

# Annual Report

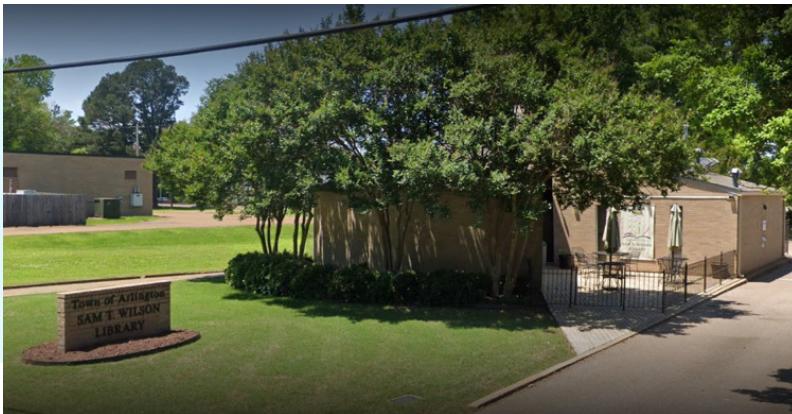
Fiscal Year 2020-2021



# UConn Library Annual Report

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# Letter From The Library Director



/// Every year I am proud of the depth and breadth of services the Sam T. Wilson Public Library provides.



Services range from print materials, eBooks and databases, audiobooks, language tools, accessibility tools, cultural events, programs, seed checkout programs, readers' advisory and everything in between. The Library provides vital access - to information, literacy, education and just plain fun - to a vibrant community. While Fiscal Year 2020-2021 was certainly different, bringing unprecedented challenges and silver linings, services and access did not change. We continually discover just how much more we can do for our community.

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought uncertainty, Library staff showed tenacity, adaptability and a can-do attitude to keep the community engaged with their Library. Barriers to access were removed where possible, including easing checkout limits and fines, reviewing policies and implementing new ways to reach patrons. This report highlights the Library's impact.

The Library quickly innovated to respond to a fast-changing environment. New procedures, protocols and service changes included curbside pick-up to keep books and materials flowing to patrons and virtual programs to keep the community learning and reading while the facility was closed to the public. Building closure spotlighted the need for access to computers and other technology; for several months, the Sam T. Wilson Library was the primary place in Arlington where residents could use technology. Community members relied on the Library for printing, copying, faxing and free Wi-Fi.

Thank you for making this a year to remember. The Sam T. Wilson Public Library staff are grateful for the commitment and support of the Town of Arlington, the Library Advisory Board, the Library Friends of Arlington, Library Systems & Services and the many local partnerships that make our Library an essential resource and the heart of the Arlington community.

### **Lisa Lance | Library Director**



**Summer Reading Program Kickoff June 2021  
Handprint the Canvas**



**2020 Best Decorated Business Honorable Mention  
Sam T. Wilson Public Library December 2020**



**Storytime in the Park**

# Programming & Outreach



The Library is a pillar of the community, a place for all ages to learn and grow together. While the pandemic limited Library services, staff worked tirelessly and never stopped offering programs to enhance the lives of community members.

Arlington's youngest residents learned crucial early literacy skills to set them on a successful path in school through programs including:

- **Tiny Tots Lapsit** – A virtual storytime introduced in October 2020. Sensory kits were available for pickup at the Library to help parents and caregivers interact more effectively with their little ones while attending Tiny Tots virtually.
- **Read with Me Storytime** – A weekly virtual storytime introduced in mid-2020. The program for toddlers and preschoolers is specially designed so children can better see the book and presenter and follow along more easily. Following the printed words as a story is read is an important pre-reading skill.
- **Preschool/Toddler Tuesday Storytimes** – This program moved traditional early literacy-based storytimes to Forrest Street Park for a fun and safe outdoor experience.





The Library continues to serve as “the place to be” in Arlington for children and teens. Young makers know the Library is an inclusive and creative space and enjoy learning through weekly STEM programs. **Small but mighty**, the Library makes a **large impact** through these valuable programs.

Library staff and local elementary school students and teachers came together to celebrate Read Across America Week in March. Staff and Library Friends recorded several literacy videos for teachers to use in the classroom in celebration of RAA.

The Library was invited to participate in the grand opening of The Market at The Crossing. Staff hosted storytimes, distributed 500 craft kits, registered new members for library cards, promoted summer reading and introduced many people to all the Library has to offer. This highly successful outreach effort was the first in-person program the Library hosted in 13 months; staff and residents were delighted to be together.

Summer Storytime in the Park, offered weekly at the Forrest Street Park Pavilion, was very well received by residents with an average of 40 people attending each week. Saturday Bingo and a chess tournament were offered safely outdoors on the Library patio as part of the Summer Reading program.

## ANNUAL PROGRAMS

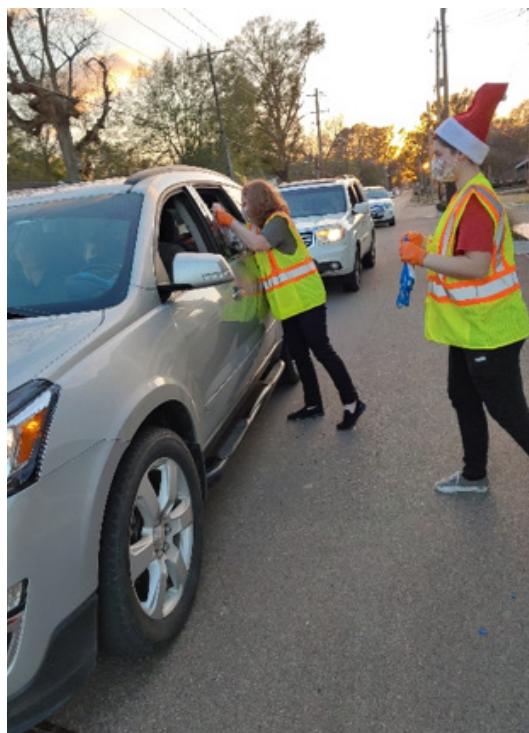


Young patrons eagerly participated in the First Annual Bookmark Design Contest with 17 entries. The event was sponsored by the Library Friends of Arlington along with 13 community donors who provided 26 program prizes. Opportunities like the Bookmark Contest are a key way to encourage participation in drawing and the arts with a chance to showcase community creativity at the Library.



The second year of Supply and Forgive for Fines supports Arlington in two ways: Overdue fines are waived for Library patrons, removing a barrier to use, and school supplies are donated to students in need. Patrons can donate school supplies to have Library fines removed. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, 144 school supplies were donated to local schools through this project.

Arlington's annual Christmas on the Square event became a drive-through celebration in Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Library staff joined the festivities and distributed more than 250 snowman tealight craft kits and information about Library services. Special thanks to the Library Friends of Arlington for sponsoring the children's craft for the event.



Library fine forgiveness continued into the holidays with the annual **Food For Fines** Forgiveness program. Through this program, fines are waived for patrons who donate canned goods at the Library. The local food pantry received 180 food items and the holidays were that much brighter for those in need as a result of this project.



The Library's Summer Reading program is a vital resource to prevent "summer slide" or loss of previous year's learning for students. Reading just four to six books over the summer has the potential to prevent a decline in reading achievement scores from spring to fall. Summer Reading combats this loss by incentivizing reading.

Prior to the pandemic, nearly 500 students registered for Summer Reading at the Sam T. Wilson Library every year. Fiscal Year 2020-2021 was the second summer the Library used an online reading log tracker; this technology was particularly useful this year. Summer 2021 registration was exceptional with 414 registrations. It was exciting to double the previous year's participation even in the midst of an ongoing pandemic. Several new families became Library regulars during the summer and a new record for Library memberships was set.



# Flexibility: Key to COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the Library's importance to the community. Staff were creative and flexible in finding new ways to further meet the needs of patrons; new challenges brought new opportunities to serve. Some of the innovative services introduced during the pandemic will continue to be part of the Library's service model and are a springboard to continued enhanced services for Arlington and surrounding communities.

When the Library building was closed the Kids Zone DIY Craft Day was converted to a take and make at-home kit program. Multiple themed craft kits were offered the second Saturday of each month, with an average of 150 kits picked up at each session. A variety of kits were designed for preschool to middle school age students.

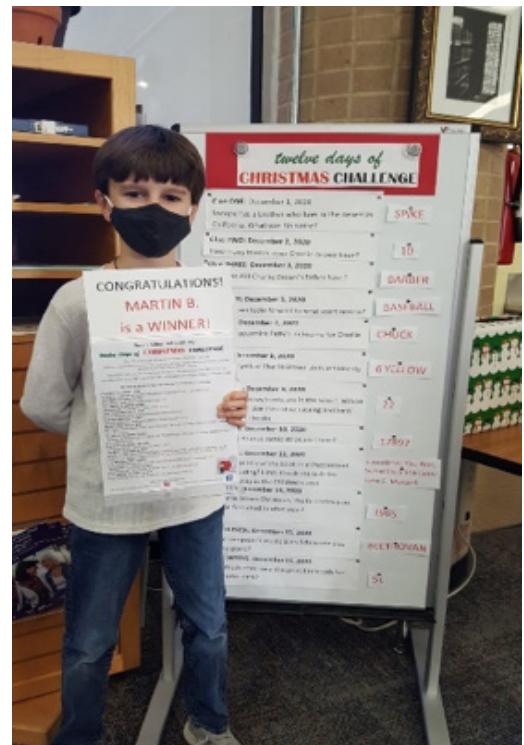
The always popular Homeschool Book Club returned last fall for both elementary and middle school students in an online chat format. The program had the extra advantage of introducing students to the Zoom virtual platform just as the school year started. Students voted for the books to read as a club. Fiscal Year 2020-2021 titles included The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett, Escape from Mr. Limoncello's Library by Chris Grabenstein and Flora & Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo, just to name a few. Attendance was strong and participants were actively engaged, sometimes even more outspoken than in-person!

A new weekly virtual storytime called Tiny Tots Lapsit began during building closure. Parents were given sensory kits to be used at home during the program. Kits included egg shakers, colorful mini scarves, and the lyrics to program songs. More than 80 kits have been distributed since the start of the program.

The 12 Days of Christmas Challenge was a fun way for the community to learn more about the Library. A different clue was posted at the Library and online during a 12 day period. Entries were turned in by the end of the month and the winner received a donated gift card to Crave Coffee Bar & Bistro, a popular local eatery!



STWPL Staff & Student Volunteers  
Town of Arlington 'Mask Up' Thru August 2020



# Library Statistics

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021



**2,032**

PUBLIC SERVICE  
HOURS



**10,910**

LIBRARY VISITS



**5,539**

WEBSITE VISITS



**272**

CHILDREN'S  
PROGRAMS



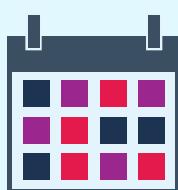
**2,146**

CHILDREN'S  
PROGRAM  
ATTENDANCE



**2,241**

PROGRAM KITS  
(STEM, STORYTIME, CRAFT)



**322**

TOTAL PROGRAMS



**2,818**

TOTAL PROGRAM  
ATTENDANCE



**14,863**

ELECTRONIC  
MATERIALS  
CIRCULATION



**26,300**

PHYSICAL ITEMS  
CIRCULATION



**41,163**

TOTAL  
CIRCULATION



**342**

NEW BORROWERS



**3,753**

TOTAL BORROWERS



**4,741**

TOTAL REFERENCE  
QUESTIONS



**1,093**

USE OF COMPUTERS