

2013-2014 Annual Report for the Town of Bloomfield

A library is a house of hope. It's a place where we all, whatever our situation, can feed our ideas and develop our dreams."

Doug Wilhelm

The Prosser Public Library and its branch, the P. Faith McMahon Library, continually strive to satisfy the needs of library patrons by expanding services and seeking improvements to facilities and programs.

Fulfilling a recommendation in the 2011 strategic plan, two study rooms were installed at the P. Faith McMahon Library this year. The rooms, designed with moveable divider panels, have been a welcome addition for adult literacy classes and tutoring. New window shades installed near the study rooms provide additional privacy. Newly acquired upholstered chairs and tables contribute to making the branch a welcoming location for all.

The Prosser Public Library received a grant of \$1,000 from the Kiser Family Fund of Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to offer a ten lecture opera series conducted by Jeffrey Engel. Each lecture took place at the library from October 2013 through May 2014. The operas are live HD broadcasts by the Metropolitan Opera shown at the Bloomfield 8 Theater on the Saturday following each lecture. The Prosser Public Library also received a grant of \$925 from CT Humanities. This funding was used to defray the costs of honorariums for the speakers involved in the One Book, One Bloomfield series, which took place during October 2013. Programming for the series included a song writing workshop, a presentation on civil litigation, a panel discussion on autism, a speaker on equine therapy, and a talk by **Francisco X. Stork**, the author of last year's One Book, One Bloomfield selection, ***Marcelo in the Real World***.

At the 2013 Bloomfield Interfaith Association annual Thanksgiving celebration, the Prosser Public Library and the P. Faith McMahon Wintonbury Libraries received the Edythe Latney Award for Community Service. The library offers adult literacy classes, delivers library materials to homebound residents, and extends outreach to home daycares, pre-schools, and nursing homes. It also provides computer classes in both group and one-on-one settings. The libraries offer a Food for Fines program annually to collect non-perishable food to support the Bloomfield Food Bank.

In December, Roberta La Monaca and Linda Gabianelli met with Stacey McCann and Ellen Stoltz from the Bloomfield Board of Education as a follow up from a November meeting with Dr. James Thompson. This visit was followed by a presentation on December 12 to a meeting of all the Bloomfield principals. The support of the principals and board of education staff is essential in helping to make library services available to all Bloomfield students.

The Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries voted once again to provide support for the Library's 2014 summer reading programs. The generous donation covered the cost of professional performers, promotional materials, and prizes large and small. A portion of the funds went toward purchase of science DVDs to support the summer theme of FIZZ, BOOM, READ! Additionally, Friends donated funding for new media equipment: a blu-ray player, retractable screen, and storage cart. At the McMahon Wintonbury Library, the Friends donation enabled the purchase of a new laptop computer for library educational uses. In June 2014, the library had an opportunity to trade in old AWE early learning computers for new ones and at a discounted price. The Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries also funded this project in full. Now children in both libraries may log in to the fun and educational programs installed on the computers, which are geared to both pre-school and school age audiences.

Duncaster has been a long-time supporter of library programming. This year's Duncaster funding brought to the library the stellar program presented by Queen Nur, "Sweet Potato Pie, and Such," which entertained eighty thoroughly engaged attendees. Thanks to Duncaster for supporting this rich programming.

In April, the library sponsored its first Volunteer Fair, inviting town organizations and institutions to be at Prosser to give out information to the public about their volunteer opportunities. Fourteen organizations participated, including Foodshare, Toastmasters, Auerfarm, Wintonbury Historical Society, The Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries, the Alliance for Bloomfield children and more.

The launch of the new online library system, Encore, at both libraries took place in June 2014. Much preparation went into making this a smooth transition. The Bloomfield libraries hold membership in Library Connection Inc, a consortium of 30 libraries with service to patrons as its primary goal. The staff and patrons are adjusting to the new system and with time will be very comfortable with the improved service.