

# 2025

## ANNUAL REPORT


### OUR MISSION

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

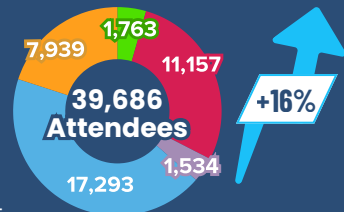
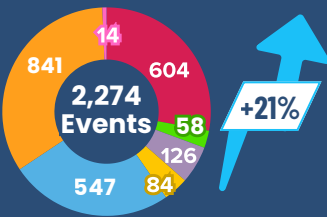


  
**194,134**  
Library Visits

  
**1,099,345** **+36%**  
Virtual Visits  
to the website or app



  
**317,409**  
Items Borrowed

**143,436+**  
Items to Borrow at the  
Library of the Chathams  
**3,828,660+**  
Items to Borrow with a  
Chatham Library Card



  
**2,920** **+46%**  
Computer Sessions

  
**21,024** **+8%**  
WiFi Sessions

  
**64,734**  
Database Searches  
  
**24,203**  
Questions Answered

- All Ages
- Children
- Teen
- Adult
- Children & Teen
- Teen & Adult
- Community Meetings





## A Message from the Director

**I'm often asked, "You're a librarian? Does anyone really go to the library anymore?" I'm proud to reply with a resounding YES!**

Library of the Chathams' 2025 foot traffic would fill the 2026 Superbowl stadium almost 3 times. The virtual traffic of residents accessing digital content, attending programs or doing independent research makes that number almost 19 times capacity. That's a lot of visits to the library!

We excelled through many external challenges during 2025, including our migration to a more cost-effective integrated library system and the closure of our primary source to purchase books. We expanded use of our fabulous new Teen Center, built our World Language Collection, and gained amazing new Board members for Chatham Library Foundation. **The Library of the Chathams is your destination for friendly, attentive service and the best collections you'll find.**

None of these achievements would be possible without our talented staff and volunteers, the fundraising efforts of Chatham Library Foundation, the Book Sales and advocacy by our Friends of the Library, and the leadership of the Board of Trustees.

**Thank you for making our library such a vibrant part of Chatham life.**

*-Karen Brodsky, Library Director*



## A Message from the Board President

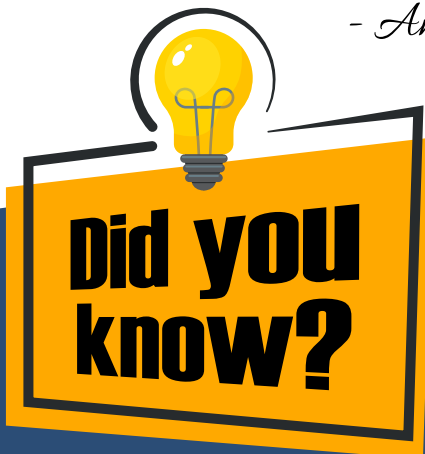
**More than 925 – that's about how many Chatham library items circulated per day in 2025**, including print books for kids, teens, and adults, ebooks, audiobooks, museum passes, and even pasta machines.

**Demand continues strong, with attendance at library events up over 15%.** It's never just numbers, though. It's about the community gathering at a central learning hub, connecting with neighbors and new friends, finding personal fulfillment, and simply having fun.

Our community surveys and consultants' analysis back what we hear every day: Chatham residents are wildly happy with library services. On behalf of the library, thank you to our taxpayers and donors. **Your investment provides more than books; it's an investment that strengthens the foundations of our community, inspiring and empowering residents of all ages.**

I encourage you to support the Friends of the Library and the Chatham Library Foundation. Above all, I encourage you to use the wonderful resources at your library.

*- Andy Hollander, Board President*



Chatham residents

**saved \$3,892,597+ in 2025**

by borrowing library items, an average savings of

**\$190 per cardholder,**

and that doesn't include library events & services!

# Collections & Services

Beyond books & media, the library's collection includes museum passes, musical instruments & other objects, seeds, and more. Digital collections range from eBooks, music, and movies to online research archives, business & career tools, and skill training platforms.

Cardholders can borrow from the 67 libraries in the Main Library Alliance and 72+ libraries in the Open Borrowing program. That's easy access to 13 more libraries and nearly 900,000 more items than in 2024!



## 2025 Highlights

- Expanded World Language Collection with Chinese and Korean children's books with support from the Friends
- Added medici.tv, a classical music streaming service with 4,000+ concerts, documentaries & more
- Continued uninterrupted service during the bankruptcy of Baker & Taylor, libraries' largest book supplier for nearly 200 years. Chatham activated long-standing contingency plans and avoided the significant delays many libraries experienced.

### DIGITAL CONTENT



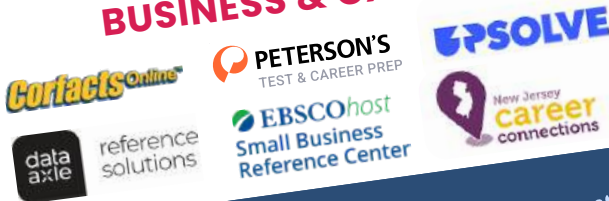
### GENEALOGY



### RESEARCH



### BUSINESS & CAREER



### NEWS



### CLASSES



## Spotlight on Tech

The library made key improvements to its technological infrastructure:

- Migrated to Koha, a new integrated library system that manages core library operations with significant cost savings
- Transitioned to a new print and time management system for public use to improve wireless printing
- Began lending public laptops at the Information Desk for in-library use
- Developed a new 3-year Technology Plan to guide future improvements



## Unlocking Family History

The new Genealogy Kiosk was dedicated in memory of Janet Went Skakum, a former library staff member who was passionate about family history. New genealogy offerings include:

- The first 50 volumes of the Genealogical Magazine of NJ
- Expanded newspaper access with Newspapers by Ancestry - includes national & select foreign coverage
- One-on-one appointments to research with a trained librarian

## BY THE NUMBERS

- Digital Content: 67,360 borrowed **+7%**
- Museum Passes: 645 borrowed, 15 museums
- Library of Things: 223 borrowed **+59%**
- Notary: 385 visits, 466 documents

“I love our library and all that it provides for myself and my grandchildren.”



## Questions Answered:

National Park passes • World War II map of Galicia • Travel to Ireland • Estate law • Grant sources for nonprofits  
 Medical toxicology • 1950s Chatham City Directories • 1970s Dow Jones averages • Stanley Paper Mill • Building birdhouses • Ghost sittings  
 MCAT practice • 1970s Chatham silversmith business • Former UCLA coach John Wooden • Filipino folktales • Real ID appointments  
 Saint Catherine of Alexandria • Local support groups



## SUMMER READING

**581** Participants  
 537 Children  
 28 Adults  
 16 Teens **+33%**

**10,303** Books Read **+21%**

**10,097** by children **+23%**  
**155** by adults  
**51** by teens **+34%**



### Celebrating Together

The community gathered at the library to share seasonal festivities, including the Fall Funtivities Festival, Halloween Dog Costume Contest, and Noon Year's Eve Party. Family, friends, and neighbors joined young artists and readers to celebrate their accomplishments at a youth art reception and the ever-popular Summer Reading Picnic.

### Exploring the Arts

Creative and cultural events included art receptions, craft workshops, concerts, and theater. A bookmark contest showcased designs from local kids. In addition to favorites like storytime, author talks, and Dungeons & Dragons, visitors enjoyed two new book clubs, Italian language classes, and writing & poetry groups.

### Cultivating Curiosity

Library events help visitors explore and connect with the wider world, through activities like NJ Makers Day, CS Base Coding Camp, and special workshops on AI, solar phenomena, and more. New series helped toddlers learn through sensory play, teens investigate the cosmos, and children & teens discover principles of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math).

“Chatham library has consistently offered quality programs over the past 20 years that I have lived in the area.”



# for All Ages



## Sharing Support

The library connects residents with vital services & opportunities to help others. Events tackled healthcare, coping skills for grief & anxiety, retirement, and more. Teen volunteers ran programs & offered homework help for kids. All ages packed snack bags for local organizations to distribute to unhoused children for our first MLK Day of Service.



## Tasting Possibilities

In addition to in-person teen Tasty Tuesdays and Kids Cooking Club, the library added virtual cooking classes & demonstrations from Library Chef Junior. High demand social events for adults centered around tastings, creative mixology, culinary competitions, and cooking techniques such as stretching mozzarella & pasta.



## Connecting with History

Virtual lectures ranged from the Civil War, Titanic, and aviation to holiday traditions, NJ scandals, and baseball. Events offered with the Chatham Historical Societies explored fashion trends, paleontology feuds, and the American flag. New monthly genealogy lectures offered basic tips on exploring family history, and in-depth guidance on research areas such as DNA matching, veteran records, etc.



## PR & MARKETING

### WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



11,115  
Subscribers <sup>+6%</sup>



sign up!

50.3%  
Open Rate



2.5%  
Click Rate <sup>+\*</sup>

*\*Both above industry average!*

### SOCIAL MEDIA

FOLLOW US!

3,926  
Followers <sup>+10%</sup>

@librarychatham

@chathamlibrary

97,910  
Total Views

@libraryofthechatham

@libraryofthechatham

### NEWS

422+  
Features

24+  
Publications

“ We love all of the programs you provide for the kids! ”

# Building Community Ties

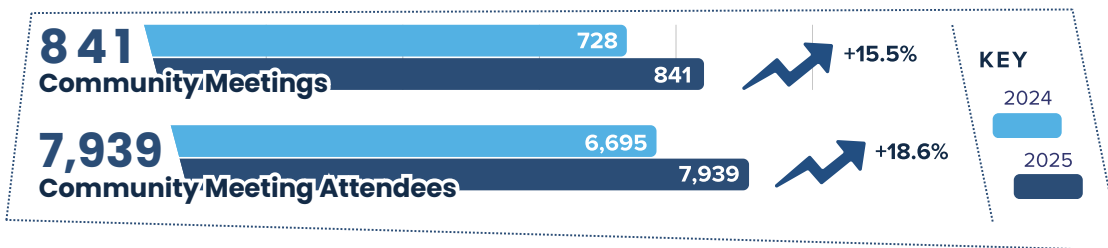


## Connecting with Local Leaders

The library's new *Community Connections* series gives residents the opportunity to meet and learn from local figures active in the community. Featured events in 2025 included a presentation from Chatham Township Mayor Choi on his world travels and a bilingual storytime program for kids with Chatham Borough Mayor Dempsey.

## A Space for Engagement

Over 50 community organizations regularly use library spaces to meet, as well as entrepreneurs, small study groups, and interviewees. Educational displays, donation drives, and valentines for first responders are just a few of the community initiatives held at the library in 2025. Policy changes also expanded the scope of notary services available to individuals, organizations, and businesses.



## Reaching Beyond Library Walls

Staff brought library activities and services directly to the community at the Fishawack Festival, High School Wellness Fair, Farmers' Market, local residential complexes, and more. The library also created opportunities for community members to connect and give back, encouraging visitors to make valentines for first responders, and inviting visitors to share messages of appreciation with local law enforcement for National Night Out.



## Staff Spotlight

Congratulations to library staff members Rosalie Baker & Margaret Nolan on their retirement. We thank you for your years of service!

Welcome to staff new in 2025: Adult Services Librarian Marissa Lasoff-Santos, Office Manager Kayla Chirip, and Library Assistants Ashley Budish & Virginia Brennan.

“ The staff at the library is AMAZING. You all offer such a great service to our community and we appreciate you! ”

## Which community groups used library spaces in 2025?

- Chatham Antiques • Chatham Community Garden • Chatham Township Republican Club • Smith College Club of Watchung Hills • Canasta Ladies • Canasta Club • Summit Westfield Delta Gamma Alumnae • Colony Pool • Chatham Community Players • Chatham Beekeeping Club • Alison Hodge-Ship Medicare • Hometown Heroes Banners Program of the Chathams • Society for Creative Anachronism • Heartland Northeast LLC • Chatham Middle School Robotics • CHS Robotics • Chatham High School Chinese Club • Sierra Club • The Willows at Chatham • For Goodness Cakes • Sutton Woods • Environmental Commission of Chatham Township, Borough and Madison • Donahue Guitar Studio • Pride Community Health • Knitting Group

- ECLC Pride
- Jack and Jill of America • Girl Scouts
- President Distinguished Toastmasters-Conquerors Club • D&D
- Chatham Community Band • Chatham Education Foundation • Fishawack Papers
- Chatham Lions Den • Chatham Emergency Squad • Literacy Volunteers of Morris County • Cub Scouts
- Chatham Beekeeping Club • Cougar Bowl Team • Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Pi Theta Omega Chapter
- Autism Learning Institute • Writers and Artists Group • Garden State Quilters Guild • Chatham Historical Society
- Chatham Township Historical Society • Chatham Field Hockey • Seeing Eye Puppy Trainers • Chatham Borough DEI
- Town & Country Garden Club • Senior Citizens Advisory Committee • New Jersey Numismatic Society (NJNS) Committee

# Library Foundation

The Chatham Library Foundation is a non-profit organization created exclusively to charitably aid the library, with a focus on the library's renovation plans. In 2025, the Foundation secured a \$20,000 grant from the Hyde and Watson Foundation for this project.

Learn more at: [chathamlibraryfoundation.org](http://chathamlibraryfoundation.org)



## Jay & Susan Allen:

*"With funds provided by the Chathams not sufficient to meet the changing needs of the library, Susan and I felt a duty to make this donation to bridge this funding gap and demonstrate our recognition of the importance of the Library to the Chathams."*



## Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library of the Chathams are a pillar of support for the library, raising significant funds for library programs and services with their hugely successful annual and holiday book sales.

Learn more at: [friendsofthechathamlibrary.org](http://friendsofthechathamlibrary.org)



## Friends President Maureen Kelly:

*"In 2025, the Friends continued to strengthen the library as a welcoming community hub through generous fundraising and volunteer support. Proceeds from the book sales helped fund valued programs and services such as museum passes. A huge "Thank You" to all who support the Friends by volunteering your time, talent & membership dollars."*



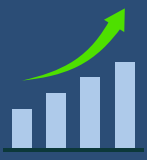
## Volunteers & Supporters

Many thanks to all who so generously contribute to the library by volunteering their time or making a donation. Your support helps deliver, and grow, the essential library services and vibrant programs our community relies on.

### Recognizing our 2025 program supporters:

*Friends of the Library ♦ Chatham-Madison Kiwanis ♦ Chatham Jaycees  
♦ Ann L. Buesing Children's Fund for the Library of The Chathams of the  
Community Foundation of NJ ♦ Marlee and Carl Frahn Fund for the  
Library of The Chathams of the Community Foundation of NJ*





**Business Center**  
including 5+ study spaces  
& meeting rooms for adults



**Local History Room**  
& genealogy center



**Children's Activity Room**  
for storytimes & crafts



**S.T.E.A.M. Room**  
Science, Technology,  
Engineering, Art & Math



**Quiet Reading Room**  
for adults



**Facility Upgrades**  
to vital core systems &  
improved traffic flow



# A Space for Everyone

The continuing high traffic, demand, and use of the new Teen Center is a testament to the impact the library's planned renovation promises for the community. The Teen Center and accessible back entrance marked the end of Phase I, but more improvements are needed.

In 2025, the library continued to work with an architect to investigate how to best reconfigure the building to maximize the available space in the Children's Area, restore and expand the library's available Adult Study Rooms, and more.

Phase II of the renovation will reconfigure the library's space to meet the evolving needs of our community. It will also address the library's growing facility challenges, including humidity problems, HVAC system failures, and plumbing issues.

Scan the QR code above to learn more about the project and how you can get involved.

# Board of Trustees

We thank our 2025 Board of Trustees for their service, and we look forward to working with the 2026 Board.

Andy Hollander, President  
Kevin Sullivan, Vice President  
Susan M. Allen, Secretary  
Lynn Magrane, Treasurer  
Mariela Gilmore, Trustee

Christina Mott, Trustee  
Carolyn Dempsey, Borough Mayor  
Marty McHugh, Deputy Mayor/Township Rep.  
Mary Donohue, Superintendent's Rep.

