

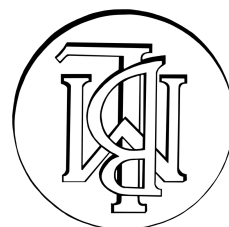
Bill Memorial Library



2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Groton, CT

Bill Memorial Library
240 Monument Street
Groton, CT 06340



The mission of the Bill Memorial Library is to meet the needs of the community in a welcoming and unique historic setting by stimulating imagination, providing the resources for lifelong learning, inspiring young patrons, and connecting to the online world.
Revised Oct. 2020, Board of Trustees

From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends of Bill Memorial Library,

As always, I want to thank you for being our patrons, donors, volunteers, and supporters. We couldn't do what we do without your support.

We had a great year, with increases in standard metrics: more library visits and more Bill Memorial cardholders. Our major milestones include getting fiber internet, replacing our early literacy computers with bilingual Spanish models, and installing a filtered and cooled drinking and water bottle filling station, all grant-funded! We are grateful to the Groton community for all of it.

If you haven't been in recently, I invite you to visit us in our classic 1890 building to see what's new and say hello!

We thank you again for your support.



Wendy Connal, Library Director



Wendy Connal, Library Director
Lover of books, dogs,
and...dinosaurs?



(left to right) Bailey Hartl of BML, Marie Carmenati of Chelsea Groton Foundation, and Wendy Connal of BML



Water bottle filling station

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2024 - 2025 Donors

In fiscal year 2024-2025, the Bill Memorial Library received 17.7% of our annual operating budget from the Town of Groton. As a small private library that is free and open to the public, we rely on public contributions for a large portion of our annual budget. We are thankful for the financial support of so many in the community who value the programs and services that the Bill Memorial Library provides.

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by Meryl Rockefeller

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Barnum
Charlotte Barnum
Holly and Stephen Eaves
Donna Johnston
Hali and Gerry Keeler
Sandra MacDougall

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Breezeline
Charter Oak Federal
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Chelsea Groton Foundation
Goldilocks Temple of Healing

Groton Utilities
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2024 - 2025 SUMMER SPONSORS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS & GRANTORS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Avery-Copp House
 Big Y Be Well Program
 Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School
 Children First Groton
 Connecticut Humanities
 Eugene O'Neill Theater Center
 Girls Who Code
 Groton Public Library
 Groton Public Schools
 Mystic and Noank Library
 Mystic River Brass Ensemble
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 Trillium Garden Club
 The Callithumpians
 TVCCA Little Learners
 UConn Agricultural Extension
 UConn EFNAP + SNAP
 Ryan Walker
 Waterford Public Library
 Wilder Gardens



Outreach Events with some of our Community Partners



Clockwise from top left: Mary-Jane, Eileen and Alex, Marsha, and Wendy and Alex

SPONSOR A SUMMER READER DONORS

Grants Awarded	Funding For
Chelsea Groton Foundation	AWE Station
City of Groton	Minor Façade Improvement
Groton Utilities	Water Bottle Filling Station
Mystic Woman's Club	AWE Station
Turn to the Wonderful	AWE Station
Mary Howard	Adult Programming

Martin P. Artale, Jr.
 Charlotte Barnum
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 Susan Bergeron
 Jane and Richard Bucklin
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 Marsha and Steve Dietrich
 Janet Downs
 Susan and John Durham
 Charlie Ebbinghaus
 The Goodman Family
 Robyn Hoffmann and Brent Eugenides
 Donna Johnston
 Joseph Kane, Jr.
 Bozena Kieltyka
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 Mary LaForce
 Jackie Massett

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 Andrea and Anthony Skiff
 Kathryn Spindler
 Duncan and Lolly Stoddard
 Elizabeth and Archie Swindell
 Fred and Dorothy Walker
 Patricia and Charles Warrington
 The Webster Family
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VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful for the knowledge, talent, and energy that our volunteers generously donated to the Library this past year. Many hours were spent on maintenance projects, fundraisers and programming that enriched the Library's services to our community. Thank you to everyone who helped!



Bill Pratt, Mary-Jane Carle, and Scott Carle accepting the Connecticut Library Association's Publicity Award (not pictured: Mary Howard)

Photo by Karla Umland

2024-2025 Library Budget

Income	
Endowment Draw	\$230,000
Fundraising/Other	71,651
Town of Groton	<u>65,000</u>
	\$366,651
Expenses	
Personnel	\$213,411
Library Supplies	22,009
Technology, Supplies & Programming	19,007
Building & Grounds	35,110
Other Operating Expenses	<u>77,114</u>
	\$366,651

Brian Bergman
Sue Bergman
Erica Benvenuti
Traci Boiselle
Scott Carle
Ruth Connal
Ky Connal-Nicolaou
Anuja Dharmadhikari
Marsha Dietrich
Gabiella Dixon
Janet Downs

Rochelle Duyan
Charlie Ebbinghaus
Sean Estep
Roman Fowler
Paola Gregoire
Joan Hamel
Saoirse Hannafin
Aliyah Hardison
Christiana Hardison
Eleanor Hardison
Kalina Hardison



Trustee Jason Rusk recording the sound for a musical video for Music & Movement



Summer Reading Program finale with Carrie Neri and Gibson from Top Hat and Tails Troupe (not pictured: Joan Hamel and Sukari, and Darlynea LePage and Winston)

Landon Hardison
Micah Hardison
Robyn Hoffmann
Tim Jackson
Eileen Johnson
Aditya Joshi
Bernadette Kunkemoeller
Emily Lavoie
John Lecce
Darlynea LePage
Stephanie Maiolo
Jackie Massett
Aaron McBride
Ken McBride
Eric McElroy
Christy McElroy
Gideon McElroy
Molly McElroy
Geoff McLean
Mark Oefinger
Sue Palmieri
Shalin Peck
Isabella Pongetti



2025 Photo Contest submission by Sydney Brooking

Christine Post
Bill Pratt
Conor Price
Kalyssa Ritchey
David Rose
Jason Rusk
Jill Rusk
Lucy Sakjowicz
Ronald Steed
Dane Stevenson
John Steward
Liz Swindell
Grayson Trask
Hadley Trask
Landon Trask
Helen Trieu
Ryan Walker
Natalie Webb
Harmony Wheaton
Lilyanna Zammuto
Rob Zuliani

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Children's Programs were fun and informative, and as always, active and interactive! Several young children completed our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program; look for our wall of all-stars in our children's room. 500 Books Before Middle School was also popular, and grade-school readers are reaching their goals! There's always lots to read and do at Bill Memorial.



The best cooking looks like a fun experiment!

Elementary-age Cooking Class with

**Erica Benvenuti, Community Nutrition Educator,
UConn EFNAP + SNAP (left)**

2025 SUMMER READING HIGHLIGHTS

Over 55 kids PreK-Gr 5 expressed their creativity this summer, actively reading and playing a fun humanities-themed version of our summer reading game, with a total of **1,604** days read, an average of **28** days read per child.

We hosted several programs for children and their families, including comedy magic by Justin Mazz; a music show by Michelle Urban; several arts and crafts activities involving polymer clay, beads, paint, and more; and a finale with dancing dogs from the Top Hat and Tails Troupe!

SCHOOL-YEAR PROGRAM TOTALS

Ages Birth to 5:	72 Programs
Attendance:	2,000+ Attendees

Ages 6 to 11:	14 Programs
Attendance:	565 Attendees

2024-2025 SCHOOL-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Storytime was well-attended weekly, including by Riverfront Children's Center, and several daycares and homeschool groups. Special guests included Freddie the Dog and a friendly T-Rex (both played by none other than library Director Wendy Connal, pictured on p. 2).
- Music & Movement showcased local musicians including Brian Bergman, Marsha Dietrich, John Lecce, and Bill Pratt on multiple instruments.
- Mary-Jane added a special small-group Music & Movement for shyer individuals.
- Kids enjoyed learning about and interacting with various creepy-crawlies and birds of prey in visits from Riverside Reptiles and the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center.
- Painting was very "popular" with several three-dimensional seasonal tree crafts using puzzle pieces, and kids discovered and decorated fossils.



"Touching" encounter at the Summer Reading Program kick-off with Tripledale Farm's petting zoo

TEEN PROGRAMS



Teens making art with a twist!

Our Girls Who Code club was open to middle and high school students both in-person and virtually, and aimed to make technology a more inclusive career. Coders worked independently and in small teams to learn coding languages, made crafts that combined STEM and art, did hands-on activities that promoted an understanding of real-world troubleshooting, and problem-solved together.



Several teens participated with their families in this past summer's miniature art display - so many mini masterpieces!

SCHOOL-YEAR FUN!

Over 230 teens attended a wide variety of fun, informative, and creative programs after school, including:

- Diamond painting
- Fingerpainting
- Werewolf (a year-round favorite)
- "Weird planets, moons, and asteroids" with Geoff McLean
- Teen cooking program with Natalie Webb, consulting dietician for the Big Y Be Well Program
- Beading sun catchers (bins 'o beads pictured below)



SUMMER READING 2025

Over 60 teens joined us during the summer of 2025 to play games, learn about wearable crafts, write creative book reviews, complete reading challenges, and paint masterpieces on canvas.



Summer Reading Program Bubble Art activity

ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMS

The library is always a fun place for people of all ages to socialize and learn. Our Food for Thought Book Group met monthly at Groton Townhouse. The Something Else Entirely book club, which meets to discuss speculative fiction, has quite a few members and continues to grow. The Icelandic tradition of *Jolabokaflokkur* was celebrated again with wrapped books and chocolates. Various staff members shared their skills through the Skill Library and during the Summer Reading Program, including sourdough bread making, beading, painting, and more!

FAMILY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Mystic River Brass Band
- Take Your Child to the Library Day
- Drop-in teacup craft
- Holiday Photo Shoot at the library
- Night of Traditional Songs and Stories including “My Childhood Christmas in Greece” with Andreas Connal-Nicolaou and music with The Callithumpians
- Marigolds for Mom (or Any Special Person)
- Seed Giveaway



Valentine's Teacup Craft

ADULT SUMMER FUN!

Why should kids have all of the fun? Three creative and informative adult programs were offered this summer, as well as the chance to win gift certificates to local restaurants and shops for reading and writing short book reviews.

- Beaded Suncatchers
- Guided Paint Class with Mocktails
- “My Semester in Australia” lecture

PROGRAM TOTAL FOR ADULTS AND FAMILIES

55 programs
1,811 in attendance!

ADULT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- The Death of Lt. Col. Ledyard with John Steward
- Crossing the Veil: When the Dead Speak (so scarily popular that it was offered twice!) with Traci Boiselle
- Book Signing with Ryan Walker, author of *The Silent Service's First Hero*
- Navigating Probate with Rochelle Duyan
- Holiday Season Relaxing Meditation with Ron Steed
- Tasty Recipes for the New Year with Erica Benvenuti
- Gardening with Native Plants with Jim Natale of Wilder Gardens
- Blues 101 (History of the Blues) with Ramblin' Dan Stevens (pictured above)
- Sourdough “Starter” Class (ran 3 times!) with staffer Mary
- Birdwatching with the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center



Adult Guided Paint Class with staffer Catherine