

Lower Merion Libraries Looking to the Future

From the Board President:

It is my honor to present this Annual Report, which continues the march of the LMLS into the future. Having set the stage with the marvelous renovations of five libraries, and with the sixth, Belmont Hills, on track to reopen by the end of 2018, we are ready to turn our attention to using these beautiful new facilities to their fullest capacities. Whether it's coding classes for toddlers, or teaching our seniors to use Facebook, the libraries are keeping pace and evolving to meet the needs of its patrons. I am confident that with the able leadership of David Belanger, our visionary Director of Libraries, and the support of the LMLS Board as well as the Township Board of Commissioners, our libraries will continue to provide exemplary service and cutting edge services and programs.

Sincerely,
Betty-Ann Izenman, President,
LMLS Board of Trustees

Ready for Today and Tomorrow

Renovations Near Completion

In 2007 the Lower Merion Library System created a vision for all six library facilities to be renovated and expanded to meet the changing needs of the community. In 2017, the ground was broken for the sixth and final project at the Belmont Hills Library (see page 3).

With the renovations complete, Lower Merion Libraries will have greater capacity for community programs, activities for children and greater access to technology.

New Ways to Borrow

Lower Merion Libraries continue to expand access to electronic resources. Downloadable ebooks and audiobooks continue to be the fastest growing service offered. New in 2017 was online access to *Consumer Reports*.

Even more innovative is lending new and nontraditional items. For example, LMLS greatly expanded the museum pass program, with members borrowing passes for the whole family to local attractions. LMLS launched the lending of Chromebook computers for in-library use. In development are other unique items to borrow.

A Plan for the Future

The Lower Merion Library System completed the draft of its strategic plan. With input from staff, board members and public officials, LMLS created a roadmap for providing outstanding service. The plan features five key strategies to move libraries forward. Visit www.lmls.org/plan2017 to learn more.

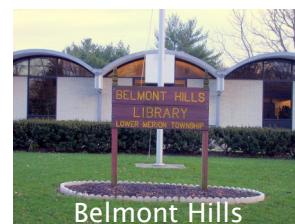
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Ardmore



Bala Cynwyd



Belmont Hills



Gladwyne



Ludington



Penn Wynne

Library Updates

Ardmore

Children had an exciting year building at Lego Fest, celebrating Dr. Seuss and Mo Willems' birthdays, exploring with Curious George, and finding new worlds during Take Your Child to the Library Day. Children learned how to code and build robots, searched for clues during Scavenger Hunts, and enjoyed storytime at the Clevenger Fountain.

Adults participated in the annual Jane Austen Celebration, First Wednesday Book Club, the Monthly Writer's Group, free biweekly Adult Computer Classes, Gerrymandering, Medicare, Financial Literacy, and Smoking Cessation. Ardmore also celebrated National Novel Writing Month. The Board hosted the Charlotte Miller Simon Poetry Celebration and the popular Kitchen Tour. The Board supported enhanced patron experiences through technology funding.

Ardmore is proud to have finished 2017 as a **Silver Level Library** in the PA Forward Star Program and looks forward to achieving Gold Status!

Bala Cynwyd

2017 was busy with 281,794 items checked out, and 154,208 visitors. The library hosted popular programs: Sundays @ 2 concerts, Great Books, author talks, college admissions, as well as gardening, justice, local history, resume building, meditation, and health information programs such as breast cancer genetics.

The Junior Room staff focused on developing programs. Staff produced a wonderful Rock/Art program, Girls Science Camp, and Dazzling Decoupage. In 2018 the Junior Room will offer the second Girls Science Camp; new programs include STIR (Storytime for Independent Readers), Shell and Fossil Fun program as well as a Poetry Pop-up.

The consistently high visitor count and circulation suggests that the library remains relevant and appreciated in the community. In 2018 look for technology Q&A, Drivers' education courses, Young Adult author visits, and more in order to bring in new faces.

Belmont Hills

2017 was an eventful year. In February, Head Librarian Robyn Langston became Head

Librarian at Ludington Library. Lizzie Barrie was hired in July as the new head librarian. In November, the long-awaited renovation project began. A late 2018 reopening is planned.

Throughout the abbreviated year, Belmont Hills welcomed 22,634 visitors, including 350 people for the pre-construction Going Away party. Twenty programs for adults were held, including mindfulness meditation and seminars on estate planning and Medicare planning. Sixty programs for kids included monthly family game and puzzle nights, a magician, and many fun craft projects. Also, 46 weekly storytimes were held. While the library building is closed, storytimes continue in the Belmont Hills Community Center. Special events included the popular 24th Annual Belmont Hills Poetry Contest, and Belmont Hills Library Day at the Wilmington Blue Rocks baseball game!

Gladwyne

The hands-down highlight of 2017 was the March 25 ribbon cutting ceremony, celebrating renovations and the addition of a beautiful glass elevator, making the library completely ADA accessible. The library welcomed back its patient patrons with balloons, elevator rides, refreshments, and crafts for the kids. The library now has a new Young Adult Area, improved workroom space, and enhanced landscaping. The elevator makes it easy for patrons to attend programs and access the Children's Room. The design complements the historic stone and glass building. Lower Merion Township's Historical Architectural Review Board and Historical Commission awarded the Library a 2017 Historic Preservation Award, commending the project as a great example of historic preservation.

The PA Library Association began a library advocacy and awareness program called PA Forward. Libraries earn recognition by becoming a "star" library. Gladwyne Library has achieved the Bronze Star.

Ludington

Thanks to the staff, volunteers, and patrons, the library sailed through 2017's transitions with flying colors. Ludington said goodbye to retiring Head Librarian, Margery Hall, while new Head Librarian, Robyn Langston, learned to successfully manage a large library. Ludington hosted many programs, including visits from Mike McGrath from WHYY's *You Bet Your Garden*,

Philadelphia Inquirer journalist Jennifer Lin, author David Macaulay, and a talk with John Bogle, founder of Vanguard. Ludington participated in Bryn Mawr Day, sponsoring the popular Petting Zoo. Other community events included the Bryn Mawr Farmer's Market, and the Clover Market. The Book Store generated much-needed proceeds. Ludington offered numerous fun educational opportunities for young patrons including the Leap into Science Program, and the Cruise into Kindergarten programs. Through the year Ludington continued to do what it does best, being a great place to read, learn, connect with others, and to nurture the human spirit. Ludington looks forward to doing it all over again in 2018!

Penn Wynne

The renovated library continues to be a huge draw to the Penn Wynne community. This

year, the library became a polling place and brought in people who had not seen the renovated space; they were amazed at the transformation. The Library Board took the opportunity to host bake sales on both election days. The library held 221 programs that 7,235 children and adults attended. There were 80 story times and 107 other children's events—including a visit from alpacas, a Peeps diorama contest, children's book clubs, police story times, multiple animal visits, music, and craft programs. Adults learned about meditation, personal computer tips, home organizing and more. The library had 10,776 people use wireless internet or public computers, and 1,631 children used the Early Literacy Station to play educational computer games. A new security gate/people counter allows better tracking of visitors coming into the library. The self-checkout machine is now available on the front desk and functioning well.

Under Construction

Gladwyne Library Reopens

The library reopened on March 25, 2017 after a 14-month renovation.

The library now includes:

- A glass elevator linking the basement children's room and the 2nd floor meeting room with the main library
- ADA-compliant restrooms
- An expanded and colorful section for young adults
- Reorganization of audio-visual materials
- Updated staff workspace
- Installation of self-check and RFID technology



Belmont Hills Library Construction Begins

Groundbreaking for the addition and renovation to the Belmont Hills Library was held on November 20. The renovated library will include:

- A meeting room for up to 45 people
- New ADA compliant restrooms
- New ADA compliant entrances
- A reading patio overlooking the park and pool
- Improved furniture and shelving
- Energy efficient lighting and HVAC

LMLS By the Numbers

Circulation:

972,439 books and other items were lent. That's 16.8 items per resident, more than twice the national average (7.3) and three times the Pennsylvania average (5.2).

Library Visits:

626,174 people visited LMLS locations. That's 10.8 times per resident, compared to 4.5 nationally and 3.6 in Pennsylvania.

Registered Borrowers:

27,537 residents have library cards. That's 47.6% of Lower Merion residents, and, in a 2016 survey, 71% reported visiting a library in the previous 12 months.

Other Stats:

📖 53,267 public computer sessions 📖 97,675 wifi sessions
📖 1,358 programs for children, teens and adults, with 44,641 attendees
📖 15,920 hours open 📖 65,496 reference questions answered

Financial Summary*

Income:

Lower Merion Township: \$4,602,233
State Aid: \$196,930
Fines/Donations/Grants: \$555,893
Total: \$5,355,156

Expenses:

Personnel: \$4,014,061
Library Materials: \$668,404
Other Expenses: \$708,779
Total: \$5,391,244

*Preliminary report, unaudited.

System-Wide Services and Events

In 2017, LMLS made several system-wide changes, everything from personnel to technology.

- Long-time Head Librarian for the Ludington Library, Margery Hall, retired. Robyn Langston, Head Librarian at Belmont Hills, was promoted to the position at Ludington. Elizabeth Barrie was promoted to the position of Belmont Hills Head Librarian. Joyce Platfoot was hired as a Reference Librarian for the Ludington Library.
- Credit card acceptance was begun in libraries using Square technology.
- *Consumer Reports* online was introduced, helping cardholders make informed purchases.
- 28 Chromebook laptops were received through a grant from the PA Department of Education.
- Coding Classes using the Chromebooks were begun through a grant from the Best Buy Foundation.
- RFID technology was implemented at the Ardmore, Gladwyne and Penn Wynne libraries.
- OCLC cataloging service was added to speed the processing of books.
- The shared library circulation system was upgraded through MCLINC.
- *This Month at the Libraries* premiered on LMTV, showcasing library programs and events.
- Lower Merion Libraries began participating in the PA Forward Star Libraries program, with two libraries receiving star status: Ardmore and Gladwyne.