



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

INNOVATIVE
PROGRAMMING

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

CUTTING-EDGE
TECHNOLOGY

FIRST-CLASS
FACILITY

EXCELLENCE





Library Snapshot FY 2025

- 292,296 people visited the library
- 23,848 active library cardholders

CIRCULATION

- 383,966 Books, Videos, Magazines and Audio Items Borrowed
- 40,661 Items Borrowed from Other Libraries via Inter-Library Loan
- 15,509 Items Loaned to Other Libraries



OUTREACH

7,158 Items delivered to 1,063 individuals



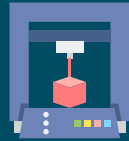
VOLUNTEERS

226 volunteers donated 4,548 service hours to support library programs and services.



ADULT SERVICES

- 333 3-D Printing Requests Fulfilled
- 5,824 Study Room Reservations Accommodated



REFERENCE

Library staff answered 33,735 reference questions.



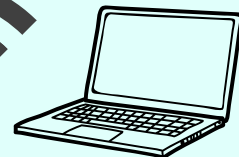
PROGRAMS

33,450 Children, Teens, and Adults Attended 1,382 Programs.



TECHNOLOGY

16,135 Library Computer or Research Sessions



OTHER RESOURCES

- 112,268 Titles Downloaded, Viewed, or Streamed
- 2,504 Museum Passes Provided for Visits to Area Museums



kanopy

hoopla

shrewsburypubliclibrary.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR



Priya Rathnam

You can see a parade of babies and toddlers making a beeline towards our meeting room every morning. On average, about 100 babies, toddlers and their grownups attend weekly sessions of Babies, Books, and Bubbles, Wiggle Words, and Book Beats, three weekly activities for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

In the afternoon and on weekends you can see teens and adults participating in Brunch and Board Games, Table-Top Role Playing Games, or in an all-ages puzzle race, as seen in the pictures.



Children's Librarian, Annie Lee, with the paraphernalia she brings to Wiggle Words.

There are 5 book groups that meet at the library. Shrewsbury Readers, pictured below on the right, just celebrated its tenth anniversary. Discoveries is a nonfiction book club, Reading Glasses is for readers in their 20's and 30's. We have a cookbook book club where participants select a recipe from a cookbook and prepare the dish and bring it to the meeting to share with others. Chapters in Common book group focuses on engaging fiction and nonfiction



Whether it's in community engagement, innovative and inclusive programming, technology integration, or fostering a lifelong passion for learning, the library has demonstrated excellence and has had a positive impact on the community.

Thanks to my dedicated and illustrious staff who wear many hats and take on the roles of storytellers, book club leaders, information professionals, gamers, event planners, and myriad other roles under the all-encompassing title of "librarian!"



A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Friends and Donors:

Thank you for your support of our beautiful public library! In the heart of our town center, the Shrewsbury Public Library is a jewel within our community. It is the second busiest library in Central Massachusetts, right behind the Worcester Public Library.

The Shrewsbury Public Library is vibrant and high-performing. It is open most days of the year, with the exception only of a handful of holidays and Sundays during the warm months between May and October. It is open for extended hours on most days. Our beautiful library welcomes almost a thousand visitors per day! This is surprising to some, but to our friends and patrons it is of course not surprising. Many of these visitors participate in the library's diverse array of programming, catering to all ages, from babes-in-arms, to school children, to teens, to young adults, to adults in their prime, to retirees, and finally to our elders who often come in with a devoted caregiver. Shrewsbury Public Library programs attract almost 40,000 attendees per year. If you have yet to experience a library program, we encourage you to peruse the library's online calendar which you will find on the library's user-friendly website shrewsburypubliclibrary.org. There you will find a wealth of opportunities for education, enrichment and enjoyment.

Most of us know that our library is a wonderful resource for an amazing collection of books and audio visual materials, but did you also know that you can use your library card to check out e-books, audiobooks, movies and music from the comfort of your home? Did you know that the library has a "Library of Things" where you can check out kitchen gadgets, garden tools, baby gear and games? Did you know that the library has its own Makerspace where you can learn to use a laser cutter, an embroidery machine, as well as a 3D printer? Did you know that the library has a new World Language Collection to serve the needs of our multi-lingual community?

Libraries have a noble mission. They are considered the bedrock of democracy because they provide free and open access to information, and are critical to civic engagement, critical thinking and intellectual freedom. But on a more personal level, libraries bring joy and foster a sense of community. It is remarkable the extent to which a vibrant library, such as the Shrewsbury Public Library, can simultaneously do both. We are grateful to the creative and hard-working staff of our library, to our dedicated library director, Priya Rathnam, and to our supportive Friends and Patrons. Thank you for allowing us to keep our beautiful library as vibrant and engaging as ever.

Library Board of Trustees

Noor Ali
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REPORT FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY



While we look forward to 2026 and how it will shape our community, the Friends of the Library is mindful of the Town's centennial celebration in 2027. For those patrons familiar with the stained-glass scene in the Library, we recall its quote "Let Your Quest Be For Knowledge." With the dollars we raise and gratefully award back to the library for programs or needed resources, this motto feeds our planning and thoughtful decisions.

As 2025 wanes, we are celebrating the 200 members among us that contribute in a myriad of ways, either by a kind donation, a few hours staffing our bookstore (in the lower level of the library), or assisting at an event. A note of gratitude is extended to the 26 individuals that made a contribution at the Spirit of Shrewsbury this September.

A treasured annual highlight for our organization is celebrating the \$1,500 scholarship the Friends awards to a deserving high school student. In June 2025, Michael Hanna was our lucky recipient. He introduced the board members to his essay, "The Seat That Got Me Through Junior Year" where he resoundingly described how the library environment helped him navigate his academic years. Michael graduated from St. John's High School and plans to attend Tufts University to study Biology. Kudos Michael! Only second to this evening is another favorite tradition – on the first Saturday in December we host an annual Holiday Open House for the community.

As the Friends continue to plan for even more creative and diverse programming, our board awarded over \$22,000 of funding this year to support programs which amounts to 83% of our total expenditures as of today. Our annual expenses include providing one of many resources like *Book Page* magazine, a monthly book recommendation and review guide, that is available for free in the library. Then there's the Hebert's chocolate bars that are available at the circulation desk. You can thank the Friends for those too!

The Friends vote on expenditures every month that fund the majority of programs in the Library. A sampling of the highest attended events this year include:

- Summer Reading Kickoff Party (over 200 people)
- Pokemon scavenger hunt (371 people)
- Castle Nitor Demo Day; an immersive historical experience in the form of craft classes. Many of the arts cover a range of periods (91 people).

All of this is made possible through various fundraisers, such as the Friends bookstore, pop-up book sales, ebay book sales and membership fees. Contributions enrich the programs and services offered at the library. We meet the first Wednesday of the month and are seeking new volunteers to join us. Even a few hours a month is sufficient! To find more information on the Friends of the Library, including membership and donations, please visit splfriends.weebly.com or call **508-841-8609, x3**.



Friends Board Members

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REPORT FROM THE FOUNDATION

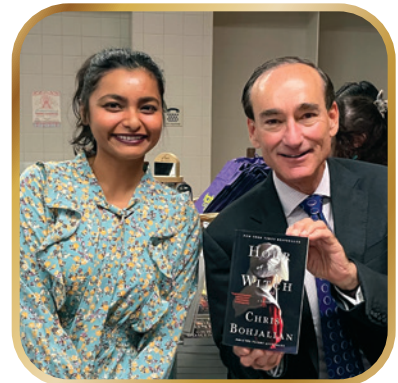
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation wish to THANK all those donors who have helped fund our Distinguished Speaker's Program and training for one of our staff, as well as helping us to secure the future excellence of our facilities.

As you may know, the Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation is committed to long-term development and improvements of our library. The Foundation's focus is on developing a base of perpetual financial support to enhance the library's offerings. The Foundation is dedicated to the library's dynamic and innovative approach to services, collections, programs, and facilities. Our goal is to enhance the quality and scope of services BEYOND those provided by the town budget, by sponsoring an annual distinguished speaker series, supporting the acquisition of state-of-the-art technological tools for the library, supporting staff training and development grants, and ensuring our first-class facilities are well preserved.

Thanks to a generous donation by Laurie Hogan, the Library Foundation sponsored three distinguished speakers this year. *New York Times* bestselling novelist Chris Bohjalian talked about his life and work to an audience of approximately 200 at the Oak Middle School. His conversation focused on novels as diverse as *The Flight Attendant* and *The Sandcastle Girls*.

Dr. Russell Johnson, a St. John's High graduate, gave a timely talk on "Communicating in Polarized Times" based on his book *Beyond Civility in Social Conflict: Dialogue, Critique, and Religious Ethics* to a large group at St. John's High.



**Aditi Singh &
Chris Bohjalian**

Dr. Russell Johnson



Dr. David McManus



Dr. David McManus, the founding director of the UMass program on Digital Medicine, gave a stimulating talk to a full house in the Library conference room entitled "Can AI Save American Healthcare?"

Trustees of the Foundation Board

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Michael Pagano

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EXCELLENCE IN ACTION



OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Our Outreach librarian visits senior living facilities such as Benchmark Senior Living at Shrewsbury Crossings, The Residence at Orchard Grove, and Southgate. She brings books, kits and take-home crafts to preschools, and public and private schools in town. The library is represented at the Farmers' Market, Health Fair at the Senior Center, town-wide Arbor Day celebrations, Spirit of Shrewsbury Festival, Truck or Treat with the Recreation Department, and SELCO Open House. Our Youth Services librarians visit the elementary, middle and high schools to share resources, run book clubs and encourage more students to get library cards. They have partnered with the Recreation Department to run a teddy bear picnic and other fun events at Dean Park.

Annie Lee & Roxanne at Dean Park



Diana Karas — Outreach Librarian

Dragons Love Tacos



EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

COMMUNITY-WIDE READING & FOOD-RELATED PROGRAMS

From March through May 2025, the library hosted a Community-Wide Read centered around the theme of food. Patrons received curated fiction and nonfiction reading suggestions, including *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters and *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner. Participants engaged in a variety of food-themed activities—such as donating to the Community Fridge or Senior Food Pantry, or recreating a restaurant experience at home—to complete BINGO boards and win prizes. Staff also organized themed programming and invited guest presenters to share their expertise and experiences related to food. Kicking off in March, the Seed Lending Library returned with great success, and Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens led a popular workshop on quick pickling. In April, Therapy Gardens hosted a fun Local Food Trivia event, and SELCO sponsored an engaging Induction Cooking Sustainability Showcase. In May, the series wrapped up with memorable events like a Mother's Day Tea and Chocolates program led by Kim Larkin of Klassic Kreations Workshops and a *Star Wars* Cupcake Decorating Class by Let's Cake Decorate for "May the Fourth"—a hit among patrons.

1,087 community members participated in various events.



EXCELLENCE IN ACTION



MAKERSPACE

The Shrewsbury Public Library Learning Lab Makerspace held its grand opening on November 9, 2024, with 110 community members in attendance. Since the grand opening, community members have created Christmas presents, embroidered tote bags, refashioned clothing, and artistic projects using Makerspace tools. The monthly Knit/Crochet Night is a popular gathering where participants share tips, tricks, and new techniques. All Makers times, when some Makerspace tools are available on a drop-in basis, fosters knowledge sharing. Makerspace users have taught each other how to use the serger, sewing machine, and other tools! The small but mighty Makerspace team continues to host regular workshops and foster community and knowledge sharing in the Shrewsbury Public Library community.



A library patron used the laser cutter to etch the numbers, letters, and pictures into boards for an elementary school project.





EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE & MEMORY CAFE

English Conversation Circle and Memory Café are two impactful programs that touch the lives of many people. The English Conversation Circle program welcomes immigrants and engages them in conversation in a judgment-free zone. Hundreds of people have gained proficiency in English and in turn enriched the lives of librarians and the facilitators of the program for 15 years. Three weekly sessions are offered.

The Memory Café is another program that serves a niche group of people. Musicians, dancers, and bands entertain the visitors at the bimonthly cafe meetings.



Nowroz celebration



Dance Group at the Memory Café



Chinese New Year at ECC



Music at a Memory Café



Holiday Party

Thank you to Sue Gillman, for sharing this heartfelt message:

"The Memory Café is a special treat, filled with caring people who understand. My husband used to sing "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," wildly off key, to wake up the kids when they were young. When the singer/violinist was singing that song, standing in front of him, looking at him, encouraging him to sing along, he started singing. He was even directing the music. He now rarely talks or shows any reactions. To hear him sing and smile and enjoy himself made me tear up. For a little while, Mike was almost himself again."

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the 226 volunteers who donated 4,548 service hours to support library programs and services this past year. We continue to be a vibrant, thriving community because of the selfless volunteers who help us during special events such as the Summer Reading Kickoff, Holiday Open House, Makerspace events, and Fixit clinics. During summer 2025, 49 teen volunteers helped with the summer reading program. Our Summer with STEAM volunteers, Khloe Cheng, Manha Hussain, Zoe Tompsett, and Sanchi Gera, deserve a special mention for their incredible work providing a four-week summer camp experience. They had themed-STEAM activities that included building and using solar ovens, making marble race tracks, elephant toothpaste, exploring painting techniques, designing board games, and practicing fractions with recipes.

Priya Rathnam presented the in-service award to Heidi Moran, volunteer extraordinaire at the memory cafe.

During our annual Volunteer Appreciation Day, Annie Lee King presented the teen award to Helen Qiu.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to George Brown who has facilitated the Shrewsbury Genealogy Club for decades. George was a steady force for the many decades he served the SPL as Assistant Director and the people of Shrewsbury. He supported and sustained the vision of excellence during changing administration of new directors and trustees, and during the tumult of construction on the new building. He cared deeply about SPL and brought kindness and fairness to his work everyday. We honor his benevolent spirit of volunteerism and sheer pleasure that he took in helping so many discover the countless stories in their family trees.

Priya Rathnam & Heidi Moran



Annie Lee King & Helen Qiu

George C. Brown





FRIENDS' MEMBERSHIP FEES



give online
as a friend of the library!

Sheila Abdallah
Kerry Adams
Melissa Adams
Mark Adler & Beverly Hay
Don & Debbie Alger
Carolyn Amsbaugh
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Eileen & Donat Aubuchon
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Stephanie Blanco
Cheryl Bortnick
Susan Bourget
Gayle Bowe
Katherine Brill
Sheryl & Alan Brooks
George Brown
Art & Joan Brunell
Lisa Bruschi
Nancy Burnett
Laura Burns
Kathleen Buzzell
Ann Matt Cairns

Jerry Callaghan
Cynthia Carlson
Beth & Scott Casavant
Michelle Charon
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Mary Daly
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Virginia Deranian
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Nancy & Bruce Dumart
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Catherine Phillips
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Anne Firmes
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Maureen Fujimori
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Kingsley
Pooja Kini
Nicholas Kitchener
Cheryl Koki
Meenakshi
Krishnaswamy
Judy Kuhtreiber
James LaRussa
Capotosto Lauren
Deborah Lebeaux
Patricia Link
Jane Lochrie
Amanda Luyster
Dale & Melanie
Magee
Arthi Mahadevan
Taruna Mangal
Charlene Martin
Rena & Chuck
Mayberry
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Christina Zarobe

We're sorry if we missed any of our valued donors' names. Please let us know if we missed your name and we'll be sure to include it in next year's report.

SUNDAY SPONSORSHIP



Thank you to our Sunday sponsors for sponsoring the entire October 2024-May 2025 Sunday season. We are very grateful to the following local businesses and individuals for their generous donations.

Providing six Sundays:

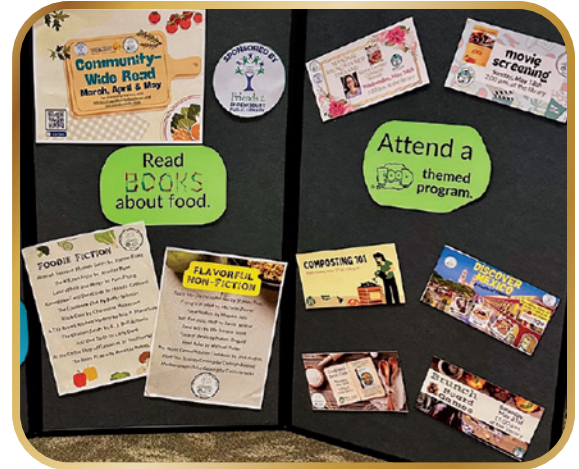
- Dr. Dale Magee & Mrs. Melanie Magee
- Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union

Providing two Sundays:

- Shrewsbury Education Foundation
- Southgate at Shrewsbury
- Olive I. & Anthony A. Borgatti, Jr., Donor-Advised Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- SELCO

Providing one Sunday:

- In memory of James. A. Heedles
- David & Kathleen Rocheleau
- The Bachini Family, in honor of Ruth Seward
- Olivia, Peg & Don Harbert
- The Del Dotto grandchildren: Drea, Dylan & Devin
- An anonymous donor
- Dean Park Grill & Pizza
- Tara Kumaraswami, in memory of Nancy Kumaraswami
- Dora M. Capite-Tkal, in remembrance of Oleh Tkal
- Richard & Alison Ricker
- Nancy Hughes & Jack Collins in remembrance of Dr. John P. Collins
- Central One Credit Union





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**THANK YOU TO THE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS
& BUSINESSES WHO DONATED TO THE FOUNDATION.**



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to the foundation!*

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Martin Young
Xiao-Dong Zhang and Han Zhang



Foundation Board members, from L to R: Don Harbert, Richard Ricker, Moe Boisvert, Deb Del Dotto, Jean Campaniello, Jean Fitzgerald, Louise Garone, Mike Pagano, Mike Hale, and Nancy Gilbert

THE LAURIE & MATTHEW HOGAN LEGACY FUND



We are very grateful to the following individuals who have pledged a donation as part of their estate planning:

Don and Peg Harbert

Robert "Chief Joseph" Terkanian

Pamela and Maurice Boisvert

An Anonymous Donor

Richard and Alison Ricker

The Foundation is pleased to recognize staff member Diana Karas who is continuing her education with the assistance of the Foundation's Edwin Golrick Memorial Fund. She is taking classes through the Library Juice Academy towards a Library Support Staff Certification. She is grateful to the Foundation for this opportunity!

"I am truly appreciative to advance my knowledge and receive a certification."

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND CAN BE SENT TO

SHREWSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION,
Attn: Priya Rathnam, Library Director, 609 Main Street, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

This report was produced by the SPL Foundation Board.

Stuffed Animal Sleepover



Laughter Yoga



Librarians with Dragon



Shrewsbury
Public Library

609 Main Street
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