

LIBRARIES

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.

Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library	FY2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual
Materials circulated	735,796	757,028
Interlibrary loans processed	141,725	145,677
Reference questions answered	87,875	89,729
Children’s program attendance	19,550	25,967
Adult and Teen program attendance	2,631	2,895
Usage of meeting rooms	1,020	1,099
Number of public use computers	48	58

Accomplishments

- 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.
- The Library held a Staff Development Day, bringing all staff together to focus on sensitivity to mental health issues in the community, emergency preparedness ALICE training, and team-building activities.
- The Arlington Author Salon received a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council. The Salon, founded in 2015, is a quarterly

reading series held at Kickstand Café and co-sponsored by the Library. Each Salon features three local authors reading from recent works.

- By continuing to participate 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.
- The Library hosted the second Arlington Book Festival in November, bringing thirteen Arlington authors to the Robbins Library to discuss their creative process, inspiring all who attended.
- The Library upgraded various technology features including a new mobile friendly, accessible library website as well as a new secure charging station to allow patrons to securely charge their device while they use the library.

Services for Adults

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. The Library offered several book clubs, including the Guys Book Group, Not-So-Young Adult Book Group, Queer Book Group (QBG) featuring works that highlight LGBTQ+ issues, and the long-running Robbins Library Book Discussion Group. A new discussion series was launched called TEDxRobbinsLibrary, to encourage discussion around thematic TED talks. The thirteenth 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 *Americanah*. The Arlington Reads Together selection is chosen by a committee consisting of Library staff, representatives from the Friends groups, the Trustees, and community leaders. Robbins Library continued outreach efforts through participation in the Farmer’s Market and the Arlington Alive summer festival.

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 tutors, and the Local History Room received heavy use 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 Teens

Teenagers in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Teen space fills with teens after school, evenings and weekends, making it a full and vibrant space for Arlington's youth. *The Library's Teen Collection had the 3rd highest circulation of teen titles in the network for an individual library.*

The Teen Librarian also started to utilize the teen space for more programming, and reported an increase in attendance. Library staff continued to engage teens via the teen blog and social media. 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 Opinion Time group. Teenagers participated in the teen summer reading program, and 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. One highlight of Teen programming was the launch of Girls Who Code in October 2016. This school year program seeks to correct the gender imbalance in technology careers. Other noteworthy programs include: LGBTQ+ Drop In, 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 and attending local LGBTQ+ groups' meetings.

Services for Children

The Children's department welcomed children from infancy to fifth grade and their caregivers, offering 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.

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 homework assignments and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. Staff continued to offer book groups for middle-grade readers.

Community outreach efforts included visits to all seven elementary schools, attendance at monthly school library aides meetings, letters to teachers, as-

signment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, Library tours, kindergarten kits, and the preparation of curriculum kits. 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 storytimes 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, the "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.

Circulation and Technical Services

The Circulation Department checked out and returned hundreds of thousands of items, coordinated the 30-person 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 2016 that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Technical Services Department processed 18,422 new items in 2016, 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.

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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.

Changes

After serving on the Board of Trustees for thirty-two years, Barbara Muldoon stepped down in August 2016. Barbara served during the major 1992 building project that resulted in renovations and an addition to the Robbins Library, and she also served as Trust Fund Liaison for many of her years on the board. She continues to be a strong advocate for libraries. A new trustee, Arlington resident Lois Rho, joined the Board in December.

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 2016 the Foundation funded all of the downloadable e-books and audiobooks available to Arlingtonians through Overdrive Advantage and Hoopla. In addition, the Foundation funded books and audiovisual material for the Robbins and Fox libraries and sponsored 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, fundraising, 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. Special projects in 2016 included new canvas

bags for children receiving their first card, an LED display in the Robbins Library lobby, twelve laptops for Girls Who Code and school visits, and a new logo design. The Friends' Annual Book Sale took place at Town Day, once again drawing hundreds of book-lovers and raising funds. The Friends maintained their ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the Library and curated a themed book sale shelf in the Lobby to promote sales. The Library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends of the Robbins Library Board and the Friends' part-time coordinator.

The Friends of Fox continue to support the Fox Branch Library with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. They supported the Fox Library by funding Friday hours and select Saturdays at the Fox, and by sponsoring sing-a-longs and library materials. 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. Special projects of the Friends of Fox included supporting the Arlington Public Art "East Arlington Stories" project, and initiating a program series for adults on Wednesday evenings.

Acknowledgments

Donations

The Library acknowledges the generous gifts from citizens, businesses and organizations 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*.

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

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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 Erica Tighe. Our Adult Services page Nicole Cerundolo also volunteered her time to support some of our bigger teen programs. The library acknowledges the Queer Straight Alliance (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), Andrew Fischer, Betsy Singer, James Milan, Richard McElroy, Ruth Hersh, Skye Stewart, Stephanie Miserlis, Susi Barbarossa, David Warrington, Timothy Wilson, and Amy McElroy (coordinator).

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of Fox Library Board members for their support: Paul Benoit, Pam DiBona, Susan Dorson, Amy Elentuck, 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 in 2016: Richard Duffy (chair), Maryellen Loud (assistant chair), Julie Dunn (treasurer), Mary Ellen Bilafer Bache (assistant treasurer), Maureen Quinn (recording secretary), Karin Barrett, Ethel Doyle, Patrick Hanlon, Susan Murie, and Bettina Stevens.

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 Susi Barbarossa, Carole Burns, Sally Naish, Tim Wilson, Alison Goulder, Katharine Jones, Judi Paradis, Ave Rangone, Janice St. Clair, Betsy Singer, James Milan, Hadley Flavin, Jean Rosenberg, Jo Costantino, Bella Costantino, Susan Gilbert, Betty Athanasoulas, Dave Warrington, Natasha Colman, Ruth Hersh, Richard McElroy, Grace Willoughby, Lee Varban, Therese Henderson, Harmony Browning, Steph Miserlis, Amy McElroy, Andrew Fischer, Skye Stewart, David Warrington, and Richard McElroy. Children's book sale volunteers include Yuri Santos, Julia Longo, Mia Umali, Natasha Colman, Rinke (Aaron) Tang, Kelly Brosnan, Grace Willoughby and Amy McElroy. The Fourth Floor Friends ongoing book sale volunteers are Ave Rongone, Susan Gilbert, David Warrington and Richard McElroy.

Future Goals

- Provide a clean, welcoming, useful, and aesthetically pleasing environment for library users.
- 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.
- Engage an architecture firm to assist the Library in a space planning project to better understand what interior renovations are needed at the Robbins and Fox libraries in order to meet the current and future needs of all Arlington's citizens.
- Use the outcome of the 2017 Reimagining Our Libraries space planning project to determine a direction and timeline for interior renovations at the Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library.
- Provide guidance and support to the Arlington Libraries Foundation as they begin a capital fundraising campaign for the Reimagining Our Libraries interior renovation project.
- Improve service levels at the Fox Branch Library with additional weekend hours and more programs for children and families.
- Continue to strengthen Town-wide efforts to make Arlington a cultural destination for residents and visitors by supporting the proposed Cultural District and by participating in other Town-sponsored efforts and initiatives.

