a model 21st century community library

Annual Report 2017 : 2018
**vision**  To be the model for a vibrant and vital 21st century community library.

**mission**  The Ridgefield Library anticipates and meets the evolving needs of our community. We are an essential partner and the place where people go to discover, question, learn and connect.

**values**  The Ridgefield Library is guided by these principles:

- To be a trusted community leader and partner, woven into the fabric of Ridgefield
- To be an accessible and inclusive resource for all
- To respect and value one another in a safe and welcoming environment

**objectives**

- Engage the community in meaningful and innovative ways
- Cultivate a highly motivated and professional staff
- Ensure the financial and operational sustainability of the Library
The hallmark of any organization is its ability to plan – and then deliver on expectations. But sometimes the truest test of character comes from the way it deals with the unexpected.

Earlier this year, our Library family was heartbroken by the passing of our long-time Assistant Director, Mary Rindfleisch. For years, Mary’s boundless energy and creativity inspired our staff, our patrons and the entire Ridgefield community. When we needed it most, your expressions of sympathy and support for Mary’s family and all of us at the Library comforted us through this difficult time. We are inspired to honor her memory with a renewed commitment to making the Ridgefield Library the best it can be.

That sentiment serves as the foundation for our new Strategic Plan – and our vision of being the model for a vibrant and vital 21st century community library. It was an incredible experience to sit down with so many community leaders earlier this year to get their advice and counsel as we updated the plan. These ongoing conversations will help ensure that we provide the services, resources, and programming that meet this Town’s dynamic needs.

This past year, we welcomed more of you than ever for programs and events. We celebrated Jane Austen’s lasting literary contributions; expanded technology classes and STEAM programming; enjoyed poetry slams, reading and writing groups; built up business skills through many programs for entrepreneurs and at-home workers; and bonded through the staff-created Artefacts Through Time escape room adventure. All this and so much more!

All of us at the Library are grateful that the Town of Ridgefield supports our mission through taxpayer funding. As a non-profit association library, we also rely on the continued support of our many donors – you, your friends and neighbors, and the many businesses that make a difference by supporting our events and development initiatives, including the annual Gala and Love Your Library days.

Through your generosity, the Ridgefield Library continues as an example of excellence in community-focused public library service and we can continue to aspire to always be better and do more. Thank you! 

Brenda McKinley
The Ridgefield Library recently finalized its first new long-term strategic plan in more than five years. Critical to this process were the connections made with dozens of leaders from our town’s government, businesses, schools, religious institutions and other organizations.

What struck me throughout these conversations is how often people used the word “community” to describe the central value that the Library brings to our town. It’s little wonder that it is repeated throughout our vision, mission and values statements.

The Ridgefield Library’s community is what makes it so special – its staff, patrons, donors and partners. Our Library Director, Brenda McKinley, ensures that the right people have the right skills to provide the services you expect from a vibrant and vital community library. You see it in people like Kristina Lareau, our head of Children’s Services, who brings remarkable creativity to the Library, or Lesley Lambton, Adult Program Coordinator, who produced nearly 600 diverse programs.

We will forever miss Mary Rindfleisch, who embodied the term “community service,” but are thrilled to welcome Andy Forsyth as our new Assistant Director – another example of the outstanding people who seek to work here.

We’re also blessed with a very active and engaged Board of Directors, who provide long-term direction for the Library. We welcomed four new members in July, providing us with fresh community perspectives.

And then there is you, the most important part of our community – the people we serve and the people who help make great things possible. Thanks to you, the Library remains in strong financial condition, as we managed within budget expense targets and exceeded fundraising goals. We could not have achieved this success without your continued generosity.

As we continually enhance your Library experience through enriching educational programs, diverse and updated collections, and serving our vibrant community, I look forward to a great year ahead. Thank you for your continued support. See you at the Library!

from our board chair

Gary Rapp
2017 : 2018 financials

As the chart below indicates, the Town of Ridgefield is our single largest source of funding, providing a grant of approximately 72% of our operating budget in Fiscal Year 2017-2018. However, it would not be possible to deliver all the services we provide without the generous support of our patrons through donations and event attendance.

**INCOME**

$2,743,453

- Town Grants: 70.4%
- Annual Appeal: 9.2%
- Investments: 7.1%
- Events, Tributes & Other Donations: 10.4%
- Operating Income: 2.9%

**EXPENDITURES**

$2,676,620

- Salaries & Benefits: 70.6%
- Building Maintenance & Utilities: 8.4%
- Library Operations & Supplies: 8.7%
- Collections & Programming: 11.0%
- Technology: 1.3%

A copy of the Ridgefield Library Association’s full audited financial statement for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 may be requested by contacting Library Director Brenda McKinley at 203.438.6960.
It’s not as scary as it sounds: groups of Ridgefield residents were “locked” in a Library room throughout January and had to solve a series of clues and puzzles to find the key to escaping their predicament — all within an hour. The first-ever Escape Room program sold out quickly and was a popular addition to the Library’s programming.

Pow! Zap! Expecto Patronum! Always one of the most popular events of the year, RidgeCon welcomed hundreds of colorfully costumed superheroes, wizards, stormtroopers and even a few Muggles to the Library for a weekend of fantasy and fun.

an accessible and inclusive resource for all:

fun facts...

- We were open for business 335 days a year, 60 hours per week.
- We welcomed over 800 visitors per day.
- Patrons checked out over 255,000 books ~ nearly 720 per day.
- Visitors logged in over 21,600 sessions on our computers and nearly 108,000 WiFi sessions.
The Great Expectations Gala has quickly become one of the most popular annual events in Ridgefield. This year, the Library honored the Couri family with the 2018 Hope H. Swenson Visionary Award for their decades of contributions to the Ridgefield community and beyond.

The annual Paccadolmi Awards recognizes outstanding community contributions to the success of the Library. This year’s honorees were long-time Board member Lisbeth Kelly and the eight members of the Homebound Delivery Team who bring Library materials to residents who can’t easily leave their homes.

usive resource for all:

- Nearly 37,000 people (adults, teens and children) attended 1,381 programs.
- Nearly 17,000 children attended 665 children’s programs.
- 2,000 teens attended 125 teen programs.
- Study Rooms booked for over 7,700 users.
- We issued 658 passports.
- 97% of Ridgefield households have at least one library card.
The Library’s Noreen L. Papa — Mothers: Live Your Life series welcomed **bestselling author Kelly Corrigan** as she shared her experiences as a cancer survivor and as a mother, wife, and daughter while discussing her recent book, *Tell Me More: Stories About the 12 Hardest Things I’m Learning to Say.*

Best-selling author and Ridgefield resident **Roz Chast returned to the Library** to discuss her latest book, *Going to Town: A Love Letter to New York* as part of the popular Author Talk series sponsored by Books on the Common.

- Did you know our collections include books in Braille, games, puzzles, STEAM kits for families and Kindle Fire 7 for kids?
- Our Reference Librarians assisted with more than 32,500 inquiries ~ nearly 10 an hour.
- Available 24/7: Over 22,700 ebooks, audiobooks and digital magazines were downloaded by patrons.
annual donors

2018 Gala
Great Expectations

2018 Honorees
The Couri Family: John & Elaine and Chris & Megan

Title Sponsor | $15,000+
Chefs’ Warehouse

Nobel Prize | $10,000+
Anonymous
Anita and Nick Donofrio**
Scott and Patricia Tenney**

Pulitzer Prize | $7,500+
Larry and Nancy Bossidy**
Rudy and Sally Ruggles**

Man Booker Prize | $5,000+
Canyon Ranch
Robert and Elizabeth Ellis**
Fairfield County Bank*
Dean and Theresa Miller**
Rodier Flowers*
Tauck Travel
TownVibe

Hugo Award | $2,500+
The Couri Family**
Steven and Liz Goldstone**
Sue Manning**
Western Connecticut Health Network

Caldecott Medal | $1,500+
Lori and John Berisford**
Sarah Bouissou Catering
Woody and Suni Harford*
Robert and Shelley Keyes**

Guardian Society Members
Annual Appeal Contributions
$1,000+

Chairman’s Circle | $10,000+
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Linda and Glenn Greenberg**
Anna Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation*
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**Library support for ten or more years.
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Western Connecticut State University
Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra
Woodcock Nature Center
Word for Words
Workspace Education
Across almost two decades as First Selectman, I’ve had the great privilege to collaborate with hundreds of dedicated town employees and volunteers. Few had an impact on me – and our town – the way Mary Rindfleisch did while working at the Ridgefield Library.

Mary was a wise librarian, and her contributions extended far beyond the walls of the Library that she helped shape and build for our community.

Over 20 years of dedicated service, Mary cultivated relationships and partnerships with more than 80 organizations across town, working directly with our schools, non-profits, town departments and community organizations to enhance every aspect of life here in Ridgefield.

Her knowledge, expertise and personal dedication led directly to many programs that enriched our community, including the STEAM conferences with the Aldrich, The Big Read with the Playhouse, The Battle of Ridgefield celebration, programs with the League of Women Voters, the Holiday Stroll and Fall in Love with Ridgefield.

If there was a planning meeting for a town-wide cultural or historical event, Mary was at the table, lending her talents and resources to the project. Even more amazingly, she did the same for her hometown of Sherman, Connecticut.

I will be forever grateful that Mary shared her many gifts with us, and our town is better thanks to her presence in our lives. We will miss her. ~ First Selectman Rudy Marconi
board of directors 2018 : 2019

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With special thanks to long-time Board members retiring 6.30.18
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