# 

## **ANNUAL APPRECIATION** REPORT

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY LIBRARY FY 2025

















Dear Friends of the Manchester Community Library,

Each year, we have the privilege of reflecting on the growth, impact, and heart of the Manchester Community Library — and this year, more than ever, I am struck by the incredible role you play in making our Library the vibrant center it is today. In addition to a year of new faces, programs, and partners, we said farewell to some very important MCL members. Former Executive Director, Ed Surjan, stepped down after shepherding the library through two years of growth, while John Clark turned over Board Chairmanship to Rhonna Cass after four years of dedicated leadership. We thank John and Ed for their incredible contributions and welcome Rhonna.

We continued to see a growing number of new faces participate in the library's dynamic and engaging programs and services. From the quiet joy of a child discovering a new favorite book, to the lively hum of weekly Mah Jongg and Canasta gatherings, to the breakthroughs made in tutoring sessions and tech workshops — your support is the reason these moments happen. And they happen every day.

This year, our Library was so much more than a building. It was a center for local arts and culture, a launchpad for new learners, and a forum for honest conversation and celebration. Whether welcoming our community to meet local candidates, hosting play groups for new families, expanding access to a variety of language programs, or simply being a warm space for neighbors to gather, MCL continues to reflect the caring spirit that is the strength of our Manchester community.

We've made meaningful strides this past year:

- Delivered more than 1,000 free programs, helping us reach new community members.
- Diversified our collection by offering expanded access to digital streaming platforms like Kanopy and Libby.
- Strengthened partnerships with cultural organizations, schools, and local nonprofits like Merck Forest & Farmland Center, Southern Vermont Center on Aging, and more.

As we look ahead, we remain deeply committed to making the library a resource for everyone:

- To remain a hub of lifelong learning in an ever-evolving world.
- To ensure equity and access, regardless of age, income, or background.
- To cultivate imagination, compassion, and connection in everything we do.

Your generosity fuels every story we help write — and we are deeply grateful. As we prepare for a new year full of fresh possibilities, we invite you to stay engaged and inspired.

On behalf of our staff, our board, and the thousands of lives you've touched through your support, thank you.

With warm appreciation,

Matt DeLaney

**Executive Director** 

Manchester Community Library

## 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.

## Our 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.



#### Thank you, Ed!

On behalf of the staff, the Board of Trustees, and the Manchester community, we are immeasurably grateful for the work you've done to enrich the Library experience for everyone who walks through our doors. Your dedicated leadership has made us better as an institution, as individuals, and as a community. We wish you nothing but the best.

## MCL STAFE

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Karen Huerta
Emet Koffman
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Carson Schafer
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I moved to Vermont in May 2023. In July 2023, I walked into the Manchester Community Library and asked if they needed a volunteer who was also a librarian. I've been volunteering at MCL ever since. My professional experience has shown me the value of good volunteer help in all areas of library service. I'm happy to share my knowledge with the staff and patrons. Being in this welcoming building and surrounded by books and fun people makes me very happy! The MCL is a great place to find a sense of purpose and fulfillment that is hard to find elsewhere.



### Permanent StoryWalk at MCL

MCL's new StoryWalk is a permanent structure built on library property. Display panels, each holding a two-page spread, extend from the Library's entrance up the gravel path to the Main St. crosswalk. The inaugural book on display was titled *Tools Rule!* By Aaron Meshon, chosen in honor of the volunteer carpenters, David Quesnel and Ken Dillihay, who dug, hammered, sawed, and nailed to make the StoryWalk possible.





A special outdoor story time was hosted in May to unveil each panel of the StoryWalk as families traveled the path, guided by Youth Services Librarian Carson Schafer.

### Permanent StoryWalk at MCL

MCL's ability to provide community engagement and enrichment through both inperson and virtual programming has gotten a powerful boost.

Acoustic and audiovisual system upgrades have been completed in the Library's Hunter Community Room, enhancing the in-person experience for all programming, improving access for virtual attendees, and making technology management more accessible for presenters.





Included in the upgrades is an all-new hybrid video streaming system, developed in partnership with GNAT-TV. This forward-thinking partnership brings together two mission-driven organizations to expand both in-person and digital participation in local life, ensuring inclusive and equitable access for all.



## **Program Partners**











**AARP** 

**American Red Cross** 

Bennington Beledi Tribal Bellydance

**Battenkill Bicycles** 

**Bennington County Democrats** 

Bennington County Multicultural Community

Center

**Bennington County Republicans** 

Bennington County State's Attorney's Office

Bennington Garden Club

Bennington Regional 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Committee

Birds & Beans

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont

**Burr & Burton Academy** 

Cafeteria Culture

Celebrate Land Project

**Community Food Cupboard** 

Dina's Bakery

**Dinoman** 

**Earth Matters** 

Easterseals Vermont

Fiddleheads Farm & Forest School

Fiery Froggies

Floating Bird

For the Love of Vermont

Garden Club of Manchester

**Ghost Light Farm** 

Glass Darkly Films

**GNAT-TV** 

**Grace Initiative Global** 

Green Mountain Academy for Lifelong Learning

Heritage Family Credit Union

**Kingdom County Productions** 

Let's Connect!

**Long Trail School** 

Manchester Elementary Middle School

Manchester Energy Committee

Manchester Fire Department

Manchester Historical Society

Manchester Journal

Manchester Machine Makers

Manchester Music Festival

**Manchester Police Department** 

Manchester Riverwalk

Maple Street School

MEMS PTO

Merck Forest & Farmland Center

Merill Lynch

Mother Myrick's Confectionery

Musikgarten

NaNoWriMo

National Alliance on Mental Illness

**National Voter Registration Day** 

## Program Partners











Nature's Market Neighbor to Neighbor Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Northshire Bookstore
Northshire Day School
Prospect Rehabilitation
Red Fox Community School
Shakespeare in the Woods
Sisters in Crime New England
SOLO

Southern Vermont Writers Conference Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging Southwestern Vermont Medical Center

State of Vermont Stratton Foundation Sunrise Family Resource Center Sushi Boat

Sync Up with Sue Taconic Music Taconic Spine The Collaborative

The Reptile Nook
Town of Manchester

Trevor the Games Man

Trout Unlimited
United States Forest Service
University of Vermont Extension

Master Gardeners
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**Vermont Blues Society** 

Vermont Center for Independent Living

Vermont Department for Children & Families,

Family Services Division

Vermont Department of Libraries

Vermont Film & Folklore Festival

Vermont Humanities

Vermont Macrame

Vermont Phone Free School Coalition

Vermont Public Interest Research Group

**Vermont Sampler Initiative** 

Vermont Attorney General's Office

**Vermont State Treasurer's Office** 

Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission

VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region

**VT** Digger

Weston Theater Company

Willoughby's Depot Eatery

## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT**

Collections Development Librarian Carrie Gutbier and Youth Services Librarian Carson Schafer have been working hard to update and reorganize the MCL collection. 1,937 new books, audiobooks, DVDs, and museum passes were added to the collection this fiscal year. In the Children's Library, Carson has added "MCL To Go" bags that allow families to take home themed books and activities and expanded our collection of materials in Spanish and French. The Children's Library has also been stocked with a collection of new, educational toys and activities for families visiting the space.









**4,796** FY25



28,560 FY24 43,128 FY25

## **GRANT WORK**

Each year, MCL works diligently to secure grants that support programs and provide vital opportunities for community enrichment, enhancing the impact of your tax dollars. This year, grant funds were awarded to various initiatives, including summer reading programs for reluctant readers, daily preschool activities, and after-school programs offering students a safe third space. Grants also funded film screenings and fostered community engagement through the Vermont Reads program. Additionally, grants supported our third annual International Voices concert with Taconic Music. Some grants, such as funding the courier service for interlibrary loans, may not be immediately visible to the public, but all of these grants supplement taxpayer funding, maximizing resources and fostering a stronger, more vibrant community.





**72,386** LIBRARY VISITS

## ADULT PROGRAMMING













When many people envision libraries, they often conjure images of serene spaces where solitary individuals immerse themselves in hushed reading. However, MCL aspires to be a distinct type of library that fosters social connections among its patrons. While designated areas are available for quiet focus, programming and engagement activities dominate the majority of the day. Last year, the library hosted over 1,400 patron-requested programs, many of which were presented in collaboration with schools, nonprofits, local businesses, and town committees. From health and wellness programs to educational and recreational activities, MCL endeavors to meet the multifaceted needs or interests of its patrons.

575
Adult & All Ages
Programs

**6,192** Attendees

## ADULT PROGRAMMING







Vermont 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programs at the Library have been graciously co-sponsored by the Manchester Historical Society. This series of events, beginning in March 2025, explores Vermont's origins, with a spotlight on 18th-century Bennington County. Expert lectures, hands-on workshops, interactive demonstrations, and film screenings offer the opportunity for community members of all ages to explore our collective history. The programming will continue through 2027 as our Brave Little State commemorates the semiquincentennial anniversary of the Republic of Vermont.







1,074 FY24 1,376 FY25



## YOUTH PROGRAMMING



















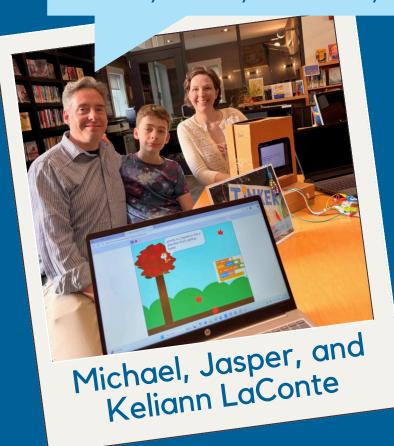
"When we moved to Manchester a few years ago, we quickly discovered that the Manchester Community Library is a central hub for the community. It is an amazing place to find programs and activities and to connect with other residents and families. We find ourselves at the library most days after school where Jasper (age:11) is a regular at programs like Build Quest, Creativity Cave, the Check Mates chess club, Fiery Froggy robotics, and Dragons in the Dungeon. Our whole family enjoys the library's weekend activities and concerts to the point that it sometimes feels like our social calendar is pretty much a copy of the library events calendar."

—The LaConte Family

## YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Jasper says that in addition to their wide selection of books, he loves that "it's an interactive place with a bunch of nice people and super nice librarians, where I've learned macrame, how to play chess, and built an art sculpture out of reverse floating triangles. It's a central place for the community and I've met a lot of nice people my age who I wouldn't have met otherwise."

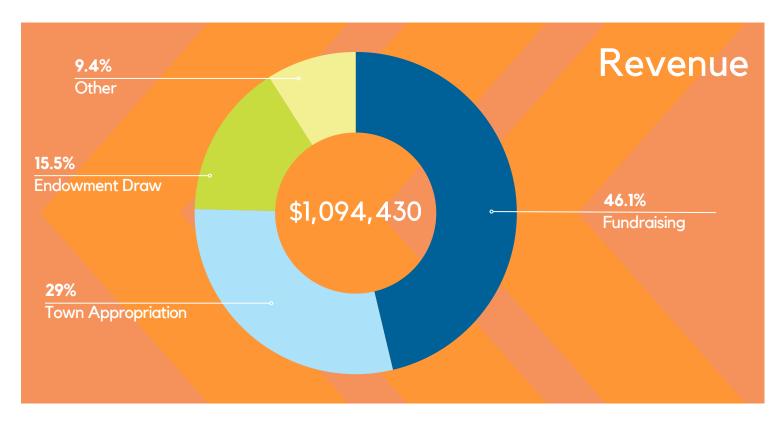
When we saw the library was looking for help setting up an after school program for computer coding, we saw it as a chance to give back to the place which had made this community feel so welcoming. We envision our Tinker Lab program to be a fun projects-based hang out focused on digital literacy and the intersection of coding and electronics. While making video games is the big draw, we also explore circuits, machine learning, and robo-crafty projects using micro controllers with a whole lot of bleeps, bloops, blinking LEDs and clicky buttons. Over the past year, the amazing kids in our community have made some incredible games. We hope you'll stop by and try them out on our homemade arcade—maybe you'll even get a high score. But the biggest win is having a place like the MCL as part of our community where kids, families and residents of all ages meet and connect over interests they may not have even known they had. See you at the library!



**572**Youth
Programs

7,474 Attendees







## SUPPORT

### The Return of the Blue Jean Ball

The beloved Blue Jean Ball fundraiser returned this June, marking the Manchester Community Library's 10th anniversary at its current Cemetery Avenue location. This long-standing tradition has always brought people together in their favorite denim to dance the night away while raising money for a beloved cause. This year's event was planned by current and honorary MCL trustees: Amanda Baer, Melissa Bell, Becky Burke, Rhonna Cass, Ruth Corbett, Fran Fauver, Ann Graham, Christine Miles, Hilary Oskam, and Linda Oskam. Emcees Rocco Maggiotto and Susie Hunter led a spirited evening, raising funds for MCL's future through raffles, a live auction, and a cash call. Special thanks to the Manchester Garden Club for their stunning centerpieces, Hub Poelmann for the delicious catering, Union Underground for bartending, Brian Hodnett of Sunset Entertainment for music and photos, and all MCL staff who helped make the 2025 Blue Jean Ball a tremendous success.













## **SUPPORT**

## FREEWILL

#### A Resource for You and Your Future

As we look forward to the future of MCL, we invite you to plan for your own future through our partnership with <u>FreeWill</u>. Using their online estate planning tool, you can create a will or revocable living trust 100% for free and protect the people, communities, and causes you care about.

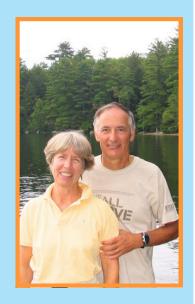
Additionally, many of our supporters give tax-smart gifts to support keeping the Library open as an inspiring gathering place for the community, providing opportunities and resources for personal enrichment and growth. These gifts come with a variety of tax advantages for you while making an immediate impact on our work. If you own stock or cryptocurrency, or have an IRA or a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), explore how you can support Manchester Community Library with this online platform. Visit us at <a href="mailto:mclvt.org/support-us">mclvt.org/support-us</a> to learn more!

### Martha & Richard Heilemann

#### **Planned Giving**

As a resource for learning and entertainment, the library in Manchester is second to none. The wide variety of materials available—books, digital resources, and activities—have enriched our lives for decades. For our family, it has played a unique and treasured role: two generations have grown up attending story time here, first our son and now our grandson. These memorable moments have instilled a love of reading, curiosity, and lifelong learning in our family.

We are deeply grateful to the Manchester Community Library for its enduring commitment to our community. Our legacy gift will provide a sustainable income for years to come, ensuring the library remains a vital resource for future generations.



## SUPPORT

## Jenny & Roy Niederhoffer

#### **New Donors**

Our family is so grateful for MCL. With one of our children attending an online microschool, we love having a calm, welcoming space where he can focus on schoolwork and meet with local teachers and mentors—an extension of his classroom. MCL has also opened doors for our kids to discover new friendships and interests. From Check Mates to Dungeons & Dragons, they've joined groups, tried new activities, and connected with other children in ways we couldn't create on our own.

We honestly can't imagine taking advantage of a school that fits our son's learning style so perfectly without this incredible resource. MCL is more than just a library—it's a hub that supports our whole family's learning, growth, and sense of community.

### Thank You!

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**.







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Vermont Department of Libraries

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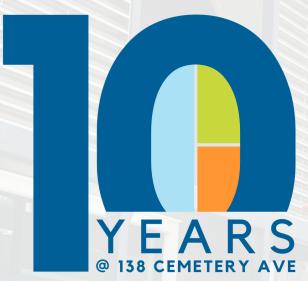
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This report gratefully recognizes all donations made between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this report. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions, and notify Daniel Gostelow, Advancement Coordinator, at dgostelow@mclvt.org or (802) 549-4578.



MANCHESTER COMMUNITY LIBRARY



To our donors, Board Members, Manchester residents, staff, volunteers, and patrons: **THANK YOU** for giving life to our Manchester Community Library over the last 10 years. Your continued support has built and enriched a community rooted in inspired gatherings and accessible opportunities.



Your donations create community, connection, and learning for all.



Manchester Community Library