

# The Heart *of the* Community



## The Ferguson Library

ANNUAL REPORT 2010 – 2011

# Message from the Chair

The Ferguson Library is an exciting place these days. Many good things are happening here. We have embarked on a successful fundraising effort and launched new community partnerships. At the same time, we continue to provide the core services that our users need and depend upon.

We opened our doors in May for *Eat Play Read*, an evening of food, spirits and jazz to benefit the Library. It was the first time many of our guests had seen the Main Library since its renovation, and the event was a celebration as well as a fundraiser. We were honored that both Governor Malloy and Mayor Pavia were able to join us that evening. While our need for robust municipal support has not diminished, we are working hard to develop an innovative and sustainable fundraising program, which will help us defray the cost of providing essential library services to the community.

The Ferguson has always enjoyed strong support from the Stamford business community, and this year, we were delighted to announce a new partnership with our neighbor, Purdue Pharma. Thanks to a generous grant, we opened the Purdue Pharma Consumer Health Information Center at The Ferguson Library, a library service and media collection designed to provide the public with extensive and up-to-date health information. We look forward to a long and productive collaboration with Purdue on this important project.

We also brought quality art to the Library this year. Through a partnership with the Stamford Art Association, we launched *Art at The Ferguson*, an ongoing series of exhibits in the Main Library Auditorium.

Such partnerships benefit the community. Thousands of people walk through our doors each day, looking to use a computer, take a class, check out a book or DVD. When we open at 11 a.m., a multitude of people are waiting outside. City funding cuts forced us to reduce hours this year, but our usage remains high. In these difficult economic times, the community depends on the Library and all it provides to be fully and constantly available.

I am grateful to the many people who made it possible for us to maintain our exceptional level of service this year. Our Trustees and Citizen Advisors, especially, responded to our fundraising activities with generosity and enthusiasm. The Ferguson Library Foundation liberally supported our collections and fundraising efforts and, through their amazing volunteer programs, The Friends of The Ferguson Library made essential and generous contributions. I would also like to give special recognition to our dedicated and resourceful staff, whose willingness to sacrifice made the greatest difference in our effort to continue providing services.

Whatever the coming year brings, we remain committed to providing the exceptional public service the Stamford community expects and deserves.

Kathryn Emmett  
Chair, Ferguson Library Board of Trustees

# Message from the President

Fiscal 2010 – 2011 presented the Ferguson Library with a major challenge – a \$1.2 million cut in city funding. We tackled the challenge and, as it turned out, the year was also full of excitement and promise.

Although the budget cut forced us to reduce hours systemwide in October, thanks to an agreement with our employees, who generously agreed to reduced salaries and increased health insurance premiums, we were able to avoid layoffs. The employee give backs only covered half of the shortfall, so we had to reduce some hours, and cut back spending on materials.

At the same time, we began a new emphasis on fundraising. The Ferguson has long earned additional income from our Friends Book Shop, Passport Office and Starbucks. This year we actively pursued additional funding sources. *Eat Play Read*, a new fundraising event at the Library, was a resounding success. This event drew 250 guests to the newly renovated Main Library in May and raised \$130,000, generating good will and engaging the community in the Library's fundraising efforts.

We developed a new sponsorship program which the local business community embraced, and which made it possible for us to preserve Sunday hours at the Main Library. Several generous donors also made significant contributions, specifically dedicated to children's programming, part of our prime mission to support literacy and lifelong learning.

We have been extremely busy throughout the year. Even though our hours were reduced, 765,000 people visited the Library, borrowing close to a million items. Ferguson librarians answered nearly 160,000 reference questions and 43,000 people attended our programs.

I would like to extend my wholehearted thanks to the Ferguson Library staff for their special sacrifice during this difficult time, and for their unwavering professionalism. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team. We are also fortunate to have the support of our community leaders and library volunteers, especially our Trustees, Citizen Advisors, Foundation Board and Friends of The Ferguson Directors.

In these difficult times, I look ahead with hope. Public libraries are more relevant now than ever before, as people seek ways to connect and understand a rapidly changing world. I am confident that The Ferguson will continue to be Stamford's center of information and learning – truly the heart of our community. We are moving forward with a sense of optimism, and of promise for better times ahead.

Ernest A. DiMattia, Jr.  
President, The Ferguson Library

*Overall, The Ferguson Library received more than 1,600 individual contributions during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. We are proud to recognize our donors in this annual report. We are grateful to every one of them for supporting a strong public library in the Stamford community, and for giving what they could to help.*

**– Kathryn Emmett and Ernest DiMattia**



# Our Mission

The Ferguson Library, Stamford's public library, provides free and equal access to print, audiovisual and evolving electronic resources, and supports childhood education and lifelong learning through reading and other forms of communication by addressing the informational, educational, cultural and literacy needs of the Stamford community.

# Our Vision

The Ferguson Library will remain the community's leading choice for information access, educational materials, and lifelong learning by continually and effectively adapting to technological and other changes in the environment.

# Our Core Values

## Accelerate Promotion of Reading

Beyond providing resources – support outreach, basic literacy and lifelong learning habits.

## Access

Provide convenient hours for the Stamford community and 24/7 access via the "virtual branch."

## Accountability

Responsible to our community.

## Creativity/Innovation

Introduce and/or adopt new technology, services and work styles.

## Diversity

Embrace the numerous cultures, races and ideas in the community.

## Equity

Freedom from bias or favoritism.

## Intellectual Freedom

Encourage the free exchange of information and ideas in a democratic society.

## Safety/Security

Create a safe and comfortable haven that is conducive to reading, studying and browsing. Provide quality customer-driven services.

## Technology Leadership

Use the latest technological advances to help provide better services.

photo credit: Tim Coffey



# The Heart of the Community

The Ferguson Library is the heart of the Stamford community, a place where people gather to learn and connect, a place for quiet study or exchanging ideas. A place where you can walk in empty handed and leave enriched.

In addition to the many programs the Ferguson offers, our libraries are centers for community involvement. Volunteers take time to help English language learners, tutors work quietly with their students after school. Job seekers come to the Library looking for a leg up.

There's no place like the Library. Just ask the people who depend on us. In December, our users showed their support by voting for The Ferguson in the Santa's Wish List contest, sponsored by a local media company. The Ferguson, in competition with dozens of other area nonprofits, finished in the top five, earning \$500.

How do people use us? We counted the ways. In April, we participated in the Connecticut Library Association's Snapshot Day, collecting information about library usage on a typical day. On April 13, 2011 4,445 people visited the Library, checking out 3,586 items and asking 468 reference questions. 1,765 people visited our website. And that was just a single day.

Think of all we do in a year.

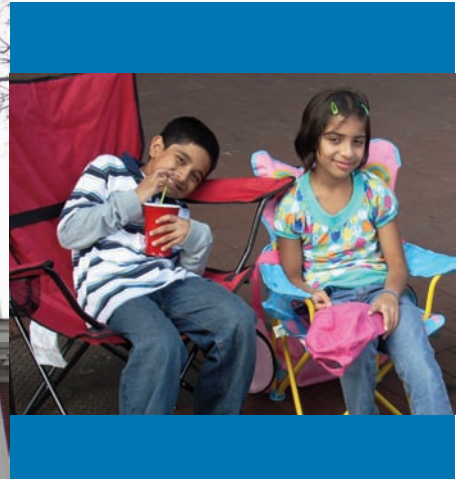


*This is more than a library, it's a community center . . . a place to relax while reading a book or a newspaper . . . a place to find out what's happening in the community. It's my second home.*

**– Shirley, library user**

# Fundraising *and* Support

photo credit: Mike Wartell



Faced with drastic city cutbacks this year, The Ferguson turned to the community for support, and the response was overwhelming.

On May 19, the Main Library was transformed into a food-filled, candle-lit, elegant venue for our first-ever fundraiser here at the Library. The event, *Eat Play Read*, was a wonderful evening of food, spirits and jazz that drew about 250 guests and netted \$130,000. From the beginning, we aimed to make this a 'friendraiser' as well as a fundraiser, so important at a time when we are relying more than ever on community support.

Our annual appeal, sent to all 50,000 Stamford households, drew a record \$125,000 from 1,100 donors, our most widespread participation ever. A local blog picked up on the interest and began a promotion of its own, offering \$5 to everyone who posted a personal connection to the Library. Within two days, the blog had more than 80 comments and the publisher made a \$500 donation to the Library.

We saw that kind of personal commitment all year with donors large and small. The Ferguson Library Foundation received an extremely generous gift of \$200,000 from past Board of Trustees Chair George Harvey for children's programming. The Library also received donations for youth programming from current Board Chair Kathryn Emmett and her husband David Golub, and Mark and Ruth Golub.

Our Sunday Sponsor program was a resounding success, with ten donors stepping up help us keep Sunday hours at the Main Library.

Thanks to: The Pitney Bowes Foundation, Silver Golub & Teittel; GE Asset Management; Citizens Bank; Cacace, Tusch &

Santagata; Downtown Special Services District; The Law Offices of Emmett & Glander; Seaboard Properties; Wofsey Rosen Kweskin & Kuriansky and The Herbert & Sarah M. Gibor Charitable Foundation; and The Herbert & Nell Singer Foundation. Just as gratifying as large donations are the small ones. Our teen supporters held a read-in at the Harry Bennett Branch in March, raising \$2,100. Teachers from Stamford High pooled their resources and wrote a check for \$1,200; the Network of Asian Moms raised \$6,000 for the Library at their cultural day; and preschoolers at the First United Methodist Church 'hopped to help' by raising \$1,600 for the Library at their spring Hopathon. Two of our young library supporters set up a lemonade stand outside the Main Library and raised \$79 for the Library in one afternoon, and longtime Friends of The Ferguson Library members Ann and Joe Sexton asked birthday guests to donate to the Library in lieu of presents. Thanks to the Sexton's generosity and that of their friends, we received more than \$1,000 in donations.

Many thanks to all our friends who have supported us so generously this year.





# Partnerships



The Ferguson enjoys strong partnerships with the Stamford community. In June, we launched the Purdue Pharma Consumer Health Information Center at The Ferguson Library, a new library service and media collection designed to provide the public with accurate, up-to-date health information. The center was started with a generous \$25,000 grant from Purdue Pharma, (part of a \$50,000 total grant) enabling the Library to purchase books, online resources and other materials to meet the growing interest in consumer health information.

In November, we joined forces with the Stamford Hospital Foundation, the Alexandra and Steven Cohen Foundation and the Stamford Public Schools on the Healthy U initiative, a project promoting healthy choices for young children. Every Stamford kindergarten received a copy of *Dinosaurs Alive and Well* by Marc Brown, a book that promotes this message.

The First County Bank Foundation stepped up to support our teen tech program, funding a \$5,000 grant for computer support in the Library's Youth Services Department. The Ferguson's Special Needs Center received a generous donation of materials on autism and learning disabilities from the Connecticut Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities. And a \$1,500 grant from Stamford Education 4 Autism funded special programming for children with sensory processing disorders.

The Ferguson has a visible presence in the community, participating in Stone Soup – an expo to provide families with information about community resources – and the annual Early Childhood Fair at Cove Island Park, where our Youth Services Department shared information about our services and programs.



*I would be lost without our library!*  
– Debi, library user

# New This Year

## *Art Exhibits*

Take a peek in the auditorium. This year, we inaugurated a new partnership with the Stamford Art Association (SAA) to bring art to the Library. The ongoing series of exhibits is called Art at The Ferguson. We launched the first show, "Stamford," in October, with a wine and cheese reception. Attendance at each opening has grown, and best of all, the Library has become known throughout the community as a venue for art. We anticipate a long, fruitful partnership with the SAA.

## *Filming in the Library*

The Library became a film location in November when the cast and crew of the Tyler Perry movie, *We the People*, took over the first floor of the Main Library. They set up in the New Materials Room, which was standing in for the New York Public Library. Lights, equipment, cast and crew – everything was gone by the time we opened. The Ferguson received \$2,000 for use of the space.

## *Arabic and Russian Newsletters*

Thanks to our new language design software, we have been able to produce special newsletters in different world languages. This year, we published newsletters in both Arabic and Russian, communities that are heavy library users.





# Technology

*I don't have high speed Internet at home and use the library for work.*

– Elizabeth, library user



*Where else can you check out books, magazines, music and movies for no charge at all. Also, if you want to use the computers it doesn't cost anything either. Basically, it's learning for free!*

– Jon, library user

## Social Media

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become important vehicles for connecting with our users, and building a loyal community of supporters. In November, looking to grow our fan base on Facebook, we took out an ad, which encouraged people to join us on Facebook and find out about library happenings. The ad, which ran for a week at a modest cost, targeted Stamford Facebook users not already connected with the Library. In one week, we went from 286 fans to 535! At year's end, we had more than 600 fans. We also send out regular weekly emails to our 23,000 subscribers.

## New Early Literacy Computers

Thanks to the generous support of the George B. Harvey Fund, the Library was able to purchase two Early Literacy Computers for children ages 2 – 10. Incoming "Friends" President Eileen Rosner donated funds for a third computer. These computers, loaded with special interactive software, are designed to develop a variety of early learning skills.

## Digital Media – Staff Jumps In

Technology changes by the minute in this age of Nooks, Kindles, iPads and other digital devices. This year, the Library's Digital Media Committee held several training sessions for staff to get comfortable with ebooks and ereaders, so they can better help our customers, who are increasingly looking for digital materials.

## Computer Classes

Computer classes are always in great demand, especially with people looking to refresh job skills. We offer classes on a regular basis in computer basics, Microsoft Word and Excel, PowerPoint and email, as well as weekly computer-based ESL classes for English language learners. Some classes are also offered in Spanish.

# Our Collection

We have a wide ranging collection of materials that can't be found at other libraries, including books in more than a dozen world languages, and a comprehensive film collection, including an enviable foreign film collection. Because of our reduced hours, our circulation declined 10% this year. The drop was especially noticeable at the Harry Bennett Branch, which is now open only four days a week.

Our e-book usage continues to grow. E-book circulation doubled this year, with a long reserve list for some popular titles. E-materials still make up less than one percent of our collection, but we spend approximately 30% of our entire materials budget on electronic materials, including databases, E-books, E-audio, and E-video. As they become ever more popular and available to the public library market, we are seeking forward-looking ways to provide the Stamford community access to these materials.



*I love this place. When the office gets hectic, I can sneak out to the library where I won't be disturbed and get more work accomplished than I would have been able to if I'd stayed at the office.*

**– Mark, library user**

# Programming



*The library is an amazing resource for fun reading, learning new job skills, taking out videos, and doing research.*

**– Martha, library user**



From English conversation to thought-provoking film series, the Library offers a wide ranging variety of programming, designed to meet the needs of our diverse community. Our 2010 Adult Summer Reading Club, Adventures in Reading, drew 370 participants who read over 1500 books!

Our book discussion groups continue to thrive. We hold lively discussions at the Main Library and branches, and also offer French and Spanish language book groups. Each group has a loyal following.

English as a Second Language (ESL) is one of our core services, and our English Language Conversation Groups are a highlight of this service. These informal conversation classes were initially funded by an LSTA grant in 2006. They became an overnight success, and the program, managed by the Library and run by volunteers, continues at the Main Library and South End Branch.

We inaugurated an exciting new American Literature Lecture series this year that has drawn rave reviews. UCONN professor Michael Maratto presented lectures on Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville in the fall, and came back to discuss Robert Frost for our annual Poet's Voice program in March.

In collaboration with the Fairfield County chapter of the ACLU, we hosted a Banned Books week program featuring the Wilton High School drama teacher whose controversial play about the Iraq war was banned by the school.

Our second annual Chinese New Year celebration drew a crowd of eighty and coverage in the local media.



# Just for Kids

Just follow the strollers! Our hugely popular story hours, including Babytime, Mother Goose and Toddler Time, instill a love of books and the library in our youngest users. These programs often draw close to 100 participants, and are among the most beloved of our children's offerings. We also offer a special Sensory Storytime for children with autism or sensory processing issues, which was generously funded this year with a gift from Stamford Education 4 Autism.

Our 2010 Children's Summer Reading Club, Make a Splash – Read! was a striking success. 2,724 kids signed up, an 11% increase over the year before! Research shows that children who read over the summer do better in school, and our summer reading program, with prizes and other incentives, is aimed at making reading a fun part of summer vacation.

The annual Jeanne Rinehart Memorial Program was one of the best in memory. In November, author/illustrator Nick Bruel entertained a crowd of 150, somehow managing to personalize each book he signed.

Our regular kids book discussions are perennial favorites, with eager young readers meeting to have a snack and share their views. These discussions foster a love of reading that keeps kids coming back for more.

Besides organizing our many programs, our tireless children's staff members recommend books, help with research, create reading lists, and do outreach into schools and the community.

## Teens

Teens are the future of Ferguson. And what a fabulous bunch. Our teen supporters decided they wanted to do something to help the Library in this difficult budget year, and even more importantly, show their support. "Read a Book, Save our Library," grew out of that idea.

On March 25, thirty teens staged a 'read-in' at the Harry Bennett Branch to raise money for the Library. The teens, who organized the event and collected sponsorships, read from 6 p.m. – midnight (with snack breaks, of course!). The event raised \$2,120 and the teens were so enthused, they are planning a 'Read-In 2' this fall. When our teens aren't helping to save the Library, they are volunteering here. 292 teen volunteers put in a record 2,766 hours this year. Our teen volunteers are indispensable to managing the Children's Summer Reading Club, listening to reports and making the younger children feel special. We are lucky to have such a committed group of young supporters.



*My family visits the library all the time. I love to see the look of wonder on my boys' faces when they find books they love.*

**– Jess, library user**



# Passport Office

Our passport business was up modestly from 2009 – 2010. We processed 6,909 passport applications this year, a 2% increase from the prior year. Passport photos were up 3%.

## The Bookmobile and Purple Bus

The Bookmobile provides mobile library services to neighborhoods all over Stamford, visiting preschools, senior centers and other locations. Even though it is on the road just one day a week, the Bookmobile has a loyal following. This year about 3,600 people visited the Bookmobile.

The Purple Bus ferries school children to the Library, some for the very first time. All twelve of Stamford's public elementary schools and several preschools participate in the Purple Bus program. This year, 1,614 students visited the Library on the Purple Bus.



# The Friends of the Ferguson Library

The Friends of The Ferguson is the Library's energetic volunteer support group. Ninety-six volunteers gave 14,500 hours to the Library last year, primarily in the Friends Book Shop. The volunteer-run shop, with locations at the Main Library and Harry Bennett Branch, sells quality used books at reasonable prices, and is the only used book store in Stamford. Despite reduced hours at the Main Library and Harry Bennett Branch, the book shop held its own in this year, earning \$204,000, down just 1.4% percent from the previous year.

The Friends support goes beyond the book shop. The Friends signed on to the Library's *Eat Play Read* fundraiser with a \$10,000 sponsorship and made several other gifts during the year, totaling \$140,446.

This year, the Friends launched a new author series with *The New York Times* bestselling author Kathryn Stockett, who spoke to a sell-out crowd at the Main Library. At \$15 a ticket, the event raised about \$4,000 and more importantly, generated a lot of buzz about the Library. The author series continues in the fall.

Five hundred seventy-one young writers participated in the annual Literary Competition Awards in April. The winners were recognized at a ceremony at the Main Library, always a thrill for the youngsters and their families.

This year was the 30th anniversary of the Friends Book & Author Luncheon. Authors Barbara Delinsky, Rachel Simon and Oscar Andrew Hammerstein captivated the audience with their stories. *The Advocate* once again co-sponsored the event.





# Ferguson *by the* Numbers

Operating support from the city of Stamford	\$7,000,000
Revenue from Library activities	\$1,075,426
Salaries & staffing-related costs	\$6,005,960
Purchases of books, electronic resources and other materials	\$781,341

photo credit: Tim Coffey



# Our Donors

We thank the following people, businesses and organizations for their generosity. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions or errors. Please call 203 351-8208 or visit [fergusonlibrary.org](http://fergusonlibrary.org) to find out how you can help.

## \$50,000 and up

Ferguson Library Foundation, including the Nancy S. Cassone Fund and the Reader's Digest Endowed Book Fund  
Friends of The Ferguson Library  
Purdue Pharma L.P.

## \$20,000 to \$49,999

Law Offices of Silver Golub & Teitell  
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SL Green Realty Corp.

## \$5,000 to \$19,999

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