

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	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual
Children’s program attendance	25,967	27,454
Adult and Teen program attendance	2,895	3,952

Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library	FY2015 Actual	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual
Physical materials circulated	686,036	693,347	666,966
E-book/audio/video downloads	49,760	62,879	64,631
Interlibrary loans processed	141,725	145,677	143,729



Library booth visitors at Town Day

Accomplishments

- Engaged Ann Beha Architects in the Reimagining Our Libraries space planning project to better understand what interior renovations are needed at Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library to meet the current and future needs of all Arlington’s citizens.
- Introduced weekend Saturday hours at the Fox Branch Library in September 2017, subsidized by the Friends of Fox Library, and increased weekend children’s programs

sponsored by the Russell Fund.

- Played a coordinating role to achieve the designation of the Arlington Cultural District by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.
- Added a “World Languages” collection in the Robbins Library Children’s Room, a more inclusive and user-friendly reboot of the Foreign Language collection.
- Held a second year of the popular Girls Who Code club for girls in grades 6-12 who are interested in entering the field of technology, and introduced an Hour of Code program open to all teens.
- Conducted a “Talking about Diversity with Diverse Books” workshop for educators in Arlington elementary schools to explore vocabulary around race, diversity, and prejudice.
- The Library upgraded various technology features including: Friends of Robbins Library sponsored free printing, new circulating laptops, and a new server.

Services for Adults

The Library offered entertaining and educational programs and interactive displays for adults throughout the year. 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 Robbins Library Book Discussion Group. The fourteenth 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 *Becoming Nicole* by Amy Ellis Nutt. The Library continued outreach efforts through participation in the Arlington Cultural District, the Arlington Alive summer festival, and Town Day.

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. 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 Teen Services Librarian continued to engage teens via the teen blog and social media. The Library is a leader in offering LGBTQ+ teen programs and community outreach to local LGBTQ+ organizations, and

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is recognized as a safe space for all teens. 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. The “Girls Who Code” program was offered for the second year in a row; the program seeks to correct the gender imbalance in technology careers. Other noteworthy programs include: 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 visiting Arlington group homes.



‘Fun at Fox’ storytime

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, and video games as well as toys, games, puzzles, a “Discover It Yourself” collection, American Girl dolls, and puppets.

Children and parents participated in many activities at the Library, including story times, 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.

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 Saturdays. For the first time ever the Fox Library was open every Saturday starting in September 2017, 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 2017 that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Technical Services Department processed 18,226 new items in 2017, 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 FY2016 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 sixteen years, Francis Murphy stepped down in September 2017. Frank participated in committee work for the Board and served as Trust Fund Liaison. He has also served several terms as a Commissioner for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and continues to be a strong advocate for libraries.

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 2017 the Foundation funded all of the downloadable e-books and audiobooks available to Arlingtonians through Overdrive Advantage. 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 2017 included new canvas bags for children receiving their first card, co-sponsorship for the Arlington Community Reads speaking program, subsidized printing for library users, and a new server at the Robbins Library. 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 Library continue to support the Fox Branch Library with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. They supported the Fox Library by funding weekend service on Saturdays, and by sponsoring sing-a-longs and library materials. The Friends of Fox run the 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 include supporting library activities in connection with Arlington Public Art and the Capitol Square Business Association, and 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. Lanie Cantor and Ron Sender gave significant hours to operate the homebound delivery program.

Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Kristina Arruda, Adrienne Beck, Matthias Beebe, Rick Beeny, Joanne Burstell, Nancy Brooks, Mary Cahill, Patricia Carroll, Stephanie Chiha, Graciela Correa, Kristen Dabney, Lynne Davis,



Celebrating 100 years of Fox Branch Library

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Catherine Farrell, Harold Forbes, Jeanne Friedman, Mary Fusoni, Lorraine Gatto, Heidi Gilliam, Greta Grancharova, Aileen Grunder, Kim Haase, Sara Huntington, Jeanette Isles, Mary Kokaras, Judy Larson, Nick Lee, Ann LeRoyer, Max Litvinof, Donald Mugnai, Matt Olsen, Amelia Ostling, Sonan Rambhia, Vielle Roby, Rama Savitri, Alan Schramm, Edda Shaffer, Lois Shannon, Shikhar Shere, Brad Sonnenberg, Carol Sullivan, Barbara Wagner, and Susan Whitney. 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 acknowledges the efforts of extraordinary teen volunteer Needle Wang, and all of the students who volunteer hours at the Robbins Library to fulfill their community service requirements for high school.

The Fox Branch Library is grateful to volunteer shelver Debbie Hayes and volunteer Guys Book Group facilitator Brad McKenna. Special recognition is given to Little Fox Shop Founder Susan Dorson and her crew of paid hourly staff and volunteers who operate the Little Fox Shop. The Fox Library also appreciates the effort of Fashion at the Fox volunteers led by Judy Hoer and Maryellen DiNatale.

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of the Robbins Library Board members for their support: Sally Naish (chair), Ruth Hersh (vice chair), Alison Goulder, Andrew Fischer, Harold Forbes, Betsy Singer, Richard McElroy, Skye Stewart, 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: Hilary Rappaport (chair), Paul Benoit, Pam DiBona, Amy Ellentuck, Jack Hurd, and Scott Weaver.

Library administration and Trustees are grateful to the Arlington Libraries Foundation Board members for all of their support: Karin Barrett (chair), Maryellen Loud (assistant chair), Richard Duffy (treasurer), Mary Ellen Bilafer Bache (assistant treasurer), Maureen Quinn

(outgoing recording secretary), Ethel Doyle, Patrick Hanlon, and Michele Meagher.

Future Goals

- 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.
- Identify and explore funding sources for Reimagining Our Libraries renovations, including grant opportunities.
- Provide guidance and support to the Arlington Libraries Foundation as they begin a capital fundraising campaign for the Reimagining Our Libraries interior renovation project.
- Continue to strengthen Town-wide efforts to make Arlington a cultural destination for residents and visitors by supporting the Arlington Cultural District and by participating in other Town-sponsored efforts and initiatives.
- Initiate process for a new Strategic Plan for Arlington's Libraries.



Celebrating 125 years of the Robbins Library building

