B E Y O N D  B O O K S

Annual Report 2011–2012
These are exciting and challenging times for libraries. More than ever, we are the touchstones of our communities, places where people come not only for information and education, but to connect in our increasingly fragmented world. Libraries have become community centers where people regroup and recharge when the power goes out, where they come to collaborate, or find a quiet corner to study.

Here at The Ferguson, we are embracing new technologies like digital books, while at the same time, providing services such as English language training and job workshops for those who need them. Libraries, which offer access for all, play a key role in leveling the playing field in our society. Our diverse community, one of Stamford’s great strengths, requires a library that offers meaningful programs and services for all our users. The Ferguson is that place.

This has been a year of accomplishment, as we launched a new website, introduced a highly regarded early literacy program for young children, and dedicated a new literacy and conference room thanks to a generous donation from the Rotary Club of Stamford. We continue to work on building a fundraising program and are grateful for our many individual and corporate donors. In May, we welcomed nearly 300 guests into the library for our spring benefit, A Novel Affair. Thanks to the generosity of our Sunday sponsors, we were able to keep the Main Library open on Sundays, one of our busiest days of the week.

I am grateful to our Trustees, Citizen Advisors and The Ferguson Library Foundation for supporting our fundraising efforts with energy and enthusiasm, and to our entire staff for maintaining a high level of professionalism during difficult economic times. I would also like to offer my heartfelt appreciation to the Friends of The Ferguson Library for their tireless work and generous contributions on the Library’s behalf.

As we look beyond books to new formats and possibilities, I am struck by what hasn’t changed: The Ferguson remains the heart of our community, a place of excitement, engagement and connection. I invite you to join us, and be a part of all that is happening here.

William S. Callion, Jr.
Chair, Ferguson Library Board of Trustees
When I arrive at The Ferguson Library each day, I cannot help but be energized. If you haven’t been here lately, I invite you to see for yourself. Walk through the lobby of the Main Library, and you’ll see people reading in our New Materials Room, or browsing just across the hall in the Friends Book Shop, Stamford’s only independent book store.

Strollers are everywhere as young families take advantage of our many programs and discover the joy of reading together. Three quarters of a million people used The Ferguson Library this year, and our 150 public access computers are constantly busy with people using the Internet or finding information through one of our many research databases. Stop in on a lecture or film in our auditorium. Last year, more than 55,000 people attended one of our 1,600 programs. As we saw a need for job training, we began conducting career skills workshops, which have become some of our most popular offerings. Where there is a need, we strive to meet it.

These are uncertain times for libraries, as budgets remain tight and publishers debate whether and/or how to make ebooks available to public libraries. No one quite knows what the library of the future will look like and how people will use it. What is known is that the role of the public library will continue to evolve around its basic mission: to keep information freely available to a democratic society, and to collect, organize and retrieve that information for those who need it.

Here at The Ferguson, we have always looked to the future, and we will continue to find new and innovative ways to serve the Stamford community. Our diligent, experienced, and resourceful staff is the key to our service success. They are talented professionals and we can never thank them enough for all they do. I am also sincerely grateful for the dedication and support of our community leaders who serve on the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board, and as Citizen Advisors and Friends of The Ferguson Library, all of whom have been invaluable partners in helping us identify and meet community needs, and remain fiscally viable.

The Ferguson Library is all about continuing education and lifelong learning for the entire community. Regardless of the changes and challenges the coming year brings, I am confident we will be ready to embrace them.

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

“Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future.”
— Ray Bradbury
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.
Libraries everywhere are struggling to reinvent themselves as customers increasingly want digital materials. What will libraries look like ten years from now? Fifty? There will undoubtedly still be physical books on the shelves, but it’s a sure bet that more of our collections will be electronic. The transition to digital is still evolving. Several of the largest publishers refuse to sell ebooks to libraries, and not all titles are available in digital format, so we are unable to acquire some of the digital books our users want. Even so, we must move ahead.

As our budget allows, we are acquiring digital titles when they are available. We must still buy most of these titles in print, meaning our already tight materials budget doesn’t go as far as it used to.

Our customers also need help navigating this brave new digital world, so we have been offering training to teach them how to use their devices, as well as instruction on how to download library materials. These workshops have been very popular, especially after the holidays, when people came in with new e-readers they weren’t sure how to use.

Digital will not replace print anytime soon, but the transition is taking place and we intend to be ready.

The Heart of the Community

No power. No problem.

When Tropical Storm Irene knocked out power to our region in late August, the Library became a place to regroup and recharge. The day after the storm, 3,220 people came through our doors in a single day.
We are grateful for your generosity. Your commitment to the Library helps support our collections and makes it possible for us to offer the programs and services the Stamford community needs and deserves.

The Library’s annual appeal, mailed in the fall to the entire Stamford community, raised $101,000 from 1,066 donors in amounts large and small, and our May benefit, A Novel Affair, drew nearly 300 guests to the library for an evening of food, wine and jazz. The event honored former Ferguson Library Board of Trustees Chair George Harvey and raised $115,000. Best of all, 46 sponsors stepped up to support us.

Major sponsors:
- Friends of The Ferguson Library
- Kathryn Emmett & David Golub
- Pitney Bowes, Inc.
- Purdue Pharma, L.P.
- SL Green Realty Corp
- Thomson Reuters

Many thanks to the Rotary Club of Stamford for a generous $50,000 donation. The funds were used in part to equip a new Literacy & Conference Room at the Main Library, which is available to the public by reservation.

Our Sunday Sponsorship program is going strong. We would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for helping us keep the Main Library open Sundays, one of our busiest days of the week.
- Judith Block
- Cacace, Tusch & Santagata
- Citizens Bank
- Diserio Martin O’Connor & Castiglioni, LLP
- Downtown Special Services District
- First Niagara Bank Foundation
- GE Asset Management
- Law Offices of Emmett & Glander
- Pitney Bowes Foundation
- Seaboard Properties
- SL Green Realty Corp

In addition to sponsoring eight Sundays, the First Niagara Bank Foundation provided funding for a dozen new computers for the South End Branch. A $5,000 gift from the Dr. Hank Harris Fund helped us buy books for our summer reading program, and a $2,000 gift from the North Stamford Association purchased books for the Harry Bennett Branch.
New Website
In September, after a 15-month redesign project, The Ferguson rolled out a new website. The old site had been updated piecemeal over the years and didn’t reflect the new and exciting things going on at the Library. Our new site, generously funded by the Friends, is intuitive and easy to navigate, with a fresh design that we also extended to our newsletter, Focus on Ferguson. Visit us at www.fergusonlibrary.org.

Every Child Ready to Read
Thanks to a grant from the George Harvey Fund of The Ferguson Library Foundation, the Library was able to initiate Every Child Ready to Read, an early literacy program developed by the American Library Association. The program, which builds pre-reading skills in children ages two to four, was extremely popular and we hope to continue it next year.

Children’s Holiday Book Festival
On the first Sunday in December, the Main Library was transformed into a winter wonderland for our first ever Children’s Holiday Book Festival. Twelve renowned children’s authors and illustrators signed books and chatted with young readers and their families, and the Youth Services Department hosted a day of book-related activities. The event brought hundreds of people into the library and raised $2,500.
More than 55,000 adults and children attended 1,600 programs at the Library this year. But numbers only tell part of the story.

With nearly 12% of Stamford’s population over 65 years old, we are developing more programs for seniors, including workshops on Medicare/Medicaid and programs such as food assistance and living independently at home. Our collaboration with AARP to offer tax assistance to the low income elderly is now in its fourth year and extremely successful.

We launched two new discussion series: Just Add Show Tunes, which examined books that became classic American musicals, and a regular discussion of articles in The New Yorker magazine, which became so popular we extended the program.

Throughout the year, we offered concerts, films and author programs, including New York Times bestselling author Elin Hilderbrand at the Harry Bennett Branch, and a very civilized ‘Book Buzz Tea’ at the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch with British author Lucinda Riley.

More than 400 people signed up for the 2011 Adult Summer Reading Club, Get Caught Up in Reading, up from 370 the year before.
Our innovative and educational children’s programming gets kids hooked on the library at an early age. It’s no accident that children who grow up coming to the library become library users as adults!

Programs for our youngest patrons—the under two set—are wildly popular. There is a great demand for this type of early childhood programming, which nurtures pre-reading skills and encourages a love of books and language. One program we’re especially proud of is our Sensory Storytime program, initially funded with a grant from the Abilis Foundation. Sensory Storytimes are geared toward children ages three to five with autism or sensory processing issues. The Ferguson has received national attention for this program, and our staff has trained librarians from all over the country.

More than 2,800 children registered for our 2011 summer reading club, One World, Many Stories, a 3% increase over last year. For the first time, all our summer reading clubs began using online registration.

Programs are just the beginning. Our dedicated children’s librarians also create reading lists, recommend books, compile teacher units and do outreach in the schools and community.

Our teens are an enterprising bunch. After raising almost $2,200 for the Library last spring with a Teen Read-in, they decided to do it again. Their Teen Read-in 2, at the Harry Bennett Branch in October, raised $650 and lots of goodwill for the Library.

A total of 260 teen volunteers gave 2,157 hours to the Library this year, but it’s not all hard work. They enjoyed book discussions and programs like Karaoke Glee and an Iron Chef competition.
JOBSKILLSHELP

Over the last year, we have extended our offerings of job/career skills programs to meet a growing demand. At our popular mock interview workshops, professional career counselors teach interviewing techniques and offer one-on-one feedback. Other programs, including resume workshops and landing a part-time job, have been fully subscribed.

In addition to formal programming, our staff helps job applicants without computer skills negotiate online applications. Even jobs such as bus drivers and food preparers require applicants to apply online these days. There is still a digital divide and our role increasingly is helping people bridge it.

THEBOOKMOBILEANDPURPLEBUS

The bookmobile is on the road just one day a week, but it covers a lot of ground, making stops at preschools, senior residences, shopping centers and other neighborhood locations.

The beloved Purple Bus brings Stamford school children to the Library, some for the first time. Children from thirteen elementary schools and six pre-schools visited on the Purple Bus this year, a total of 1,800 students.

The Library processed 7,031 passport applications this year.
Our staff is constantly working to bring library services to the community as well as partnering with other organizations in our area.

Here are some of the ways we collaborate:

- A new literacy partnership with audit, tax and advisory firm KPMG helped purchase books for disadvantaged children.

- Our Dial-a-Book service mails books to the homebound. Visiting Books delivers books to fourteen senior centers around the city.

- ESL students tour the Library and learn about the services we offer.

- Our children’s librarians conduct trainings for Head Start teachers.

- A partnership with the Stamford Art Association brings art into the Library.

- Fifty kindergartners and their families came to the Library for family night, hosted with Stamford School Readiness Council.

The Ferguson undertook a community-wide survey in June to measure how Stamford residents use the Library and what services are most important to them. The survey, conducted by Berk Consulting of Seattle, was primarily designed to be taken online, although we found that quite a few respondents preferred the paper version. Both the online and paper survey were available in English, Spanish, Russian and Haitian Creole, and included questions on library usage, how satisfied users are with library programs and services, and which resources they feel are most valuable. It also included a series of questions for nonusers. 2,700 people took the survey, and the results will help guide us in developing a new strategic plan.

“The first thing I taught my kids was how to swim, the second — I took them to the library. So much of my life I learned from reading and the library.”

— Tom Calderbank, Dial-a-Book patron
The Friends Book Shop at The Ferguson Library

The Book Shop is a true Stamford treasure. The shop, with locations at the Main library and Harry Bennett Branch, sells quality used books at reasonable prices and is Stamford’s only independent book store. Last year the shop raised $202,000, proceeds that go to support library programs and collections. 128 volunteers gave more than 11,000 hours of their time.

“I come here and load up with as much as I can carry, and when I’m finished, I re-donate them.”
— Bernice Weiss

Friends Author Series 2011 – 2012

This past year the Friends Author Series welcomed these exciting authors to the Library:
• Gabrielle Hamilton and Colman Andrews
• Steve Berry and Andrew Gross
• Jane Green, Julie Otsuka and Charlotte Rogan (see below)
• Adriana Trigiani

Friends Literary Competition

561 young writers entered works of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. The winners were recognized at an awards ceremony at the Library in April.

Andrew Gale Film Series

The Friends underwrote a new film series in honor of the late Andrew Gale, a devoted library user, who especially enjoyed the Ferguson’s film programs.

Congratulations to the Friends for winning the “Friends of Connecticut Library Award for Outstanding Friends Organization of 2011.”
“I can’t say enough good things about the library. Anytime I need help, the librarians are right there.” — Roselyn Finchler
“I just moved to Stamford and was glad to find a library close by. I’m preparing for exams and can’t study at home, so I come here.”
— Jay Dorai

“Nothing can compare to the joy the library brings.”
— Judith Block

“The library is the community. It’s the heartbeat. If you don’t have a library, you have nothing. I don’t think I could live without the library.”
— Veronica Gambini

“The library is a big part of my entertainment — reading, listening and movies. I appreciate the very helpful and friendly people who work there.”
— Jacquelyn Jones

“You can sit down and unwind a little.”
— Tom Haber
### Ferguson by the Numbers

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Operating support from the city of Stamford</td>
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<td>Revenue from Library activities</td>
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<td>Salaries and staffing-related costs</td>
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<td>Purchases of books, electronic resources and other materials</td>
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<td>Total program attendance</td>
<td>55,417</td>
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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 to find out how you can help.

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The Friends of The Ferguson Library
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First Niagara Bank Foundation
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