





Dear Friends of the Manchester Community Library,

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Manchester Community Library on Cemetery Avenue, I am writing to express my profound gratitude to all of you. These past 10 years have been truly transformative for our Library, community, and all of us who have been a part of this journey. Thanks to your incredible support, we have created a vibrant, thriving place where learning, creativity, and community intersect.

This past fiscal year was full of accomplishments, which you can learn about elsewhere in this report. But looking ahead, I am excited about the future. The next decade will bring new opportunities, challenges, and possibilities for the Manchester Community Library, and I want to share with you a vision for our future—a future that, as always, will rely on the generous contributions and partnership of people like you.

The world is changing rapidly, and the role of public libraries is evolving. Over the next 10 years, we plan to keep pace with these changes, ensuring that our Library continues to serve as a cornerstone for education, connection, and discovery in our community. Here's a glimpse of what we envision for the Manchester Community Library in the years to come:

Building a Stronger, More Inclusive Community

The Library continues to be a place where everyone is welcome. As Manchester grows and diversifies, we will work harder to ensure the Library remains a space of inclusivity and belonging. We will expand our collections to reflect a broader range of voices and experiences, offer programming that celebrates diversity, and ensure our services are accessible to all.

Enriching Early Childhood and Youth Education

In the next decade, we will deepen our commitment to early literacy and educational support for children and teens. We envision a Library that continues to be where young people can ignite their curiosity, discover new passions, and receive the academic support they need. From expanding our storytime sessions to offering more after-school tutoring, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) programs, and creative arts workshops, we are eager to provide more opportunities for the youngest members of our community to thrive.



Community Well-Being and Lifelong Learning

A Library is not just a place to learn but to grow, heal, and connect. Over the next decade, we will broaden our adult education and community well-being offerings. Whether through workshops on mental health, personal finance, or job readiness, we plan to meet the evolving needs of our patrons. As our population ages, we are committed to creating more programs for seniors, providing opportunities for lifelong learning, social connection, and health-related resources.

Expanding Access to Technology and Digital Literacy

As technology becomes increasingly central to our lives, it is essential that everyone, regardless of their background, has access to the tools and training they need to navigate the digital world. We aim to expand our technology offerings, providing even more public access computers, tech workshops, and training programs. From digital literacy courses for seniors to coding and robotics clubs for youth, the Library will play a crucial role in helping bridge the digital divide.

A Center for Local Arts and Culture

We see the Library continuing to serve as a vibrant cultural center for Manchester. From local author readings to art exhibits, music performances, and film screenings, we envision a space where the creative spirit of our community can flourish. We plan to expand our partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations to bring more enriching experiences to the Library, fostering a deeper appreciation for the arts and culture in our region.

Of course, this can only happen with your support. Our vision for the next 10 years is ambitious but achievable with your continued partnership, which we trust and value immensely.

Together, we can ensure that the Manchester Community Library remains where dreams take flight, lives are changed, and community is built.

Thank you for everything you have done to help us reach this milestone. Thank you in advance for your ongoing support as we embark on the next chapter of our journey and build the future of the Manchester Community Library together.

Sincerely,



Ed Surjan, Executive Director

Our Mission

The Manchester Community Library is open to all as an inspiring gathering place for the community, providing opportunities and resources for personal enrichment and growth.

Vision

The Manchester Community Library will be a hub of the community through our role as a trusted resource; providing unique, essential, and innovative services; and by creating a welcoming and stimulating environment for learning and social connection.



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VOLUNTEERS



Renee Lewin

Creativity Cave Volunteer, Local Teacher & Artist

I have always loved libraries. The way they smell and the fact that they are the home to so many stories, tucked inside colorful bindings. Libraries are a gift to their community, and the Manchester Community Library is the biggest, most generous, most inclusive present ever received. This summer I had the honor of hosting several art classes tucked back in the Creativity Cave. I looked forward to each and every Wednesday, making a mess with the local (and not so local kids...we had one family visiting from Florida), talking to their parents, and laughing with the staff. We are beyond lucky to have access to such a wonderful, welcoming, and inclusive place like the MCL. It's not a place to just 'get books' (although there is nothing wrong with that either.) It's a space where the public can learn new languages, take art classes, join a Dungeons and Dragons crew, learn a new dance, and listen to lectures. And I'm pretty sure I'm just scratching the proverbial surface. I feel so lucky to have been a small part of this community and I truly am excited about my future involvement. Here's to libraries! The MCL in particular!

731
Volunteer
Hours Logged



+1,964%
PATRON
ACCESS TO
ITEMS

592,257
CATAMOUNT
LIBRARY
NETWORK
ITEMS

HIGHLIGHTS

SCHOOL COLLABORATIONS

Manchester Community Library is dedicated to creating opportunities for learning and connection to community members of all ages. MCL had the privilege of collaborating with many local schools in FY24 to create and facilitate programming related to the students' curricula. This allowed students to find enrichment outside of the classroom and brought young learners together from a variety of the area's schools.



Top Left: "Dinoman Space" with Sunderland Elementary School, Maple Street School, Dorset Elementary School, and Manchester Elementary Middle School (MEMS) students. • Bottom Left: *Goldenseal* author Maria Hummel with a Long Trail School student. • Right: MEMS students create art based on *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown.

HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRAM PARTNERS

American Library Association
 Andris Berry Band
 Battenkill Bicycles
 Battenkill Valley Health Center
 BenAnna Band
 Bennington Garden Club
 Bennington Museum
 Brotchman
 Buck3fifty
 Burr & Burton Academy
 Children's Literacy Foundation
 Dorset School
 Earth Matters Manchester
 Entity Dance
 For the Love of Vermont
 Garden Club of Manchester
 GNAT TV
 Grace Initiative Global
 Green Mountain Academy for Lifelong Learning
 Green Mountain Club
 If You Must Know
 Israel Congregation
 Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Long Trail School
 Luminous Crush
 Manchester Elementary Middle School
 Manchester Energy Committee
 Manchester Fire Department
 Manchester Gym
 Manchester Historical Society
 Manchester Math Mentors
 Manchester Police Department
 Maple Capital Management
 Maple Road
 Maple Street School
 Mark & Clarke
 Merck Forest & Farmland Center
 Merrill Lynch
 Mother Myrick's Confectionary
 Mothers Against Media Addiction
 Mountain Fresh Bowls
 Museum of Chinese in America
 NaNoWriMo
 National Voter Registration Day
 Nature's Market
 Never Tech Late
 Northshire Bookstore
 Northshire Day School

Outright Vermont
 The Puppet People
 Sam's Woodfired Pizza
 SOLO
 Someday Farms
 Susan G. Komen More Than Pink Walk
 Taconic Music
 The Collaborative
 The Gamer's Grotto
 The Mountain Goat
 United Counseling Services
 United States Forest Service
 Vermont Blues Society
 Vermont Community Foundation
 Vermont Film & Folklore Festival
 Vermont Folklife Center
 Vermont Guardian ad Litem Program
 Vermont Humanities
 Vermont Macrame
 Vermont Old Cemetery Association
 Vermont Satsung Society
 VNA Hospice
 Weston Youth Theater Company
 Willoughby's Depot Eatery

RECREATION

The Library serves as a place for people to *come and create!*

MCL has bolstered its recreational programming this fiscal year for all ages. In particular, after school options for elementary and middle school students have taken off. A grant from the Vermont Community Foundation made it possible for local artists to come in each week to teach new artforms to students in the Creativity Cave, and our youth Dungeons & Dragons program has been a rousing adventure each Wednesday. Adults have also been laughing, crafting, and exploring new interests from fiber arts to writing. The Library continues to diversify as a safe space for the whole community to learn, discover, and have fun.

408
Recreation
Programs

5,554
Attendees



RECREATION

Sammy Wright

Age 11



Sammy: "I like that you can be anything, or do anything... I love to find mind-bending loopholes. You can't do that in the real world. You can't bend the mind of Mother Nature. We switch through maps a bunch, and it's fun. It's mostly kids I know already, and sometimes I meet new friends."

Kate Bledsoe (Mom): "I love that it's a welcoming social space that values his creativity. Surprisingly, it also makes him motivated to practice math! He'll just be working out percentages to determine the chance that he can summon Salami God, or multiplying huge numbers to find out how many golden edible hearts are still available."

Caren McVicker

Local Author

"In August 2023, I pitched the idea of a new drop-in writers' group on Tuesday evenings to Paige and she embraced the concept wholeheartedly. By providing a dedicated space for local writers to come together and work in the presence of other writers, the library has jump-started a new writing community in Manchester and the surrounding towns. There is a synergy in the room when we write together, and that special high-octane creative ingredient would not be possible without the library opening its doors to us and providing a space for our work."



EDUCATION

Education is a particularly important pillar of what MCL offers. Beyond providing access to our growing physical collection of more than 27,000 items and online audiobooks, eBooks, and learning databases, most of our programs and events are educational by design. Some of these initiatives, such as our summer reading program, are developed in-house, but many are realized through partnerships with local individuals, nonprofits, schools, and state organizations. Forming these partnerships is crucial to the execution of our mission, and it helps promote the Library from a repository of knowledge to an active participant in its dissemination.



+8%
LIBRARY
MEMBERS

4,025
FY23

4,359
FY24



975
FY23

1,074
FY24



+10%
TOTAL
PROGRAMS

Aden Berry

Student

"As a homeschool student, the library is a great resource whether I use it for educational purposes, or for pleasure. The wonderful atmosphere and lovely staff make going to the library a memorable experience. I also enjoy my literature class with Paige, which teaches me so much. She makes learning literature fun."



EDUCATION



John Graf

**History Teacher
Burr & Burton Academy**

"As we approach the end of the school year I wanted to reach out and thank you for all the collaboration and programming you have fostered between the Manchester Community Library and Burr & Burton. BBA students and teachers have benefited from the multiple programs you have invited us to or set up specifically for us. It is one thing for the library to welcome/encourage student attendance at your events, however, the idea that you are seeking out programming specifically for local schools and working to bring speakers like Mark Timney to campus speaks to MCL's commitment to serving this community. Thank you specifically for all your efforts this year. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with you as we look ahead to next year."

304

**Education
Programs**

3,769

**Student
Attendees**



**58,650
LIBRARY
VISITORS**

COMMUNITY

The community is the driver of everything that happens at MCL. Patrons have a substantial impact on our material collections, resources, and programming. Through the last fiscal year, groups have come together at the Library and because of the Library. The monthly Diversity & Inclusion CommUNITY Potluck became a space where families throughout the region have created a community that shares resources and celebrates diversity. Parent & caregiver groups, playgroups, and grief groups gathered in the Library to embrace and support one another through every phase and facet of life. MCL is truly the community's Library, open to all.

Caralee Kennedy

Diversity & Inclusion CommUNITY Potluck Co-Organizer

"We needed a safe place to bring BIPOC community members together. Somewhere people feel safe sharing experiences or needs and to talk about what our area can change to make it a more welcoming one. There are not a lot of places that are really ready to be that space. We brought the idea to the Library and without a second thought they were not only willing but overjoyed to be part of real local advancement. We have been able to host monthly events, hair clinics, and speakers. The welcoming nature and willingness to be on the forefront of these really deep and sensitive conversations has been so important in the effort to create a more inviting community. The Library given us a building to host a platform, they have shared ideas, donated to support ongoing clinics and events, and provided educational materials. We are more than grateful for their participation and feel a real sense of community partnership with the staff."



COMMUNITY

173
Community
Programs

3,865
Attendees



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Public Libraries are increasingly becoming key contributors to public health and Manchester Community Library is no exception. In addition to providing a wealth of print and digital resources for those interested in increasing their knowledge about both medical issues and mental well being, MCL hosts a variety of regular programs, such as yoga and tai chi, to provide community members with access to stress relieving physical activity. Throughout the year the Library also hosts important discussions, often in partnership with other local nonprofits, about media and substance addiction, general psychology, meditation, and anxiety.



Rich Marantz

Tai Chi & Meditation Instructor

"I have facilitated Tai chi and meditation programs at the Manchester Community Library. I love doing programs there since it is open and welcoming to everyone. The physical space is beautiful and very well maintained. Every one of the staff who I have encountered have been kind, competent and helpful. I look forward to a continuing relationship with the Manchester Community Library."

HEALTH & WELLNESS

189

Health & Wellness
Programs

1,111

Attendees

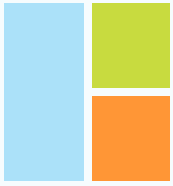


Maresa Bowen

Pumped Up Instructor

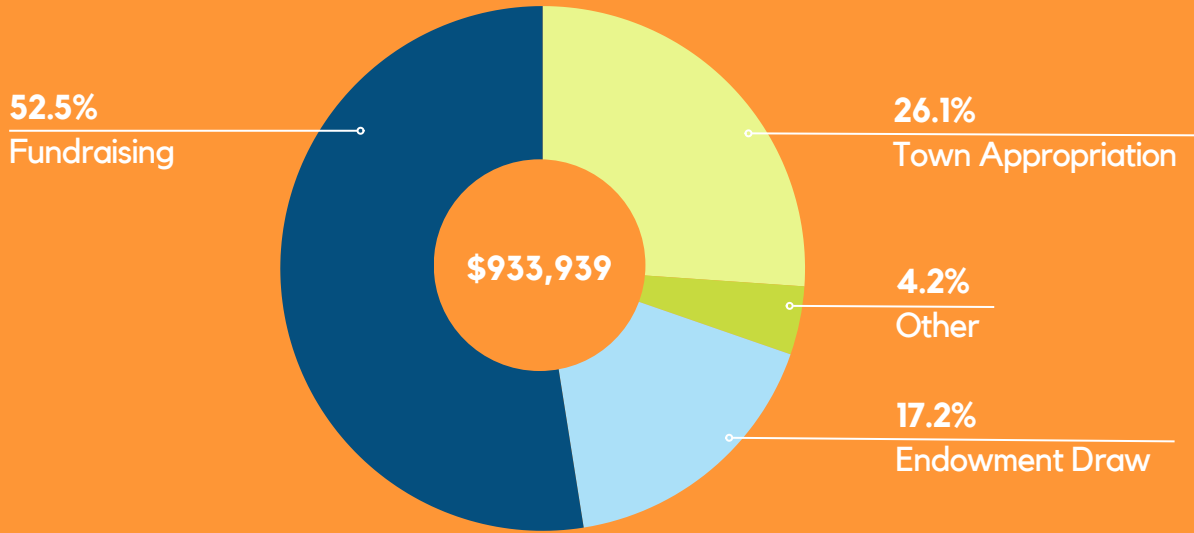
"It has been an honor this last year to teach Pumped Up- a fitness class designed to help those with Parkinson's Disease. It has brought me so much joy to watch as the participants in the class have increased their fitness levels, improved their balance and stability, and gained more knowledge about the disease from each other, all through our 30-minute fitness class. Pumped Up has become much more than we imagined it to be- it has become a safe place for those with neuromotor disorders to come support each other. Members of the class now often meet afterwards to discuss struggles they may be facing, offer comfort and compassion to each other, and suggest medical professionals in the area that offer services that they have benefited from. Teaching this class is truly one of my favorite parts of my week, and I'm excited to see it continue to evolve and help more members of the Manchester community."



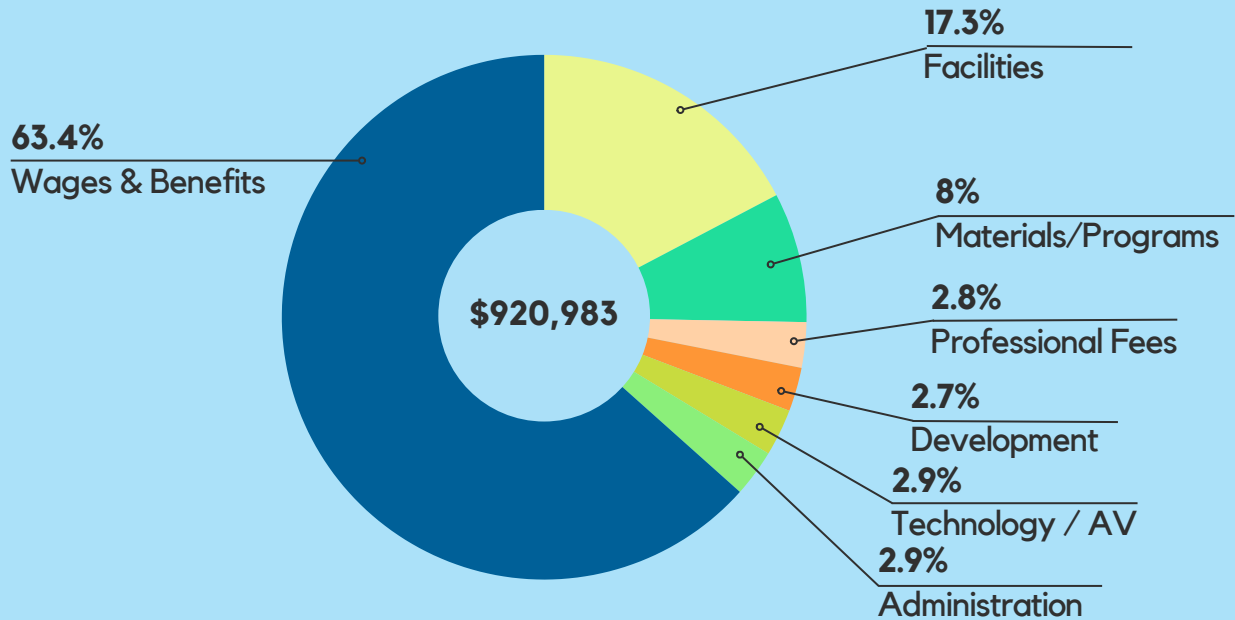


SUPPORT

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Mike & Barbara Powers

Planned Giving

"We could not be happier with our decision to include MCL in our estate, helping ensure the future of our outstanding Library. Please join us and consider making a planned gift to MCL."

In anticipation of his retirement, Mike Powers and his wife, Barbara, decided to consult with a professional financial advisor to gain an overview of their financial future and map a path for a secure and comfortable retirement income. In this exploration, they were also encouraged to consider making a provision for future charitable contributions via a planned gift.

The result: the Powers established a charitable remainder trust that provides lifetime income and a financial payout to named beneficiaries upon their passing. Their financial advisor, tax attorney, and accountant guided them in setting up the trust, giving them control over the various investment vehicles and the ability to modify or change the designated beneficiaries. They find this a most satisfying way to be confident they can continue supporting the charities that are most meaningful to them.



Frances Skinner Willing Circle and Planned Giving at MCL

The Manchester Community Library exists today thanks to the transformational power of philanthropy. In 1897, Frances Skinner Willing established the Mark Skinner Library in memory of her father for the community's benefit.

Over a century later, in 2006, a generous bequest from Lyn Hoyt provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand and enhance the Library's services to serve the community better. On November 15, 2014, the Manchester Community Library opened its doors at its present location.

Frances Willing, Lyn Hoyt, Martha Heilemann, Barbara and Michael Powers, and Frank and Sharron Kropa are among the individuals whose foresight ensures the future vibrancy of the Manchester Community Library for years to come. Won't you consider joining them in the Library's legacy society – the Frances Skinner Willing Circle? Please get in touch with Ed Surjan, Executive Director, at esurjan@mclvt.org for a confidential discussion about including the Library in your estate plans.

John & Samantha Black

New Donors

"On a visit to Manchester on a cold rainy December day, my wife and I stopped in at MCL to get out of the rain and see what it had to offer. In a lot of ways, it was like stepping back in time. Adults and children were sitting and actually reading books—not staring at their phones—and they were having a good time!



Children were laughing at stories being read and adults were lounging comfortably engrossed in the books they were reading. We subsequently purchased a home in Manchester and I visit the library regularly. My experience there is always the same as that first visit. The staff is friendly, knowledgeable, and extremely helpful. The facilities and book selection are first class.

Since moving to Manchester, I have financially supported MCL because I believe that libraries are vital to healthy, successful communities. I attribute a great deal of my success in business and my happiness in life to my life-long love of reading and my sense of curiosity which began and grew in libraries.

MCL provides the same opportunities I benefited from to residents of Manchester and Southwestern Vermont, regardless of their means. I cannot think of a better organization to support!"

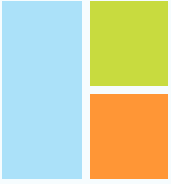
Georgeanne Bonifanti

IRA Giving

Georgeanne is an accomplished retired librarian, an enthusiastic volunteer, and a generous donor to MCL. Echoing Andrew Carnegie's sentiments, she says, "I support MCL because a public library outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its citizens."

Georgeanne gives to the Library directly from her IRA. Qualified charitable distributions allow eligible IRA owners up to \$100,000 in tax-free gifts to charity annually. She encourages you to join her in "making gifts to the Library through your IRA. Your generosity can make a real difference, simplify your giving, and reduce your tax burden.





DONOR ROLL

Thank **YOU**, our donors, for playing a significant role in ensuring **YOUR** Manchester Community Library's role as a hub of the community, a trusted resource, and a welcoming and stimulating environment for learning and social connection. We could not do this work without **YOU**.

This report gratefully recognizes all donations made between August 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this report. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions, and notify Daniel Gostelow, Advancement Coordinator, at dgostelow@mclvt.org or (802) 549-4578.

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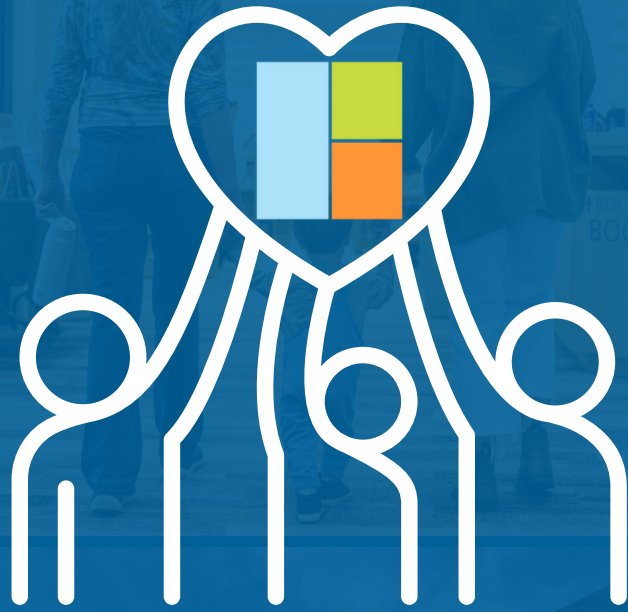
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