita Saini, Josh Scoggins, and Eric Tighe. Our Adult Services page Nicole Cerundolo also volunteered her time to support some of our bigger teen programs. The library acknowledges the QSA teens who helped run our drop in nights: Claire Dickson, Abigail Dickson, and Gabe Oppenheimer. Melanie Davis-Kay is credited with being an outstanding teen services intern.

The Fox Branch Library is grateful to volunteers Debbie Hayes, Marie Ariel, and Becca Casper for their efforts. Special recognition is given to Little Fox Shop Founder Susan Dorson and her crew of 20 volunteers who staff the Little Fox Shop at the Fox Library.

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of the Robbins Library Board members for their support: Sally Naish (chair), Amy McElroy (co-

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ordinator), Andrew Fischer, Betsy Singer, James Milan, Nancy Knoff, Richard McElroy, Ruth Hersh, Skye Stewart, Stephanie Miserlis, Susi Barbarossa, and Timothy Wilson.

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of Fox Library Board members for their support: Paul Benoit, Pam DiBona, Susan Dorson, Amy El-lentuck, Elizabeth Halley, Jack Hurd, Hilary Rappaport, Scott Weaver, and Shunsuke Yamaguchi.

Library administration and Trustees are grateful to the Arlington Libraries Foundation Board members for all of their support: Richard Duffy (chair), Maryellen Loud (assistant chair), Julie Dunn (treasurer), Mary Ellen Bilafer Bache (assistant treasurer), Maureen Quinn (recording secretary), Karin Barrett, Ethel Doyle, Susan Murie, and Bettina Stevens.



Student volunteer Morgan Jackson on Volunteer Appreciation Day

The library is also appreciative to the many volunteers assisting with the Town Day and Children's book sales. Town Day book sale volunteers include Susan Gilbert, Betsy Singelais, Sue Wood, Ajay Rao, Mary Parlee, Brian Rose, Lorraine G., Tali Gorokhovsky, Mila Stanojevic, Esme Emma Hodgdon, Rachel Diamond, Victoria Tse, Wendy Watson, Susi Barbarossa, Carole Burns, Sally Naish, Tim Wilson, Nancy Knoff,

Bonnie Echmalian, Sheila O'Donnell, Katharine Jones, Bonnie Echmalian, Therese Henderson, Judi Paradis, Skye Stewart, Annmarie Ostrowski, Janice St. Clair, Susanne Blair, Colin Blair, Betsy Singer, James Milan, Jean Rosenberg, Steph Miserlis, Amy McElroy, Andrew Fischer, and Harmony Browning. Children's book sale volunteers include Hanna Ali, James Milan, Tali Gorokhovsky, Mila Stanojevic, Emma Hodgdon, Victoria Tse, Anne Higgins, Harmony Browning, Melanie Davis-Kay, Judi Paradis, Susi Barbarossa, and Amy McElroy.

Future Goals

- Identify goals for the Reimagining Our Libraries renovation campaign with input from staff and the community. Define project limits, understand existing conditions, and develop planning options that will transform Arlington's libraries for 21st century users.
- Continue efforts to ensure that the library provides a clean, welcoming, useful, and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Form partnerships with community organizations, strengthening town-wide efforts to make Arlington a cultural destination for residents and visitors. Contribute to the managing partnership of the Cultural District effort.
- Focus on programs, spaces and resources that nurture children and teens, inspire a lifelong love of reading, and spark the imagination.
- Create opportunities for lifelong learning: expand horizons, expose residents and visitors to new knowledge, and nurture personal empowerment.
- Expand the Library's reach through content, programs, and services that connect to residents and visitors where they are in Arlington. Reach new communities within Arlington and increase the visibility and participation of the Library throughout Arlington.



A frieze outside Robbins Library