

# Phoebe Griffin Noyes



OLD LYME LIBRARY

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2020–  
June 30, 2021

# OUR MISSION

is to inspire lifelong learning and discovery in a welcoming place with exceptional resources, programs, and services.

# OUR VISION

is to be the community's vibrant hub for engagement, discovery, and creativity.

## ABOUT THE LIBRARY

Established in 1897, the Old Lyme–Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library is a private, independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization. It is owned by the Old Lyme–Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library Association, Inc., and governed by its Board of Trustees. The day-to-day operations of the Library are managed by the Library director and 11 staff (total FTE 8.4). As the Town of Old Lyme's designated Public Library, it receives some funding from the municipality (47% of budgeted FY19-20 income). This municipal funding combines with income from the Association's Endowment, the proceeds of the Library's annual fund drive, income from the Friends of the Library, and various grants to fund the Library's annual operating budget. The Library is a long-standing member of the Libraries Online, Inc. consortium.

From developing fun, interactive story times for infants and toddlers to hand-delivering books to homebound patrons, the Library continues to provide opportunities for residents of all ages to learn and grow. Our core services include: providing access to a variety of print and digital books, audio-visual media, and research tools; assisting with technology and encouraging the development of information literacy; supporting the public school curriculum; conducting early literacy training and fostering an enduring interest in learning and reading among our youngest patrons; and offering programming that informs and engages the community.





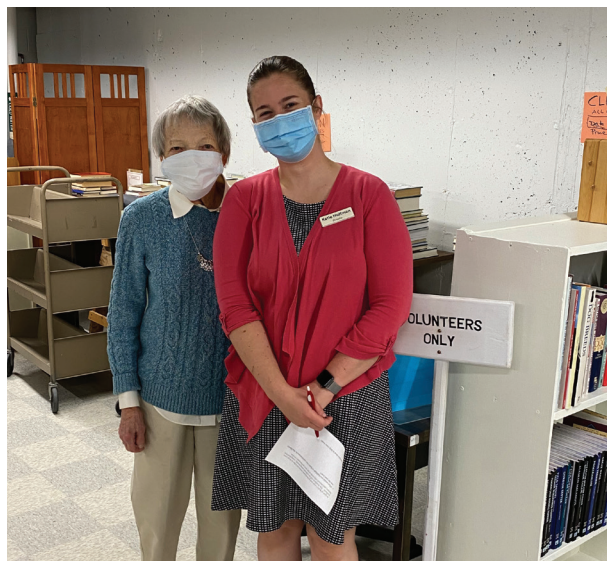


## LIBRARY STAFF

Katie Huffman *Director*  
 Linda Alexander *Public Services Manager*  
 Katie Balocca *Development Assistant*  
 Julie Bartley *Children's Librarian*  
 Nike Desis *Tween/Teen Librarian*  
 Kristine Ferguson *Access Services Manager*  
 Katy Klarnet *Substitute Librarian*  
 Evelyn Morgen *Administrative Assistant*  
 Kathy Sharp *Circulation Assistant*  
 Jessica Steding *Reference & Tech Librarian*  
 Mary Talbot *Circulation Assistant*

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 Markus Warlitz



pictured L-R: Citizen of the Year with Evan Griswold, Marcia Smith, Roger Smith, and Tim Griswold; Witness Stones Ceremony with poet Marilyn Nelson; Curbside items awaiting pick up; Long-time volunteer Agnes O'Connor with Katie Huffman; 2021 Memorial Day Parade with Katy Klarnet, Markus Warlitz, Skip Sibley, and Julie Bartley.

# Introduction

What a year this has been! While we celebrated the completion of the multi-year Renewal Project, the majority of the year's plans were dictated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. From rolling out curbside service to installing plexiglass and setting up temporary offices and desks to pivoting to Zoom and outdoor programming, Library staff, board members, and volunteers all worked diligently to provide exceptional resources, programs, and services while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. Looking back, it's incredible to realize that it wasn't until May 19—7 short weeks before the conclusion of the fiscal year—that we fully opened our doors (see below for a timeline of service rollouts). Despite the continuing challenges this year presented, we're very proud of all that we've accomplished on behalf of our community, and we hope you enjoy this review of the past year. We're so very grateful for all of the many people who, directly or indirectly, contributed to our work this year. But most of all we're grateful for our patrons who inspire us to keep working and moving forward—THANK YOU!

**July 6  
2020**

The Library began accepting returns.

**July 16  
2020**

The Library began offering curbside pickup for reserved materials.

**Nov 4  
2020**

The Library opened by appointment. Patrons were allowed 30-minute sessions to browse the collections, use the computers or copier, and receive staff assistance. All seating, study, and play areas remained closed.

**Feb 4  
2021**

The Library received its Certificate of Occupancy from the Town of Old Lyme, marking the formal conclusion of the Building Renewal Project.

**May 14  
2021**

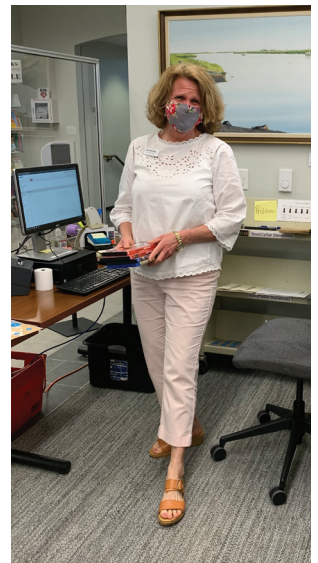
The Library officially ushered in the public, post-renovation & COVID-19, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and virtual tour.

**May 19  
2021**

The Library opened its doors for regular business hours (Monday-Thursday 9am-7pm, Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9am-2pm). Curbside pickup of Library materials continued to be offered for all. Seating areas opened.

**June 1  
2021**

The Library began accepting online reservations for its new Study Rooms. The new spaces proved to be very popular with 56 uses in the first month.



*"Our staff is incredible! They have sustained 'life long learning center' through a renovation & a pandemic always with a positive attitude. They enrich so many lives."*



# Children's Services

As part of its vision to be the community's hub for engagement, discovery, and creativity, the Library offers a wide array of programming and services for children. Plans for 2020–2021 were significantly impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but Children's Librarian Julie Bartley shifted gears and created a wide range of safe, educational, and fun events and activities for children in addition to rolling out several new literacy services. Here's a selection of what happened in 2020–2021:

***Walk a Mile in My Shoes—A Social Justice Book Club:*** These special activity kits highlight the lives of people who have helped bring positive change to our world. Participants watched a recorded reading of the story or checked out the book from the Library, completed a related activity, and then took a mile walk while talking about the book. The following 10 selections were completed 403 times by young patrons and their families:

*All Different Now: Juneteenth, The First Day Of Freedom*  
by Angela Johnson

*Magic Ramen: The Story Of Momofuku Ando* by Andrea Wang

*Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts

*Sewing Stories: Harriet Powers' Journey From Slave To Artist*  
by Barbara Herkert

*Counting On Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13*  
by Helaine Becker

*This Is The Rope: A Story From The Great Migration*  
by Jacqueline Woodson

*Kunkush: The True Story Of A Refugee Cat* by Meme Ventura

*Free As A Bird: The Story Of Malala* by Lina Maslow

*Nelson Mandela* by Kadir Nelson

*I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* by Debbie Levy

*"We listened to the book and then spent some wonderful time doing the craft together.*

*Thank you for providing these activities that have brought me together with the people I love. Until we can be together in person, this is great."*



Patron on her experience completing the Malala craft with her nieces and their grandfather—both residents of NJ—via Zoom

***Every Child Ready to Read Early Literacy Program:*** This early literacy training program from the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children is designed to educate parents and caregivers in the five practices to help children become ready to learn to read—Reading, Talking, Singing, Writing, & Playing. The program empowers parents as baby's first teachers and demonstrates ways that early literacy tips and pre-reading skills can easily be incorporated into everyday activities at home. In support of this initiative, Ms. Julie developed a pamphlet for parents and caregivers with tips and techniques they can use to develop pre-reading skills for their children and information on how the Library can help achieve these goals.

*pictured above: Mia & Ava display their Malala-inspired crafts*

**Lyme-Old Lyme Schools:** After an extended hiatus, Ms. Julie resumed story times at Center School in June 2021! For her first visit back, Ms. Julie read *Chicken Story Time* by Sandy Asher in keeping with the forthcoming Tails & Tales Summer Learning theme. Later that month, Ms. Julie and Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis attended the Mile Creek Pep rally to prepare kids for the summer. The event featured a motivational presentation about thinking big and making your dream come true by world renowned Disney artist Rob Surette.

**Lil' Book Bundles:** This new service features a set of three themed books that can be checked out together as a unit for Early Learners (ages birth to five). Families can also create their own "bundle." For Summer 2021, families with young children had the option to earn a sticker toward a Book Bundle Bubbles prize for each completed book bundle.

**Themed, Personalized Boxes:** In an effort to extend our book matching services to children at home last year, Ms. Julie offered several opportunities for children to receive a book box featuring hand-selected books and fun activities:

**Santa Paws—A Reading Gift Box to Share with Your Favorite Furry Friend:** Participants received a take-and-make gift box including a holiday gift ornament craft for their pet or stuffed animal and two Library picture books to read to their pet—real or stuffed.

**Roar & Read—Dino-vember:** Participants received a box containing two age-appropriate dinosaur books, tattoos, a sticker, and a dinosaur egg to hatch at home.

**Fun & Educational Programming:** Ms. Julie offered a wide variety of special virtual events and learning opportunities throughout the year. Highlights include:

**Virtual Story Times & Take-and-Make Kits:** In response to the ongoing pandemic, Ms. Julie continued offering virtual story times and take-and-make kits for children throughout the year. All told, she produced 19 themed presentations and kits this year that were used 711 times by children and their families!

**Busy Beavers:** This virtual program was offered in collaboration with the Old Lyme Land Trust. Participants learned about local beaver behaviors and habitats, heard a story about beavers, and completed a take-and-make craft activity.



**Bee Calm, Bee Kind:** This virtual program featured a reading of *Bee Calm: The Buzz on Yoga* by Frank J. Sileo; an instructional yoga video produced by Katie Ziskind, certified yoga instructor and licensed family therapist; and a take-and-make valentine bee craft to share with a friend.

**Happy Birthday, Phoebe! A Virtual Celebration:** On a snowy Thursday morning of school vacation week, 36 excited kids and caregivers gathered via Zoom to participate in a wonderfully interactive musical show provided by children's entertainer Matt Heaton. The kids danced, sang, and celebrated Phoebe's 224th birthday with contents from a kit available for curbside pickup.

*pictured left: Levi zooms in for Phoebe's Birthday Celebration*

*pictured right, top-bottom: Social Justice Bookclub Kits awaiting pickup, Shark Week display, Brandon Lee creating a chalk masterpiece, Dawn McCarthy visiting with Blu*



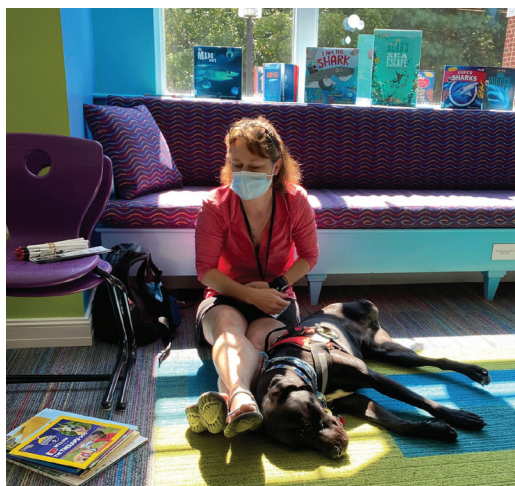
**Summer Learning 2021—Tails & Tales:** Planning for Summer 2021 was particularly complicated given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Julie worked with Library staff and the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools to develop a program that avoided the risks of gathering indoors while embracing a shift away from online learning and the stress of a very long and uncertain year. The resulting program emphasized fun experiences that could be completed virtually and/or in person and allowed for varied levels of family commitment on a week-by-week basis.



**Tails & Tales Theme:** This summer, participants read tales and learned about tails from all over the globe! In support of the state theme, the Library offered an 8-week program, each week highlighting a different animal habitat from around the world, including rain forests, forests at night, grasslands, rivers & lakes, the arctic, human homes, oceans, and farms. To help celebrate Tails & Tales, the Library teamed up with High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Center. Each week, the Library featured the “favorite books” of a High Hopes horse. Meanwhile, the Children’s Room was transformed into an animal wonderland full of horses, sea creatures, and more.



**Weekly Raffles:** Children earned chances to win by doing something fun at the Library such as checking out a book, participating in a program, or completing a take-and-make kit. Weekly winners were awarded an Old Lyme Ice Cream Shoppe gift card, and the Grand Prize Winner won an equestrian experience at High Hopes. The children loved this new format! They were very excited about the weekly raffles and had a blast filling out the tickets, which is made evident by the 667 tickets that were submitted during the 8-week program.



**Fun on the Lawn & at Home:** Each week, the Library hosted a special event highlighting an animal habitat. In keeping with COVID-19 protocols, programs occurred on the Library lawn, weather permitting, via Zoom, or on a drop-in basis to reduce in-person crowds. Highlights included: a drop-in Sasquatch Scavenger Hunt, Rainforest Yoga with Katie Ziskind on the lawn, Bring the Hoopla hula-hooping on the lawn, a virtual dance party with Mr. Matt of Turtle Dance Music, a drop-in Narwhal Party, and a drop-in reading event featuring furry friends Duke, Blu, and Nemo from Project Paws–The Tim Buckley Project.





# Tweens & Teens

Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis worked diligently throughout the year to engage, connect, and support middle and high school-aged community members, many of whom were grappling with feelings of isolation and powerlessness. Nike—with support from an amazing youth volunteer group and other staff members—created opportunities for youth to be creative and have fun, learn something new, and make a difference in the community. Here's a sampling of what happened in 2020–2021:

**Youth Volunteers:** A loyal group of tween and teen volunteers worked throughout the year to support Library services and one another. Volunteers connected remotely with one another and Nike from July to March, and everyone was thrilled to start meeting in person on a weekly basis in late spring 2021. Here's a sampling of their work:

**Lit Fuse:** This group of older teens met virtually throughout the fall to discuss and learn about global concepts of social justice and intersectionality with the purpose of deepening their understanding of the world and one another. The Library provided a safe space for these teens to support one another and engage in critical thinking and inquiry.

**Library Outreach & Support:** Volunteers worked diligently to spread the word about Library services by creating bookmarks, designing flyers, creating displays, and talking with their peers. The group also provided feedback—both formal and informal—in support of the Library's long-range planning process.

**Library Lawn Games & Activities:** Volunteers led the effort for this weekly, drop-in, outdoor event for tweens and teens this summer. In addition to playing games, participants engaged in conversation and activities such as making pronoun buttons to wear and share.

**Community Support & Feedback:** Volunteers provided support to the new Sustainable Lyme–Old Lyme Arts Programming initiative led by Cheryl Poirier and Liz Frankel. They invited their friends to complete a survey and attended an online round table to share their opinions about art programming. Then they worked with Nike to create take-and-make activities in support of Arts Programming throughout the summer.



*Shrinky Dink Earring Kit assembly*

**Special Events & Activities:** Nike created a wide variety of special opportunities for youth to engage with one another, discover something new, and be creative. Here's a sampling:

**Take-and-Makes:** Special kits were made available for curbside pickup throughout the year. These kits included everything necessary to engage in a creative project and learn something new. Many of the themes focused on current art trends and history and/or highlighted artists of historically marginalized communities. Participants were often encouraged to share the results with a loved one or an isolated member

of the community. All told, over 600 kits were produced and distributed to young people in the community. Selections included: Bookmarks for Incarcerated Youth, Block Printed Bandanas, Instant Author Kits, Photo Transfer Ornaments, Ugly Masks (with a follow-up contest), Shrinky Dink Earrings, Accordion Star Books, Lorna Simpson Inspired Collages, Hanging Art Mobiles, and Remix a Work of Art.

**Dinner, Dessert, and a Movie:** Nike teamed up with amazing 8th and 10th grade volunteers to bring a curated experience to teens. Participants filled out an online survey to express their interests and were able to pick up curbside a hand-selected kit featuring 2 movies, 2 books, and some easily prepared dinner and dessert. Thirty teens participated in this fun-filled activity kit before supplies ran out.

**Neighborly Notes:** In time for both Valentine's Day and Phoebe's birthday month, patrons were invited to make notes to share with homebound and other high-risk elders. Participants picked up art card kits featuring the art of Keith Haring. They then personalized the cards and returned them to the Library for distribution. The Lyme's Senior Center was instrumental in distributing the cards—both via mail and via the Meals on Wheels program. All told, 21 families—55 people ranging in age from 2 to 62—participated as makers, resulting in 175 cards received by 65 recipients.



*"[you've made it] \*\*so easy\*\* to try something new, to introduce an artist who has impacted our culture, and to provide love to our neighbors. Thank you thank you! Thanks again for doing so much for this community!"*

A mosaic of kindness note cards

**Doodle Workshop:** Tweens and Teens gathered on the Library lawn to engage in drawing exercises intended to lessen anxiety, boost confidence, and build problem-solving strategies. This workshop, presented by cartoonist Cara Bean, was provided in partnership with LYSB. All participants received a kit containing a drawing pen, a mechanical pencil, blank paper, a novelty eraser, and a mini booklet describing how to make mini books.

**READ.LEARN.EXPLORE! Summer Program:** Participants earned the chance to win a private movie night at the Phoebe with 4 of their closest friends, complete with pizza and Chocolate Shell gift cards. Participation was designed to be easy and fun—the program required no formal registration and was run on a drop-in basis. Over 30 teens in grades 6–12 joined in throughout the summer by submitting nearly 370 entries.

*"What a neat service. We just moved to town in November [...]. My daughter is a 6th grader and reads VORACIOUSLY. :)"*

*...Just picked ours up! 10/10!! "*

**Book Boxes:** A book box is a personalized selection of books featuring titles from the Library's exciting YA collection. Participants were invited to share their reading preferences through an online form on the Library's website and then pick up a curated box. To help spark interest, Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis and Circulation Assistant Kathy Sharp identified genres and themes including Black History & the Graphic Novel, Historical Fiction, Fantasy+, Mystery/Thriller, and Realistic Fiction. In the spring, Nike partnered with the Lyme–Old Lyme High School Spectrum Club to offer a special Spectrum Club



Presents! themed box. Thirty hand-selected book boxes have been prepared since the service rolled out in March, including boxes for adults and teachers!

***Lyme–Old Lyme Schools:*** The 2020–2021 school year presented many new challenges and uncertainties, but thanks to an awesome and engaged school staff, Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis was able to collaborate with the school community on several new and exciting initiatives:

***Designing Graphics to Share:*** Nike moderated this virtual panel presentation presented during the school day in partnership with the school career counselor. The presentation featured Juanita Austin, founder of Cultured AF, New London, CT and Andre Salkin, founder of @leftnortheast, Lyme-Old Lyme High School '20. The program was geared toward “anyone interested in visual art, research & writing, graphic design, social justice, and arts & culture work.” The panelists shared how they got started, their current projects, and how their design skills helped them accomplish their goals. Students from all four grades (9-12) attended as well as adults.

***Amnesty International Group:*** Nike partnered with the Lyme–Old Lyme High School Amnesty International Group to arrange a virtual visit from Students for Educational Justice. Students for Educational Justice (SEJ) is a youth-led, intergenerational, social justice organization based in New Haven, CT. Vy Tran, a college student and SEJ moderator, directed a open discussion on a variety of topics pertinent to students, including school counseling services, security guards, the stigma around mental health services—its origins and possible fixes—and basic needs. Tween/Teen Librarian Nike also discussed the ways in which the Library supports youth advocacy by providing information services and human resources for change-makers, a space to engage in continuous discussion and learning, and a place without the hierarchy and pressure that often can be part of students’ academic life.

***Library Card Sign-Ups:*** In support of a new world literature project, High School Librarian Lucy Trost worked with Nike to streamline the process for students to register for a PGN Library card.

*pictured left, top-bottom: Hanging mobile kit; a Book Box contents; Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis in the newly designed space; Bookmarks for incarcerated youth*

*pictured, right: Author David Handler with Katie Balocca and Katie Huffman*





# Adult Services

Similar to Children's and Tweens & Teens services, Adult Services staff embarked on yet another year unlike any other. Staff worked tirelessly to continue developing opportunities for adult patrons to engage in lifelong learning and connect with the greater Old Lyme community while keeping in mind COVID-19 protocols. 2020–2021 special projects and initiatives for adults include:

**Adults Events:** As part of its mission to inspire lifelong learning and discovery, Public Services Manager Linda Alexander and Development Assistant Katie Balocca worked to identify interesting and noteworthy programs to share with the community. Here's a sampling:

**It's All Local:** The Library hosted several Zoom seminars aimed to people interested in the region—its past and its future—including *The Hidden History of Old Lyme, Lyme, and East Lyme* with Jim Lamos & Michaelle Pearson, *Off the Rails: Connecticut's Transportation Future Post-COVID* with Jim Cameron, *Forgotten Voices: The Hidden History of a New England Meeting House* with Carolyn Wakeman, *Connecticut Chestnut Trees* with Jack Ostroff and Jack Swat, and *The Nut Museum: Visionary Art of Elizabeth Tashjian* with Christopher B. Steiner.

**Sustainable Old Lyme:** The Library hosted an assortment of educational programs in partnership with Sustainable Old Lyme, including *Your Carbon Footprint* with Alan Poirier, *Renewable Energy* with Bill McNamara, *Share the Beach* with Sean Roche, and *Nix the Knotweed* with Suzanne Thompson.

**Self Care:** In an effort to encourage self-care during the especially challenging 2020–2021 year, the Library offered a variety of programs via Zoom designed to facilitate peace and well-being, including a *3-Part Mindfulness Meditation Workshop* with Dr. Julie Liefeld, RN, LMFT, PhD, ERYT 500, *Self Care Workshop* with Life Coach Judy Faherty of Seventh Sister Yoga, *Boost Your Immunity* with Patricia Lynch, and *Kindness Cards* with Tracy Larson.

**Book Clubs:** Book clubs provide an excellent opportunity to connect with others and learn something new. In 2020–2021 the Library continued to host 2 monthly groups—*Phoebe's Book Chat*, a daytime group led by Linda Alexander, and *Contemporary Classics*, an evening group led by community member Marsha Bansavage. Both groups shifted seamlessly to Zoom for the year.

**Something Fun:** The Library provided several opportunities for residents to engage with one another and discover something new, including a Zoom *Hands-On Flower Arranging Workshop* with Mar Floral, *Voyaging with Marionette* with Ron Breault, and author talks with David Handler (*The Man Who Wasn't All There*) and Claire Griffin (*A Rebellious Woman*) on the new Library patio and lawn.



**Homebound Services:** Seeing a potential increase in need for Homebound Service, Access Services Manager Kristine Ferguson and Public Services Manager Linda Alexander worked to expand door-to-door delivery of Library materials. To accomplish this, they solicited the help of Lymes' Senior Center Director Stephanie Gould to identify residents in need.

**Community Partnerships:** As part of our vision to be a community hub and provide exceptional services throughout the Old Lyme community, Library staff actively participated in community initiatives and served in a variety of roles throughout the year. Here are a few examples of such work:

**Arts Economy Subcommittee/Economic Development Commission:** This newly formed subcommittee of the EDC worked to “build on the arts and culture traditions and local attractions in Old Lyme to create a unique destination.” Library support included attending meetings and suggesting ideas for the forthcoming *Explore Old Lyme* website. The Library also met with EDC chair Howard Margules to discuss ways the Library can help support economic development within the community—in particular, home-based businesses and remote workers.

**Kindness Committee:** The Town of Old Lyme Kindness Committee worked “to make kindness the norm in our homes, schools, and workplaces.” Library support included attending meetings and supporting kindness-generating events and activities.

**Old Lyme Arts District:** The Library worked with partners of the district to promote opportunities to enjoy and take part in the cultural arts and learning available on historic Lyme Street. While the Midsummer Festival was canceled due to COVID-19, the group hosted a variety of small group activities all along Lyme Street, including Make Music Day in June and events in support of the Lyme Art Association's Centennial Celebration.

**Lyme Academy of Fine Arts:** Representatives from the Academy and the Library met throughout the year to explore ways the two organizations could collaborate to better serve the Old Lyme community.

**Public Art for Racial Justice Education (PARJE):** Library staff met with PARJE representatives to identify ways to partner in the year ahead.

**Pollinator Pathways/Sustainable Old Lyme:** Various Library staff worked with representatives from this group to provide support for the new initiatives (see previous Adult Events, Tween/Teens, and Native Gardens for more details).

**Old Lyme Witness Stones Project:** This project's goal is to expand the understanding of local history and honor the humanity and the contributions of those formerly enslaved in the historic Lyme community. The Library was deeply humbled to serve as a founding partner of this initiative led by Carolyn Wakeman in conjunction with The Florence Griswold Museum, The Congregational Church of Old Lyme, and Lyme–Old Lyme Schools. Library support included:

**Interpretive Sign:** A permanent interpretive sign was installed at the Library lawn near Lyme Street. This sign provides a map of the Lyme Street enslavement sites.

**Witness Stones Old Lyme Website:** This new website, providing information about the project and additional research opportunities, was designed and hosted by the Library.



***Witness Stones Installation Ceremony:*** On Friday, June 4th, the Library hosted the Witness Stones Installation Ceremony on the new patio and lawn. The Ceremony served to honor the newly installed historical plaques commemorating the lives of fourteen individuals who were once enslaved on Lyme Street. Members of the Old Lyme community gathered on the lawn to honor Cato, Lewis Lewia, Humphrey, Caesar, Jack Howard, Jenny Freeman, Luce, Crusa, Nancy Freeman, Temperance Still, Jane, Pompey Freeman, Samuel Freeman, and Arabella. The program included music from world-

renowned soprano Lisa Williamson and members of the Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School chorus; poetry from distinguished Connecticut poets Antoinette Brim-Bell, Marilyn Nelson, and Rhonda Ward and seventh-grade students; and remarks from community partners and representatives.

## Behind the Scenes

In addition to providing direct service to Library patrons, staff stayed busy behind the scenes throughout the year. Ongoing tasks included ordering and cataloging books and media, preparing and organizing publicity materials, ordering supplies, overseeing building maintenance, and much more. Special projects of note for the 2020–2021 year include:

***Post-Renovation Clean Up:*** The construction may have ended in July 2020, but the work didn't end there. All staff pitched in to put the Library back in order post-renovation. Administrative Assistant Evelyn Morgen worked tirelessly on organizing supply cabinets and Library records, Public Services Manager Linda Alexander re-shelved and reorganized the Genealogy Room, Access Services Manager Kristine Ferguson shifted Adult Collections, Children's Librarian Julie Bartley shelved and arranged the Picture Book Collections, Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis organized the Young Adult Room and Collections, Reference & Tech Librarian Jessica Steding reinstalled all public technology, Library Director Katie Huffman designed and installed new signs, and Development Assistant Katie Balocca, Circulation Assistants Kathy Sharp and Mary Talbot, and Substitute Librarian Katy Klarnet all pitched in to organize office space, service desks, and supply closets as needed.

***New Online Reservation System:*** Reference & Tech Librarian Jessica Steding worked to install and implement a new, easier-to-use Library calendar and registration system. Patrons can sign up for Library events, reserve a museum pass, book study rooms, and schedule a passport appointment via this new online, self-service system available on the Library's website.



# Spreading Kindness

The 2020–2021 year was difficult for everyone, including Library staff. In an effort to help spread cheer and kindness during this difficult time, staff planned a variety of giveaways for Library patrons of all ages. Cheer inducing and self-care giveaways included:

**Houseplant Giveaway:** Access Services Manager Kristine Ferguson worked with Development Assistant Katie Balocca, Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis and teen volunteers, and Friends of the Library/Duck River Garden Club volunteer Eleanor Hufford to present the first annual Houseplant Giveaway. Over 100 cuttings and plants were offered to community members along with care instructions thanks to this collaborative effort.

**Magical Reindeer Food:** Children's Librarian Julie Bartley created sachets of this annually offered reindeer treat featuring oats to lure hungry reindeer and glitter to attract their gaze while they fly through the night sky.

**Stress Relief Kits:** 60 goodie bags containing chocolate and bubble wrap were bundled and distributed by Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis and teen volunteers in support of LYSB's Fall Unplugged Weekend.

**Brighten Your Day:** Access Services Manager Kristine Ferguson, with assistance from other staff, personally cut and arranged flowers from her own garden, the Library, and other staff gardens to spread cheer to visiting patrons. All told, over 140 bundles of flowers were distributed, including lilac branches, spray rose bouquets, zinnia stems, and daffodils.

**Spice Explorers:** Tween/Teen Librarian Nike Desis and teen volunteers offered participants a pathway into a culinary adventure with these prepared spice kits containing cumin, nutmeg, oregano, fun facts, and simple recipes in support of LYSB's 2nd Unplugged Weekend.

*"Just wanted to say how touching it was to see the Spice Explorer Kits outside the front door (and then to take them home and use them!). What a brilliant way to make connections with your public! So endearing and clever! Thank you! "*



# Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library is an all-volunteer organization devoted to strengthening the partnership between the Library and our community through support, volunteerism, and advocacy. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for the Friends—like the Library, the BookCellar remained closed for much of the year—but thanks to the amazing efforts of many, the Friends were able to lend financial and volunteer support throughout the 2020–2021 year. Here's a sampling of Friends' activity from this past year:

***Friends Council:*** The Friends Council met regularly via Zoom throughout the year to discuss future plans of support, including an Annual Meeting in June 2021 to share the year's accomplishments and begin planning for 2021–2022. While the Hospitality Committee was relatively inactive due to the pandemic, the Garden Friends continued to work with the Board of Trustees to plan for the new native garden (see Board of Trustees for more details), and the BookCellar volunteers were thrilled to get back into the building.

***Phoebe's BookCellar:*** After a pandemic-necessitated closure, the BookCellar reopened its doors in November 2020. Prior to reopening, a small group of volunteers worked to organize the sales space and the back office. The new paint, lighting and floor as well as new shelving and reorganized space have all contributed to a huge improvement and many complements from customers and volunteers. Sales during the year totaled nearly \$15,000. In addition to offering regular weekly hours, the BookCellar volunteers provided special events and services throughout the year, including:

***Pop Up Outdoor Sales:*** Volunteers hosted 2 outdoor sales in November 2020 in support of LYSB's Unplugged Weekend and Small Business Saturday.

***Shoreline Soup Kitchen:*** BookCellar volunteers created over 100 bundles of books for children ages 0-18 receiving Food Pantry services. Each bundle contained 3 books and a Kindness bookmark created by the Old Lyme Kindness Committee.

***Summer Stock Up Sale:*** In late June, volunteers hosted a huge outdoor sale featuring live music from the Music Now Foundation and refreshments provided by the Friends' Hospitality Committee.

***Teacher Appreciation:*** The BookCellar distributed coupons to all Lyme–Old Lyme teachers for a free paperback, DVD or CD as a thank you for all they did to keep the schools open and safe during the pandemic.

***Financial Support:*** The Friends of the Library donated nearly \$10,000 to the Library in 2020–2021. These funds directly support patron services, including books and ebooks, museum passes, online learning tools, and programs.



*Friends of the Library's BookCellar Sale on the Lawn*



# Board of Trustees

The 17 volunteer members of the 2020-2021 Board of Trustees worked with one another and Library staff throughout the year in structured committees to help support the Library, provide governance, and plan for the future. Select 2020-2021 accomplishments include:

## ***Building Renovation Committee***

Committee Members: Ken Biega, Chair; Lynn Fairfield-Sonn, Community Member; David Stanland, Community Member; Kirsten Sicuranza, President of the Board; Russell Fogg, Community Member; Anna Reiter, Old Lyme Liaison/Community Member; Michaelle Pearson, Community Member, and Katie Huffman, Director.

After many years of planning and work, the Building Committee completed the Renewal Project in 2021! On May 14, 2021, Board President Kirsten Sicuranza, Building Committee Chair Ken Biega, and Library Director Katie Huffman officially ushered in the public, post-renovation & COVID-19, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and virtual tour. As of August 30, 2021, \$3,007,718 of the \$3,050,000 budget had been expended to date. The remaining \$42,282 has been earmarked for items that were removed during the design phase for budget issues: exterior lighting, revised entrance to Book Cellar (door & awning), miscellaneous furniture/equipment, and an exterior sign. Additional work on the grounds and native garden will be completed in 2022 by the Building & Grounds and Garden Committees.

## ***Development Committee***

Committee Members: Patrick Gingras and Skip Sibley, Co-Chairs; Board Members Mary Dangremond, Suki Fader, Wen He, Sondra Griswold, Kirsten Sicuranza, and Roger Smith; and Staff Members Katie Balocca, Evelyn Morgen, and Katie Huffman.

Thanks to the amazing generosity of the community—both individual donors and business sponsors—and the hard work of committee members, the Library raised \$151,405 in direct support of the Library's 2020–2021 operating budget. Due to the ongoing pandemic, plans for a Library Gala were postponed.

## ***Equality Team***

Team Members: Board Member Markus Warlitz and Library Director Katie Huffman, Co-Chairs; Staff Members Linda Alexander, Katie Balocca, Julie Bartley, Nike Desis, and Evelyn Morgen; and Board Members Jane Cable, Mary Dangremond, Barbara Hack, Kirsten Sicuranza, Roger Smith, and Skip Sibley.

This group, dedicated to exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to the Library and the Old Lyme community, met monthly throughout the year to explore this complex topic and plan for the future. Specific accomplishments include: the publishing of a public statement in support of sustainable, long-term progress towards equality, inclusivity, and justice at the Library and in our community in fall 2020; engagement with a wide array of continuing education and training for board and staff members; and the purposeful development of public programming and Library collections and services in support of diversity.

*pictured right, L-R: New garden space; Rain Barrel donated by the Old Lyme Food Share Garden and painted by Connie Pan; Garden Committee members Sondra Griswold, Kirsten Sicuranza, and Diana Drake*



## Finance Committee

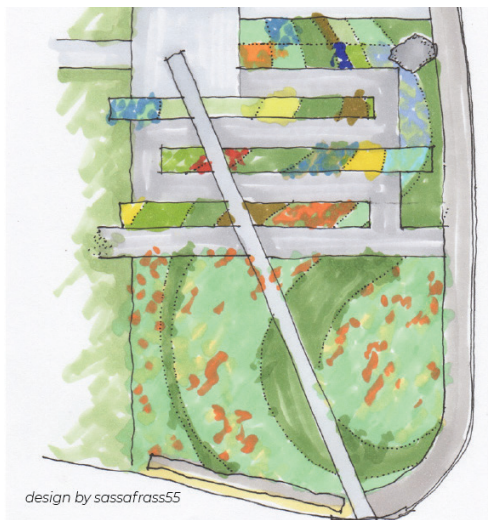
Committee Members: Thomas Britt, Chair; Board Members Jane Cable, Patrick Gingras, Kirsten Sicuranza, Roger Smith, and Markus Warlitz; Community Members Lynn G. Fairfield-Sonn, Ned Perkins, and David Stanland; and Library Director Katie Huffman.

The Finance Committee met regularly throughout the year to manage the Library's endowment investments and oversee the annual operating budget. In addition, the committee rewrote the Library's Investment Policy Statement—it was approved by the Board in April 2021—and developed a long-term plan to reduce the withdrawal rate from the endowment from 5.5% to 4.5% over the next several years while supporting the expansion and development of Library services.

## Long-Range Planning Committee

Committee Members: Markus Warlitz, Chair; Board Members Jamie Alpha, Thomas Britt, Patrick Gingras, Blair McBeth, Skip Sibley, and Kirsten Sicuranza; Staff Members Julie Bartley, Nike Desis, Kristine Ferguson, Katie Huffman, and Jess Steding; and Community Members David Stanland and Alan Poirer

After a 2-year renovation and pandemic-induced hiatus, the planning committee resumed regular meetings via Zoom in fall 2020. The committee developed plans to navigate the completion of a new long-range plan—anticipated fall 2022—and began the planning process by reviewing community feedback, evaluating accomplishments from the previous long-range plan, and completing exercises from the *Aspen Action Guide: Re-Envisioning Your Public Library 2.0*, a planning tool developed by The Aspen Institute to provide Library and community leaders a set of resources for Library specific strategic planning.



## Garden Committee

Committee Members: Board Member Sondra Griswold and Garden Friends Chair Eleanor Hufford, Co-Chairs; Board President Kirsten Sicuranza; Community Member/Landscape Designer Diana Drake; and Library Director Katie Huffman

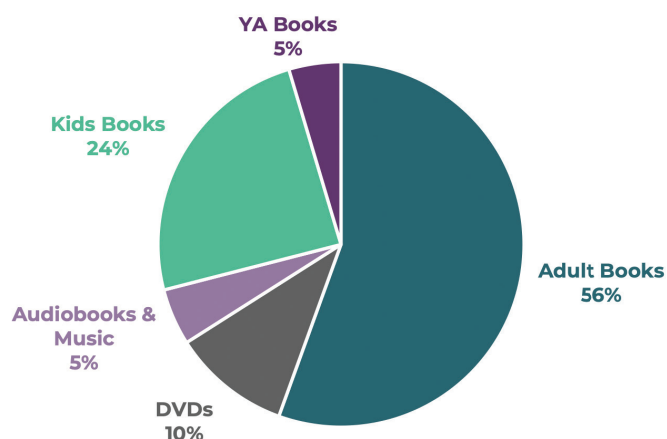
Committee members continued to oversee the planning and design of an educational and commemorative native garden. Accomplishments in 2020–2021 include the installation of commemorative paver walkways, the development of an updated garden design in light of budget limitations, the planting of native shrubs and plants near the patio, the planting and upkeep of a temporary native meadow, and the development of community educational materials.



# By the Numbers: SERVICES

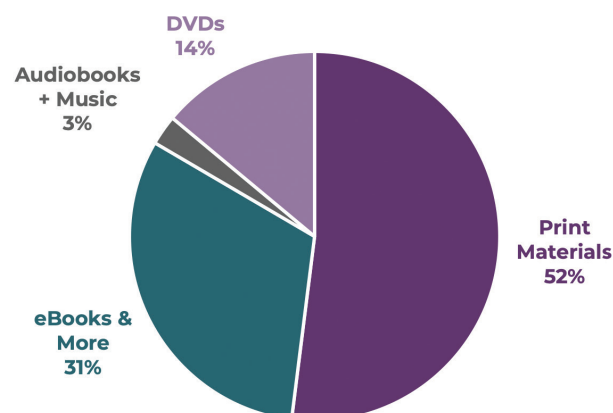
## Physical Collections

40,000+ print items & media items available for use



## Use of Collections

Nearly 46,000 items were checked out by patrons

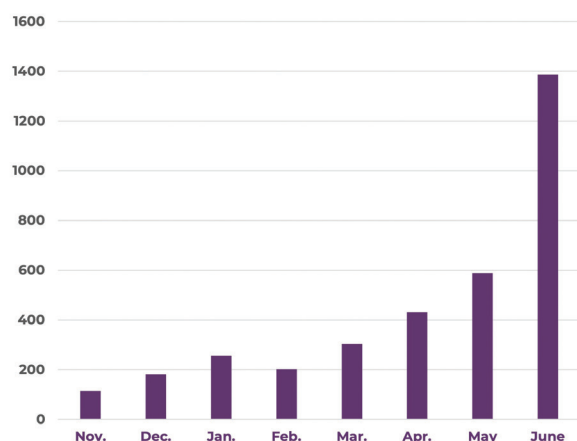


## Digital Collections

- Over 15,000 ebooks
- Over 6,000 downloadable audiobooks
- Nearly 4,000 online magazines
- 45 online databases & tools

## Visitors

Visits were significantly reduced due to the ongoing pandemic. The building was closed to the public July–October, but patrons began using the Library more as vaccines became available and restrictions eased.



## Children's Events

- Patrons viewed 29 on-demand Children's events over 2,000 times
- 143 patrons attended 6 in-person events
- 48 patrons attended 4 live, virtual events

## Tween & Teen Events

- Patrons viewed 2 on-demand events 163 times
- 108 patrons attended 8 in-person events
- 55 patrons attended 5 live, virtual events

## Adult Events

- 778 patrons attended 41 live, virtual events
- 142 patrons attended 2 in-person events

## Take-and-Makes & More

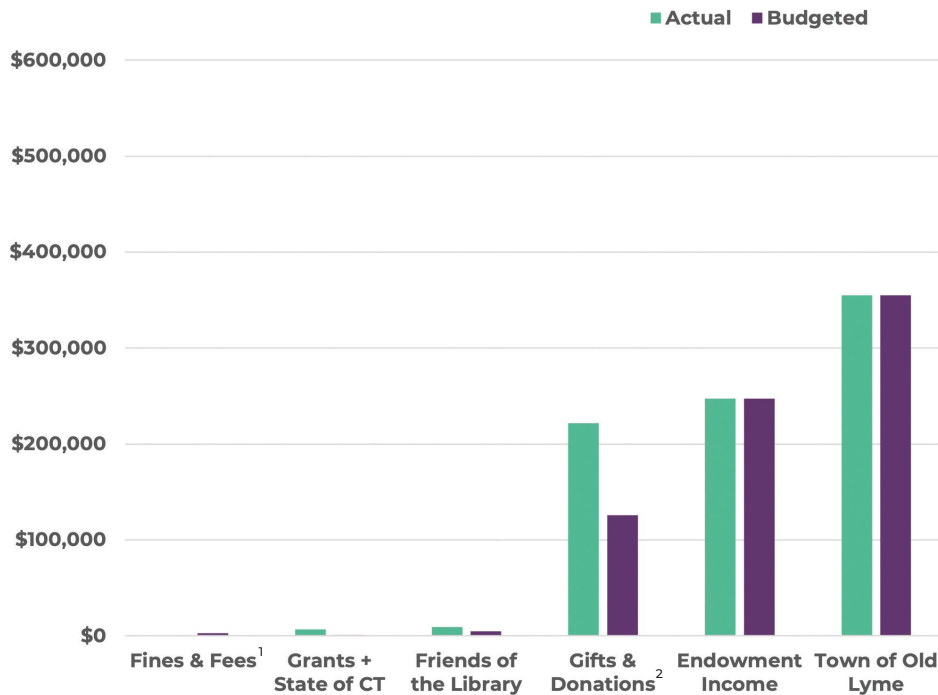
- 1,682 participants participated in 49 unique take-and-make and other self-directed activities.

## Website

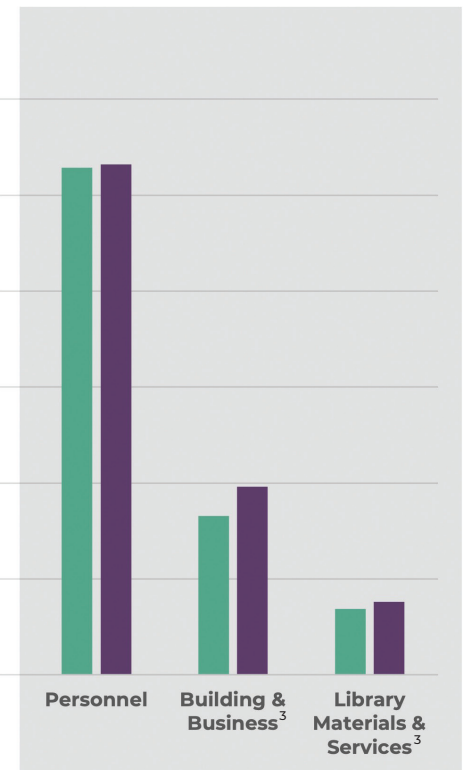
The Library's website was visited nearly 27,000 times (43,000+ page views).

# BY THE NUMBERS: FINANCES

## Operating Income 2020–2021



## Operating Expense 2020–2021



<sup>1</sup> Permanently eliminated Library fines as of July 1, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Actual includes DiCorletto legacy gift (to be invested in Endowment)

<sup>3</sup> Actual reduced due to ongoing COVID-19 closures.

## Endowed Funds Report

The Library Endowment was established in 1899 with \$10,000 in gifts from the Ludington & Noyes families. Over the course of the 20th century, additional funds were contributed by Old Lyme residents committed to supporting the long-term success of the Library. Today, the funds comprise a variety of investments; some are restricted funds, designated to be spent on particular categories of books, materials, & services, while some are unrestricted and are used to cover a portion of annual personnel and building expenses. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, withdrawals from the Endowment represented 34% of the Library's total operating budgeted income.<sup>4</sup> During the fiscal year, the Endowment investments generated a return of 23.54%.

<sup>4</sup>Endowment withdrawals represented 30% of actual income.





# 2020–2021 Honor Roll

We are grateful to acknowledge all those who supported the Library.

Anonymous (64)  
Pat & Don Abraham  
Marie Abraham  
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Jamie & Curt Alpha\*  
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The Balocca Family  
Marsha, William &  
Brendan Bansavage  
Matthew Barrett &  
Elizabeth Hamilton  
Susan & Stephen Bates  
Matthew A. Baxter  
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Sue & John Beatty  
Jim & Janet Bechtel  
Tom & Judy Beers  
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Behringer  
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In Honor of Bernice Carney  
by Sharan Carney  
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We are grateful to acknowledge these businesses that have partnered with and provided support to the Library.

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Quality • Reliability • 24 Hour Service

**Suisman Shapiro**  
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ABM Business Systems LLC

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## HONOR ROLL, cont'd

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Gretchen Stanland  
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Keith & Tracey Sutherland  
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Lynne & Ric Zimmerman\*  
Mrs. Zito's 1st Grade Class of 2020  
Barbara L. Zuccardy

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We are grateful to acknowledge these companies that have matched donations to the Library

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EVERSOURCE  
Network for Good  
Pfizer Foundation  
Rockefeller Financial Services



# In Memoriam

We are honored to help remember these loved ones.

*In memory of Brenda Baker*  
Sheldon Baker

*In memory of Gene Bekaert*  
Marc & Nancy Bazilian

*In memory of Joanne Bishop*  
Pat & Gary Bieniewicz

*In loving memory of Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr*  
Chris & Jackie Zendan,  
Anthony & Carol DiCorleto

*In loving memory of Gladys Feigenbaum*  
with love, Fenmore Feigenbaum & Family

*In memory of Martin Finneran*  
Anne Marie Finneran

*In memory of the beloved mother, grandmother &  
wife of the Frasier Family*  
Marc & Nancy Bazilian

*In memory of Richard Hinman*  
The Hinman Family

*In loving memory of Helen G. Ingle*  
Her five children

*In memory of Robert A. Martin*  
Susan Handy

*In memory of Richard M. Ryan "Riley"*  
Richard & Marie Ryan

*In memory of Richard Sagan*  
Betty Sagan

*In memory of Joe Sapia*  
Shirley Sapia

*In memory of Bill & Virginia Stewart*  
Ian & Janice Stewart

*In loving memory of Etta & Arthur Todd*  
Eve Todd

## REMEMBERING NICHOLAS "NICKY" J. DICORLETO JR.

On Friday, April 30, members of the Library Staff & Board met with the family of Nicholas DiCorleto to pay tribute to Mr. DiCorleto's legacy to the Library. Mr. DiCorleto passed away peacefully on April 30, 2019 at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford. The DiCorleto family were longtime residents of Old Lyme, having owned properties in the Old Colony Beach Association since the 1940's, and were longtime patrons of the Library. The Library Staff & Board are sincerely grateful for Mr. DiCorleto's generosity and honored to help remember his legacy for generations to come.

*pictured L-R: Katie Huffman (Director), Kirsten Sicuranza (Board President), Chris Zendan (Es-*



*tate Executor/Nephew)*

*The 2020–2021 Annual Report  
was produced and designed  
by Library staff.*

