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PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Reading Public Library Year in Review.

Reading, MA— It's mid-winter and while we're hunkered down following a busy and challenging 2021, remember that the Reading Public Library is here year-round - a welcoming center for learning and civic engagement. Despite some COVID-related closures prior to the arrival of vaccines, we quickly pivoted to virtual programming, curbside services, and gradually welcomed you back to the building. Since June 2021 we have been open continuously; no appointments needed. Programs, from old favorites like Winter Warmers, to storytimes, to Zoom author events were on offer all year.

Here are some key happenings and highlights from the past year, and remember, stay tuned for our latest programming and services news throughout 2022.

In 2021 we were joined by new staff!

Welcome to [Ally Dowds](#) in Public Services, [Lindsey Mancuso](#) in Borrowers' Services, and [Meghan McCabe](#), our new Teen Librarian. In addition, recognizing a need to add resources for mental and physical health, librarian Susan Beauregard took on a new role as a Community Health Librarian. Her programs on aging well and other topics are set to run this spring, mark your calendars.

New Services offered in 2021

- Food Drives for the Reading Food Pantry: to counter growing food insecurity in Reading during the pandemic, we sponsored [spring](#) and summer food drives.
- We established a free public [Zoom account for local non-profits to use](#).
- [ValueLine](#), an authoritative financial information resource is now available as well as the online version of the [Wall Street Journal online](#).
- Our children's librarians, in partnership with the Reading Public Schools, provided STEAM programming for campers in grades 1-3, an initiative that will continue through 2022.

Your favorite Programs of 2021

- **Summer Reading** is always a highlight of the year, and 2021 was no exception - nearly 1,000 patrons of all ages participated. Our inaugural program, Fairy Castle Quest saw the Children's Room transformed into a magical castle for young readers. Summer Reading will be back in 2022, more details coming this spring.

- [Winter Warmers](#) went virtual with its short & snappy staff book recommendations recorded for [YouTube](#), making this popular program even more accessible. There were hundreds of views across four genres, including a new category, young adult & children's books. This year, Winter Warmers will be virtual again and the 2022 recordings premiere on February 14.
- Speaking of virtual programming, more than 100 kids enjoyed a dinnertime author event with Grace Lin. **Dine-in with Grace Lin** featured a reading, questions for the author, and a set of books for participants. This event was sponsored by the Helen A. Nigro Foundation.
- [Reclaiming Your Story](#), a substantial grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, funded ongoing workshops, author events, youth literary magazines, and more.
- One of the hottest series of the year was literally for the birds. **All About Birds** and Bird Walks with RPL friend Dave Williams tapped into the town's appreciation for our feathered friends with virtual presentations and walks outdoors in the Town Forest. Look out for the 2022 birding events.
- Finally, please remember that many of our ongoing and new programs are generously sponsored by [The Friends of the Reading Public Library](#), a group whose fundraising efforts help support the programs you count on all year long.

Collection Highlights: Library of Things, Books & DVDs

Fun facts about our adult collection: of the top 25 titles, we purchased 350 total copies in print, large print, eBook, eAudio, and CD/Playaway for a total circulation of 5,309.

In the Children's Room: of the top 25 titles that circulated, 13 were Backpacks, which are specially curated by our fabulous Children's librarians. The top 2 backpacks? *Vehicles* and *Pinkalicious*.

On the teen side, the top title was Jerry Craft's Newbery and Coretta Scott King Award-winning *New Kid* - a graphic novel about a 7th grader adjusting to life in a new school. Top teen print titles circulated an astonishing average of 76 times.

The [Library of Things](#) began circulating again in March, 2021. Top items borrowed include the Orion Star Blaster Telescope, ViewSonic DLP Projector, and the Brother P-Touch Label Maker. We continue to add new items including Chromebooks and WiFi HotSpots, snowshoes (take these for a spin in the Town Forest), a Paper Shredder and 24-piece tool kit.

We hope to see you often in 2022!



The Reading Public Library is committed to evolving together to strengthen communication, equity, collaboration, and learning in our community. Our mission is to be a center and resource for learning and civic engagement. We provide a place and platform of, by, and for the people who can benefit as individuals as well as contribute to the well-being of the community. We work to achieve these goals and commitments by focusing on education, equity, accountability, and access.