

LIBRARIES

ROBBINS AND FOX LIBRARIES

Mission

Arlington's Libraries are vital community centers for all, providing 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

- Eliminated overdue fines, removing a socio-economic barrier to library use and promoting equality among borrowers of physical and digital materials.
- Presented the FY18 Reimagining Our Libraries building studies and conceptual designs to the Capital Planning Committee, setting the Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library on a path for major improvements.
- Following an appraisal of the Winfield Robbins Art Prints, gained permission through Town Meeting to deaccession the collection.
- Completed an RFP process and awarded a lease for children's resale shop space in the Fox Library.
- Attracted national media attention for the library's third annual LGBTQ+ prom, co-sponsored by the Arlington Rainbow Commission, Queer Mystic, ACA, Waltham Public Library, Newton Free Library, and the Arlington Housing Corporation.
- Held community education events and a teen-designed vaping cessation program co-sponsored by AYHSC to help address the vaping epidemic.
- Partnered with Arlington Eats to establish the Robbins Library as a distribution site for lunches on Fridays in July and August.
- Opened the Robbins Library as a cooling center on Sunday, July 21 during the heat wave, and offered family-friendly films in the Community Room.

- Joined the Housing Corporation of Arlington's Human Services Network, a collaboration of relevant Town departments and non-profit social services organizations working to identify and stabilize vulnerable community members by connecting families and individuals to resources that promote healthy living.
- As a Managing Partner of the Arlington Cultural District, won the maximum \$5,000 grant from the Mass Cultural Council to support district activities and benefit the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture.

Services for Adults

The Library offered entertaining and educational programs throughout the year. 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 26th year. The sixteenth annual Arlington Reads Together program, co-sponsored by the Diversity Task Group of Envision Arlington, took place in March with events and discussions inspired by Alan Gratz's *Refugee*. The Library continued outreach efforts 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 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

Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2019 Actual
Circulation Total	756,226	731,597	741,374	749,636
<i>Physical materials</i>	693,347	666,966	663,644	643,004
<i>Digital materials (e-books/audio/video)</i>	62,879	64,631	77,730	106,632
Interlibrary loans processed	145,677	143,729	148,384	153,964
Children's program attendance	25,967	27,454	24,769	24,356
Adult and Teen program attendance	2,895	3,952	4,465	3,784
Usage of public meeting rooms	1,099	1,136	1,144	1,471
Number of public use computers	46	58	72	93

Library is a regional leader in offering LGBTQ+ teen programs and outreach. The Teen summer reading program saw close to 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 caregivers participated in 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.

Community outreach efforts included visits to all seven elementary schools, attendance at school library aides' meetings, Diverse Books workshops for educators, 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 bi-lingual story times, 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 summer concerts.

Edith M. Fox Library

The vibrant East Arlington branch of the Robbins Library continued to offer services on Tuesday-Friday, year-round and on Saturdays September through June, with Saturday hours made possible with private funding. 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. The library added after-school programming at Fox to support students from the Gibbs School. All ages enjoyed the monthly book

displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and schools. A new lease agreement was reached between the Town and the children's resale shop known as the Little Fox Shop following an RFP process, and proceeds will continue to benefit Fox Library programs and services.

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 18,236 new items in 2019, updated the records in the 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 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, volunteer and staff appreciation, Staff Development Day, and staff attendance at library conferences and workshops.

Changes

The Board welcomed new Trustee Stephen Quinlan in February 2019.

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 providing a structure for bequests. The Foundation was able to fulfill the library's fiscal year 2020 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. In 2019 the Friends launched a new winter concert series featuring live performances in the Robbins Library Reading Room. 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 2019, 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 sponsoring a portion of Fox Library sing-alongs in 2019. Special projects of the Friends of Fox include sponsoring library activities in connection with the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture, especially at the annual Feast of the East festival. The Friends of Fox Library opened a new thrift shop on Mass Ave in 2019, with proceeds planned to benefit the Fox Library.

Acknowledgments

Volunteers

The Library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who donated over 2,000 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, Raquel Balmelli Newell, Joanne Burstell, Nancy Brooks, Carol Browne, Stephanie Chiha, Graciela Correa, Ann Michelle de Castro, Catherine Farrell, Gail Fillion, Heidi Gilliam, Sharon Green, Aileen Grunder, Kim Haase, Sarah Huntington, Marion Kilson, Mary Kokaras, Judy Larson, Nick Lee, Ann LeRoy, Max Litvinov, Kaz Lockwood, Sharyn Lowesstein, Tomi Magome, David McGowan, Melanie Mendez, Donald Mugnai, Ann Marie Peterson, Vielle Roby, Richard Schmeidler, Dolores Schueler, Edda Shaffer, Rose Udics, and Susan Whitney. 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, Harleen Bassan, Lily Bell, Darcy Coleman, Rhandy Ghermosen, Gabe Ibarrondo, Gabe Higgins, Aleksander

Makowka, Dinor Nallbani, Davis Rennella, Samuel Reyes, Donatello Sassaroli, Nayara Rodrigues, and Pauline Sanooval-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), Harold Forbes (vice chair), Karen Kittridge (treasurer), Katherine Krister (assistant treasurer), Gwendolyn Wong (secretary), Alison Goulder, Andrew Fischer, A. David Lewis, David Warrington, Rebecca Kittredge, Susi Barbarossa, Timothy Wilson, Sally Naish, and Amy McElroy (coordinator).

Library administration and Trustees acknowledge the Friends of Fox Library Board members: Scott Weaver (chair), Jack Hurd, Hilary Rappaport, and Shunsuke Yamaguchi.

Library administration and Trustees are grateful to the Arlington Libraries Foundation Board members for their support: Karin Barrett (chair), Maryellen Loud, J.B. Maxwell, Michele Meagher, Marian Hanley, Patrick Hanlon, Jeff Miller, and Jonathan Wallach. The Library also acknowledges the commitment of advisory board members Melissa King and Sara McCabe.

Future Goals

- Promote the Reimagining Our Libraries capital improvement projects at the Robbins Library and Fox Branch Library by supporting the Arlington Libraries Foundation in preparing for a capital fundraising campaign, and by working with Town leadership and appropriate departments to explore public/private opportunities for the Fox Library site.
- Publicize and begin implementing the new Strategic Plan for Arlington's Libraries, a 5-year long range plan.
- Identify ways to promote the fine-free initiative among community groups with the goal of increasing library card registrations and overall circulation/use.
- Renovate the circulating art prints collection with a local arts focus, complete the deaccessioning of the Winfield Robbins Art Prints collection through sale or gift, and pursue the related goal of applying trust funds to future library improvements.
- 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.