

Lower Merion Libraries Telling Your Stories

From the Board President:

The impact of the library on our family is best described by Kayla, my 23 year old daughter—

"The library not only gave me a physical escape, but also a mental one....the biggest impact on my life was being able to read anything and everything, whenever I wanted. I would check out stacks of books so big that ... the librarians would laugh and say I'd never get through them all, but later would give me recommendations for more.

I credit my love for reading as well as my thirst for knowledge to the library— I could pick up Harry Potter, a stupid romance novel and a comic book, all in one go... The best thing about libraries is the freedom they give you to learn anything or ... nothing at all, just to sit and think and put yourself in a different world from the one you find yourself in... I probably spent more time in the library during my childhood than anywhere else other than school or home, and I couldn't be happier about it."

Thank you to the LM library staff for helping us raise a curious, independent young woman. I know our story is repeated daily in the library.

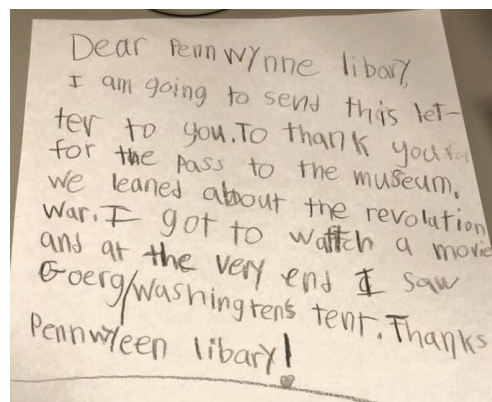
Betty-Ann Izenman, LMLS Board

Making an Impact in the Community

The Lower Merion Library System is not just a group of buildings with books, but an active participant in our community. Libraries bring stories to life, and they also get life from the stories of the community. In reviewing accomplishments for 2018, LMLS celebrates how the library has impacted lives in our community.

Statistics are also part of our story. For the first time in several years, library use has increased along many measures. More people visited libraries, they checked out more books, and attended more programs. Details are on the back page.

Julian gave the Bala Cynwyd Library a five-star review on Google "This library has everything a good library should: knowledgeable staff, a fantastic selection of books, movies, and CDs, computers and printers, and children's programs. Plus, the building was recently renovated, and it is glimmering!"



One young visitor enjoyed using a Penn Wynne Library museum pass.

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Ardmore



Bala Cynwyd



Belmont Hills



Gladwyne



Ludington



Penn Wynne

Library Updates

Ardmore

2018 was busy and productive. The library welcomed over 90,000 visitors, hosted 13,600 internet sessions and offered 235 programs. Whatever you were looking for could be found at the library. Children enjoyed Tuesday matinees, created a LEGO movie, learned about saving money, made tie-dyed shirts, built robots and learned basic coding techniques.

Patrons attended seminars on first-time home buying and social security and retirement planning. Many learned how to use their personal electronic devices through the twice-weekly technology clinics. And, a group of enthusiastic future writers joined Dr. Goswami, an Ardmore Board member, to attend her Creative Writing Workshop on Memoirs.

Board members worked tirelessly planning and implementing various programs and fundraisers. In addition to the annual Poetry Celebration and Kitchen Tour, the Board was active in community outreach programs and plans to increase library outreach.

Bala Cynwyd

Bala Cynwyd Library continued its growth in 2018. Patrons checked out 293,095 items, and we greeted 160,083 visitors. In addition to ongoing programs, we introduced movie showings for adults and young adults. Attendees engaged in intelligent and entertaining discussions afterwards. We hosted a total of 342 programs, with 11,859 across all age groups in attendance.

The Junior Room staff remained focused on developing programs locally as well as bringing top talented performers for our public. In comparison to 2017, we nearly doubled the number of special programs offered. Some of these programs included: music classes, art classes, a six-week session of coding classes, Longwood Garden Community Reads program based on the book *Treehugger*, and story times. We rolled out our STEM Fun Zone.

We value our high visitor count, and the appreciation our patrons express about our services, which reinforce our importance in the community.

Laura told us—"This charming little library [Ardmore] has been a treasure! Easy walking distance, small but rich collection, and a surprising number of current popular materials."

Belmont Hills

The Belmont Hills Library building closed for renovations in November, 2017, and staff were dispersed between the LMLS Processing Center and the other LMLS branches as needed. We continued to hold our weekly story times at the Belmont Hills Community Center. On November 4, the community gathered for a Grand Reopening

Celebration attended by over 400 people, including State Representative Pam DeLissio, State Senator Daylin Leach, and Pennsylvania Commissioner of Libraries Glenn Miller.

Long-time staff member Jackie Leming was hired as a full-time Library Assistant in the

Ludington Library Junior Room. Gwen Gatto took over Jackie's children's programming and collection development duties. We also hired Neeti Verma as a part-time staff member.

We held 10 programs and 14 story times in November and December, including a "Countdown to Noon" on New Year's Eve which was attended by dozens of families.

Gladwyne

The Board of Trustees committed to finding new ways to raise money and this year saw success with the first "Library Libations" event at the Union League Guard House. The tickets sales, a raffle for a Dinner for 12 at the Guard House, and a Silent Auction raised over \$13,000.

For many years, the staff remained stable, but this year saw the first of two big retirements. After thirty-three years of service to the community, Linda Pullano retired on the last day of 2018. It is not possible to overstate how much we will miss her. (The second retirement came in January 2019).

The success of the Gladwyne Museum Pass program, prompted adding several more sites for patrons to explore including: Bucks County Children's Museum, Eastern State Penitentiary, Tyler Arboretum, and Woodmere Art Museum.

Gladwyne Library achieved the Silver Star in the Pennsylvania Library Association's PA Forward

Adam told us on Facebook—"Ms. Gail is the best librarian ever (kids floor) [Ludington]"

program. We are completely back to normal after the 2016 renovation and happy to resume our place as the Heart of the Village.

Ludington

Ludington Library saw a productive and busy year in 2018. The theme was best captured by “trying something new.” Our museum pass collection began circulating early in the year and passes were checked out enthusiastically and regularly! Ludington was also grateful to receive a Keystone Grant to help fund necessary upgrades. They include replacing windows not part of the 2012 renovation, improvements to the HVAC system, and LED lighting.

There was a lot of fun to be had at Ludington as well. Staff planned interesting programming all year. Ludington featured three musical performances over the summer to promote the Summer Quest/Reading theme, *Libraries Rock*. The adult and children’s performances were held outdoors in the gazebo area, and audiences enjoyed the shows with accompanying lawn chairs and blankets. Finally, a huge thank you to dedicated staff, volunteers, and board members for making 2018 at Ludington

Library another great year to remember.

Penn Wynne

2018 was a busy year for Penn Wynne Library. We had 75,107 visitors, 178 programs that 6,006 people of all ages attended. We began our museum pass program and it has become an incredibly popular part of our collection. We hosted our enormously popular Alpacalypse (a visit from 2 alpacas who arrived in a minivan!); our Peeps Diorama contest had 27 entries; T-Rex Tea Party and celebrated Dinovember with daily updates of dinosaur activities in the library.

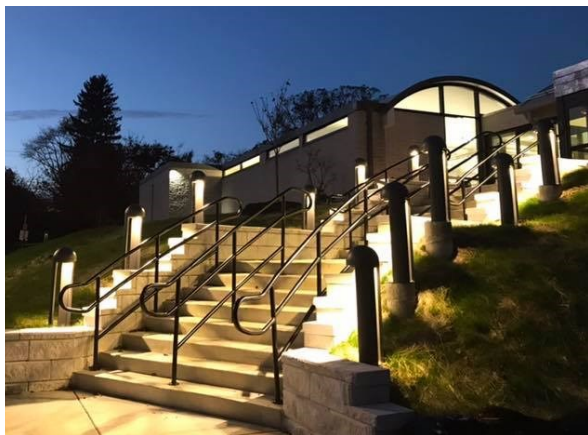
The board held its Appetite For Books in the library and it was a wonderful evening. The library offered movies, craft programs, and a Breakfast with State Representative Tim Briggs. Our departing Children’s Librarian Alison King, was the Grand Marshal in the Penn Wynne July 4th Parade. We continue to offer a great collection, fun events and a warm and welcoming spirit to all our visitors.

Gene and Bob are pleased “to see the Library [Gladwyne] anchoring the Village.” (This comment came with a donation to the library.)

Construction Completed

LMLS Completes a 10 Year Project to Renovate and Expand all Six Libraries

- Design plans completed in 2008
- Construction began with the Ludington Library in 2010
- The final project, the Belmont Hills Library, reopened November 2018
- In total 20,477 square feet of floor space were added, and 65,489 square feet were renovated
- Four new elevators installed, including a glass elevator at the Gladwyne Library



Belmont Hills Library Reopens

The Library reopened November 4, exactly one year after closing for renovations.

The library now includes:

- A light-filled meeting room for 45
- A reading patio overlooking the Township pool and McMoran Park
- ADA compliant restrooms and entrance
- New furniture and shelving, complete with a laptop bar
- Energy efficient lighting and HVAC system

LMLS By the Numbers

Circulation:

989,652 books and other items were lent. That's 17.1 items per resident, more than twice the national average (7.2) and three times the Pennsylvania average (5.1).

Library Visits:

636,111 people visited LMLS locations. That's 11 times per resident, compared to 4.36 nationally and 3.55 in Pennsylvania.

Registered Borrowers:

30,483 residents have library cards. That's 52.7% of Lower Merion residents, and, in a 2016 survey, 71% reported visiting a library in the previous 12 months.

Other Stats:

📖 49,764 public computer sessions 📖 109,680 Wi-Fi sessions
📖 1,461 programs for children, teens and adults, with 42,353 attendees
📖 17,359 hours open 📖 70,172 reference questions answered

Financial Summary*

Income:

Lower Merion Township: \$4,861,196
State Aid: \$196,930
Fines/Donations/Grants: \$607,759
Total: \$5,665,885

Expenses:

Personnel: \$4,191,930
Library Materials: \$671,663
Other Expenses: \$797,557
Total: \$5,661,150

*Preliminary report, unaudited.

System-Wide Services and Events

In 2018, LMLS had many system-wide projects, everything from personnel to technology.

- Changes in staff for children's services included: a new librarian at Penn Wynne and promotions at Ludington and Belmont hills
- Purchased township-wide license to show select feature films
- Received \$20,000 in funding through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program
- Updated software used for summer reading programs
- Held coding classes at six libraries with a grant from the Best Buy Foundation
- Received a \$260,000 Keystone Grant for Ludington Library upgrades
- Upgraded the LMLS e-mail system
- Updated the policy for DVD circulation, use increased by 2.97%, the first increase after several years of decreases
- Circulation increased by 2.29%, including a 21.75% increase in downloadable materials

A local dad said, "the Belmont Hills Library has been a focal point for my young family. The story times, crafts, guest speakers and extensive children's section have taught my children what community means. We know the library staff by their first names. So friendly and knowledgeable."