



# HOOKSETT Library Annual Report FY2020

The Hooksett Library plays a vital role in providing information and resources to Hooksett residents in a wide variety of ways, particularly this past spring during this unprecedented public health crisis. The Hooksett Library trustees voted to close the building to patrons and staff on March 13th, 2020, following an emergency meeting regarding the President's declaration of a National State of Emergency. The immediate priorities were to prevent spreading, help 'flatten the curve', and protect staff.

However, the virtual library remained open to continue to serve the community. Librarians and library staff worked to locate and curate needed public information from reputable sources, in order to make these resources easily available to the community through the library website and social media. The library website portal functioned as the virtual branch 24/7, while staff increased the library's email marketing and social media presence to make townspeople aware of digital offerings. Online library card registration continued for town residents, and free public wifi extends out from the physical building across the parking lot. From March to June of 2020, the library had an average of 760 visitors utilizing the library's wifi access from the lawn and parking lot each month.

The Library Director followed the Reopening New Hampshire Libraries Task Force closely, in conjunction with the Governor's Economic Reopening Task Force, to guide the library's practices for safely handling materials and proceed with public service. Remote management of employees, task tracking, and communication were immediate priorities as staff transitioned to a remote work environment. More mobile technology was also purchased for staff working remotely, so that the library's Chromebooks could be used in other town departments.

Librarians monitored and responded to patron demand for popular titles by purchasing additional digital copies of books and audiobooks for Hooksett Library cardholders specifically. Librarians added e-resources in anticipation of the evolving needs of our community, particularly focusing on professional development courses, basic digital literacy and job seeker assistance, and reference databases designed specifically for the small business community. Library staff responded quickly to community requests through the new Live Chat service, as well as via email, phone, and social media.

The library continued to provide cultural enrichment opportunities for all community members. Children's room staff were among the first in the state to jump into virtual storytime

programming. The Youth Services Librarian realized the immediate value in offering kids continuity with faces they knew from the library because she recognized that “our librarians *are* the celebrities to these young kids.” The positive community response proved this!

Storytimes and baby rhymes, virtual crafts, Saturday STEM activities, and a spring butterfly hatching program on Facebook Live engaged children and parents. Weekly programs saw an average attendance of 10 to 20 families attending each session live with viewings in the weeks following reaching into the hundreds. For our tweens and teens, we developed virtual escape rooms and a new virtual Dungeons & Dragons program.

Adult book groups and technology classes continued virtually, and our technology librarian discovered new ways to safely assist patrons with technology challenges. He also continued one-on-one virtual tech support for community members, using a variety of platforms from Google Meet to Jitsi meeting software, while keeping library staff up to date on the security and privacy issues inherent to such work. He also designed and taught virtual classes targeting patrons who are not comfortable with technology in order to improve access to ebooks and e-audiobooks for those reluctant populations; these were very well received.

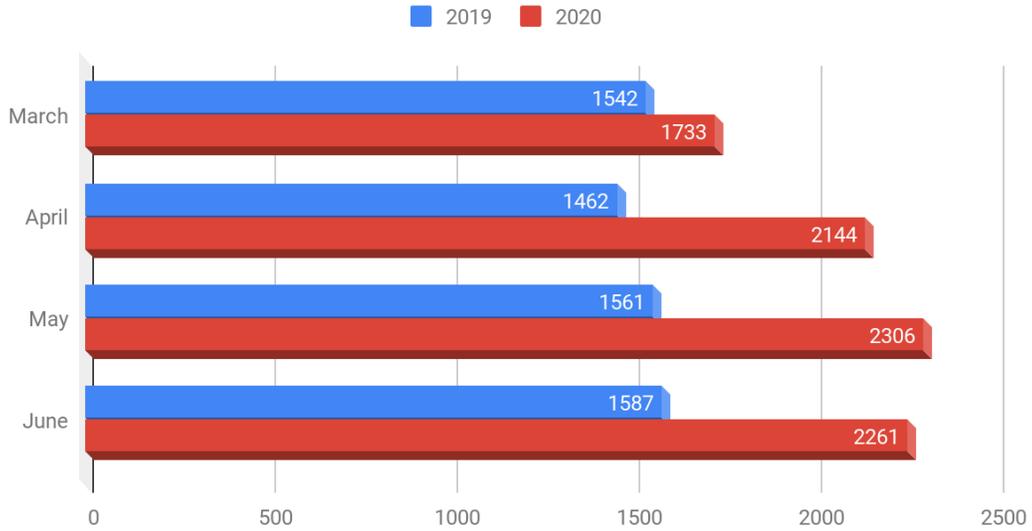
The book drop was kept closed during the Stay at Home order and through April 25th, when we opened for one day a week. Based on the recommendations of the Reopening New Hampshire Libraries Task force and the most currently available research, we allowed quarantine time for materials before they were handled. We increased our book drop to two days a week mid-May, and then opened it full time in early June in preparation for our curbside pickup service.

Porch Pickup, the library’s contactless curbside service for providing library materials to cardholders, started June 15th and immediately saw impressive usage. In designing this service, particular attention was paid to protecting the health and safety of everyone involved; during planning and implementation, a team-based approach was chosen to ensure continuity of service, should staff be affected by illness. Librarians continued to raise general awareness of the library’s increased digital offerings as we determined the safest way to provide the community with physical materials. In the first month of Porch Pickup, the library served 315 unique patrons and checked out 2400 items, booking approximately 150 appointments each week! The ability to communicate via text using our Live Chat system has made Porch Pickup very easy to use, enabled quick appointment scheduling, and opened channels for instant communication and staff efficiency.

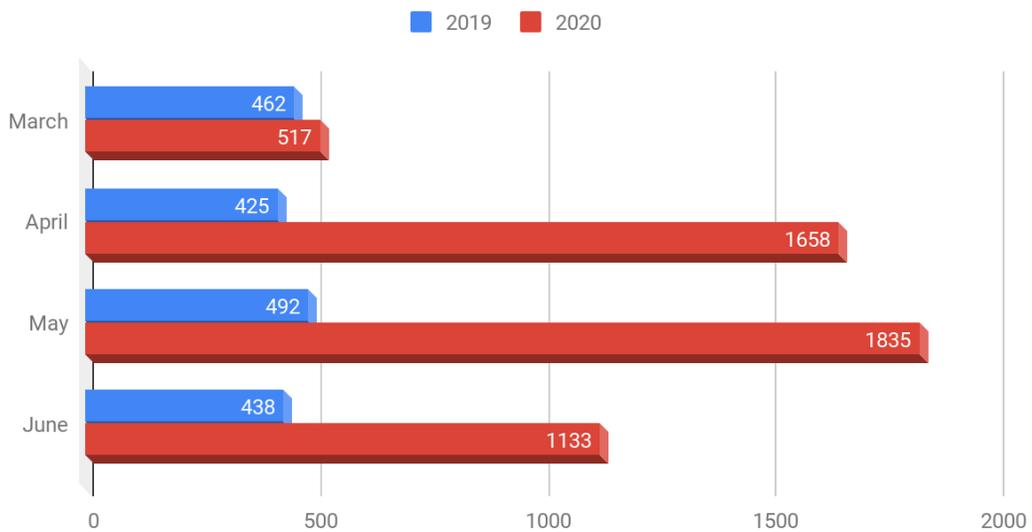
Throughout this time, we expanded our digital content and social media presence while continuing to add physical materials to our collection. The library saw a 35% increase in circulation of digital books during Spring 2020 in comparison to the same three months last year; this increase has continued at a rate of 42% in the month of June, even now that physical materials are available as well. The library offers digital resources for professional development, language learning, and other educational resources; however, the usage of these platforms

increased by 183.5% during Spring 2020 from the same period last year, indicating increased demand for these services as well. Additional resources for job seekers and small businesses were then added in anticipation of community need.

### Digital Book Usage: Spring 2019 vs 2020



### eSources Usage: Spring 2019 vs 2020



During the summer, youth services staff provided a virtual summer reading program with Take and Make craft kits available every two weeks through the six-week program. These kits have kept kids creatively connected to their librarians while allowing parents respite, and the Facebook Live demo events are viewed frequently, long after the event has passed. Meanwhile, the Discovery room has undergone significant renovations to improve the story time space; the timing of this will provide Hooksett's children a fresh and exciting space upon their return to the building.

The last quarter of fiscal year 2020 presented unforeseen challenges for the library, during which the leadership, board of trustees, and library staff have repeatedly proven themselves capable of rising to the challenges and opportunities presented therein. The Hooksett Library provides quality information services to the community, and building and maintaining our collections, both digital and traditional, adds lasting value to the town.

Moving into fiscal year 2021, we will continue to monitor the public health situation with a focus on providing the best service we are able during the pandemic, using a sliding scale of services that can be expanded or scaled back, depending on the number of cases in our community, availability of testing and PPE supplies, and staffing levels.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Rainier, Library Director

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