

## Heermance Memorial Library 2022 Annual Report to the Town Board (Looking back over last year's accomplishments)

Presented by Library Director Catherine Benson on September 12, 2023, 7pm at the Cocksackie Town Hall to Supervisor Richard Hanse; Councilman Tom Burke; Councilman Patrick Kennedy; Councilman Michael Veeder; Councilwoman Linda Wilkinson; Town Clerk Bambi Hotaling; to the Heermance Memorial Library Board of Trustees and to members of the public.

*M*any people think of libraries as just a place for literature. To our great benefit, libraries offer much more than books. Through social events, classes, and other programs, libraries positively impact their communities by bringing people together. The Heermance Memorial Library has provided free books, information, programming, ideas, and education to our Cocksackie community for more than 115 years.

At our library in 2022, we provided and continue to provide programs on job or career coaching; art classes: painting, sculpting, coloring, knitting, working with collage and mixed media. We offer digital navigation to the public, helping people learn new technology and how to use their devices. A healthcare consortium navigator visits our library to help members of the public find affordable healthcare, tailored to their needs.

By offering community events, libraries can positively impact the health and well-being of their surrounding population, lessening isolation and loneliness. Our library's popular history presentations, visits by local authors, ukulele classes and our participation in Christmas by the River's Bough the Holidays wreath auction brings people together with common interests, strengthening community ties.

For children and their caregivers, we offer many early literacy programs, classes and other events, such as the Summer Reading Program, Downtown Block Parties and the YMCA for Healthy Kids Day. While interacting with others their own age, children hear books read aloud (story time), learn a new skill (art classes), or read a book to a therapy dog.

With all the opportunities that the Heermance Memorial provides, everyone can find an event, class or service that speaks to them. By participating in these programs, people can find social connections and a sense of purpose that comes with making a positive impact on their community.

## **WHAT WE OFFER THAT YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW**

We offer federal and state tax forms to the public.

We participated in the Digital Navigator program, offering our patrons and local community members a connection with digital resources and services in order to obtain affordable broadband, computers and devices.

Museum passes for The Museum of Firefighting--FASNY, The U.S.S. Slater, The Bronck Museum, ukuleles (new for 2023), binoculars (also new this year), American Girl dolls and outfits are all available for borrowing.

We offered free masks received from Greene County Emergency Services and free COVID-19 test kits from Senator Michelle Hinchey's office.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

We participated in "Beyond the Library WiFi Access Project" to extend our WiFi at no cost for equipment and service through MHLS. We extended our WiFi reach further outside so more can access our free Internet.

Libby app is free: Borrow ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, and more from your local library for free! Libby is the newer library reading app by OverDrive.

Mid-Hudson Library System expanded its offerings with an Overdrive agreement with Upper Hudson Library System, Mohawk Valley Library System and Southern Adirondack Library System, allowing patrons greater selection.

Hoopla app is free: Borrow and enjoy audiobooks, eBooks, comics, movies, TV, magazines, or music everywhere you have a screen—your computer, your phone, your car, even your TV. All you need is a library card.

Additionally, with technology for the library, 3 laptops and 1 patron computer monitor were purchased from the Mid-Hudson Library System.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

Based on our data collection at the election, community input helped to drive programming. The most popular request was for historical programs and Shelby Mattice from the Bronck House presented twice in 2022.

## OUTREACH

At the end of March, we returned to the community room at Bethany Village for checkouts. Previously, staff delivered books individually to residents.

Last year, we participated in two Block Parties on Reed Street. The Library offered Summer Reading Program registration, library card applications, displayed upcoming library programs and lawn games.

The Great Give Back October: we collected non-perishable foods and personal hygiene products for Community Action of Greene County.

## GRANTS AWARDED FOR 2022

- CREATE for art classes taught at the library.
- Stewart's Holiday Match grant funded technology purchases.
- Greene County Rural Health Network for Take and Make Kits for cooking at home. This program was popular.

- The Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation funded air purifiers.

The Greene County Legislature distributed the funds to the Greene County Library Association divided equally for Internet & Digital Inclusion Expansion.

## **LIBRARY OPERATIONS**

- Take and Make Kits were popular.
- Early Literacy Backpacks are available for circulation. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and patrons are asking for more of these fun-filled backpacks with songs, fingerplays, crafts and activities.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The National Bank of Coxsackie's NBC Cares visited with 10 volunteers. Kat Garland also donated her time. Both groups worked to complete tasks around the library, hanging cabinets, weeding, cleaning and priming outdoor surfaces. Library staff is deeply grateful for their diligence and thoughtfulness.

Terry Rabideau ran the Children's Story times online and in person for the library.

## **SUMMER READING PROGRAM FOR 2022**

Our Summer Reading Program "Oceans of Possibilities" featured art classes, science experiments for kids, take and make craft kits, family story time and Lego brick building. Stewart's donated all the makings for ice cream sundaes.

## **STORY TIMES/PROGRAMS**

- Story times held outside, online and in-person programming for the library.
- The Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Change Program was well attended by participants seeking healthy choices.
- Art classes abounded throughout the year with, among others, garden art plates, watercolors, acrylic, and open times for artists to create and flourish.

## FRIENDS

- The Friends partnered with the Community Garden to host a Midsummer Night's Dream, an evening stroll around the garden with music and refreshments, and a presentation on pollinators.
- They hosted the Halloween Party with stories, crafts and cupcakes.
- Christmas by the River wreaths and holiday decor were offered for silent auction. We created a Storywalk® for "The Most Perfect Snowman."

## UPKEEP

- In 2022, we had the opportunity to upgrade the lighting to LEDs with an incentive from Central Hudson and added air conditioning upstairs.
- NYSERDA Energy Audit was completed with recommendations made.

## BUDGET

**2024 Budget is presented to the Town Board for \$306,122, of which we are asking Town of Coxsackie voters to support the Special District Library tax of \$290,575.** Staff and trustees met for input on this budget and we created a prudent budget for 2024. Acknowledging that we can't be assured of donations, or of the success from the competitive grants we intend to seek, next year's budget does not include those monetary aspirations in the projected budget.

Thank you to these local organizations for their generous support: Helping Hands of Sleepy Hollow Lake, The Friends of the Heermance Memorial Library, Greene County Rural Health Network, National Bank of Coxsackie, Greene County Legislature, Stewart's Shops, CREATE Council on the Arts, The Bank of Greene County, and State Telephone.

The Heermance Memorial Library projected budget for 2024 is increasing. The NYS minimum wage rate is going up and we plan to increase salaries

accordingly. For a household assessed at \$100,000, the library tax would be \$65.52, representing an increase of \$2.86 over last year. This is a 4.56% increase.

**2023 NY Forward Project: In progress**--We applied for the Coxsackie New York Forward grant. We are seeking \$1,699,000 from the \$4.5 million grant received by the Village of Coxsackie to provide access for all. Our current library configuration does not allow access for all community members to utilize our facility completely. In our proposal, we would add an ADA compliant community room, bathrooms, and parking lot. A community room would be a huge benefit for all community members to access and utilize.

**Library Election will take place Tuesday, October 3, 2023 from 10am-9pm.**

**Staff:**

Catherine Benson (Director)  
Jennifer Grounds  
Christine Reda  
Lynn Erceg  
Maureen Hanse  
Jacqueline Whitbeck  
Betty Bigler

**Board of Trustees\*:**

Carol Serazio, President  
Laura Shauger, Vice President  
Mark Maraglio, Treasurer  
Eileen West, Secretary  
Joseph Garland IV  
Charles Hailer  
Bridget McGuigan  
Marilyn Rausch  
\*(1 available seat

We offer community engagement with access to information through free materials, free programming, free information, free access to the Internet. It is from community input we look to the library's future, to shape the space in which we can build authentic connections, with access for all.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Catherine Benson, Library Director