



Bill Library  
718 Col. Ledyard Hwy.  
Ledyard, Ct. 06339  
(860) 464-9912

## Annual Report 2019-2020



Learn | Discover | Create | Connect

Ledyard Public Library  
[www.ledyard.lioninc.org](http://www.ledyard.lioninc.org)



Gales Ferry Library  
18 Hurlbutt Road  
Gales Ferry, Ct. 06335  
(860) 464-6943

**Mission:** The Ledyard Libraries serve as a center of information for the community, providing friendly, knowledgeable service and free access to a diversity of ideas, information and experiences. We strive to enhance the quality of life in our community and encourage the love of reading, critical thinking and lifelong learning.



Fiscal year 2020 proved to be a challenging year with some ups and downs. The year started like any other with the development of a strategic plan, the initiation of a complete count committee to work on the census, and grant writing to support library projects. The Children’s department saw a big change with the retirement of Nancy Brewer who had held the position for the last 30 years. We were sorry to see Nancy go but welcomed Stacey Burt as the new Children’s Librarian. The COVID pandemic hit in late winter and the library was forced to close in mid-March. All of the part time staff were furloughed. The four remaining full time staff continued to work both in the building and from home. By June things were beginning to improve and we could move towards reopening to the public.



The Library Commission assigned a committee to work on a Strategic Plan for the library. The Committee included two staff members, two Library Commission members, a member of the Friends and a community member. The committee gathered input from library staff, town officials, and members of the community through surveys, focus groups and interviews. They developed a vision statement and revised the mission statement for the library. The final plan highlighted three goals each with a set of objectives the library will work on. The goals included Meeting Community Needs, Collaboration, and Marketing.

The library played a part in the 2020 census collection. A complete count committee was formed to help publicize the importance of filling out the census. A grant from the Community Foundation provided funds that could be used to print promotional materials and provide refreshments for educational events. Members of the committee delivered information through churches, schools, daycares and other organizations in addition to social media posts. Information sessions were held in the library as well as recruitment sessions for census workers. The library promoted its technology for community members to complete their census forms online.

The library closed to the public in early March due to the pandemic but library services were still made available to the community. Patrons were able to apply for a library card online if needed and access all of our digital resources. Some online vendors allowed their resources to be accessed from home and we increased the availability of downloadable E and audiobooks, movies and more available through Hoopla and Overdrive. Programming was provided virtually for both children and adults. During the shutdown the full-time staff in the building worked extensively on collection maintenance removing out of date materials and reorganizing the shelves. They also worked on one of the objectives in the strategic plan which resulted in a new logo/brand for the library. The new logo features a tree with the tagline “Learn, Discover, Create, Connect” from the vision statement.

As things began to improve in June we offered curbside pick-up of materials. 176 patrons took advantage of this with 225 transactions. On June 22 our doors were open to the public again but new protocols were put in place. Furniture and computers were rearranged to allow for social distancing, Plexiglas shields were installed around the circulation desks, masks were required by all, and capacity in the building was limited to 50%.

## Statistics

• Number of items checked out	88,383	• Recordings, spoken & music	4,467
• Items borrowed per capita	5.89	• Museum Passes	7
• Visits	36,170	• Children's Programs	185
• Registered borrowers	4,450	• Virtual Children's Programs	17
• Adult books & Magazines	35,383	• Teen Programs	17
• Children's books & magazines	17,497	• Adult Programs	147
• Young adult books & magazines	2,260	• Virtual Adult Programs	17
• Newspapers	6	• Staff – Full time	4
• Videos	6,132	• Part-time	12

## It Happens @ the Library

The library continued to sponsor programs for children, teens and adults last year.



The **children's department** offered 202 programs to over 4,400 children. These included 8 story time sessions for ages 6 months to 5 years, several vacation programs and after the pandemic hit virtual programs. Visits were made to day cares and nursery schools to introduce the children to books and stories. The Library also promotes family literacy by encouraging parents to read with their children. The library participated in the statewide "Take Your Child to the Library Day" in February offering programs at both libraries. Studies have shown that children who participate in reading programs during the summer maintain or improve their reading skills when they return to school in September. Story time programs for preschoolers also offer many benefits including the development of listening skills, and helping children become better readers and learners.



A coding club was started for ages 8-18 and received a big boost with a grant from the Rotary Club for Ozobots and a coding club grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), North Dakota State Library, Linda Braun, Crystle Martin, and Prenda. The latter grant provided code club software for one year with training for library staff on how to use it. Participants met weekly when the library was open and virtually since the pandemic hit. Thirty-five coders learned the basics of coding websites, games, and robots using the Prenda software in a fun, supportive environment with other children. All coding became self-directed after COVID with input from the library and from Prenda.

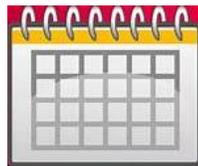
### The Library creates young readers and fosters success in school

- Storytime sessions for ages 6 months to 5 years
- Outreach visits to daycares and preschools
- Provide resources for homeschooled youth
- Summer reading programs and activities
- Vacation programs throughout the year

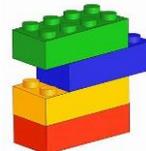
#### Children's & Teen programs by the numbers



8 - 12 week story time Sessions



6 weeks of Summer reading



251 programs



4,847 attendees



For **teens** the Library sponsored “A Universe of Stories” a summer reading program enjoyed by thirty-two students in grades 7-12. In addition to encouraging reading over the summer, the program offered teens a chance to volunteer in the library helping with programs for the younger children. During the 7 week program teens read a total of 173 books and volunteered over 319 hours. Studies have shown a link between summer reading and high school achievement. Not only does reading build comprehension skills and vocabulary but it helps students become better writers. Programs for teens included healthy cooking, paint pouring and movie nights.



For **adults** the Library continued to offer book discussions at the senior center and in the library, an investment discussion group, a cookbook club and an online genealogy group pre pandemic. The year began with a full schedule of programs for adults that included technology, movies, crafts, gardening, outdoor activities and a series about town departments. In addition to individual technology help patrons could learn about our 3-D printer and how to create and send a job to it remotely. Twice a month patrons enjoyed recently released movies at afternoon matinees. Patrons learned about paint



pouring, jewelry making and crocheting as well as putting a garden to bed and how to save seeds. Mystic Seaport provided a program on the autumn night sky, Avalonia conducted some hikes and Trout Unlimited gave lessons in fly tying. A Know Your Town series provided the community with information sessions about town departments including the Mayor and Town Council, Town Clerk, Building and Zoning, Emergency Services and more. Once the pandemic set in we stopped doing in-house programs and switched to virtual programs. The monthly cookbook club and discussion groups met on Zoom. A series on Eagles, Bears and Bobcats was presented on Zoom along with a Gardening program. Recordings were made and presented to demonstrate crafts such as paint pouring and crocheting.

## Community Connections



The Library strives to be active in community events, partnering with the schools, the senior center and other organizations in town. Library volunteers delivered books and other items to Ledyard residents who are homebound. The library took part in several events in the community and at the schools including Children’s Day, Trunk or Treat, and school open houses. A Seed Library is provided in the spring with help from the Garden Club and Ledyard High School. Grants and donations allow us to provide patrons with free vegetable and flower seeds, along with a series of educational gardening programs. The library had over 4,400 seed



packages donated. The library closure at the beginning of planting season impacted our ability to get seeds out to community members. In spite of the closure, almost 2,000 seed packets were taken or 44%. A grant from the Eastern CT Community Garden Association allowed us to mail free seeds to patrons who requested them. 48 bundles of 6 seed packages were sent through the mail and some were picked up curbside.

## Support Groups

The **Friends of the Ledyard Libraries** continue to support programs and purchase equipment for the Library through their fund raising efforts. This small but active group held two successful events including the Bill Book Sale in September and the holiday Books and More Sale in November. The Book Cellar is permanently set up in the basement of Gales Ferry Library providing a continuous book sale during library hours. The Friends sponsored programs for adults including author visits from Martin Podskoch (*The 169 Club*) and Erin Jones (*Tin Foil Crowns*), Mushroom Hunting in Connecticut and Chef Jenn Magrey demonstrating how to make cheese based appetizers. The Friends fundraising events also support items for the community including museum passes, online databases, an event calendar and welcome packets for new card holders.

**The Bill Library Association, Inc.** presented its annual awards in June. Erin Tolles, a graduating senior was awarded a \$200 scholarship. Two 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, MacKenzie Hope and Shelby Morrison were awarded a gift card from Bank Square Books.



**The Ledyard Historical Society** The Janice W. Bell Historical Research Room at Bill Library is overseen and staffed by the Ledyard Historical Society’s Archive Committee, which is chaired by Andrea Buka, with research assistance from Sheila Godino and Town Historian, Kit Foster. They provide local history and genealogical information to local, national, and international inquirers. This year they answered 22 research requests, several of which were answered by Andrea and Kit using personal and online resources during the shut-down. The Bell Room was closed due to COVID19 protocols for the last four months of the fiscal year. Despite this there were 100 uses of the Bell Room this year. Approximately 85% of the archive’s book collection may be accessed through the LION catalog, and can be used in the Bill Library. The long-term project of digitizing the room’s contents to make them available online is progressing with the help of the new archive assistant, Rebecca LaPoint, a part-time paid employee of the Society. An ever-increasing portion of the collection is made available in their website’s digital archives at <http://ledyardhistory.org/virtualexhibit/>. Vincent Godino built a much needed new shelving unit using wood milled at the Ledyard Up & Down Sawmill for the archive. We are grateful to Vin, the Sawmill, and Ledyard Public Works, who installed the shelves.

**Gifts/Grants** The Library often receives gifts from the community in support of our mission or grants are requested for specific programs. Gifts are given to support a collection, honor an occasion or remember a loved one who has passed away.

**Grants**

- CT Master Gardener’s Association
- Eastern CT. Community Garden Association
- Prenda
- Community Foundation of Eastern CT

**Civic Groups**

- Glenwood’s Book Club
- Ledyard Lion’s Club
- Ledyard Rotary Club

**Gifts in Honor of**

- Nancy Brewer
- Sarah Desormier

**Gifts in Memory of**

- Thomas Lee
- Lance Rockefeller
- Tom Wilson
- Jan Bell
- Sandy Seaton
- Mary Phillips

**General Gifts**

- Warren Stedman

**Library Commission**

The Bill and Gales Ferry Libraries are governed by the Ledyard Library Commission, which meets on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at alternating libraries. They currently meet on Zoom due to the pandemic. The public is welcome at all meetings. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the town’s webpage at [www.ledyardct.org](http://www.ledyardct.org) under “Agendas and Minutes.” Members of the Commission are:



- Rebecca Nash, Chairman
- Elizabeth Rumery, Vice Chairman
- Ellin Grenger, Secretary
- Carol Ganz, Treasurer
- John Bolduc

- Barbara Candler
- Brian Cronin
- Ralph Hightower
- Cheryl Winston

**Library Hours**

**Bill Library**

- Monday – Wednesday 9-8
- Thursday 9-1
- Friday – Saturday 9-5
- Sunday Closed\*

**Gales Ferry Library**

- Monday – Tuesday 9-8
- Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday 9-5
- Friday & Sunday Closed



\*Hours have been revised since the pandemic.