

Brownell Library Report

By Penelope D. Pillsbury, Library Director

Brownell Library Trustees have agreed upon an updated Mission: **The Brownell Library provides diverse collections and services for all ages in a welcoming and comfortable environment where people come first. The staff's mission is to help patrons connect to and utilize the library's resources and to provide opportunities for community enrichment and cultural awareness.**

Our new **Long Range Plan** will be flexible, revised on an annual basis. **Four community values identified by Heart & Soul** are identified as Brownell's Service Responses in the new plan: **Education, Local Economy, Health & Recreation, and Community Connections.** Staff are developing Action Steps for each Service Response.

Our work within the wider community involved staff facilitating and hosting **Heart & Soul neighborhood conversations.** Friends offered books for the Little Free Library Project. We helped coordinate the **Railroad Avenue Recess Committee** and served as a lively stop for **Train Hop V.** Trustees and staff created treats and served as hosts to over 1500 attendees. The Kolvoord Community Room hosts many community groups beyond library programming.

Youth Staff, local gardeners and kids thoroughly enjoyed our first-ever **Library Garden for Kids, using a plot at Summit Street School.** Volunteers, teens and kids planted seeds & seedlings, and Youth Staff brought kids up weekly for weeding and harvesting. The vegetables were cooked into tasty dishes at the library, enticing kids to try healthy fresh foods. Principal Mary Hughes and the Natural Playground Committee supported the garden, which returns in 2014.

"Must Read" Mondays, 1st Wednesdays and 1st Fridays: Along with The Big Ideas Dine & Discuss series led by **volunteer Ed Cashman,** the staff started a "Must-Read" Mondays discussion group. Brownell remains the Chittenden County venue for **1st Wednesdays Lecture series sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council.** As part of our series, **Former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins** spoke to a 900 + audience at Ira Allen Chapel. Our **1st Friday Piano Concerts** attract accomplished and amateur pianists, sometimes at the same time that lively games of Dungeons & Dragons or Magic The Gathering are happening in the Youth Area.

Local history is always popular at Brownell. Tim Jerman's program **"Essex Before the Automobile"- The Photographs of Local photographer W. C. Sawyer** courtesy of the Vt Historical Society packed the meeting room with 75+ patrons. He also lead a well-attended Cemetery Walk to go with the Essex/Essex Junction **History Hikes,** funded through Railroad Ave Recess & Essex Historical Society.

Technology - In 2013, staff trained **2,470 people to use computers.** In a week, 597 persons used the library's public computers to access the internet or create documents. Patrons use our WiFi connection all over the building.

Climate Change and Brownell - The torrential downpour on Wednesday May 22 caused a flood in the server room closet . Water rose at the foot of the exit stair and came in under the mezzanine door. Bobby Miller offered the Village a grant to aid a reworking of the drainage to keep backwash out.

Books, DVDs and CDs still hot! Circulation 169,403! Brownell sponsored 87 adult programs, 317 programs for children and 151 for young adults for a huge total attendance of 8,020 in the course of 2013. We are proud that our community has many talented people who volunteer their time and expertise to offer events for us.

The busiest season for us is always Summer Reading Program: 262 kids registered, and they read 3077 books, an activity that reduces summer brain drain. 1643 attendees enjoyed 86 youth programs. 71 teens registered, and they read 637 books. 394 attendees enjoyed 40 teen programs. **Brownell Teens won the State Summer Reading Program video production prize.**

With the new VOKAL library consortium our patrons can see and request materials from farther afield. Our **Interlibrary loan requests have soared:** We requested 526 items for our patrons, in 2010 we asked for 457.

Friends of Brownell Library led by Janet Allard held monthly book sales, the proceeds of which support programming and best sellers. The Friends have added some new members, with many hands to help. FOBL helped fund the **Bus Tour of Rock of Ages Quarry and Visitors Center in Graniteville** this summer.

Library Trustees – Christine Packard, Chairperson, Andy Kolovos, Vice Chair, Sheila Porter, Secretary and Nina Curtiss, Treasurer are our board leaders. Andy Kolovos joined the board, when faithful **Genevieve Melle** stepped down. **Nikki Yandow** has rejoined the board. Our Teen Trustees are **Giselle Glaspie and Grace Yu**, who have enjoyed the library through TAB programs and give us a youthful perspective.

Brownell Library Foundation led by **Dorothy Bergendahl** made 1st Wednesday Programs possible again in 2013. Local sponsors beyond Friends and Foundation include: **Kolvoord Overton & Wilson, P.C., Northfield Savings Bank and Unsworth Law, PLC.**

Staffing Changes: **Adult Circulation Assistant Donna Canniff** resigned, and **Viki Kramer** was promoted to that position. **Andrew Baker** was hired to serve as **Adult Circulation Assistant.** **Young Adult Librarian Kat Redniss** resigned. Part-time Youth Services Assistant **Erna Deutsch** was promoted to full-time **Assistant Youth Librarian.** **Mary K. Dennison** joined the staff as part-time **Assistant in Youth and Young Adult Services.**

This year 134,368 people visited! Come back on August 16, 2063 to open **the Brownell Library Time Capsule** that we installed this year. Don't forget where it is in the Main Reading Room.