

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.

Accomplishments

Completed the Reimagining Our Libraries space planning project, resulting in a building program and schematic designs for the Robbins Library and the Fox Branch Library and recommendations for phasing the project.

In its first full year as a collection, the Library of Things saw a circulation of 724 with holdings of 68 non-traditional “things” for patrons to borrow including kitchen gadgets, board games, tools, and craft kits. The collection is co-sponsored by Sustainable Arlington and the Friends of the Robbins Library.

Completed an updated appraisal of the Winfield Robbins Art Prints collection for the purpose of evaluating options for the future of the collection.

Initiated free public printing subsidized by the Friends of the Robbins Library.

Achieved a 1.3% increase in circulation of materials and e-content.

As a Managing Partner of the Arlington Cultural District, the library was successful in applying for the maximum \$5,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support the district.

Services for Adults

The Library offered entertaining and educational programs throughout the year. Community-building book discussion groups included the Cookbook Club, Guys Book Group, Not-So-Young Adult Book Group, Queer Book Group (QBG), and the Robbins Library Book Discussion Group, now in its 25th year. The fifteenth annual Arlington Reads Together program, co-sponsored by the Diversity Task Group of Vision 2020, took place in March with events and discussions in-

spired by R.J. Palacio’s *Wonder*. The Library continued outreach efforts as a Managing Partner in the Arlington Cultural District and through partnerships with the Arlington Poet Laureate, Sustainable Arlington, the Rainbow Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and other Town groups.

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 regular meetings. In addition, the two study rooms were in demand by students and tutors. Local organizations and individuals took advantage of the Library’s public art display opportunities, and public information display spaces at Robbins and Fox.

Services for Teens

The Robbins Library Teen space and teen collections were heavily used by Arlington teens in grades six through twelve, during the week, and on weekends. The Head of Teen Services engaged teens by cross-promoting programs in the schools, through local teen support networks, and via the teen blog and social media. The Library is a regional leader in offering LGBTQ+ teen programs and community outreach to local LGBTQ+ organizations, and is recognized as a safe space for all teens. The Teen summer reading program saw over 1,000 participants, and multiple copies of titles on the middle and high school summer reading lists were available for students all summer long.

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, various performances, and middle-grade book groups. The children’s librarians offered assistance to children, parents, and teachers in researching homework assignments and for general use of physical and virtual library collections.

Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual
Physical materials circulated	686,036	693,347	666,966	663,644
Digital materials (e-books/audio/video)	49,760	62,879	64,631	77,730
Interlibrary loans processed	141,725	145,677	143,729	148,384
Children’s program attendance	19,550	25,967	27,454	24,769
Adult and Teen program attendance	2,631	2,895	3,952	4,465
Usage of public meeting rooms	1,020	1,099	1,136	1,144
Number of public use computers	48	46	58	72



Borrowing trains in the Children's Room

Community outreach efforts included 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 educators, library tours, and the preparation of curriculum kits. Children's librarians presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes and prepared summer reading list titles for the elementary schools. Library staff also held bilingual story times and early childhood literacy discussions and board book giveaways.

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 a Baby Brunch for new parents, Kindergarten Kits for children turning five who are

ready for their first library card, puppet shows, animal and nature programs, and outdoor concerts in the summer.

Edith M. Fox Library and Community Center

The vibrant East Arlington branch of the Robins Library continued to offer services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays year-round and on Saturdays September through June, with Saturday hours made possible for the second year in a row by the Friends of Fox Library. Children and parents enjoyed a variety of programs at the Fox including story times, sing-a-longs, craft programs, drop-in play, the "Reading to Dogs" program, and the summer reading programs for all ages. Elementary schools, nursery schools, and the Arlington Boys and Girls Club brought classes to the Fox Branch Library for stories and instruction, and the library added after-school programming at Fox to support students from the newly reopened Gibbs School. All ages enjoyed the monthly book displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and schools. There was an unexpected temporary closure of the children's resale shop within the library in August 2018. The library and the Town are addressing the need for a Fox retail space lease agreement for the benefit of the Fox Library, and a re-opening of the children's resale shop is anticipated in early 2019.

Circulation and Technical Services

The Circulation Department checked out and returned hundreds of thousands of items, coordinated the 30-person volunteer program, maintained 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 Technical Services Department processed 18,472 new items in 2018, updated the records in the catalog, coded vendor bills, and maintained selector



Fox Library

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.



Library trustees (left to right) Adam Delmolino, Kathy Fennelly, Amy Hampe, Joyce Radochia, Jonathan Gates, Heather Calvin

Board of Trustees

The seven-member Board of Trustees supported the Director with library policies and administered library trust funds so that essential library services could be delivered, approving funding for materials for adults, teens, and children at Robbins and Fox. Other services funded include the summer reading programs, activities for children, the Arlington Reads Together program, volunteer and staff appreciation, Staff Development Day, and staff attendance at library conferences and workshops.

Changes

Trustee Lois Rho stepped down from the Board in September 2018, marking two years on the Board with one year as Trust Liaison. The Board and the Director gratefully acknowledge Ms. Rho's service and anticipate a new trustee to be in place in early 2019. The Board welcomed new Trustee Jonathan Gates in January 2018.

Arlington Libraries Foundation

The Arlington Libraries Foundation was established in 2013 to continue the long tradition of supporting the libraries by raising private 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 Robbins and Fox, creating endowed funds and named funds at the request of donors, and by providing

a structure for bequests. In July 2018 the Foundation announced that donations in fiscal year 2018 totaled just over \$100,000, representing a new high-water mark for the organization. The Foundation was able to fulfill the library's fiscal year 2019 requests, funding all downloadable e-books and audiobooks available to Arlington card-holders through the Overdrive Advantage digital collection platform. 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 monthly programs for adults, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. This vital support group raises supplemental funds to maintain the library's website, the museum pass program, books and prizes for the adult, teen, and children's summer reading programs. Annual projects include canvas Robbins/Fox bags for children receiving their first card, co-sponsorship for the Arlington Community Reads speaking program, and subsidized "free" printing for library users. The Friends' Annual Book Sale took place at Town Day 2018, once again drawing hundreds of book-lovers and raising funds. The Friends maintained their ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of Robbins and curated a themed book sale shelf in the lobby to promote sales.

The Friends of Fox Library board supported the Fox Library by funding weekend service on Saturdays, and by sponsoring sing-a-longs and library materials. Special projects of the Friends of Fox include sponsoring library activities in connection with Arlington Public Art and the Capitol Square Business Association, especially at the annual Feast of the East festival.

The Fox Library benefits from Fashion at the Fox sales revenue administered by the Friends of Fox. Fashion at the Fox offers consignment-quality donated items at bargain prices, and took place in June and December of 2018. The sales are run by Judy Hoer and Mary Ellen DeNatale, who also coordinate volunteers.

The Little Fox Shop, a popular children's resale shop whose proceeds benefit the Fox Library, was temporarily closed in August of 2018 resulting in a public bid process for a new iteration of the shop in 2019. Proceeds will continue to benefit the Fox Library by lease agreement with the Town.

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

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grateful to Arlington resident Richard Duffy who donates profits from ongoing sales 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 Lynne Davis gave significant hours to operate the homebound delivery program. Therese Henderson continued to serve as trained volunteer coordinator of the Robbins Library Book Discussion Group.

Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Becky Anthony, Thomas Beckett, Michael Bowman, Joanne Burstell, Nancy Brooks, Stephanie Chiha, Marc Chin, Graciela Correa, Ann Michelle de Castro, Smita Dhake, Paula Ebbitt, Catherine Farrell, Gail Fillion, Jeanne Friedman, Mary Fusoni, Harold Forbes, Lorraine Gatto, Heidi Gilliam, Aileen Grunder, Kim Haase, Sarah Huntington, Ananda Raj Joshi, Kunjani Joshi, Mary Kokaras, Jeannette Iles, Judy Larson, Nick Lee, Ann LeRoy, Max Litvinov, Melanie Mendez, Donald Mugnai, Amelia Ostling, Ann Marie Peterson, Vielle Roby, Richard Schmeidler, Dolores Schueler, Edda Shaffer, Lois Shannon, Homayoon Shahidi, Eric Tighe, Rose Udics, Barbara Wagner, and Susan Whitney, and Amy Yelin. The Library acknowledges the efforts of all the students who volunteer hours at Robbins and Fox to fulfill their community service requirements for high school: Madeline Amidon, Darcy Coleman, Alex Gardinier, Varun Gopal, Razmig Keusseyan, Aleksander Makowka, Meghan Mei, Colby Mei, Tamera Moinuddin, Nayara Rodrigues, and Pauline Sanoval-Alvarez. The Library is grateful to Fox Library volunteers Justine Barnes, Joe Cook, Debbie Hayes and volunteer Guys Book Group facilitator Brad McKenna.

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of the Robbins Library Board members for their support: Ruth Hersh (chair), Barbara Fulchino (vice chair), Meghan Gardner, Alison Goulder, Andrew Fischer, Betsy Singer, David Warrington, Harold Forbes, Katherine Krister, Richard McElroy, Susi Barbarossa, Timothy Wilson, Sally Naish, Karen Kittridge, Gwendolyn Wong, and Amy McElroy (part-time coordinator).

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of Fox Library Board members for their support: Pam DiBona (chair), Lynn Baldrige, Jack Hurd, Hilary Rappaport, Scott Weaver, and Shunsuke Yamaguchi.

Library administration and Trustees are grateful to the Arlington Libraries Foundation Board members for their support: Karin Barrett (chair), Maryellen Loud, Richard Duffy, Mary Ellen Bilafer Bache, Michele Meagher, Ethel Doyle, Marian Hanley, Patrick Hanlon, Jeff Miller, and Jonathan Wallach. The Library also acknowl-

edges the commitment of advisory board members Melissa King, J.B. Maxwell, and Sara McCabe.

Future Goals

- Eliminate fines for children, teen, and adult library users to promote and support library use by all.
- Develop a new Strategic Plan for Arlington's Libraries, a requirement of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for State Aid eligibility.
- Use the outcome of the FY18 Reimagining Our Libraries space planning project to determine a direction and timeline for renovations based on real and potential funding sources.
- Identify prerequisites for an MBLC design and construction grant and prepare to be responsive.
- Enhance collections at Fox Library that hold appeal for 6th grade Gibbs students, and support the Fox Branch Librarian/Head of Teen Services in building programs and displays that engage teens and tweens.
- Pending Town Meeting action, make a plan to deaccession the Winfield Robbins Art Prints collection through sale or gift for the benefit of the community and the library, and pursue the related goal of applying funds to future library improvements.
- Cultivate a "hot titles" collection at the Fox Library with multiple copies of new and popular materials for teens and adults, to better meet town-wide demand for such materials.
- Develop community engagement using a survey to evaluate perceptions of library programming for all ages.
- Promote increased use of the Library of Things, including developing programming and partnerships to support the maker community.
- Promote the Library as a key component of Arlington's cultural landscape within the Arlington Cultural District.