



Enriching Minds.
Enhancing Community.





### 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 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 and inspire our community in meaningful and innovative ways
- Cultivate a highly-motivated and professional staff
- **:** Ensure the financial and operational sustainability of the Library

# irom our **library director**

This Annual Report celebrates the Ridgefield Library's 2022-2023 fiscal year — a year for strengthening our community connections. We also celebrate the Ridgefield Library's enduring core values — to be a trusted community leader and partner; to be an accessible and inclusive resource for all and to respect and value one another in a safe and welcoming environment. Our exceptional staff is here for you, and we strive to live these values in all that we do. At the Ridgefield Library — all are welcome.

Our staff welcomes everyone who comes through our doors and partners alongside each person, supporting their individual needs. For individuals going through critical life transitions and challenges the Ridgefield Library is a trusted source of information. A safe place to have questions answered and to find needed help. We are the place whose role it is to support each citizen, our town, our schools, our nonprofits and our businesses. The Library does this through engaging, enriching and educational programs; strong collections and information access; expert service and a comfortable, welcoming space.

We are grateful that the Town of Ridgefield supports our vital mission through a grant that funds 70% of our operating expenses. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit association library, we rely on the continued support of our many donors — you, your neighbors and friends, as well as the many businesses large and small that make a difference by supporting our programs and initiatives. It is because of your engagement and generosity that the Ridgefield Library has both a long history and a bright future welcoming our community.

This past year we saw an explosion of interest and use of the wide array of STEAM Corner equipment in the Donofrio Family Technology Center, with patrons learning new skills while designing and creating their projects. It is wonderful to see these innovative "made in the Library" items. Many things are made in the Library. Early literacy is made in the Library. Career support and economic development are made in the Library. Civic engagement is made in the Library. Lifelong learning is made in the Library. Community is made in the Library. And all are welcome. **Thank you for your support!** 



Brenda McKinley

Sunda MKinkey

## from our **board chair**



Carrie Wells

### As I begin my 2nd year as Board Chair, the Ridgefield Library is celebrating 120 years on Main Street! Our

Library has been a community destination since 1903 when James Morris gave the E. W. Morris Memorial Library to the town, in memory of his wife Elizabeth. The lovely Morris Building is still a part of the Library, but over the years the building has expanded and evolved to meet your needs. Today, the Ridgefield Library proudly resides in the heart of Ridgefield's Cultural District.

Library Director Brenda McKinley and her staff welcome hundreds of patrons every day. Patrons come for the books, the programs and the services; or just a quiet place to work, read or study.

The Ridgefield Library partners with more than 130 other community organizations to expand its programming and outreach. Through these partnerships, the Library provides an ARTalk series, Author Talks, STEAM programs, Health & Wellness programs and much more. It also provides services to the disability community, homebound seniors, home schoolers and adults with memory loss.

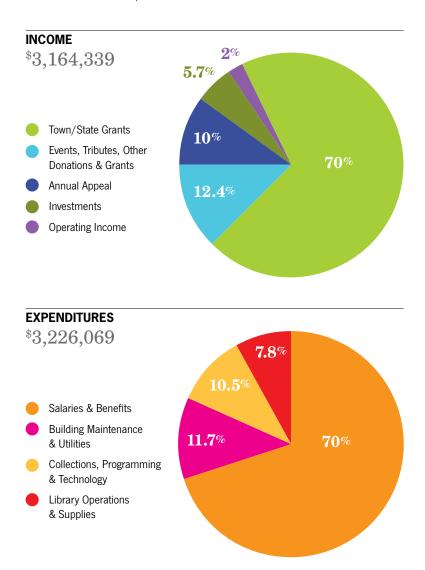
In addition to continually updating the collection of physical and digital books, and managing over 300,000 annual checkouts, the Library offered 1,500 programs this past year. These programs were designed to enrich the lives of people of all ages across our community.

While the Town of Ridgefield provides significant funding, the Library needs to raise funds to cover approximately 30% of its annual budget. Whether you are new to town or the Library has long been part of your charitable giving, we need your help. Your donation supports the development of impactful programs and ensures the maintenance of our beautiful building and substantial collections. Please consider donating to the Library's Annual Appeal.

On behalf of the Ridgefield Library Board of Directors, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve you and thank you for your support. It is with your generosity that the Ridgefield Library continues to be a beloved community destination.

## 2022:2023 **financials**

The Town of Ridgefield is our single largest source of funding, providing a grant of approximately 70% of our operating budget in Fiscal Year 2023. However, it would not be possible to deliver all the services we provide without the generous support of our patrons.



<sup>\* 2022-2023</sup> Financials on this page are based on unaudited financial information. A copy of the Ridgefield Library Association's full audited financial statements may be requested by contacting Library Director Brenda McKinley at 203.438.2282.



### 2022:2023 **facts**

### Your Library is a thriving hub of activity and lifelong learning.

**Something for everyone:** More than 1,500 programs were offered for children, teens and adults in 2022-2023, including **hands-on workshops**, book discussion groups, lectures, technology instruction, art and craft classes, creative writing, musical performances, author talks, health and wellness programs and much more! Over 31,000 people participated in a Library program this year.

The **Lodewick Children's Library** was a hub of activity all year: weekly storytimes for a range of ages; over 1,000 registrants for **our exceptional Summer Reading Program**; popular classes that explored science and technology; puppets, musicians and animal visitors; our new 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program to promote early literacy; and more than 300 children and families celebrating the annual Noon Year's Eve Balloon Drop!

This year's **Paccadolmi Award** was given to longtime Library Board member and volunteer **David Yaun**, an energetic and enthusiastic advocate for the Library and facilitator for the Library's popular Hot Stove event with baseball luminary Gary Cohen. The Paccadolmi Award recognizes outstanding community contributions to the success of the Library.

The Library's 2023 **Great Expectations Gala** honored **Suni and Woody Harford** with the Hope H. Swenson Visionary Award for their many contributions to Ridgefield and the greater community, and for their longstanding support of and service to the Library and its mission.

Thank you to The Lantern for hosting a fun and engaging **Guest Bartender Night** in support of the Library. Library Board members **Dr. Jeet Sandhu and Paul Mellinger** poured signature cocktails for a full house!

1,500

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

6,000

STUDY ROOM SESSIONS

31,000

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

223,000

**LIBRARY VISITS** 

305,000

**CHECKOUTS** 



### 2023 Gala Great Expectations

### 2023 Honorees

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### **Title Sponsor**

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### Nobel Prize | \$10,000+

Larry and Nancy Bossidy Fairfield County Bank Danielle and David Ganek Lin and Stephen Jamison Rudy Ruggles

### Pulitzer Prize | \$7,500+

Laura and Brian Hull The Shantz-Mantione Group UBS Private Wealth Management

### Booker Prize | \$5,000+

068 Magazine
The Couri Family
Anita and Nick Donofrio
Doyle Coffin Architecture
Rob Ellis
Robert Karofsky
Dean and Theresa Miller
Rodier Flowers
Eileen and Jay Walker

### Hugo Award | \$2,500+

Catherine and Chris Desmarais
Jennifer and Carlo Gabrielli
Liz and Steven Goldstone
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Ridgefield's HamletHub
Anne Marie Squeo and Philip Maggi
Young's Fencing and Landscaping

### Caldecott Medal | \$1,500+

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Soundview Market

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Palazzo Landscaping

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these lists. If your name has been misspelled, omitted or improperly listed, please accept our apologies and contact Jane Lindenburg, Development Director

at 203.438.2282 Extension 104.

### 2022:2023

### Program Partners

The Ridgefield Library thanks our program partners and collaborators who help us to present programs that engage, educate and enhance our community!

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Western Connecticut State University

Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra

White Memorial Conservation Center

Wild Seed Project

Woodcock Nature Center

Word for Words

The E. W. Morris Memorial Library Building, the historic front wing of the Ridgefield Library, has been welcoming generations of Ridgefielders since 1903. Its opening was a major milestone for our town. At the turn of the century, a fine library was a point of pride for a community...an expression of shared ideals for learning and literacy.

Fortunately for Ridgefield, 120 years ago, an inspirational gift made our fine Library a reality, at a time when people travelled through town via horse and carriage. The building and land upon which the current Morris Building stands were purchased and donated by Library Board Member James N. Morris, a New York businessman who summered in Ridgefield, in memory of his late wife, Elizabeth.

Today, the Morris Building is enjoyed every day by people in our community who seek a quiet place to read, study or work. Its beautifully carved doors open onto the Library's Main Street lawn, a place where Ridgefielders of all ages gather in every season for popular community events from Make Music Day to the Holiday Stroll.

After 120 years, the Morris Building provides a link to our past, a space for our present and a bridge to our future, and is a vital part of the Ridgefield Library, an active and vibrant 21st century library!

Designed for Beauty Architect Raleigh C. Gildersleeve's design for the building blends the Art Deco, Beaux Arts and Chicago styles and makes beautiful use of marble, granite, brick, copper, bronze and decorative ironwork. The Morris Building is part of the Ridgefield Center Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

Library History Before 1903 The first library to serve Ridgefield's residents was a subscription library which opened in 1795, followed by Hiram K. Scott's Circulating Library in 1852. The Ridgefield Library and Historical Association was established in 1871 and incorporated by the State of Connecticut in 1901. Library services were offered in a variety of locations in town until the purchase of the former Smith Tavern property at the corner of Main and Prospect Streets in 1900, with construction of the Morris Memorial Building commencing in 1901.





Enriching Minds. Enhancing Community.

472 Main Street, Ridgefield Connecticut 203.438.2282 ridgefieldlibrary.org

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With special thanks to long-time Board member Rob Ellis, retiring 6.30.2023.

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