

State of the Library 2012~2013

Dear Friends,

Do it once. Do it right. Do it now. These words propelled our vision of a new library on Main Street, Ridgefield, USA. Thanks to the support of nearly 1,300 donors and the Town of Ridgefield, 2012-13 was the year that we did it – and, boy, did we get it right. As we write this report, the New Ridgefield Library has risen behind the historic E.W. Morris Memorial building, ready to resume its role as the nexus of culture, intellect and community-sharing in town. We are on target to open our new doors in Spring of 2014. The space will be spectacular.

INTERIM SPACE We are now “experienced” library movers and shakers. Down the road at 21 Governor Street, in temporary quarters, the heart and soul of the Library – its people and collective knowledge – never missed a beat. Back in 2011, as we sifted through the available options for a temporary library space, we took very seriously our responsibility to maintain a vital presence in town for the thousands of patrons who pass through our doors annually. Securing the downtown space was no small feat, and reconfiguring it to house the welcoming and responsive institution that so many have come to rely on was a fun task. As our staff and board worked through this, always looking through the dual lenses of financial responsibility and efficiency, they had the added need to project usage and staffing of the temporary space and develop a plan to store the Library’s large collection.

Throughout, your Library kept its doors open for all but the two weeks it actually took to execute the move, eventually even expanding its hours. Perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that except for physical space limitations, the stress of the move and all of its attendant new responsibilities was never transferred to our busy patrons. For all practical purposes, it was business as usual.

DOLLARS AND CENTS As our Fiscal Year 2012-13 financials show, we met the responsibility of financial effectiveness and continued to honor the letter and spirit of our partnership with the Town of Ridgefield. By limiting our scope during the transition, we managed within an operating expense budget that has grown by less than one-half percent annually since 2005.

THANK YOU First, a huge vote of thanks to the Town and our loyal donors, not only for the funding of the New Ridgefield Library but also for ensuring the smooth, almost seamless transition described above. Keeping our focus on our primary mission and meeting the needs of our stakeholders also helped us meet our annual fundraising goals this past year. Our supporters rose to the occasion as always by recognizing that on the heels of a successful capital campaign, we still needed financial help to keep library operations running smoothly throughout the transition. Donors included individuals, families, businesses, foundations and organizations. And, of course, we should all pay tribute to the *Friends of the Ridgefield Library* for its continued willingness to underwrite programs as well as its capstone donation to the Campaign for the New Ridgefield Library. All of our donors make the Library a true ‘jewel in the crown’ as a hub of education, entertainment and excitement.

BY THE NUMBERS The role of the library is changing to meet your needs and aspirations. We offer more than 113,000 books and other publications — including audiobooks, DVDs and other digitally formatted works. Though half the collection has been in storage during interim operations, we still managed to circulate a state-leading 12.6 items per every man, woman and child residing in our town, aided by the excellent resource-sharing services provided by the Connecticut State Library and the Bibliomation consortium. Since 2005 our librarians have responded to more than 17,000 reference questions each year. That’s on top of the questions answered by users of our 15 standalone workstations and Wi-Fi connectivity. Access to licensed, downloadable audio and e-books exceeds 6,300 titles, a 27% increase year - over - year, while our patrons checked out 56% more of these items than in 2012, with further double-digit percentage increases expected this year. Our online reference resources now exceed 100 databases, several of them vast in scope and content.

PEOPLE AND PLACES During the protracted, storm-related emergencies of the past few years, we have provided respite and services such as Internet connectivity for more than 3,000 temporary “refugees.” Then there is the number and variety of events and activities for adults, teens, children, academics, hobbyists and business and social networks. Last year close to 20,000 patrons attended the 860 group programs staged in the temporary facility and in the venues of generous partner organizations such as the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Keeler Tavern Museum, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Ridgefield Guild of Artists and Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club. We are looking forward to the new building, which will comfortably accommodate more events of greater variety.

“BECAUSE I LIKE TO READ!” — Max, age 8 Hundreds of residents helped and guided us in keeping our mission fresh and vibrant as we prepare to move into our new space. More than 600 individuals helped us create our new strategic plan by participating in focus groups and written surveys. This confirmed emphatically the community’s support for the facilities and services needed now and well into the future, and allowed us to stand solidly behind our **Vision...**

To be the centerpiece of Ridgefield, an essential partner and destination of choice for our community: the place where people go to read, discover, question, connect and thrive.

So, 2012-13 was a big, historic year for the Ridgefield Library. In terms of management and operations, it was one of the most challenging that we’ve faced in the 142 years since the first Ridgefield Library Association was formed. You’ve watched a new, transformative space emerge before your eyes. And, you’ve also seen the best that the Library staff and patrons have to offer. Please take a look on our website at the exhaustive timeline of the path we have traveled from our first strategic planning conversations in 2003 to today. **Armed with your support and enthusiasm, our Library will always be the place where people go to “read, discover, question, connect and thrive.”**

The opening of the new Library this year will be marked by a great celebration of Ridgefield’s unique blend of ingenuity and community spirit that makes the town a magnet for those seeking a better quality of life. Thank you for all the many ways you are a part of this mission. We greatly value the role we are privileged to play in your behalf.

With best wishes,



Peter Coffin
Chair, Board of Directors

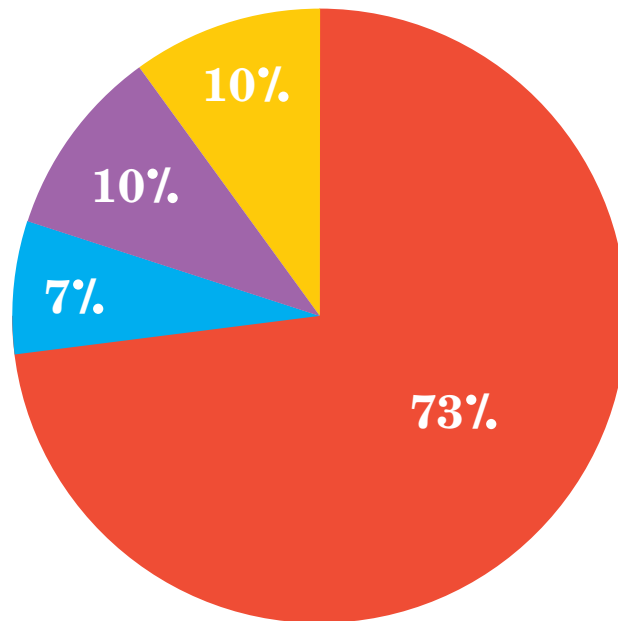


Chris Nolan
Library Director

2012~2013 Financials

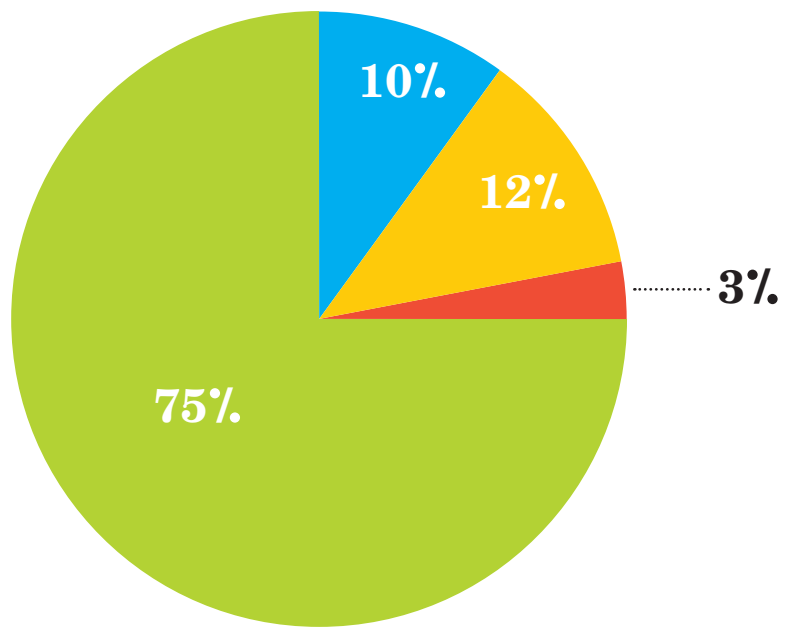
EXPENDITURES 2012-2013
\$2,103,466

- Salaries & Benefits
- Building Utilities & Repairs
- Collections & Programming
- Supplies & Overhead



INCOME 2012-2013
\$2,099,403

- Town & State Grants
- Endowments & Investments
- Annual Appeal & Other
- Donations
- Operating Income



2012~2013 Annual Appeal Donors

Donors listed here provided support for 2012 -2013 annual operations. Please visit www.thenewridgefieldlibrary.org for a complete list of contributors to the Campaign for the New Ridgefield Library.

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