

ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Report for the year ended
December 31, 2017

Published March 12, 2018
Piscataway Public Library



PISCATAWAY
public library

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Library Usage by the Numbers 4

Public Events 5

Outreach 8

Services Launched 8

Grants Awarded 9

Volunteers 9

Staff Recognition 10

Executive Summary

2017 was another vibrant and dynamic year for Piscataway Public Library, full of rich experiences, achievements, and transitions. The two branches (John F. Kennedy Library and Johanna W. Westergard Library) continued to serve as hubs of community activity and learning with more than 270,000 in-person visits, 240,000 books and other materials borrowed by residents, 90,000 visits to the Library's website, and 16,000 attendees at Library-sponsored programs.

The Library provided a variety of both new and traditional programs for residents, with a focus on literacy, arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), building community, and celebrating diversity. Some of the most popular and engaging programs this year were ESL and citizenship classes for new Americans, summer STEM camps for students in grades K-12, and story time programs for small children and their caregivers.

Piscataway is a caring and richly diverse community that continues to respond to all-ages programming that provides charitable service opportunities and events to celebrate unique cultural experiences. The Library's Teen Services Department responded to students and parents seeking academic support opportunities by creating the STAR Homework Club for Middle and High School students, as well as providing access to online homework help for K-12 students. Initiated by the Diversity Committee, the Library became an active member of Welcoming America, a national network of inclusive communities, and hosted a very successful International Arts Open House.

The Library greatly expanded opportunities for Piscataway residents by applying for and receiving grants in excess of \$16,000 from local and national corporations, foundations, and grant-making organizations. This funding made possible a variety of additional programs and services for residents of all ages. Several staff members were acknowledged for their outstanding work and commitment at the state and national level, a trend that has continued for several years.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all the people who support the Library, particularly the Township of Piscataway, the Friends of Piscataway Public Library, private donors, a dedicated and engaged staff, and the Board of Trustees.

M. Allen McGinley, Interim Director

Library Usage by the Numbers



274,754

in-person visits to
the library



92,724

visits to the
library's website



247,618

materials borrowed
from the library



20,511

eBooks, eAudio Books,
and other eContent

1,117

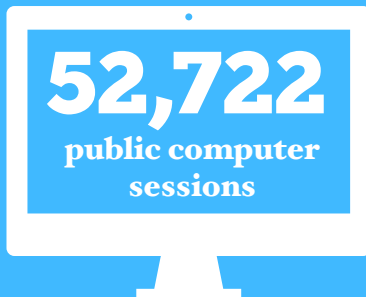
public events
at the library



*with a total
attendance
of*



16,216



52,722
public computer
sessions

109,508



pages
printed

WiFi
sessions



58,972



3,278

total volunteer hours were
donated by over 200 volunteers

grant funding
received in
excess of



\$16,000

Public Events

Programs continued to be a major draw for Piscataway residents looking for both educational and entertaining experiences. Over **16,000** people attended public events for children, teenagers, and adults at the Kennedy and Westergard Branches. Library programs provide free opportunities for residents to learn, broaden their horizons, and build relationships with others in the community. Below are some programming highlights from 2017.



Literacy

In 2017, the Library launched its first ever year-long **Adult Reading Challenge**. Using different monthly themes, this program challenged participants to read books from a wide variety of different genres. The result was 63 participants reading roughly 200 eligible books!

With a focus on the theme of *Build a Better World*, the Library's 2017 **Summer Reading Program** for children had *710 registered participants*, reading a total of *12,201 days* during the summer. And the annual Summer Reading Carnival had over 850 attendees!

There continues to be a strong demand for **early childhood literacy programs** at both locations. In a typical week, we offer six story time programs (*Rhyme Time*, *Bedtime Rhyme Time*, *Tot Time*, *Twilight Tales*, and *Once Upon a Story*) for children between the ages of six months and five years. Other literacy programs include *Tales for Tails* therapy dog program (grades K-5); *Lunch with the Librarian* program (ages 4 year and older); and a book club, *ChapterCats* (grades 3-5), which began meeting in August 2017.

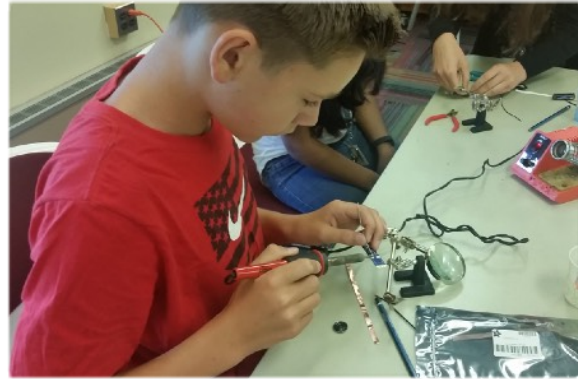
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

The Library increased STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) programming for children in grades 1-8 in 2017, including the addition of workshops for **Scratch**, **Python**, and **Java** programming languages. The newest addition to our monthly STEM schedule is **Homeschool Tinker Takeover** (ages 6-14 years). Some of the Library's most popular monthly STEM programs for children continue to be **Lego Club** (grades K-5), **Budding Builders** (grades K-5), **YELL** (grades 2-8), and **Crazy Concoctions** (grades K-5).



For the second consecutive year, library staff collaborated with Piscataway resident George Tsacnaris to plan and host the **Build It Better Design Challenge**. This program, open to Piscataway High School students, is a one-day startup competition designed as a bridge experience in the areas of STEM and entrepreneurship. The goal of the competition is to present teams of participants with the challenge to design, build, test, and market a product for the consumer market. STEM continues to play a major role in the Library's summer

programming opportunities for school-age youth. The summer of 2017 featured **TinkerCamp** (grades K-5), the **Teen Maker Institute** (grades 6-12), and **Maker Lab** (grades 5-12). These three programs combined offered 30 total sessions with a total attendance of 365! Participants in these programs completed complex projects ranging from building birdhouses and terrariums to coding with micro-controllers.



A student solders a resistor to a circuit board during a summer STEM workshop for teens

Arts

This past year, the library rounded out its annual NJ Makers Day celebration with a **Local Makers Market**, featuring handmade creations from Piscataway residents. This event supported local small businesses and provided free networking and selling opportunities. Local makers were given the opportunity to register for a table at no cost to



sell handmade crafts, including pillows, baby clothes and bibs, dream-catchers, and much more! Many of the two dozen participating vendors were newly established businesses or individuals who had few to no other avenues through which to make connections with their community. The event attracted resident shoppers as well as others interested in learning more about starting a business or creating and selling handmade products.

From the Madonnas of Raphael to the splatter paintings of Jackson Pollock, 2017 was a thrilling year for **Art Talks** at Piscataway Public Library. We basked

in the beauty of feminist icon Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings and debated Vermeer's controversial use of technology in his paintings of light.

The Library was also host to a wide variety of **art exhibitions** during 2017. We showcased New Jersey landscapes influenced by Impressionism, calligraphy in the languages of East Asia, Surrealist caricatures of Coney Island, a motley collection of art done by gifted high school students, and a multimedia display commemorating the centennial of the First World War.

In addition to these engaging programs for adults, we also maintain our commitment to providing art programming to nurture creativity in children of all ages. This year we



offered monthly **drop-in craft** programs and a bi-monthly **Art for Kids** program (grades K-5) as well as several special events including **pumpkin painting** and **cupcake decorating**.

Community

The Library continued its efforts in 2017 to help central New Jersey maintain a healthy blood supply, by hosting six **blood drives** at the Kennedy Branch. Thanks to the tremendous generosity of Piscataway donors, **205** blood units were collected, saving *countless* lives!

In the spring of 2017, the Library invited service agencies and nonprofit organizations from the Piscataway area to the Kennedy Branch for the first ever **Volunteer Fair**. This well attended



event provided residents with the opportunity to talk to representatives from local organizations and learn more about volunteer opportunities.

Over 400 residents attended our **3rd annual New Jersey Makers Day** event which hosted hands-on making and learning experiences. Highlights included an outdoor drone racing exhibition, and an appearance by *Blacksmith* from the ABC television program *Battlebots*.

In May of 2017, the Library teamed up with the *Piscataway Rotary Club* and *Community Hope* to host the town's first ever **Memorial Day Family Event** at Quibbletown Park. The free event featured a commemoration to veterans, and families were invited to enjoy children's stories, an inflatable bounce-house, face painting, and to create Memorial Day themed crafts. This collaborative event was the direct result of feedback that Library staff received from a series of community conversations.

Celebrating Diversity

During 2017 Piscataway Public Library offered a variety of programs for New Americans, including **basic English, conversational English, and citizenship** classes. As an active member of the *Welcoming America* organization, the Library celebrated Welcome Week with an **International Arts Open House**.

Community members shared their culture's music, art and dance with each other in an atmosphere of friendship and respect. The Library's **Diversity Committee** also celebrated Chinese New Year, Diwali, and many other world holidays with events for all ages.



Daniel Simon, and his wife Lanny Tanto, who both participated in ESL classes

Outreach

In addition to the many programs and services we offer within the walls of our physical library locations, we also continue to go out into the Piscataway community to visit residents of all ages at schools and a variety of community festivals and events.

The Children's and Teen Services librarians visit local schools to promote literacy and library services to students through **book talks, story times, library card sign-up drives** and other special events. This year, the Children's Department performed 108 outreach activities with 2,308



students at *Arbor Intermediate School, Grandview Elementary School, Knollwood Elementary School, Eisenhower Elementary School, Randolphville Elementary School, and Martin Luther King Intermediate School*. Similarly, the Teen Services Department visited *Conackamack Middle School, Quibbletown Middle School, Schor Middle School, and Piscataway High School* multiple times each throughout the school year to tell students about books and other library services and sign students up for library cards.

Early childhood literacy skills are vital to young children, so the Children's Department performed **89** class visits with **2,392** students at pre-schools and daycare programs in Piscataway Township, including *Children's Corner by the River, Children's Corner by the Pond, Bright Beginnings, The Goddard School, An-Noor Academy, KinderCare Learning Center, Lake Nelson Adventist Academy, The Learning Experience, Kingdom Kids, Kinder College, Big Hugs Childcare & Development, Start-Rite Nursery School and Kindergarten, Rutgers Livingston Daycare, and Greenhouse Nursery*.

In 2017, the Library continued to have a friendly and engaging presence at community events including the **Piscataway Street Fair, Rutgers Day, and National Night Out**.

Services Launched

In the spring of 2017, the User Services department launched a **tool lending** service that gives Piscataway Library cardholders onsite access to new items such as bike locks and universal mobile device chargers. These services were created in response to community requests, and were so popular in 2017, that the Library plans to expand the program to include universal laptop chargers in 2018.

The Teen Services Department kicked off the school year in the fall of 2017 by launching a new after-school program called the **STAR Homework Club**. Coordinated and staffed by librarians in the Teen Services Department, this program



provides structured time for Piscataway students in grades 6-12 to complete homework after school in the teen spaces at the Kennedy and Westergard Libraries. The goal of STAR is to provide students with the necessary time, space, and resources to excel in school, and also to supplement their traditional education with outside-of-school learning.

To support this new after-school program and help ensure the educational success of Piscataway students, the Library also added a new online resource called **Brainfuse**. This resource, which is available at the Library and from home on computers and mobile devices, gives students access to live tutoring from certified teachers and self-paced learning modules in a variety of academic subjects.

Librarians in the Teen Services Department also incorporated programming into STAR Homework Club, including study break crafts and a new program called **Talk It Out Thursday**. Talk It Out has utilized a partnership with the *Piscataway Township Domestic Violence Crisis Intervention Team* to facilitate discussions with teens on a variety of topics from tolerance and respect to bullying and dating violence.

Grants Awarded

- *Sparkfun Community Grant* in the amount of **\$500** to fund STEM kits and supplies for MiY and Teen Services
- *Cognizant “Making the Future” Grant* in the amount of **\$9,000** to fund the Teen Maker Institute, a summer STEM camp for students in grades 6-12
- *PSEG Sparks Grant* in the amount of **\$2,500** to fund TinkerCamp, a summer STEM camp for students in grades K-5
- *Walmart Community Grant* in the amount of **\$1,000** to support the STAR Homework Club
- *Vernon Library Supplies Grant* in the amount of **\$1,000** to support ESL programming
- *World War I and America* grant from the *National Endowment for the Humanities* in the amount of **\$1,500** to fund programming to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the US involvement in the war
- *Middlesex County Art Minigrant* in the amount of **\$1,350** for Art-in-the-Round, a series of open art demonstrations/workshops

Volunteers

The tremendous generosity of the Piscataway community continued to have a significant impact in 2017 on volunteer service at the Library. The User Services Department has seen a steady increase in the number of adult volunteers in the past two years, with the number of hours increasing by over **161%** from 2016 to 2018.

Teen volunteers were an integral part of programming for the Children’s Department in 2017,



assisting with the **Summer Reading Club**, and preparing materials for other ongoing programs. These volunteers also helped keep the shelves organized during the school year in the Children's Department. In total, the Children's Department solicited **193** volunteers who donated over **1,852** hours! Teen volunteers also played a role in the Teen Services Department, with **29** teens volunteering for a total of **147** hours. These students committed their time to the **Teen Advisory Board (TAB)**, the **Teens Teach** program, and serving as advisors for the **STAR Homework Club**.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of Piscataway Public Library continued to be stalwart library supporters in 2017. This all-volunteer group provided the Library with donations to support library programs and community outreach totaling **\$4947.54**. The support of this 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in fundraising and promoting library resources in the community is absolutely critical to the work of the Library.

Staff Recognition



Our Library staff are often recognized for their achievements at the local, state, and national level, and 2017 was no exception. **Doug Baldwin**, Head of Technology, was named a 2017 *Mover and Shaker* by the national publication *Library Journal* for his role as a STEM advocate. Not only has Doug coordinated all-ages STEM programming in Piscataway through the Library's makerspace, but he has been a leader in the development of statewide STEM educational opportunities as a co-founder and current president of the nonprofit organization *New Jersey Makers Day*.

Mo Donohue, Teen Services Librarian, was the 2017 recipient of the New Jersey Library Association *President's Award* for her extraordinary commitment to school librarians in New Jersey. Mo helped develop the first full census of school librarians in New Jersey since 2008, and demonstrated tremendous leadership on the NJLA Task Force on School Libraries. Mo received this prestigious honor at the 2017 NJLA Conference in Atlantic City.

