2023 Annual Report







Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees

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The Honorable Sean Spiller, Mayor
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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.

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.

As kids, we loved libraries. So it is a special joy to work at the Montclair Public Library, one of the best libraries in the state.

Montclair is a wonderful town and a town that loves its Library. How do we know?

- Last year, there were 170,000 visits to our two buildings.
- Those visitors checked out more than 390,000 items. Those items included books, for sure. So many books: kids books, eBooks, biographies, audiobooks. They also checked out a pressure washer from our Library of Things, seeds from our Seed Library, a bird-watching kit from our Senior Center in a Box and so much more.
- We held more than 1,500 events ranging from book talks and classes to concerts and storytimes. We're proud that 22,000 people participated in these events with the enthusiasm, questioning, and wisdom we've come to expect from our patrons.
- We are especially happy that the number of events held at the Library by community organizations almost quadrupled.

We also know because of our generous donors who show their support in so many different ways.

- Making our first Gala in over five years a resounding success and a night to remember.
- Volunteering as guest readers for The Little Read read-a-thon—for the 15th year in a row.
- Coming out for events, from the Summer Reading kick-off to Sweet & Spooky Halloween.
- Joining in a Community Conversation on Reading to identify ways the Library and community organizations can better support the public schools in literacy efforts.
- Enthusiastic participation in the Annual Appeal, to fund programs and resources to broaden and enhance all that MPL has to offer.

Montclair is a special town, with an engaged citizenry that values opportunities to connect, learn, and debate ideas. The Montclair Public Library is uniquely suited to bring people together—all ages, from all backgrounds—and serve them in effective, innovative ways. Library leadership, staff, and supporters are committed to this shared vision of what our Library can be. Because, simply put, Montclair is a Library Town.

Although we didn't know each other in our early library days, we're so happy to be working together now. The kids, families, supporters, community leaders, and others we encounter at the Library each day provide all the inspiration needed.

Thank you for your support.

Janet Torsney, MLS Director, Montclair Public Library Mary Packer, M.Ed., CFRE

Executive Director, Montclair Public Library Foundation

Early Literacy Kits

At the start of 2023, the Bellevue Avenue Branch began lending Early Literacy Kits. Each kit is suitable for ages 2-5 and contains themed books and educational games to reinforce learning through play. The kits aim to improve children's language skills and vocabulary, build knowledge of the world around them, and provide a means to explore and ask questions. Themes include ABCs, Colors, Counting, Emotions, Space, Time, and more.

Open Book / Open Mind

MPL's live conversation series continued to feature great authors and thinkers discussing their new books and the important topics of our time. In 2023, hosted authors included:

- Toluse Olorunnipa in conversation with Jon Fortt
- Kate Zernike in conversation with Dale Russakoff
- Robert Pinsky in conversation with Kate Tuttle
- Michelle Zauner in conversation with Elisabeth Egan
- Eliza Minot and Laura Spence-Ash in conversation with Alice Elliott Dark
- Dionne Ford in conversation with Benilde Little
- Lenny Kaye in conversation with Cindy Stagoff
- Colson Whitehead in conversation with Kate Tuttle
- Adam Nagourney in conversation with David Folkenflik
- Rachel Swarns in conversation with Khalil Gibran Muhammad
- Lisa Belkin in conversation with Christina Baker Kline

ommittee:

Elisabeth Egan Dionne Ford Jon Fortt DT Max Juan Milà
Dale Russakoff
Margot Sage-EL
Rachel Swarns
Susan Weinberg



David Jones, Co-chair
Kate Tuttle, Co-chair
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Neal Carruth Catherine Chung Alice Elliott Dark Jennifer Dorr

Seed Library

In March, the Bellevue Avenue Branch launched a Seed Library that offers a variety of free seed packets to anyone, no library card required. The Seed Library focuses on plants that are native, pollinator-friendly, and/or edible, with the goals of fostering resilience, preventing hunger, and promoting nutrition in the community. Supported by Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library and Hudson Valley Seed Company.



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The Lit Gafa

On April 27, more than 200 guests gathered at The Manor in West Orange for the 20th anniversary celebration of the Montclair Public Library Foundation, raising nearly \$200,000 through sponsorships, ticket sales, a live auction, and raffle baskets.

The evening was emceed by Tony-, Golden Globe-, and Emmy-nominated actor Patrick Wilson. Author, actress, and MPLF Board member Dagmara Domińczyk spoke movingly of her personal connection to libraries and the important role they play in the lives of children.

Special recognition was given to the Honorees, Jennifer Dorr-Moon and David Jones, for their achievement as co-founders of MPL's signature series Open Book / Open Mind. This program features a dozen live in-depth conversations with local authors every year, sparking public discussion of important ideas across our highly diverse community. It has grown exponentially over the last nine years and now engages audiences around the globe.



Lit Gala Event Chair Erica Barrett and Jason Barrett



The Honorees with their spouses: David Moon and Jennifer Dorr; Mary Lee and David Jones



Emcee Patrick Wilson introducing Ariel Zeitlin (Open Book / Open Mind program coordinator) to present Honoree David Jones with a gift



Marianne Ribley with MPLF Board Chair Gina Chung Fortt

In April, MPL began lending a variety of useful and recreational objects as part of its new Library of Things. Objects include board games, a sewing machine, cordless drill, telescope, microscope, ukulele, and more. This initiative adds to a nationwide trend of circulating non-traditional items, expanding the role of libraries as community hubs and spaces for sharing.





Montclair Reads "Crying in H Mart"

In April and May, MPL invited the community to read and discuss "Crying in H Mart," the bestselling memoir by Michelle Zauner, also known as the leader of the acclaimed indie pop band Japanese Breakfast. This series of events included book club meetings, karaoke night, a Korean cooking class, and an Open Book / Open Mind talk with Zauner in front of an audience of 430, in-person and online. Thanks to our partners AAPI Montclair and Watchung Booksellers.

Township Proclamation

The Township of Montclair officially proclaimed April 27, 2023 as Montclair Public Library Day, in honor of National Library Week, the MPL Foundation's 20th anniversary, the Open Book / Open Mind program, and the Library "for its efforts in consistently supporting and serving our residents and community" and "providing free and equitable access to information, resources, and services for all people."





Summer Reading

Recognized by libraries nationwide, summer reading promotes literacy during a time when children are out of school and may not otherwise be maintaining their reading skills. MPL's Summer Reading Club ran from June 23 to August 12,

with 323 children, 58 teens, and 191 adults participating. Anyone who logged their reading was eligible for prize drawings throughout the summer, which included gift cards to various Montclair businesses. In June, festivals at both branches kicked off the season with magic, face painting, sweet treats. live music, and more.

Stories of Exile

From September to December, MPL organized a reading group and public programs that explored the refugee experiences of Eastern European Jews in the Holocaust and those of contemporary Syrians fleeing their wartorn country. The Yiddish Book Center's "Stories of Exile" Reading Groups for Public Libraries is made possible by a gift from Sharon Karmazin.



Latin American Heritage Celebration

In September and October, MPL hosted 20 programs that celebrated the diverse cultural traditions of Latin America. From Spanish flamenco and Puerto Rican stories to Latin jazz and Andean panpipe workshops, guests of all ages explored the vast region spanning Mexico to Chile and also Spain and Portugal. Co-presented by Latinos of Montclair.



Made possible by funds from the Essex County Division of Cultural Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.







The Little Read

From October 18 to 20, MPL celebrated 15 years of The Little Read, a series of events in which guest readers climb into the iconic big red chair and read stories aloud to schoolchildren and families. 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 visits to the Library by local schoolchildren and culminated in a Little Read Party with special performer Fyütch, who performed songs that educate, entertain, and empower the next generation through a combination of hip-hop and visual storytelling. Fyütch's performance was funded by the Essex County NJ Clean Communities Grant.

Sweet & Spooky Halloween

Nearly 300 people attended the Sweet & Spooky Halloween party on October 28, featuring a haunted house, face painting, puppet show, stories, and more.





Local family-owned running store Fleet Feet Montclair was among the Honorable Mentions named in the inaugural "I Partner with My Public Library" awards. Created by the non-profit Let's Move in Libraries, the award celebrates the crucial work of community collaborators to public libraries across the United States. The MPL Foundation nominated Fleet Feet Montclair for their 15-year partnership with the Library, which includes an annual 5K Training class offered with the Adult School.





New Benches and Flagpole Dedication

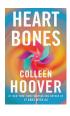
On November 16, MPL and the MPL Foundation were delighted to dedicate the beautiful new benches and flagpole in front of the Main Library. Thanks to the generous donation by Josh Weston, in memory of Judy Weston, for making this possible, and to the family, friends, and community members who helped celebrate.

Kwanzaa Community Celebration

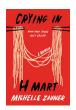
On December 16, MPL celebrated Kwanzaa with the traditional pouring of the libations, a discussion of the seven principles, and family activities such as live music, dance, art, and magic.



Most Borrowed Titles of 2023



ADULT FICTION
"Heart Bones"
by Colleen Hoover



ADULT NONFICTION "Crying in H Mart" by Michelle Zauner



ADULT MEDIA
"Everything Everywhere
All at Once"



JUVENILE FICTION"Dog Man: Fetch-22"
by Dav Pilkey



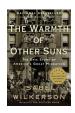
JUVENILE NONFICTION "The Beetle Book" by Steve Jenkins



JUVENILE MEDIA "Smell My Foot!" by Cece Bell



YOUNG ADULT FICTION "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas



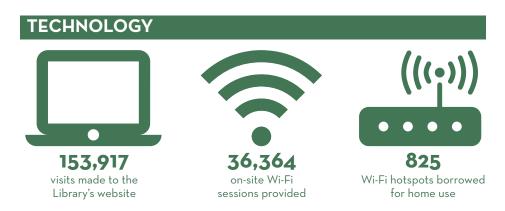
YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION "The Warmth of Other Suns" by Isabel Wilkerson

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Library at a Glance

Total budget approved at the June 12, 2023 Trustees meeting: **\$4,333,169** (includes existing and anticipated income/expenditures)

88% of expenditures were covered by the Township of Montclair. For more information, visit **montclairlibrary.org/about/reports-audits**







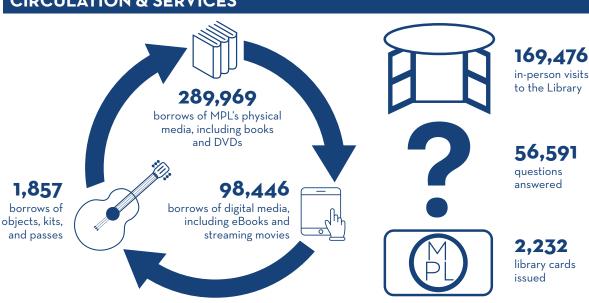
attendance at children's and teen programs



3,754 attendance at adult programs



CIRCULATION & SERVICES

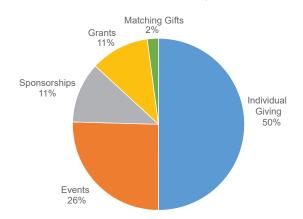


Foundation at a Glance

Thanks to a successful Gala, grant awards, an increase in business sponsorships, and generous donors like you, we raised 60% more in contributions than in 2022!

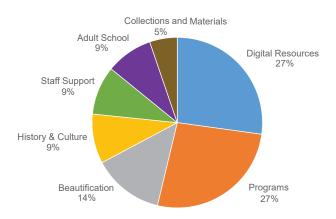
Funding Sources

Where did Foundation funding come from in 2023?



Supporting the Library

Which Library resources and activities received Foundation support in 2023?



Grants Received

Total grant funds secured in 2023 was \$129,500, nearly double that in 2022. This list includes a multi-year award from Partners for Health Foundation—**the largest grant ever** to be awarded to Montclair Public Library Foundation.

Partners for Health Foundation

...to hire a part-time social worker for two years

Essex County Local Arts and History Grant Program

...to digitize deed abstracts

...for 2024 classical music concert series

National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest

...for 2024 Big Read program

Whitehill Foundation

...for loanable children's STEM kits

Albert Payson Terhune Foundation

...for new children's books

Investors Foundation

...for social services office furniture and equipment

Advocates Help Raise Awareness and Secure Ancillary Township Funding in 2023

The Foundation's Advocacy Committee works to petition local government for adequate municipal funding. Current minimum State mandates are insufficient to provide the operating hours, services, and programs that our diverse community deserves. Join the fight today: email <code>info@montclairplf.org</code>.

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Thank You to Our Business Sponsors

JROTA, LLC.









































































Thank you to all of our 2023 donors! Your generosity makes it possible to offer valuable programs and resources to everyone in our community.

\$25,000+

Anonymous Edward Robin & Family in Memory of Gloria Robin

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Anonymous
Jonathan Bellack & Jennifer Bonnell
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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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June Nguyen & Todd Tauber
Donald & Jill Seagraves
Robert Tortoriello
Fred Williams

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Jennifer Bernstein

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Alice Elliot Dark & Lawrence Dark

Alicja Delag & Krzysztof Misiukiewicz

Susan DiMarco & Jeh Johnson

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Sandy Spatola

Diana Stewart & Sons

Roland & Susan Straten

Missy Sullivan

Thomas Sullivan

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Marcos Vargas

Frank & Margo Walter

Eric Weiser



The Teen Room received a makeover—with new tables, chairs, shelves, and decorations—thanks to funds raised at the Lit Gala.

\$250 - \$499

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Kristina Anderson Linn & Merrick Andlinger Vandana Aneja & Gaurav Jetley

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Melissa McCarthy & William Wing

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Dara Sanderson Scholastic Book Clubs

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Carley Graham Garcia & David Garcia



Photo by: Neil Grabowsky

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Jeannette & Philip Miller

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Arlene & Harry Moskowitz

Donna Myrie The Nagy Family Mara Novak & Jim Price

Martha Nowycky

Mary O'Crowley & David Wholley

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