



Annual Report FY2021

The Hooksett Library is a vital resource in this community that provides information and technology resources, literacy and cultural programming, and varied reading and entertainment materials for all ages. This last year has challenged every public institution, while asking us to reimagine our readiness and reevaluate our core services. The Hooksett Library staff and trustees have made thoughtful changes that allowed us to move forward, bringing the community back together, slowly but surely, in our physical space, while our virtual library continues to expand beyond the reach of our building.

The library's focus on technology has brought many virtual library enhancements over the past year, including an "Ask a Librarian" live chat/text button on our website, allowing ease of communication for patrons wishing for immediate responses regarding current services and porch



pick ups. Other additions are virtual newspaper access, wireless remote printing, e-newsletters highlighting new materials and recommended reads, increased social media presence and



improvements to our public access catalog. New patrons continue to discover us and register for new cards online, and many participate regularly in weekly technology classes, or receive individualized tech support sessions for device troubleshooting and special training. Laptops are available for checkout, and library chromebooks were well

utilized by the town during the initial COVID shut downs to cover employees working from home.

As our patrons learned how to cope with pandemic changes and challenges, they looked to the library to support community engagement and connections. Library staff provided technology



and Zoom support for standing library groups, including the digital photography group, local art classes, knitting groups, Hooksettites, and our on-going book clubs for adults and kids. Moving established programs to the virtual space required individualized attention, creativity, and flexibility, and we increased our community partnerships, hosting

Zoom programs with NH Fish & Game, a live cooking demonstration with a celebrated local chef, presentations with AARP NH, among others. The positive feedback from these programs encouraged us by demonstrating how much patrons valued these connections.



Library staff also focused efforts on our senior population, offering COVID vaccine registration assistance, a public flu vaccination clinic by appointment, and leading seminars on consumer safety, how to avoid scams, and how to use technology to stay connected and keep us safe and healthy. In December 2020, we offered “porch-pick-me-ups”, free kits with donated puzzles and treats, as well as information resources for those experiencing isolation. We offered monthly creativity kits for adults, and led a support group series for caregivers and individuals affected by spousal loss with Granite Visiting Nurse Association; these programs provided seniors with friendly encouragement, resource connections, and invitations to reach out again.

Hooksett Library has always served the families and children of Hooksett, and this year was no different in that regard. The youth services team continues to be outstanding; they pivoted to



provide early literacy connections for kids through virtual programs, live facebook demos, and take & make craft/STEM kits. Kids who were toddlers attending “Little Movers” classes at the library pre-pandemic are now growing into kids; because our youth services team connected with many of these children in the virtual space, they report that many haven’t missed a beat and still know their librarians from live virtual events like the Polar Express storytime, Miss Lori’s Zoom Baby Rhyme, and

Messy Science on Facebook Live. Miss Heather’s team looks forward to welcoming these growing kids into the newly renovated Discovery Room and are enjoying their summer reading programming with them outside in-person this summer.



If silver linings can be pulled from the storm clouds of this past year, one major success has been Hooksett Library’s focus on the local. The Hooksett Heritage Commission and the library collaborated to celebrate Hooksett Heritage Month virtually in May, using the Neighborhood News, Facebook, our e-sign, and a virtual slideshow with historical sketches and photos that connect us to our local history. The Hooksett Bicentennial Committee is also hard at work, planning events for this next year’s town wide celebration, including a variety of speakers made possible through grant funding from NH Humanities. These collaborations between town groups and library staff help gather momentum and further amplify what’s outstanding in the Hooksett community.

Turbulent times help narrow our focus, but also shake us up. Because of the changing nature and scale of this global health crisis, the Hooksett Library was not able to accomplish all that we would have liked with the resources and time we had, and that is to be expected. It was challenging to safely provide public access to computers to the greater public, as we have always done; due to limitations on public building access during the winter virus surge and our desire to focus on the town taxpayer, we made hard choices, focused on Hooksett cardholders only. We provided laptops for loan and then computer use by appointment. We expanded wireless printing, performed notary services in the fresh air, and spoke to many, many people on the phone or by chat instead of in-person. We recognized that



Hooksett kids were missing our LEGO-lend program, so we made additions to our 'library of things' collection, such as a metal detecting kit and a trail camera, to encourage kids and adults to go out exploring the natural world together. We focused on our collection development on timely topics, like coping with anxiety, eating for health, and cultivating resilience and creativity.

During this past year, our digital collections exploded with unprecedented but sustained use.



As we look to this next year, we are grateful for the recent AARPA grant funds we applied for and received from the New Hampshire State Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services; a mobile Maker Space cart is a fantastic addition to our kids' programming toolbox, and can be used by other town groups for educational outreach programming. We will continue to use many of the innovations and services we developed as part of Hooksett Library's pandemic response, including take & make kits, virtual tech support, virtual/hybrid programs during winter months, and porch pickup.

~ NEW SERVICES ADDED ~

- Porch Pickup & Virtual Browsing
- Virtual Storytimes & Programs
- Take-and-Make Kits
- Live Chat
- Virtual Tech Support
- Virtual Escape Rooms
- NextReads Newsletters
- Fresh Book Picks For You
- Custom Book Bundles
- Mobile printing
- AtoZdatabases & NewsBank
- ...and more!

Each year brings further challenges, yet we hope that the lessons learned from this past year will make us all better stewards of our communities. The Hooksett Library plays an essential role in this endeavor. We will continue to focus on providing the best service possible, keeping the following goals and initiatives in mind: to determine and fill the needs of our community with additional virtual and in-person outreach services, digital literacy, increased access to digital resources, and early literacy for our youth through school age.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Rainier, Library Director

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