



2022 Annual Report

WE'RE BACK!





Photo by: Neil Grabowsky

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Founded in 1893, Montclair Public Library serves the citizens of Montclair, New Jersey through two facilities: the Main Library and the Bellevue Avenue Branch. The mission of Montclair Public Library is to change lives every day, through words, ideas, and community building. Our vision is to provide unlimited opportunities for lifelong learning, discovery, and community engagement.

Board members as of December 31, 2022

Montclair Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

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The Montclair Public Library Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that develops philanthropic support for the Montclair Public Library. Established in 2002, the MPL Foundation raises funds for library programs, collection enhancement, staff development, special projects, and other critical needs that exceed municipal funding. The Foundation has raised over \$4.5 million to support Library programs and services including technology improvements, museum passes, summer reading programs for children, and the signature Open Book / Open Mind series, which brings together high-profile authors and expert conversation partners for in-depth discussion about their work.

Dear Friends,

Our theme for 2022 was “We’re back!”

It was such a pleasure to be fully open in both buildings. We are especially grateful for the community support and Township discretionary funding that enabled us to restore hours to seven days a week at the Main Library and six days a week at the Bellevue Avenue Branch.

Clearly, you enjoyed coming back to the Library!

- We had more than 114,000 visits, up 85% from 2021.
- Program attendance and class registrations totaled 11,430, a 40% increase.
- 370,000 physical and digital items were checked out, a 21% increase.



You came to the Library for many reasons: Adult School classes, storytimes in different languages, Open Book / Open Mind discussions, programs for seniors, teen games, computer and research help.

We were very glad to make many of our resources—books, music, movies, research, programs—available to you in your homes.

And, of course, we enjoyed bringing the Library to you whether on the eTuk, marching in the Independence Day Parade, or participating in the many school and community events that make Montclair so special.

Thank you for coming back. I hope you’ll enjoy revisiting 2022 highlights in this Annual Report.

As many of you know, I also came back in 2022. I grew up in Montclair (the Bellevue Avenue Branch was my childhood library) and returned to raise my daughters (the Main was their first library). I have worked at my hometown library a few times since becoming a librarian in 2008, and it is now my great pleasure to be Director of this outstanding one.

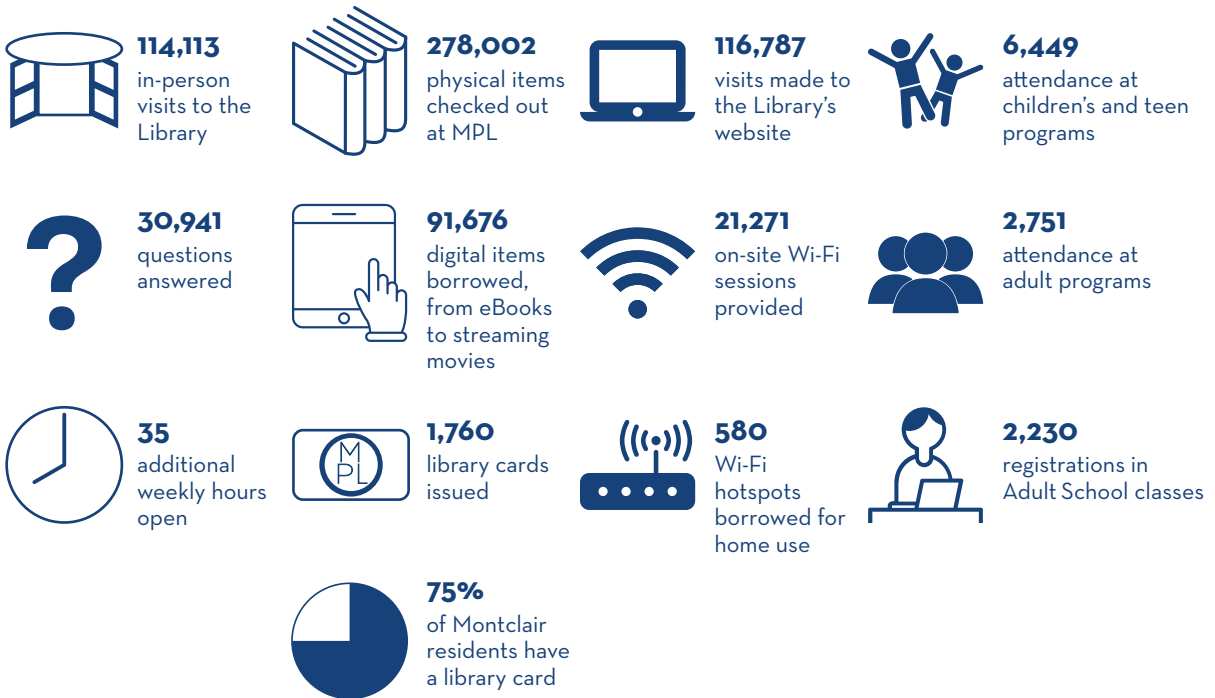
You may also know that I love hearing new ideas! Email me at director@montclairlibrary.org to share your thoughts and feedback about what would make the Library even better.

On behalf of the entire staff and Board of Trustees, welcome back!

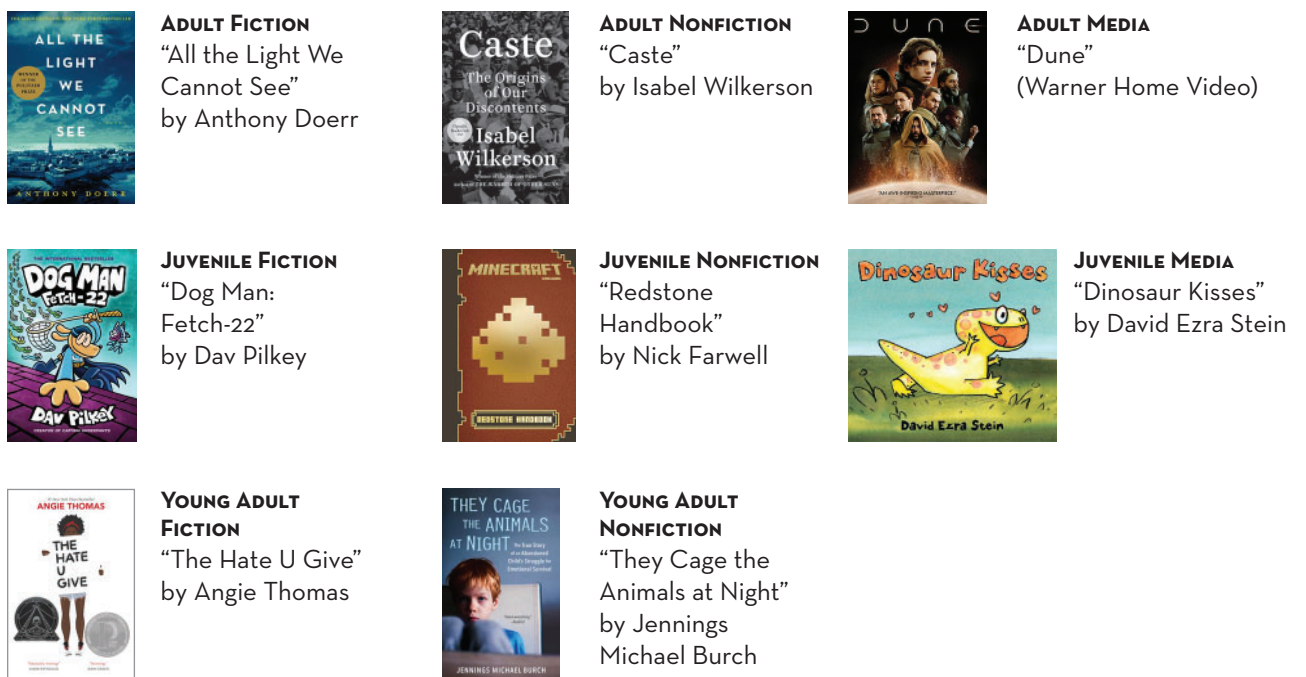
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Janet Torsney, MLS
Director
Montclair Public Library

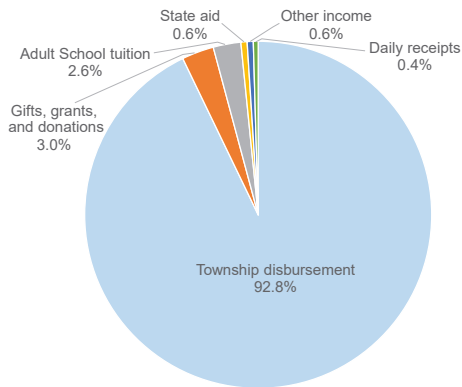
2022 by the Numbers



Most Borrowed Titles

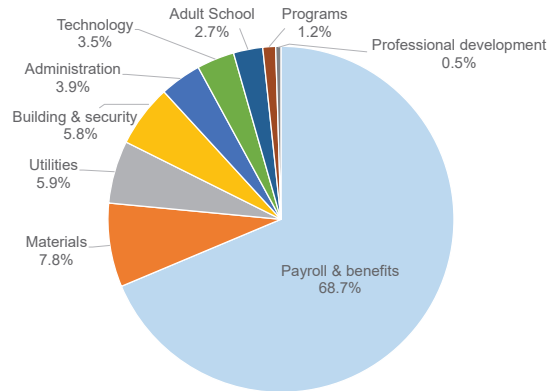


Library Budget *Income used and expenditures made in 2022*



INCOME

Township disbursement	\$3,382,267
Gifts, grants, and donations.....	\$108,688
Adult School tuition.....	\$93,826
State aid	\$21,071
Other income	\$20,683
Daily receipts.....	\$16,363
TOTAL	\$3,642,898



EXPENDITURES

Payroll & benefits	\$2,501,662
Materials	\$285,250
Utilities.....	\$213,464
Building & security	\$212,231
Administration	\$141,343
Technology	\$127,847
Adult School	\$99,777
Programs	\$43,593
Professional development	\$17,731
TOTAL	\$3,642,898

Grants Received

In 2022, MPL and the MPL Foundation applied for and received almost \$70,000 in external grants. The number of grant applications more than doubled between 2021 and 2022. The amount received also increased by over 150%. The grants support a diverse range of projects and purposes:



Wi-Fi expansion and outdoor library

...Hyde and Watson Foundation, LibraryLinkNJ, and Montclair Foundation

Creative Aging program

...New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Digital literacy

...Public Library Association

2023 Local Arts grant for a Hispanic Heritage Celebration

2023 Local History grant for deed abstract digitization

...Essex County Division of Cultural Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Neurodiverse and special needs programming and materials

...Whitehill Foundation

“Stories of Exile” reading groups

...Yiddish Book Center

Pandemic relief

...American Library Association COVID Library Relief Fund

Adult School



Image by: John Meixner

The Adult School Department offered 254 total classes and tallied 2,230 registrations in 2022. Classes and events were held at both Library branches as well as offsite locations throughout Montclair.

As a recipient of the American Library Association's American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Libraries, the Adult School applied the funds toward "A Journey through the Philippines" in July, a cultural celebration of family crafts, dance, and music rooted in indigenous customs, history, and storytelling by Alay Philippine Performing Arts. The grant also funded "A Musical Tribute to Hispanic Heritage" in September with Peruvian-American singer Lula Valdivia, as well as "Celebrating Italian Heritage with Neapolitan Music and Culture" in October. The combined attendance for all three events was almost 200.

Among the offsite programs were a three-film series retrospective to honor early Black filmmaker and Montclair resident Oscar Micheaux, offered in partnership with Montclair Film; an iPhone photography workshop at Van Vleck House and Gardens; 5K training at Anderson Park; and a bus trip to the Holiday Train Show at the New York Botanical Garden. The Adult School began a partnership with Montclair Community Farms to offer classes in urban homesteading, beginning with "Introduction to Canning and Food Preservation" in October. The department also presented "Voices from the Caribbean Poetry Showcase" with the Nuyorican Poets Cafe as co-sponsor.

Adult Services

In 2022, Adult Services offered a variety of engaging virtual, hybrid, and in-person programs and events. In-person health screenings conducted by nurses from Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center continued, and a virtual fitness class—Open Level Pilates on the Mat—engaged 168 participants. Patrons received in-person assistance with technology through its Book A Librarian appointments, and outreach was conducted at Edgemont Parkhouse.



Photo by: Tony Turner / Dance on the Lawn

The Everything Book Club, Teachable Moments Book Club, and Start a Series Book Club offered nearly 30 sessions where a diverse selection of titles was discussed, including "Harlem Shuffle" by Colson Whitehead, "Orchid Thief" by Susan Orlean, "Devil in a Blue Dress" by Walter Mosley, and "The Garden of Evening Mists" by Tan Twan Eng. Over 125 participants enjoyed

films ranging from “A Bag of Marbles” (in recognition of Holocaust Remembrance Day) to “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman” (as part of the Library’s Juneteenth celebration). The Library also hosted a screening of “Frankenstein” with special guest Sara Karloff, daughter of Boris Karloff.

Over 500 patrons attended musical, theatrical, and dance presentations. In April, the Library celebrated National Jazz History Month with a performance of “The Music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn” presented by Vinnie Cutro; in July, the Hudson Shakespeare Company presented “Much Ado About Nothing”; in September, the Library hosted Dance on the Lawn; and Montclair Early Music presented its “Pilgrims to Patriots” concert in October.

Nearly 140 attendees participated in author talks including a virtual presentation of “The Strong Black Woman: How a Myth Endangers the Physical and Mental Health of Black Women” by Marita Golden in conversation with Sonyrea Tate. The Library also partnered with AAPI Montclair in a presentation of “Rise: A Pop History of Asian America from the Nineties to Now” with Jeff Yang and Phil Yu.

In the fall the Library debuted “Living Green,” a series co-presented by Montclair Climate Action that covered topics such as Rooftop Solar 101 and Electric Vehicles 101. The Library also initiated a Senior Craft Club and held a Come Craft With Us event for all ages in November.

Adult Services participated in several statewide initiatives and national programs, including the Access Navigators Program and NJHealthConnect @ Your Library. MPL was among over 160 public libraries nationwide awarded funding by the Public Library Association, supported by AT&T, to conduct digital literacy workshops. It also received a grant from Essex County Division of Cultural Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, to continue digitizing its collection of deed abstracts, an essential part of its Local History collection.

Bellevue Avenue Branch

The Branch saw 17,655 in-person visits in 2022. In June, it expanded its open hours from 19 to 40 hours per week, which exceeds the pre-pandemic level of 36 hours per week.

During the year, the Branch hosted numerous weekly storytimes, arts and crafts, musical dance programs, and more to serve 2,799 children. Staff also ventured out to Brookdale Park for pop-up storytimes that reached 200. Summer kicked off with a concert by Rockness Music and ended with live animals from Eyes of the Wild, presented through the Clean Communities Grant of Essex County. The Corner Book Club for adults debuted with six librarian-led discussions, while teens came together to solve a whodunit during our After-Hours Murder Mystery Party. Music Mondays returned, sponsored by the Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library, offering live music on the plaza for families.



Photo by: Neil Grabowsky

Borrower Services



Photo by: Neil Grabowsky

The Library rejoined the Reciprocal Borrowing and Lending (ReBL) program at the beginning of 2022. Montclair cardholders can once again access the physical collections of Essex County libraries that are not in the BCCLS network, including but not limited to Newark Public Library, Verona Public Library, and Montclair State University's Harry A. Sprague Library.

The Home Assisted Services (H.A.S.) program continued to provide delivery and pick-up of Library materials to Montclair residents who cannot easily leave their home due to mobility issues, age, or other reasons. The department also continued to acquire difficult-to-find items from libraries across the state and country through a partnership with the New Jersey State Library. Borrowing through the state catalog is available to all MPL cardholders.

Borrower Services once again offered test proctoring services to students who need to take supervised standardized tests. Students can request that a librarian act as a proctor and, pending approval from the institution giving the exam, set up an appointment to take the test in a quiet study room. This service is open to all residents of Essex County.

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Youth & Teen Services

2022 saw Youth & Teen Services transition from virtual to in-person again. Nevertheless, the virtual programs in early winter offered an array of options for families: storytimes, a homeschool community book club, a Black History Month concert by social justice rapper Fyütch, and "Simply Safe Kids Parent Workshop: Sexual Abuse Prevention Education," which allowed parents to learn about tough topics from author Kimberly King via Zoom.



Upon resuming in-person programs in the spring, the Library co-presented Succeed2gether's 6th annual Montclair Literary Festival, serving as one of the festival's outdoor venues with programs such as storytelling by Sabina Wasonga-Gitau.

Summer saw enriching programs: Alliah L. Agostini debuted her book "The Juneteenth Story,"

culminating in a discussion on the importance of commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African-Americans; staff presented a Pride Storytime in partnership with Montclair Pride; and Fyütch, by then a Grammy nominee, performed his catchy family rap songs in-person to a jumping crowd.

In the fall and winter, the department celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a concert from Mariana Iranzi, held the annual Little Read, introduced resources to new homeschooling parents, provided weekend drop-in crafts and a second installment of the Sew It! Workshop, organized the Kwanzaa Community Celebration, and added Korean and French storytimes.

During the year, teen volunteers performed more than 900 hours of service, ran children's programs and helped with crafts, made community greeting cards, and organized teen books in the collection.

Outdoor Library



In October, MPL formally dedicated the Kathryn Perino Outdoor Library, a permanent seating area and garden in front of the Main Library. Kathryn Perino (1939-2019) was a Montclair resident for 30 years and a teacher in the Union City school system. Funds from her generous bequest to the Library helped to create the new space.

The outdoor library includes accessible tables, seating, and umbrellas, as well as an expanded Wi-Fi signal radius and bandwidth. Two of the umbrellas use solar energy to provide charging stations for personal devices such as tablets and phones. The outdoor seating and free Wi-Fi are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and are not dependent on the operating hours of the Library. It is well-suited for individuals and small groups who do not want to enter the building but still want a quiet place to study, work, or browse the web.



In addition to the estate of Kathryn Perino, this project was made possible by the generous support of the Hyde and Watson Foundation, the Montclair Public Library Foundation, LibraryLinkNJ, and the Montclair Foundation.

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC LIBRARY
OPEN BOOK  **OPEN MIND**
 AN OPEN DOOR TO TOP WRITERS & THINKERS



Maggie Haberman's conversation about her bestselling book "Confidence Man" became the Library's most-viewed YouTube video (more than 25,000 views).

In 2022, Open Book / Open Mind highlighted 12 highly distinguished authors and their books, including New York Times bestsellers "Confidence Man" by Maggie Haberman, "The 1619 Project" collection, and "Empire of Pain" by Patrick Radden Keefe. Two of the programs were also broadcast on C-SPAN's Book-TV. In September, the program began using a hybrid format. Altogether, with in-person attendance, live Zoom participation, and views of recorded programs on YouTube, Open Book / Open Mind reached 29,000 viewers in 2022. Hosted authors included:

Khalil Gibran Muhammad and Jake Silverstein
 in conversation with David Troutt

- Caitlin Petre in conversation with Andrew Marantz
- Jeremy Peters in conversation with David Halbfinger
- Patrick Radden Keefe in conversation with DT Max
- Ben Raines in conversation with Sowandé Mustakeem
- Katherine Heiny in conversation with Kate Tuttle
- Tom Perrotta in conversation with Elisabeth Egan
- Alice Elliott Dark in conversation with Christina Baker Kline
- Maggie Haberman in conversation with Jonathan Alter
- Evan Mandery in conversation with Dale Russakoff
- Laurie Lico Albanese in conversation with Alice Elliott Dark

Special thanks to the Advisory Committee:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| David Jones, Co-chair | Alice Elliott Dark | Dionne Ford | Dale Russakoff |
| Kate Tuttle, Co-chair | Jennifer Dorr | Marc Lacey | Margot Sage-El |
| Jonathan Alter | Priya Doraswamy | DT Max | Rachel Swarns |
| Reagan Arthur | Elisabeth Egan | Juan Milà | Susan Weinberg |
| Neal Carruth | | | |

We are grateful for the generous sponsors of Open Book / Open Mind:



Josh Weston



Rosemary Iversen



Anonymous

In-kind sponsors:



From October 13-15, the 14th annual Little Read welcomed a series of guest readers onto the iconic big red chair to read stories aloud to schoolchildren and families. This celebration of literacy encourages sharing stories, building community, and cultivating a love of reading. Funds raised through sponsorships, organized by the MPL Foundation, support children's programming at the Library throughout the year, including the Summer Reading program.



The Little Read began with class visits and culminated in a community read at Geyer Family YMCA and a dance party at the Main Library, which featured Jorge Aguirre, author of "The Chronicles of Claudette" graphic novel series and head writer for PBS' "Alma's Way"; Dagmara Domińczyk, author and star of "Succession" on HBO; Sharron Miller, Artistic Director of Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts; and Nitro Blues Band (School of Rock).



Thanks to our Little Read sponsors:

Bedtime Stories Sponsor  Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center

Community Site Sponsor 

BookMate Sponsors  MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY Rosemary Iversen

Friend Sponsors    

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Let me tell you a story...late in 2022, a young girl of 8 or 9 saw the “book o’meter” out front, measuring our progress for the Annual Appeal. She saw that the Library needed help, so she went home and emptied her piggy bank. Who knows what those dollars and cents represented for her? Perhaps savings toward a wished-for toy, an outing to the movies, or some other special treat—whatever it was, her heart and mind made a choice. She took her treasure and brought it to the Library. What an extraordinary gift.

It is gifts like hers, made with love for the amazing treasure trove of knowledge and wonder that is the Library, that make my job so rewarding.



Thanks to donors like this young girl (and you!), the Montclair Public Library Foundation provided comprehensive support for Library programs, collection enhancement, online resources, technology, and Wi-Fi expansion in 2022. With the inclusion of grants and sponsorships secured by the Foundation, as well as \$18,000 raised during the April 2022 “Buy A Book” campaign for the purchase of children’s materials, the Foundation’s funding for the Library surpassed \$208,000.

Early in the year, the Foundation partnered with the Montclair Library Friends and the Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library to raise awareness and rally support for an increase in ancillary municipal funding for the Library after severe cuts were made in the wake of the COVID pandemic. A partial restoration of those dollars led to increased hours at both the Main and Bellevue Avenue branches, expanding access to all of the Library’s resources.

Throughout 2022, the Foundation Board was on-hand to support Library events such as the Summer Reading Kick-off and the Little Read, in addition to hosting our own Donor Appreciation events, Meet the Director Receptions, and a Sweet & Spooky Halloween event.

The Foundation made significant progress toward our strategic goals in 2022, including the expansion of our Board and a high level of Board engagement, a dramatic increase in the number of grant proposals on which the Library and Foundation have collaborated, and growth in our donor base. The Foundation also debuted a refresh of our website and launched our own social media channels. Be sure to “like” and follow us!

As for 2023, GREAT things are already in the works. Be sure to mark your calendars for **The Lit Gala** happening on April 27. It is the Foundation’s first major fundraising event in more than five years and will be one of the final hoorahs to take place at The Manor before this beautiful location closes in July. We will be honoring Jennifer Dorr-Moon and David Jones, founders of the Library’s signature Open Book / Open Mind program. Tickets are available online at montclairplf.org/gala.

To everyone who raided their piggy bank this year, or sacrificed some treat or comfort in order to make a gift to the Library, we thank you. You are part of what makes the Montclair Public Library such a special place.

Mary Packer, M.Ed., CFRE
Executive Director
Montclair Public Library Foundation

Montclair
Public
Library
Foundation



Thank you to all of our 2022 donors! Your generosity makes it possible to offer valuable programs and resources to everyone in our community.

Library Champions (\$10,000+)

Anonymous (2)
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Eileen Birmingham and Greg Wawro
Colbert Family Fund of Coastal Community
Foundation of South Carolina
James and Susann Connors
Estate of Elise T. Dillard

Hyde and Watson Foundation
Investors Foundation
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Estate of Kathryn Perino
Edward Robin and Family in Memory of Gloria Robin
Rita Singer

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Valerie Block and Alexis Romay
Bobbi Brown and Steven Plofker
Gina Chung Fortt and Jon Fortt
Jennifer Dann Phillips and Jonathan Phillips
Ruth Davis
Aman D'Mello and Mark Malaspina

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