



ANNUAL REPORT



2023-2024



www.patten.lib.me.us



207-443-5141

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It seems fitting to write this letter just after the 11th annual Bath Kindness Day. At Patten Free Library we serve the City of Bath and the towns of Arrowsic, Georgetown, West Bath, and Woolwich. Ours is a community-rich environment and we see acts of kindness on a daily basis.

Kindness is equal parts concern and action, and our library is where the two come together, as a gathering spot for those with big ideas and willing hands. With the City of Bath, we host the Climate Conversations, a series focused on learning and sharing ways to live with a changing climate. Every third month, a room filled with skilled volunteers share their talent and expertise at our popular Repair Café. Each day, a corps of dedicated volunteers help our library staff with everything from book repair and shelving to delivering items to those who can't get to the library themselves.

The library is a gathering spot for knitters, readers, bakers, families, and remote workers. In short, we try to provide something for everyone in our communities and with the help of many, it all works. We are a place of social connection and the result of human capital. We build community well-being and connect our library users to information, and to each other. Thank you, for the active role you play and for your continued support.

Lesley Dolinger,
Library Director



Patten Free Library transforms lives, inspires lifelong learning, preserves local history, and builds community through joyful, creative exploration and dialogue.

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Now You're Cooking

Major Benefactor

Count & Crush LLC dba CLYNK
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THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

26,486

Inter Library Loans
processed



114,725

kids, teens and
adult materials
checked out



6,215

connections
to our free
Wi-Fi



139,288

patron
visits



783

new library
cards issued



36,857

total digital checkouts



9,704

research questions
answered



With an average of **460** visits each day, Patten Free Library was a hub of activity this past year! Our library users borrowed, renewed, and downloaded over **400** items a day. We issued **783 new cards**, gave out **454 museum and park passes**, and answered thousands of research questions from our three service desks.

This year we offered **600 programs** to our community. That's more than **2 programs a day!** We gave away **1600 Grab and Go Kits** across all age groups! Kits included eclipse glasses, spice kits with recipes, slime kits, paper roll penguins, beeswax candles, and more!

"I think [PFL does] a fabulous job of being an intellectual and inspiring community hub. Your ability to source books is stellar and your free tickets to museums is beyond fabulous. You even gave away eclipse glasses! Hooray! You have great programs and a wonderful children's room." - Anonymous Patron

IMPACT STORIES

CHILDREN'S ROOM

Storytime has grown exponentially this past year, with at least fifty attendees each week. Parents have connected and shared resources with one another, children have found new friends, and all have found a love for song and story.



We also participated in Families CAN! and Midcoast Maine Community Action's community baby shower, where over 100 families attended a resource-sharing event and learned how PFL and other organizations can support new parents and caregivers.



Lego Club has been a weekly occurrence at PFL with kids ages 5-12 coming to play with Legos, eat snacks, and unwind in one of our air-conditioned spaces. Through this club, a parent became a weekly volunteer and runs our Minecraft club for PFL kids.

TEEN SPACE



The Teen Space saw increased use last year, with teens coming to hang out, watch movies, and use our Wii. We offer passive programs like paint by sticker, watercolors, beads, and the popular monthly Grab and Go Kits.

The Teen Pantry, a free resource for toiletries, snacks, and school supplies, is in high demand and is restocked multiple times each week, thanks to donations from patrons, the Bath Area Food Bank and hats and scarves from PFL's Knitting Circle.

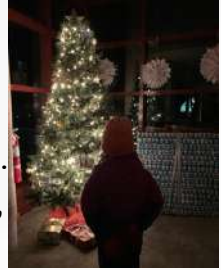
New this year is a microwave, allowing hungry teens to make ramen, oatmeal, and hot chocolate.

IMPACT STORIES

ADULTS

Throughout the year, PFL has continued to offer a variety of adult programming for all different areas of interest, including author talks, technology classes, climate advocacy, book and movie discussion groups, art projects and talks, and free coffee every Friday.

December of 2023 saw the return of Starry Night, our annual luminary walk in Library Park, and the addition of A Night at the Patten and Tiny Art show. We celebrated the season with hundreds of guests, sold local art, and raised money for the library.



In the spring, PFL partnered with the Bath Area YMCA on their DEI Programming Series: *Acknowledging our Past to Create a More Inclusive Future*. The lineup included Maine State Archivist Kate McBrien, Maine State Poet Laureate Julie Bouwsma, and Pamela Cummings, president of the Board of Directors of the Abyssinian Meeting House. This was a highly successful collaboration, and the Bath Area YMCA awarded PFL a Social Responsibility Award at their annual dinner.

PFL was also awarded a grant from the Maine Humanities Council to host Racial Equity and Reconciliation Advocate Dustin Ward for a series on Race and Equality in Literary Voices.

HISTORY ROOM

In April we received a donation of a watercolor from the daughter of an artist that grew up in Bath. It was her wish that the painting of library park during Heritage Days (painted sometime in the early 90s) be donated to the library and put on display. Her daughter was able to see it hanging in the building when she participated in Art in the Park this Heritage Days.



IMPACT STORIES



The History Room has been helping the Children's Room staff find photos and artifacts to use at the American Girl Doll Club meetings. For the Victorian Era we were able to find a leather satchet of photos of the Elmhurst mansion's grounds and interiors right after it was finished, and of course, for Kit Kitteridge we got the typewriter out.

That's been a great way of showing that historical/archival materials aren't necessarily "boring" and can reach all different kinds of age groups while also increasing our inter-departmental collaboration.

The 2024 Town History Series was the 20th anniversary of the lecture series which was started in 2004 by then-manager of the History Room, Peter Goodwin. This year's talks included topics such as a video history of Day's Ferry in Woolwich and the establishment of Reid State Park in Georgetown. The Town History Series remains so popular in-person attendance often threatened to exceed room capacity with was often matched one-to-one by online attendance. We are already excitedly beginning to plan the 2025 series.

'The Patten Free Library is a place that my family and I frequent often and I would say that it is already like a dream! ...I would only wish to see the Patten Free Library continue to be a place for families and individuals to have a place that nurtures growth for knowledge and creativity through learning together as a community.' - Anonymous Patron

FRIENDS OF PFL

The Friends continue to focus on promoting the resources and services of the library, sponsoring programs, and providing financial support through a variety of activities.

The bookstore generated \$45,380 and, after expenses, a net income for the library of \$30,817. Over 50 volunteers supported the bookstore, producing an average contribution-in-kind per volunteer of \$592.

By the end of this fiscal year we provided \$15,850 from the Heritage Days and April book sales, membership dues, donations, and Starry Night food sales. Combined with the bookstore income, the Friends contributed a total \$46,667 to the Patten Free Library. Other activities this year included sponsoring 2 teen-teams in the Spelling Bee, sponsoring the Writing Contest, and providing prizes for the Summer Reading Program.

In June 2024 John Dunn was appointed Acting President of the Friends. John moved to Bath in 2016 from New York State's Hudson Valley, where he was involved with libraries at both the local and regional levels. He was formally elected to the post at the Friends annual meeting in October.

VOLUNTEERS

In April, we celebrated the **3,560** hours our volunteers worked over the last year, and we selected *Bill Gray* as our Volunteer of the Year. Bill has been a PFL volunteer for 14 years and does everything from building furniture and general carpentry, to packing boxes of books. He is always willing to help out wherever he is needed, and as one PFL staff member put it, "*If you have a question, Bill can probably answer it.*" Thank you, Bill, and all our volunteers, for the dedication and support.

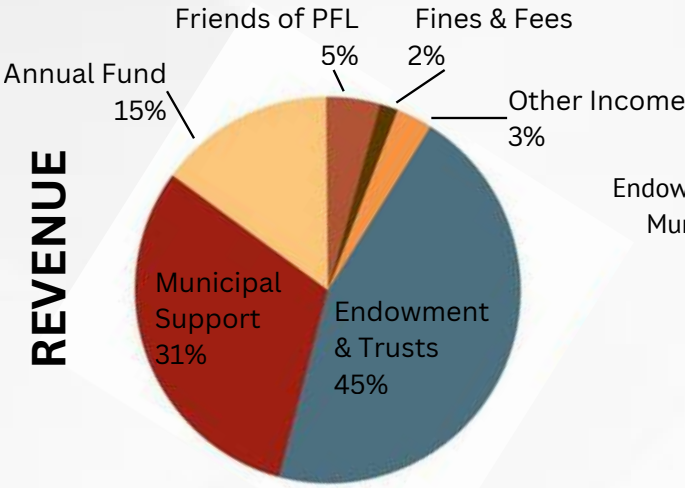


FINANCIALS

Revenue: \$1,030,372

Expenses: \$1,027,816

Difference: \$2,556



Operating Revenue

Endowment & Trust Income **\$458,809**

Municipal Contributions **\$314,899**

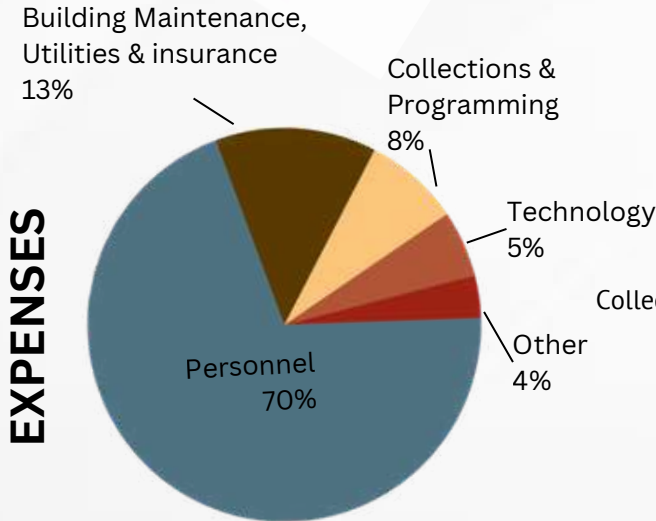
Fundraising **\$150,043**

Friends of PFL **\$60,381**

Fines & Fees **\$15,633**

Other Income **\$30,607**

Total Income \$1,030,372



Operating Expenditures

Personnel **\$708,241**

Building Maintenance, Utilities, Insurance **\$134,281**

Collections & Programming **\$79,917**

Technology **\$55,349**

Other **\$50,027**

Total Expenses \$1,027,816

GRANTS

Anonymous - \$20,000

Bath Matters - \$3,000

Coastal Maine Regional Broadband - \$2,000

Maine Humanities Council - \$2,000

State of Maine (ARPA) - \$100,000