

# The Ferguson Library

## You'll Be Amazed at What Awaits You



ANNUAL REPORT 2012 - 2013  
[WWW.FERGUSONLIBRARY.ORG](http://WWW.FERGUSONLIBRARY.ORG)

## Message from the Chair



Amazing may not be the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word “library.” But the longer I’m involved with The Ferguson, the more amazed I become. Public libraries are truly amazing places—hubs of learning and information, the heart of their communities. Where else can you learn to use the latest technology, meet an author, or come in from the cold when the power goes out? Here at The Ferguson, I continue to be amazed at all we do, despite the financial challenges the Library continues to face.

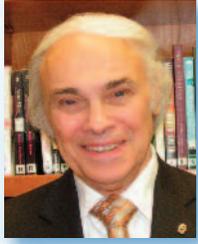
This year, we introduced a mobile app so our users can reach us from their smartphones and mobile devices; we brought self check-out to the Main Library, and introduced a popular *New York Times* Bestseller Collection. And we hosted a thought-provoking Civility Series in partnership with the city of Stamford, that brought compelling, sometimes controversial figures to the Library. Our third annual spring fundraiser, *A Novel Affair*, was the most successful yet, and we are grateful to our many individual and corporate sponsors for helping us to surpass our goals. Indeed, as we work to build our fundraising program, I am struck by how widespread and heartfelt our community support is.

Of course, there is still more work to be done. As we embark on a strategic plan for the next three years, we recognize the need to find ways to reach out to underserved parts of our community, and remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. But I am certain that with The Ferguson’s talented staff, and the visionary contribution of our Trustees, Citizen Advisors, Ferguson Library Foundation, and Friends of The Ferguson, we will meet these challenges with energy and enthusiasm.

The Ferguson Library continues to surprise, excite, and yes, amaze me with all that it offers. I invite you to join us. You’ll be amazed as well!

—Greg Caggainello  
Chair, Ferguson Library Board of Trustees

# *Message from the President*



For more than 130 years, The Ferguson Library has been Stamford's center for information, education and culture, the heart of the community we serve. Public libraries are increasingly community centers, but they are also places of inquiry and investigation. More than ever, people depend on us for job skills and technology training. This year we hosted a first ever career fair, capping a month of career related programming. We also saw a dramatic increase in the use of our virtual resources, with ebook circulation doubling. We still face challenges providing electronic books as the publishing industry finds its footing with this new model, but we are committed to staying on top of emerging technology, and indeed, we must, to remain relevant.

The way information is delivered continues to evolve, but one thing that hasn't changed is the Library's role in the community. Nearly three quarters of a million people visited us this year, and 54,000 attended one of our 1,800 programs for children, teens and adults. When Hurricane Sandy struck in late October, the Library, always a community hub, became a safe place for people to recharge, figuratively and literally. We added extra hours and people poured in, laptops and children in tow.

Our dedicated staff, many of whom were suffering hardship of their own after Sandy, rose to the occasion, working long hours and providing caring customer service when it was needed most. I am grateful to them. I am also indebted to our Board of Trustees, Citizen Advisers, Foundation Board, and Friends of The Ferguson Library, for their leadership and unwavering support throughout the year.

Even though we continue to face financial uncertainty, I am very optimistic about the future. This is a time of great change, and libraries are at the forefront, portals for information and learning in a world where access to resources is often uneven. Strong public libraries are essential, and I know whatever challenges lie ahead, we will meet them with resourcefulness and creativity.

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

## *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.

*"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library."*

*— Jorge Luis Borges*

# Hurricane Sandy

## *A Place of Refuge*

“Our library rocks!”  
—Anonymous

Hurricane Sandy, which hit at the end of October, left our community, state and entire region reeling. Even though Stamford was spared the worst, the storm left widespread power outages. When the Main Library reopened Wednesday, October 31 almost half the city was still without power.

We added extra hours that week as people came looking for not only Internet and power, but a place to stay warm and dry and find a sense of community. We waived fines all week, and kept the public posted on extended hours through our website and social media. Our users couldn't say enough.

*“Thank you Ferguson Library. We’ve made our second trip to the Weed Branch today. It’s warm, the wifi is fast and quiet enough to work and think!”*  
—The Jordan girls

*“We are so grateful to the Ferguson Library for extended hours, free wifi and electricity. With all your budget cuts, you find ways to support the community.”*  
— Frances Wu Nobay

*“At home there is nothing to do—no TV, no phone, no microwave. Here, at least, we are busy and doing something.”*  
—Kavita Upadhyay



# New This Year

## *Mobile App*

Library users can now get us on the go thanks to our new mobile app. So many online interactions are happening via mobile, that we knew we needed to be there too. You can now reach the Ferguson online from your smart phone, iPad or other mobile device.

## *Civility in America Series*

The Mayor's Civility in America Series, held at the Main Library, brought large crowds to hear former Maine Senator Olympia Snow, Texas Governor Rick Perry and other notables in the fields of politics, education, media and sports. The series was organized by the city of Stamford and the Dilenschneider Group, and sponsored by the Library, Hearst Media Group in Connecticut, Sacred Heart University and Purdue Pharma.

## *New York Times Bestseller Collection*

*The New York Times* bestsellers, always popular reads, are now housed in our New Materials room at the Main Library. We have multiple copies of all hardcover fiction and nonfiction titles, and comfy chairs for reading. We also introduced circulating ereaders preloaded with *New York Times* bestseller titles.

## *Self-Check out at the Main Library*

In February, the Main Library joined the Harry Bennett Branch in offering self-check out. Library users now have the option of scanning their own library materials, and even paying fines with our self-check machines. Usage is picking up as patrons get more comfortable. Of course, we still offer traditional check out service for those who prefer it.



# Support

## *We Can't Do It Without You*

We can't thank you enough. Your generosity and commitment to the Library helps support our collections and makes it possible for us to offer innovative programs and services.

The Library's Annual Appeal, mailed in the fall to the entire Stamford community, raised \$84,000 from more than 900 donors, and our spring benefit, *A Novel Affair*, now in its third year, did better than ever, netting \$160,000 in an elegant evening here at the Library. Magician Ryan Oakes wowed the crowd, and we were pleased to honor John Stewart, President and CEO of Purdue Pharma, with The Ferguson Award.

### MAJOR SPONSORS:

- Kathryn Emmett & David S. Golub
- Friends of The Ferguson Library
- The Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation
- Pitney Bowes, Inc.
- Purdue Pharma L.P.
- Lee J. Rizzuto, Jr.
- SL Green Realty Corp
- Stamford Downtown Special Services District
- Thomson Reuters

We are grateful to our 2012–2013 Sunday Sponsors for helping us keep the Main Library open on Sundays, one of our busiest days of the week.

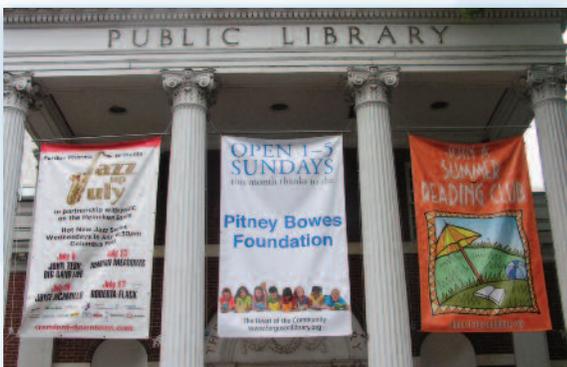
- Judith Block
- Citizens Bank
- First Niagara Bank Foundation
- GE Asset Management
- Pitney Bowes Foundation

The Library has a new flagpole thanks to the Policastro family of Stamford. The previous flagpole was damaged by a car, and the Policastro's, who donated the Library's original flagpole back in 1968, stepped up again.

The Ferguson successfully applied for a number of grants this year to support new and ongoing programs and services. Many thanks to these funders:

- Ferguson Library Foundation—\$80,000 for children's programming and collection support
- Steven A. and Alexandra M. Cohen Foundation—\$20,000 for children's programming
- Abilis Foundation—\$12,000 to fund a book discussion group for people with developmental disabilities.
- First County Bank Foundation—\$11,000 to fund a small business center at the Library and \$8,700 to provide underserved Stamford children increased access to technology.
- Max J. & Winnie S. Rosenshein Foundation—\$5,000 in support of summer outreach to disadvantaged children

(continued)



# Support

*(continued)*

- St. John's Community Foundation—\$3,000 for Visiting Books services for seniors
- Nestle Waters—\$2,500 to serve disadvantaged children through our Head Start outreach program
- KPMG—\$2,000 for books through their Family for Literacy program
- Purdue Pharma—10 pre-owned iPads from Purdue Pharma (\$1,750 value)
- Stop & Shop—\$1,000 grant for educational programming
- Queenan Foundation —\$1,000 for a children's literary program

\*A special thank you to Purdue Pharma for generously printing the *Novel Affair* invitations and programs; and the Joint Summer Reading List, produced by the Library and the Stamford Public Schools.



# Community Partners and Outreach

We continue to foster rewarding partnerships with other organizations in our community.

Here are some of the ways we collaborated this year:

- Tax assistance provided by AARP at the Harry Bennett and Weed Memorial & Hollander branches
- Volunteers from accounting firm KPMG listened to young readers as part of our Book Buddies program over the summer. They also rolled up their sleeves for a day of volunteering in June.
- Reading is Fundamental book giveaways at the Library in partnership with the Stamford Public Education Foundation
- Kindergarten information night at the Library in cooperation with the Stamford Board of Education and the School Readiness Council
- Library presence at Hands for Life, the citywide health initiative at Chelsea Piers
- Art exhibits at the Main Library curated by the Stamford Art Association



# Job Help

## *The New Reality*

We are increasingly asked to provide help with resumes and job applications. Even jobs in food service and housekeeping now require online applications, a daunting task for those who don't have the necessary skills. Our staff helps applicants fill out forms and wade through what can be a confusing process.

In October, we held our first ever Career Month, with workshops on resume writing, cover letters, interviewing and social media. The month culminated with a career fair, which put job seekers in touch with prospective employers. Several participants reported they landed jobs as a result.



# The Bookmobile and Purple Bus

## *On the Road*

The Bookmobile visits preschools, community centers and other neighborhood locations. Even though it is on the road only one day a week, it is a beloved presence in the community.

*"The bookmobile has been a huge part of my life since the 1940's."*

*– Sheila Egan*

*"It's my lifeline."*

*– Selma Ruggiero*

The Purple Bus brings Stamford school children to the Library, some for the very first time. 1800 children from nineteen elementary and preschools schools visited on the Purple Bus this year.

*"The children love it! It's a wonderful opportunity to introduce them to the library and borrowing and respecting books."*

*– Kathy Goldberg*



# Technology and Digital Training

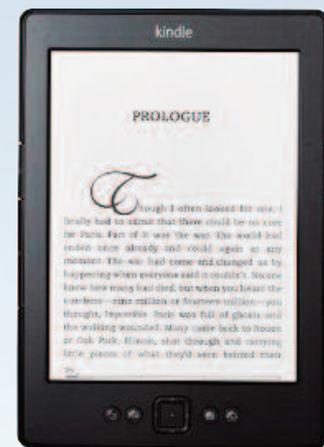
*"The Library provides resources I do not have at home and is a place that is conducive to learning."*

– Matt Librandi

We have been offering one-on-one appointments with librarians for some time, but this year we introduced personalized computer instruction in several different languages: English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian and Haitian Creole. We also purchased two computers specially designed for people with visual impairments, with larger screens and a text-to-speech option.

Our computer classes are always heavily subscribed, and this year, in addition to classes on the basics, we offered digital photography, consumer health resources, job searching online and genealogy research, among others. A new series of classes on computer programming, offered in partnership with Rippowam Labs, filled every seat in our computer lab.

In May, we rolled out a Digital Discovery table with ereaders and tablets for patrons to experiment with. Some folks are interested in buying a device, others just want to see how it all works. The technology isn't only for adults. Our children's department bolted down a table of iPads, loaded with educational apps, for the younger set. Needless to say, they're a big hit.



*"It builds community. Even as materials go digital, the library remains a safe haven for the community to enjoy."*

– Kate Bolger

# Books and More

*“I love this library.”*

– Michelle Buisseret

## *Ebooks*

This year saw a dramatic increase in the use of our virtual resources. In 2012, ebook circulation doubled from 8,300 to 16,600. However, we still face challenges providing ebooks. Publishers are in flux about library pricing, and as a result, electronic books can be much more expensive than physical books, which we still need to buy too. And some publishers place restrictions on sales to the library market. Even though ebook use is growing, about 75% of all books sales are still in print format and our users are not ready to abandon print.

*“The library is a wonderful place to make new friends.”*

– Lonnie deMarco

## *Databases— Beyond Google*

Database use increased this year too. These resources give users access to the ‘hidden web,’ and are usually only available by subscription—free to Ferguson Library cardholders. In 2012, our users conducted 212,000 searches on the iConn database, up from 121,000 in 2011.

## *Muslim Bookshelf*

As part of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to further understanding of Islamic culture, the Library received a collection of books, films and other resources meant to introduce the American public to the history and culture of Muslims. As part of the grant, we also received year-long access to the database, Oxford Islamic Studies Online.



## *Museum Passes*

This year we began circulating free and discounted passes to Connecticut museums, state parks and other attractions. The passes have been a big success.



*“The library has great books and films for both my young children and the rest of the family.”*

– Willie Porcello

# Programs

*The Library offered a total of 1,900 programs this year. More than 54,000 people attended.*

More than ever, libraries have become places to foster participation, collaboration and creativity. We embraced this philosophy wholeheartedly this year, with a wide range of compelling programs.

Our diverse community came together for several internationally themed events—World Fest in October drew 220 people with music, dance and art from around the world; and in November, we celebrated Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, with two days of festivities that included films and dance. The 13<sup>th</sup> annual Haitian Book Festival drew 270 people to the South End Branch in October and our international film festival continues to flourish. In January, 100 people enjoyed an afternoon of award-winning short films at the Main Library.

*Let's Talk*, our informal English conversation groups, is a hugely popular, volunteer-run program now in its seventh year. The collaboration helps English language learners get comfortable speaking English in a non-threatening environment.

Throughout the year we offered author programs, films, concerts and book discussions, including a popular *New Yorker* discussion group, which is now being hosted at the Main Library as well as the Harry Bennett Branch. The *Purdue Healthy Living Series*, generously supported by Purdue Pharma, features speakers on topics such as healthy eating and stress reduction.

“The Library gives me an opportunity to learn English.”  
— Jason A.



# Just for Kids

*"My children have a safe and fun learning environment."  
– Lisa Palma*

We offer creative, education-based programs for children of all ages. Our storytimes, which introduce the youngest library users to reading and books, are full to capacity. We are especially proud of *Every Child Ready to Read*, a literacy based initiative designed to teach young children the skills needed to become readers (generously funded by the Harvey Fund of the Ferguson Library Foundation), and *Sensory Storytime*, a program for young children with autism or sensory processing difficulties.

*"Sensory Storytime is an awesome program. My son was recently diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, and there are not many programs available, especially not for families with economic hardship here in Stamford."  
– Tammy Vera*

Our 2012 children's summer reading club, *Dream Big—Read*, drew more than 2,500 registrants. Almost 1,000 of those children read ten books or more over the summer, an achievement at any age!

We hosted thirteen children's authors and illustrators at the Library for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Children's Holiday Book Festival in December. The event raised \$1,400 and drew an additional 600 visitors to the Main Library that day. We also celebrated Kwanzaa in December and joined a nationwide celebration of libraries and families with Bring Your Child to the Library Day in February.

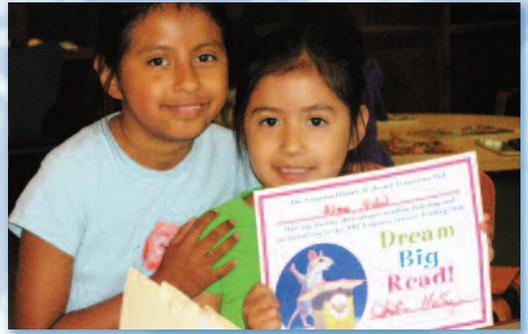
Throughout the year, we offered regular films, book discussions, science programs, art workshops and much more.

# Teens

We have a thriving teen program, which does a remarkable job connecting with this hard to reach age group. TMAD, our teen advisory group, helps plan events, and teen volunteers provide indispensable help with our children's summer reading club. This year, 204 teens volunteered their time, a 22% increase over last year.

One of the year's highlights was a Hunger Games party. Twenty-eight teens and a couple of intrepid librarians got into the spirit with make-up and competitions.

Throughout the year, teens also enjoyed ballroom dancing, decorating with henna and a rousing discussion of Banned Book Week.



# Friends of The Ferguson Library

## *The Friends Book Shop*

The Friends Book Shop, with locations at the Main Library and Harry Bennett Branch, celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. The shop sells quality used books at reasonable prices, and is Stamford's only used book store. Its proceeds support Library programs and collections.

*"The book shop is my home away from home."  
—Peggy Weiss*

## *Book & Author Tea*

The Friends introduced a lovely new event this year—a Book & Author Tea, held at the Harry Bennett Branch in March. Author Dorothy Wickenden delighted an audience of 100 with stories from her book, *Nothing Daunted: The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West*. Afterward, a high tea was served amid the stacks.

## *Friends Author Series*

This year, the Friends Authors Series welcomed these compelling authors to the Library for evenings of food, wine and conversation:

- Rock DJ Carol Miller (October)
- Food authors Katie Workman, Michele Stuart and Claire Criscuolo (November)
- Carol Wallace, author of *To Marry an English Lord*, the book that inspired *Downton Abbey* (April)
- Women's fiction writers Elin Hilderbrand, Mary Beth Keane and Suzanne Palmieri (June)

## *Literary Competition*

575 young writers entered works of fiction, nonfiction and poetry in the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Literary Competition, sponsored each year by the Friends. The winners were recognized at an awards ceremony in April.



# Ferguson by the Numbers

Operating support from the city of Stamford	\$7,140,000
Contributions and grants	\$659,728
Revenue from other sources	\$421,246
Salaries & staffing-related costs	\$6,213,109
Purchases of books & other materials	\$651,557
Items circulated	952,503
Visitors to the Library	735,843
Offsite Internet users	139,041
Reference questions answered	139,558
Passport applications processed	8,060

Libraries are the heart of the community.”

—D.V. Gambini

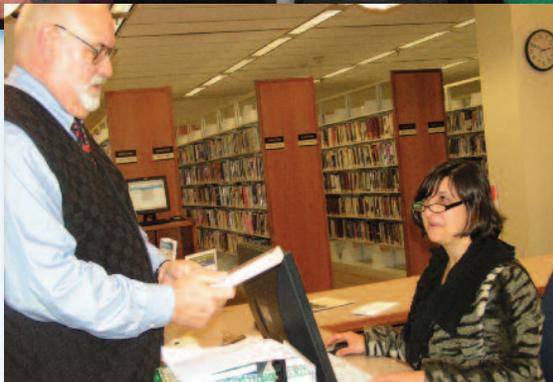
## Ferguson Staff



*“Best of all – the staff!” —Ester*

*“I have become accustomed to the consistently fine service provided by your staff.”*

*— John McKeefery*



# 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  
Friends of The Ferguson  
Library  
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## \$20,000 to \$49,999

Steven A. and Alexandra M.  
Cohen Foundation  
First County Bank  
GE Asset Management  
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SL Green Management LLC

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

Ernest Abate  
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Melissa Chefec  
Richard Chin  
Brian Choi

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Judith & Arthur Copeland  
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