

# Lower Merion Libraries Values in Action

## Dear neighbors & library patrons,

The Lower Merion Library System board recently completed a search for a new At Large member. We were surprised and humbled by the number and quality of the applicants. The decision to choose just one person was extremely difficult.

I mention this because it is a perfect example of the intersection of the shared values of the Library System and our community. This is a partnership. So many experienced, passionate people applied to volunteer their time and effort for the betterment of LMLS, just as our library staff pledges to provide respectful, compassionate service guided by the highest standards of professionalism.

In fact, unprompted, many of the Board applicants told us that their motivation for applying was their high regard and fondness for the library staff. We are fortunate to have amazing staff and amazing neighbors willing to support that staff in our newly renovated buildings.

Our librarians are always trying to improve our communities and our lives. I am grateful that the community joins staff to keep our libraries vibrant and relevant. Please join me in supporting our libraries financially as well.

Betty-Ann Izenman  
President, LMLS Board of Directors

## This is Our Pledge

In 2019 staff began to update the LMLS strategic plan. The update started with a process to identify the shared values employees have in providing outstanding service for the residents of Lower Merion Township. The values identified by staff led to developing an LMLS purpose statement which summarizes our commitment to the community.

**Purpose Statement:** Lower Merion Libraries: always ready to inspire and empower our community. We bring you the world!

### Core Values

#### Engagement:

- We create opportunities to connect individuals and build community.
- We ensure fair and equal access to library resources as champions of inclusivity and diversity.
- We foster and enhance the intellectual and civic life of the community.

#### Exploration:

- We promote a culture of learning to support discovery and growth.
- We cultivate a sense of curiosity to spark new ideas and innovation.
- We uphold the right of every individual to seek and receive information from all points of view.

#### Excellence

- We provide service guided by respect, compassion, and the highest standards of professionalism.
- We build trust through fairness, transparency, accuracy, and confidentiality.
- We work as a team on behalf of patrons, staff, and the entire community to build an institution which will serve current and future generations.

# Library Updates

## Ardmore

In 2019 Ardmore welcomed 89,626 visitors, hosted 13,634 internet sessions and facilitated 400 programs, from cookie decorating to managing chronic pain. Ardmore partnered with business, education and civic organizations to increase community awareness. Staff conducted and participated in class visits, community book fairs, a holiday food drive and LM Summer Café programs. We strengthened community outreach with biweekly tech clinics, free weekly writing assistance programs and with the purchase of hot spots. The Great Stories Book Club came to life through an ALA grant. The Dungeons & Dragons Club and a teen advisory board laid the framework for developing young adult programming, including a 2020 middle school book club.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment and dedication of the Board. From fundraising to community outreach, the Board is ever supportive of staff endeavors.



## Bala Cynwyd

We continued to enrich our connection to the community in 2019, offering programs ranging from a presentation on body image issues, to a discussion on the history of the Reading Railroad. Our Sundays @ 2 concert series remains well attended. We offered 80 programs for adults and teens, and 142 programs for children, as well as 130 story times, to the delight of 12,372 attendees. We also added 6 new sites to our popular museum passes program.

In keeping with our STEM activities, our staff developed and made available materials, and art and music classes, in conjunction with professional performers and teachers; the STEM Fun Zone, located in the Jr. Room, drew in many engaged children.

We increased our focus on outreach, hosting an event at Lord & Taylor, and one at the Merion Train Station, to launch our Summer Reading programs.



We are grateful to our generous and dedicated volunteers, who have donated 1,308 hours assisting our staff.

## Belmont Hills

In 2019, Belmont Hills Library's renovated building helped us to connect with the community. We began a popular baby playgroup that meets on Monday mornings in our meeting room. The use of the meeting room as an art exhibit space began, displaying the work of local artists. Our meeting room was also used for story times, crafts, Civic Association meetings, ukulele lessons, yoga classes...even hosting the neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt indoors when inclement weather loomed. Work with local organizations included: Belmont Hills Fire Company bringing trucks to story time, an off-site program at Villanova University's observatory, and programs by Morris Arboretum and Riverbend Environmental Education Center.

Head Librarian, Lizzie Barrie, received State Sen. Daylin Leach's Public Librarian of the Year award and Children's Librarian Gwen Gatto was selected to give a "Lightning Talk" at the Pennsylvania Library Association's annual conference.



## Gladwyne

The Board announced a Warm & Cozy Campaign to secure funds for a new boiler and roof and then quickly went into action. A "Raise the Roof" Cocktail Party netted over \$16,000 and a repeat of "Library Libations" at the Guard House raised over \$13,000. A grant of \$26,000 from the McLean Contributionship was welcome news! Donations to the Maud & Stuart Bell Society (\$1000 or more) held steady at 23.

Adding to the popular museum passes, we now loan Hot Spots, Steam kits and Wonderbooks.

We experienced the largest turnover of staff in 25 years, and while we miss our retired colleagues, we saw a burst of new energy and creativity poured into programming for all ages.



The goal is to bring as many people as possible through our doors (and up the elevator!) to experience a wide variety of interesting, educational events and have access to the depth and richness of our collections. The ultimate goal, however, is to remain the "Heart of the Village!"

## Ludington

Ludington Library continued to play a vital role in the community in 2019. There were musical performances, programs on medical and financial well-being, and author visits, including the Main Line's own Janny Scott as she discussed her book *The Beneficiary*. The Juniors enjoyed magicians, and the new *First Friday* programming which gave children the chance to get creative and ready for the weekend. Ludington hosted many other activities for channeling creativity, or just getting to know your neighbors' perspective a little better by sharing a unique experience.

Ludington also offered more museum passes, more cake pans, more e-books, and a brand new hot spot lending program. Staff and board strived to create a sense of place and community like nowhere else. The key to another successful year was creating the kind of library that people want to be a part of, where



collaboration and quiet reflection are equally welcome.

## Penn Wynne

2019 was a busy and exciting year. We had 75,472 visitors, 179 programs, including 84 story times. We had 5,146 people use our public computers and 9,025 people logged in to our wireless internet. We shipped 11,589 items for holds to other libraries and received 10,590 to fill our holds.



We had 31 entries in our Peeps Diorama contest with over 4000 views on our Facebook page! There were craft programs, a drag queen story time, book clubs for kids, tie dying t-shirts and our ever-popular Alpacalypse! The Board held hugely successful Appetite For Books and Touch A Truck events as well as running Election Day Bake sales and restaurant fundraisers.

We have a great partnership with the Penn Wynne Civic Association for the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and New Year's at Noon-both have strong community support and participation. Our meeting room is used by many diverse groups and we are pleased that the library is such a welcoming place for our users.

# System-Wide Services and Events

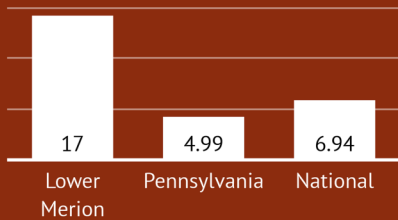
In 2019, LMLS undertook many system-wide projects, ranging from technology to staffing changes.

- Hired a part-time Director of Development and began increasing fundraising activities
- Received \$15,000 in EITC funding to support the Summer Learning Program and Coding Program in libraries in 2020 and a \$26,000 grant to support the renovations to the Gladwyne Library
- Worked with the county automation consortium to begin upgrading the computer network linking libraries with high-speed fiber connections
- Held the ADL Anti-Bias Training for all library staff at the annual in-service day. Held training sessions on interacting with service animals in the library
- Supported the One Book One Lower Merion program featuring the best-selling *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens, in her only Philadelphia area appearance
- Updated software used to list library events on [www.lmls.org](http://www.lmls.org), to include more flexibility and a registration module
- Filled the positions of Coordinator of Youth Services and Children's Library Assistant at the Ludington Library, Library Assistant and Head of Circulation at the Bala Cynwyd Library, and various other positions
- Continued participation in the PA Library Association's PA Forward program for literacy programming: Ardmore, Bala Cynwyd and Ludington libraries received Gold status, Gladwyne Library received Silver status and the Belmont Hills Library received Bronze status

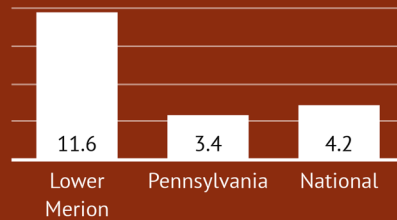
# LMLS By the Numbers

## Library Use

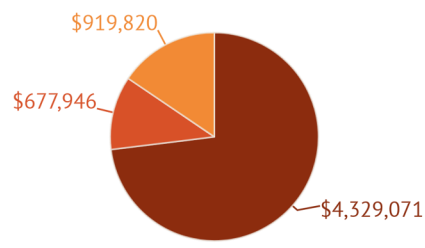
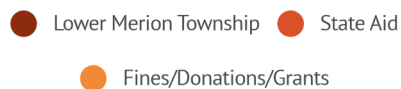
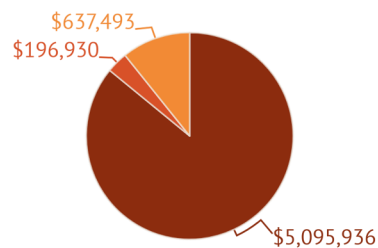
### Circulation Per Person



### Library Visits Per Person



## Income and Expenditure



## Library Activities



46,535 Computer Sessions  
101,682 WiFi Sessions



1,934 Programs  
49,223 Attendees

109,434 Questions Answered



33,221 Resident Borrowers



16,895 Hours Open

