



Annual Report 2023

OUR MISSION

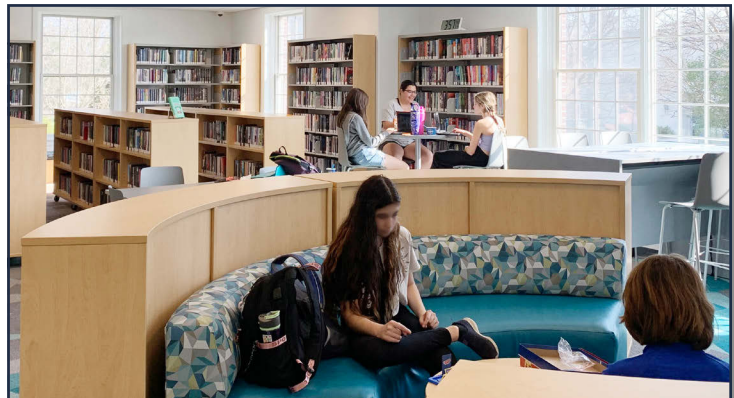
More than a place for books, Library of the Chatham provides resources that support valuable opportunities to build knowledge, culture and social experiences that enrich lives.

A year of new beginnings at the library

A Space for Everyone

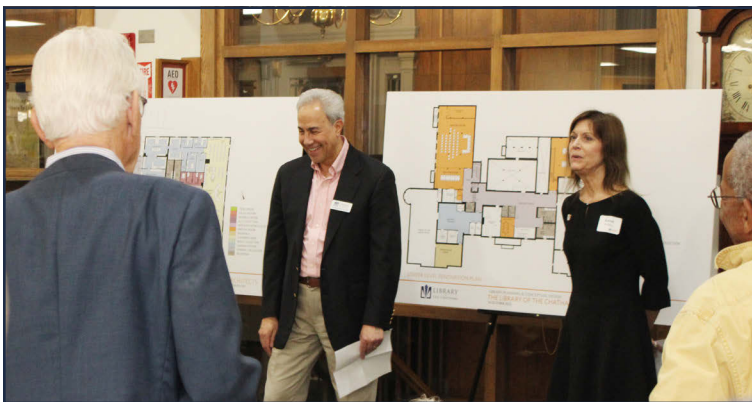
Phase I of this ambitious renovation project includes a more convenient back entrance into the library and a first-ever dedicated teen room. Both parts of Phase I were nearing completion at the end of 2023.

The new Teen Center, shown at right, may be also used by adults while school is in session.



Teen Center

Chatham Library Foundation



Project update reception, November 2023

Chatham Library Foundation will raise funds for the library's *A Space for Everyone* construction project and eventually create an Endowment Fund to ensure a consistent level of support and protect our programs from unpredictable funding shifts.

A foundation is usually formed when larger amounts of money are needed than can be raised by a Friends group; these funds can then be invested until they are used. We are grateful that

the Friends of the Library support the new Foundation. Friends of the Library is a separate entity that focuses its energy on the Annual Book Sale and other fundraising efforts.

Museum Passes

Chatham patrons can now reserve museum passes for a particular day and plan their visit in advance. This provides a vastly improved service compared to our previous “first come, first served” model. Another welcome addition was a pass to the Museum of Modern Art. Circulation of the library’s museum passes nearly doubled compared to 2022! Residents can easily reserve a pass on the library website. The museum pass program is funded by Friends of the Library of the Chatham.



Instant Language Assistant

In 2021, a task force was formed with the goal of making the library a more welcoming place by removing barriers to library use. One of the results of this effort was the installation, in 2023, of a new device at the Circulation Desk, Instant Language Assistant, which enables library staff to communicate with patrons in any language. We’ve already had a chance to talk to patrons who speak Ukrainian, Portuguese, Chinese, and other languages – easily and seamlessly! This is part of our continued commitment to making the library more accessible to everyone.

2023 LIBRARY USAGE SNAPSHOT

- 176,321 VISITS TO THE LIBRARY
- 300,652 ITEMS BORROWED,
INCLUDING 49,610 DOWNLOADABLE ITEMS
- 28,238 QUESTIONS ANSWERED AT THE
REFERENCE DESK
- 44,788 DATABASE SEARCHES
- 17,603 USES OF THE LIBRARY WI-FI
- 322,906 VISITS TO THE LIBRARY WEBSITE
- 329,579 USES OF THE LIBRARY MOBILE APP

MORE TO READ

We added 3,607 adult books, 619 teen books, and 1,769 children's books to the collection.

Our collection includes much more than books.

In 2023 we added:

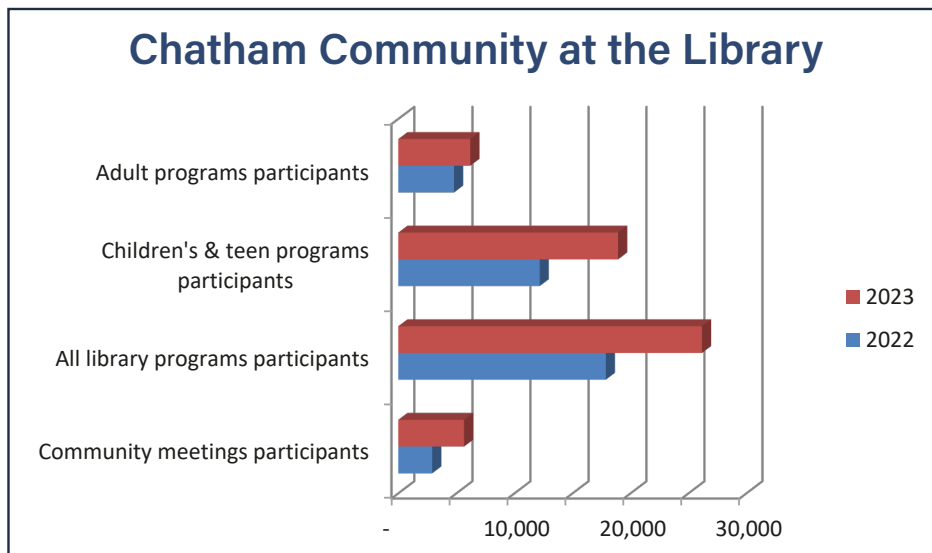
- 569 e-Books
- 457 movies
- 202 music CDs
- 61 audio books

Chatham residents also enjoy nontraditional items, such as mobile hotspots, telescopes, tents, and the seed library.



PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

In total, 1,090 library programs attracted 26,169 participants. Adding in community events, the number of people who attended programs or meetings at the library was 31,832, a 53% growth from 2022. The library is truly a hub of community life in the Chathams!



- 353 adult programs with 6,196 participants – 29% growth
- 29 all-age programs with 1,043 participants – 15% growth
- 537 children's programs with 16,817 participants – 54% growth
- 171 teen programs with 2,113 participants – 65% growth
- 549 community group meetings with 5,663 attendees – 94% growth

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

In 2023, the Youth Services Department continued our mission of inspiring a new generation of lifelong library champions. The library wrapped up a year-long series of "Trip Around the World" programs about the culture, food and traditions of far-off places including India, Ireland, South Africa and many more. In keeping with the multicultural theme, Mandarin and Spanish immersion storytimes were offered for our youngest patrons. Children who attended our six-week Indian Film Dance Workshop learned about beat, rhythm and synchronization and performed a recital for family and friends at the final session.



Boogie Woogie Babies is one of our Thursday morning programs for toddlers



Chess for Kids program is taught by Chess Expert Sean Finn

The library offered two chess tournaments this year. Participants received certificates, and medals were awarded to winners. Elementary age children participated in craft programs throughout the year celebrating holidays such as Lunar New Year, Halloween, and the Fourth of July.

Our Summer Reading Club was a resounding success! We kicked it off with a dazzling Science Circus presented by the Liberty Science Center. 642 children joined the club and reported on 10,815 books! That's almost 2,000 more books read than in 2022.



Reading to a nonjudgmental listener - a therapy dog



Halloween with princesses at the library

CS Base returned this year for another successful Summer Coding Camp. The six-day camp, which is run exclusively by high school volunteers, was attended by 62 children. It included classes in Scratch, Robotics, App Development, Java and AI & Data Science, as well as sports and games in the park for an all-around camp experience.

TEEN PROGRAMMING

In 2023, we continued to expand programming for local teens and preteens. Programs covered a variety of subjects, including art, science, cooking, yoga, and more. We also had more outreach opportunities this year. We visited Chatham High School during their Wellness Fair, where we spoke with many students and encouraged them to volunteer at the library. Teen volunteers came into the library consistently to help with various tasks and activities. A number of teen volunteers shared their passions with the library and the community by creating and implementing entire programs. Cooking, music, crochet, and coding were just a few of the classes taught by local teens, and we intend to continue building these community relationships.



The Summer Reading theme was All Together Now. Above: Making friendship bracelets

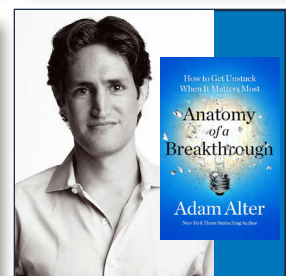
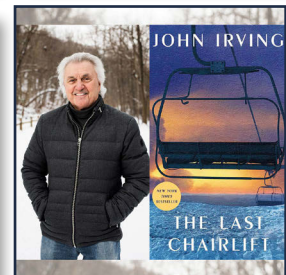
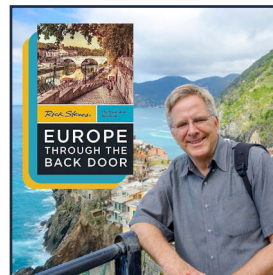
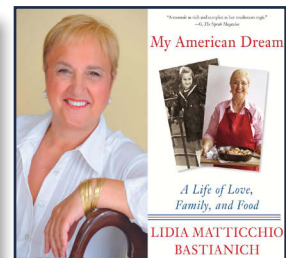
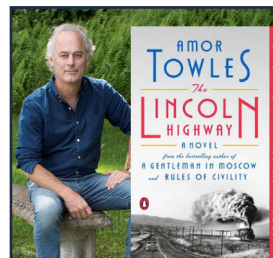
ADULT PROGRAMMING

Programs for adults spanned a wide range of interests – something for everyone! New this year: with the help of two native Italian volunteers, we started Italian Conversation Groups, which were an instant success.

The Chatham Borough and Chatham Township Historical Societies presented nine fascinating programs at the library on subjects ranging from the Brooklyn Bridge to White House pets.

Our Library Speakers Consortium provided virtual talks with best-selling authors, resulting in interactive experiences for large audiences.

Educational program topics included financial health, real estate, and gardening. For art lovers, we offered drawing and watercolor classes, as well as lectures on art. Some of the library’s programs were pure fun, such as cheese and olive oil tastings, sustainable wine tasting, holiday crafts, and even a dog pageant!





A participant in our Summer Dog Pageant

On a more serious note, our Wellness Initiative continued, in cooperation with the Mental Health Association, with individual counseling sessions.

The library provided individual help with technology (Bring Your Own Device) and, in a role reversal, teens lectured adults on Artificial Intelligence so successfully that we had to repeat the sessions twice!

As in prior years, the library hosted Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and ran a robust ESL program.

For Veterans Day, the library organized a display showing off our pride in Chatham veterans of all wars and conflicts. We are very grateful for the help and participation of several generations of Chatham veterans and their families!

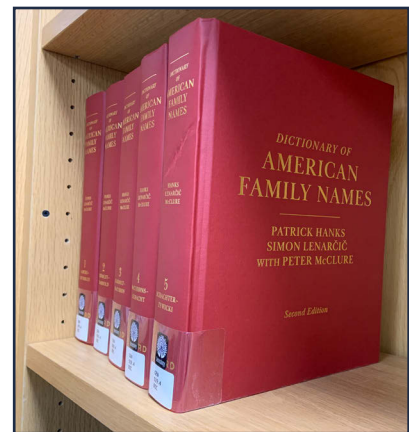


REFERENCE SERVICES

New genealogy resources include databases such as FindMyPast, MyHeritage, FamilySearch, and Jewish Data, as well as print resources, including *Tracing Your Ancestors* study guides; *The Dictionary of Family Names*; and the journal *Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*. The library has joined several genealogical and historical societies and has been accepted into the FamilySearch Library Affiliate Program, which gives our patrons additional resources from the research center of the Church of Latter-Day Saints.

Other developments included the expansion of our Seed Library, which was more popular than ever and required additional orders of seeds during the season. The library also continued its subscription to the prestigious JSTOR database of full-text journal articles. This was requested by our high school population and its usage has taken off this year.

Reference statistics were higher compared to 2022. The total reference transactions for 2023 was 28,238, an increase of about 8.5% from 2022. The library's notaries provided service to 357 persons, notarizing 484 documents.



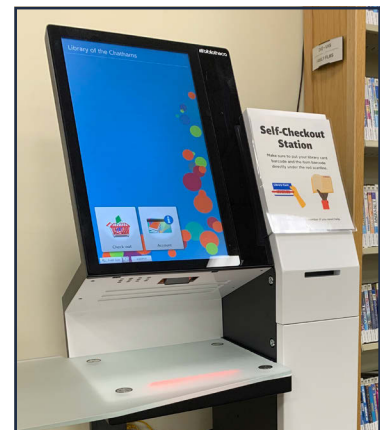
COMMUNITY GROUPS AT THE LIBRARY

The library hosted 549 community group meetings with 5,663 attendees – 94% growth from 2022! These are some of the groups that used the library in 2023:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| American Society for Suicide Prevention | Delta Gamma Alumnae |
| Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority | ECLC |
| American Red Cross | Garden State Quilters |
| Book Group | Jack and Jill of America |
| Chatham Antiques Club | John Taylor Babbitt Foundation |
| Chatham Borough DEI Committee | Junior League of Summit |
| Chatham Borough Republican Committee | Knitting Group |
| Chatham Boy Scouts – various troops | Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute |
| Chatham Community Band | Literacy Volunteers of Morris County |
| Chatham Community Beekeeping Club | Madison-Chatham Adult School |
| Chatham Community Garden | Mahjong Group |
| Chatham Education Foundation | New Jersey Numismatic Society |
| Chatham Emergency Squad | Parents Support Group of NJ |
| Chatham Girl Scouts – various troops | PTO of the Chathams |
| Chatham Players Community Theater | Toastmasters Conquerors Club |
| Chatham Township Republican Committee | Writers and Artists Group |

LIBRARY SUPPORTERS

Funding from our towns doesn't cover all the costs of running a modern library and its various programs. Some of our programs and resources are made possible by Friends of the Library and fundraising efforts. The communities of our two towns have been very generous to the library – see the latest annual list of donors at chathamlibrary.org/donors-2022-2023. Thank you!



New self-checkout station funded by Friends of the Library

Thank you to these local groups for supporting our 2023 programming:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| The Friends of the Library | Chatham Jaycees |
| Chatham-Madison Kiwanis | Hughes Fire & Security Systems |
| Ann L. Buesing Children's Fund for the Library of the Chathams
& Marlee and Carl Frahn Fund for the Library of the Chathams
of the Community Foundation of New Jersey | |

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The Friends of the Library continue to be the library's strongest supporters. In addition to their donations of \$37,000 generated by their book sales and \$19,500 for programs for all ages, they contributed \$40,000 towards the new Teen Room furniture and more than \$12,000 for a new self-checkout station. It takes a lot of work and dedication to achieve these stellar results. Thank you, Friends!



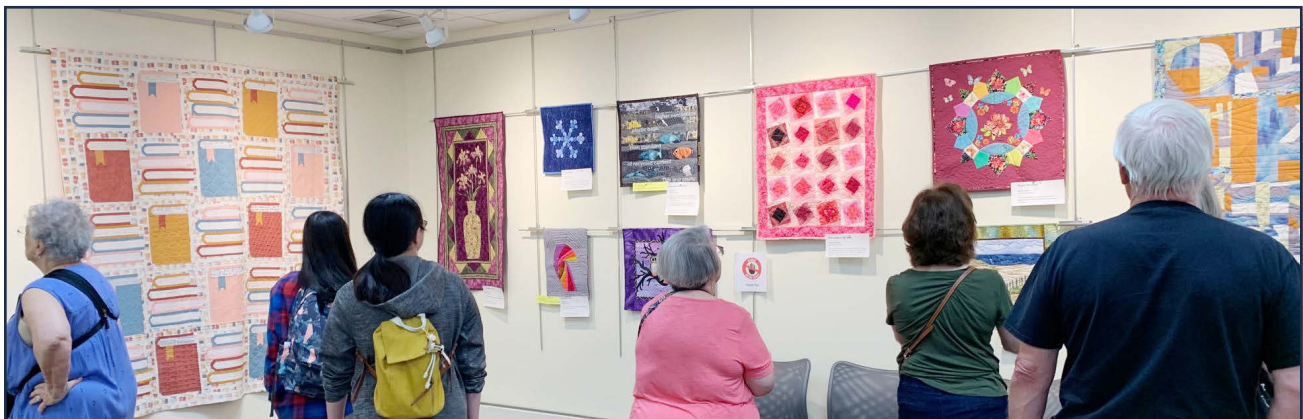
Friends of Library present March book sale proceeds to Library Director Karen Brodsky, May 2023

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We thank the members of our 2023 Board of Trustees for their service during a year filled with growth and new initiatives. We look forward to working under the leadership of the 2024 Board.

2024 Board of Trustees

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Andy Hollander, President | Mariela Gilmore, Trustee |
| Kevin Sullivan, Vice President | Christina Mott, Trustee |
| Susan M. Allen, Secretary | Carolyn Dempsey, Borough Mayor |
| Lynn Magrane, Treasurer | Marty McHugh, Township Representative |
| TBD, Superintendent's Alternate | |



The library hosted 11 art shows in 2023. Shown here: the opening reception of the Garden State Quilters Guild show in July.