



TO: Library Board of Directors

DATE: September 20, 2024

RE: **LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Wednesday, September 20, 2024  
5:00pm – Green Room  
Worcester Public Library  
3 Salem Square  
Worcester, MA 01608

cc: City Clerk's Office

**AGENDA**  
**WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Library Board of Directors  
Wednesday, September 25, 2024  
5:00pm – Green Room  
Worcester Public Library  
3 Salem Square  
Worcester, MA 01608

**Mission Statement:**

The Worcester Public Library serves as a gathering place that actively promotes the free exchange of ideas in our democratic society. The Library makes information and services available to all people while fostering intellectual freedom, protecting privacy, encouraging personal growth and enrichment, and celebrating our diverse community heritage.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of June 26 minutes
3. President's Report
4. Executive Director's report
  - Updates not included in report
  - Q&A
5. Administration Committee reports
6. Friends report
7. Foundation report
8. Adjournment

**Worcester Public Library  
Administration Committee Meeting  
Virtual Meeting on Friday, August 16, 2024  
3:00 PM**

**Worcester Public Library  
3 Salem Square  
Worcester, MA 01608**

**Attendees:** WPL Board Members: Stephanie Pasha, Laura Nicole Miller, Matthew Noe Roseann Fitzgerald, David Dominguez, Gail Schuyler, Sheila Trapasso

**Library Staff:** Jason Homer (Executive Director)

Administration Committee member Matthew Noe called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

The Purpose of the virtual meeting was for Worcester Public Library Administration Committee and the WPL board of directors to receive an update from ED Jason Homer about the events at the library of last week, subsequent conversations, decisions, and next steps.

ED gave a summary of the attack on a WPL main branch staff member last Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 3:30 PM. The person attacked is a custodian at the WPL Salem Square Branch and a man came from behind and hit him with a skateboard while the custodian was speaking with a librarian. The person who attacked the staff member kept on walking in the library after the assault. The librarian who witnessed the attack grabbed a walkie-talkie and alerted security about the incident. Security was able to handcuff the assailant. ED Jason Homer was not at the WPL when the event occurred but returned quickly from an off-site meeting. The police quickly responded and secured the scene. ED Jason Homer noted that there was a Code Adam (missing child) at the same time because a parent could not locate their child. Staff located the child. ED Jason Homer made the decision to close the Main Branch and all branches because WPL were shaken up by the incident.

After the incident, WPL staff met with ED Homer and City Manager Eric Batista so that they could voice their concerns. The staff were told that they did not have to report to work on Friday but if they did report, that there would be a two-hour listening session for them to raise their concerns, followed by actions to remediate concerns. Since the listening session, the following actions were taken:

- Benches were removed from the front wall of the Worcester Public Library (Franklin Street entrance facing Worcester Common).
- Swing Doors were installed at Service Desks and alert buzzers were installed (thanks to a generous gift from the Worcester Public Library Foundation).
- The WPL has increased police presence outside and inside the WPL.

Also, ED noted that the consultants Breakthrough Collaborative were meeting with staff the same week. A list of the action items has been posted in the WPL Conference room with target completion dates for complete transparency.

ED noted that some WPL has hosted several post-traumatic sessions for WPL staff which included the group activity of making stuffed animals, visits from the Worcester Community Rescue League of four puppies.

He noted that only yesterday (8/15/2024) has the WPL felt like “normal” business operations.

He also noted that WPL staff would like the WPL to install metal detectors and a bag searching policy. ED Jason Homer stands firm that this is not necessary to create a safe and welcoming Library environment where all are welcome.

He noted that most WPL staff came to work on Friday and only two staff members were unable to attend the Block Party on Saturday, August 10, 2024. But reiterated that the traumatic event would have different responses and all are valid.

When it was learned that the WPL staff who was assaulted was okay, the WPL staff were relieved. The WPL staff member who was assaulted sent an email to WPL staff thanking them for their support.

The WPL staff have requested more security guards and ED Jason Homer said that he is actively listening to their concerns and will not veto staff concerns. He also noted that the communication lines are open to staff balancing safety with a welcoming Public Library atmosphere

In addition to the City Manager Eric Batista, Homer has received much support from the Worcester Community including Worcester Together, Sen. Robyn Kennedy and City Councilor Etel Haxhiaj. Also many library directors have reached out.

He concluded his summary by saying that he is focusing on the positive. The WPL staff member who was assaulted is eager to return to work and he is working to help navigate staff emotions since the incident.

ED then asked the WPL board if they had questions.

Stephanie Pasha commented that she was in touch with City Councilor Etel Haxhiaj and others to thank them for their support of the WPL and the WPL staff. She also let the WPL board know that the WPL Foundation purchased lunch on Friday for the WPL staff.

Matthew Noe thanked ED Homer for his report and asked how are you taking care of yourself? ED Homer thanked Noe for his concern and said that he has been able to get time away with his family and attend a concert. His family and friends have been incredibly supportive.

Noe also questioned whether the Library would monitor how the removal of benches helps increase the safety of staff and patrons. ED Homer said the wall must go. Having a larger police presence is not the solution to the issues at hand. He noted that the call buttons under the desks and 15 pagers were purchased by the Worcester Public Library foundation for \$4,300.

ED Homer noted that he and WPL staff are planning to institute some changes in the first floor layout to improve staff and patron experiences at the WPL beginning on Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.

WPL Director Laura Nicole Miller asked how can the WPL board help? ED asked the WPL board to support him and his staff when they make their needed asks to the Worcester Community.

Stephanie Pasha thanked ED Home for his empathy, for leading with his heart but also standing his ground to keep the Library open to all. There were no more questions.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Fitzgerald

In Attendance: Katie Bagdis, Matthew Noe, Laura Miller, Stephanie Pasha, Jason Homer

Call to Order 5:03 p.m.

1. Strategic Roadmap

- MOTION to approve the Strategic Roadmap as revised made by Laura Miller, seconded by Matthew. Approved Unanimously.

2. ED Review

- Review of ED areas of anticipated self-evaluation

- Input from direct reports/leadership

- Input from Board - questionnaire was finalized. Will be asking Board to complete within 2 weeks of next meeting.

III. MOTION to enter executive session made by Laura Miller, seconded by Matthew Noe. Approved unanimously.

IV. MOTION to adjourn made by Laura. Seconded by Matthew.

Adjourned 5:40 p.m.

In attendance: Katie Bagdis, Matthew Noe, Laura Miller, Stephanie Pasha, Jason Homer

Call to order 5:03 p.m.

- I. Discussion about Staffing shortages for Sunday hours
  - a. 12 staff members have volunteered to work
  - b. Currently unable to open the Main branch on Sundays beginning in late October because do not have the minimum number of staff needed to open
  - c. There is enough staff available to staff two of the smaller branches
  - d. The Committee discussed and agreed the focus should be on opening the Main branch because it will support a larger group of patrons
  - e. Discussed options with ED on how to make up the shortages
- II. Strategic Roadmap
  - a. ED presented a revised draft which was compiled with significant input from staff
  - b. Committee provided some constructive feedback
  - c. ED will update and present to Committee at next meeting for approval
- III. ED Review
  - a. Scheduled meeting for 9/11 to discuss the process
  - b. Committee will need to finalize questions from the board for feedback
- IV. New Business
  - a. Recent Social Media Postings
    - i. Discussions about Code of Conduct for patrons and whether there is any language which applies to social media posts and access to the library
- V. MOTION to adjourn by Miller, seconded by Noe. Approved unanimously

Adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Called to order 5:04

Attendance: Katie Bagdis, Laura Miller, Matthew Noe, Stephanie Pasha, Jason Homer, Sulma Rubert-Silva.

1. Funds for Foundation Support: Discussions about how we will pay the support for \$110,000 to the Foundation annually. Sulma met with purchasing department and finance committee to discuss and it was determined \$89,000 will come from the Green Fund which has the WPL drawing closer to 3% from the fund each year based upon all support from the Funds to the WPL and \$21,000 will be from Higgins funds, which has us drawing approximately 2.5% of the fund balance to meet this obligation.

**MOTION:** To approve the withdrawal of funds as proposed: Laura made the motion; seconded by Matthew. Approved unanimously.

2. Policies:

- a. Cell Phone Policy: Discussions about the proposed policy. The policy is in line with the current policy of the City of Worcester. There were discussions about whether there should be additional section to address charges on the phone and whether the City or the employee would be responsible for the same and eliminating some redundancies in the policy.

**MOTION:** to approve the policy as amended. Matthew made the motion, seconded by Laura. Approved unanimously.

- b. Talking Books Policy: Discussion about the proposed policy. Discussions about whether the policy lines up with the WPL policies. We want to avoid any contradictions. The policy will be reviewed and revised for discussions by the committee at a later date for approval.

- c. Information Table Policy: Discussion about proposed policy.

**MOTION:** to approve the policy. Laura made the motion, seconded by Matthew. Approved unanimously.

3. Event Challenges this Summer:

- a. Number of groups were collaborating a Palestine Teach in event for college and high school students. Group wanted to use space in library which was approved because in line with the mission of the WPL. There was significant backlash within the local and larger community about not allowing the event to occur.
- b. Over 60 attended. Went better than expected. Ultimately drove more people the event. WPL still working with them.

4. Strategic Road Map



- a. Result of working with Leadership team and staff on our Strategic Plan this summer. There was significant engagement which was wonderful to see.
  - b. Slight adjustment to the purpose section which Board has previously discussed.
  - c. Five strategic imperatives
  - d. We will continue to discussing as the draft is finalized.
5. Christina Connolly is getting the Erskine aware for solute to Women this year.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.



**WORCESTER  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



**Sora**

The student reading app

# SUMMER 2024 REPORT

[www.mywpl.org](http://www.mywpl.org)

# Report of the executive director

Welcome to the new format of the director's report. Based on the Strategic Roadmap, it focuses on making meaningful progress in five strategic areas keyed to purpose and ambition statements.



This report focuses on the summer of 2024, presenting year-end statistics for the 2023-2024 period at the end, along with individual statistics for July and August 2024, as well as tracking progress towards goals for these two months. Additional materials, such as departmental reports, are compiled for the summer period. Next month, the report will return to a monthly format.

**New Logo:** The library's new heart-shaped logo has been positively received by both staff and the public. This vibrant redesign emphasizes Worcester as the 'Heart of the Commonwealth' and positions the WPL as the center of the community, dedicated to public service.

**Second and Third Floor Update:** ARPA funding provided by the city for updates to the second and third floors offers opportunities to optimize collections and create private meeting spaces.

**Summer Reading:** The Summer Reading program underwent a successful overhaul during the first phase of a two-year plan. Changes included simplifying the 'counting' process for patrons and reintroducing paper logbooks. Overall participation remained steady compared to last year. 2025's program will simplify further for both patrons and staff, incorporating best practices from other urban centers.

**Earmark from Rep. Mary Keefe:** The Library in Every Classroom project achieved remarkable success. With funding and support from Rep. Keefe, its outcomes have prompted schools to reevaluate the role of school libraries. Key results included 8,317 books opened, 3,461 hours read, and 3,199 unique users, all for just 0.01% of the total school budget.

Collaborative sessions with various staff members to enhance the library's workplace culture commenced with the support of Breakthrough Collaborations.

The Fourth **Annual Library Block Party** on Saturday, August 10th was the largest yet. The event featured a Bluey and Bingo Dance Party, along with visits from Stitch, Paw Patrol, and Cocomelon. Over 3,500 attendees from throughout Worcester enjoyed fun that fostered a sense of belonging and connection for families facing financial challenges.

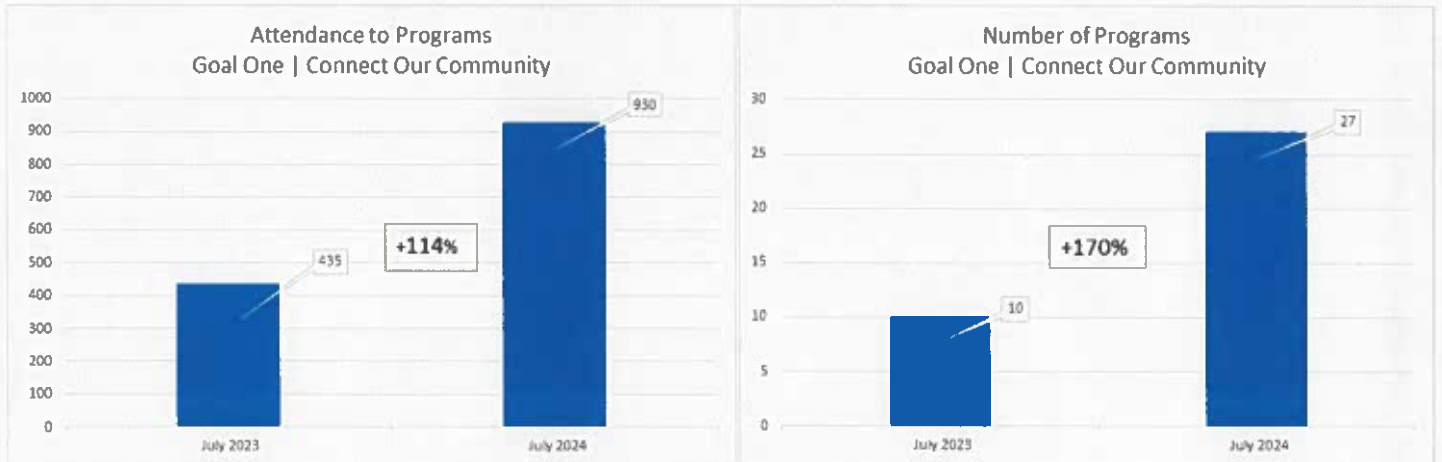




# Goal 1 Connect our Community | July 2024



- Grow and strengthen our partnerships throughout the community
- Respond and act on community needs
- Commit to diverse community engagement



## Highlights

**Partnerships** The library rekindled its partnership with Girls, Inc. of Worcester with shared goals of empowering girls through STEM and educational programs. Programs like Build Your Own Rube Goldberg Machine and crafting sessions at Youth Connect camps support girls' growth, help overcome barriers, and foster independence.



### Responses towards identified community needs

Three days in July featured Immigration Legal Services for Afghan Arrivals (ILSAA) working alongside volunteer attorneys to file family reunification forms for 43 Afghan families (91 people). This is the first step that helps rejoin residents with spouses and/or children.

Two drop-in Bluey Parties (at Main and Francis Perkins) provided fun, themed crafts, snacks like sprinkle toast, and activities for 247 children and family members. The benefits of free play opportunities for children and families in Worcester is inestimable.

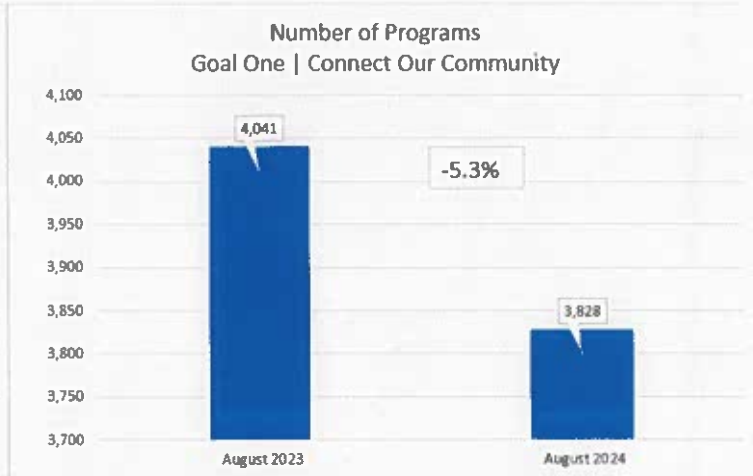
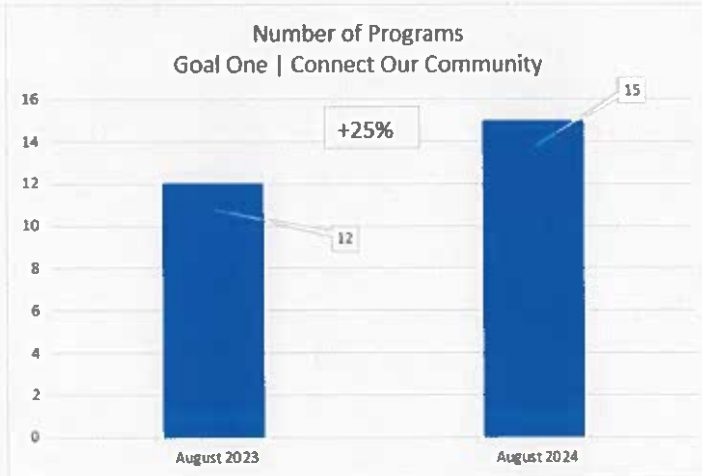
### Diverse audiences engaged

WPL's first recorded book became available for Talking Book Library patrons all around the country: Joel Kiesling's reading of *The Combat Zone: Murder, Race, and Boston's Struggle for Justice* by Jan Brogan.

# Goal 1 Connect our Community | August 2024



- Grow and strengthen our partnerships throughout the community
- Respond and act on community needs
- Commit to diverse community engagement



## Highlights

**Partnerships** Safe Exit has multiple programs that support vulnerable persons; the library is working with the resource center / day shelter (named 'Harbor') and also Jana's Place which helps women exiting from the sex trade who have co-occurring substance use mental health disorders.



### Responses towards identified community needs

De-stress with dogs (81 attendees) continued to be popular during the 'Dog Days of Summer' program, and 42 attendees were helped with English Conversation Circles. This category also includes the Fourth Annual WPL all-ages Community Block Party. This event met the entertainment and recreational needs of an estimated 3,500 attendees with free fun activities, giveaways, music, a photo booth, a dance party and a 'meet and greet' event with Bluey & Bingo. Henna tattoos, face painting, and a candy bar.

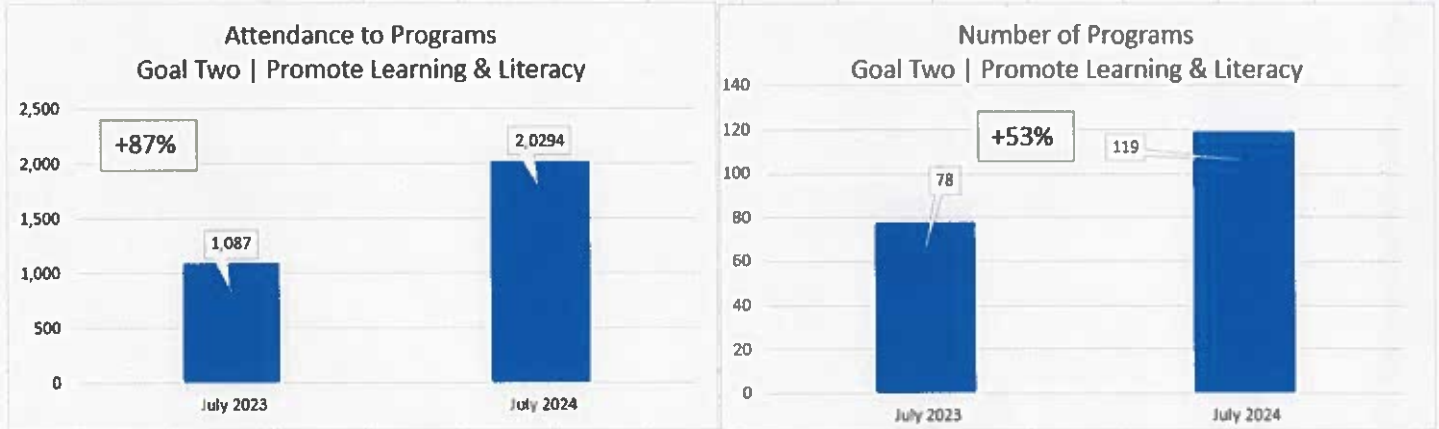
### Commit to Diverse Community Engagement

Engaging with members of diverse groups and of all abilities is a core part of the mission of the Talking Book Library (TBL). TBL held one audio-described movie matinee and one program of flamenco dancing designed to foster the joy of movement.

## Goal 2 Promote Learning & Literacy | July 2024



- Engage community in learning
- Promote digital literacy with a commitment to eliminating the digital divide
- Encourage curiosity and exploration



Goal 2 is where the vast majority of the library's public programming is reported. As time goes on these numbers may become more granular. Bullet one ('Engage') are programs where the librarians direct the learning toward an achievement or goal. Bullet three ('Encourage') are program spaces where patrons are invited to discover aspects of the topic driven by their own inquisitiveness.

### Engagement

44 individual programs throughout all locations welcomed learners of all ages. Programs ranged from chess and book clubs to genealogical programs. Youth Services branch library efforts were particularly strong. Toddler Time, Baby Bounce, and Family Storytime are standard programs that appeal to young families and provide caretakers the skills they need to be a child's first teacher.



### Digital Divide

Funding was secured through the Mass Broadband Institute to support the library's work of reducing the digital divide. Convincing data from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) will help shape the library's efforts.

### Curiosity & Exploration

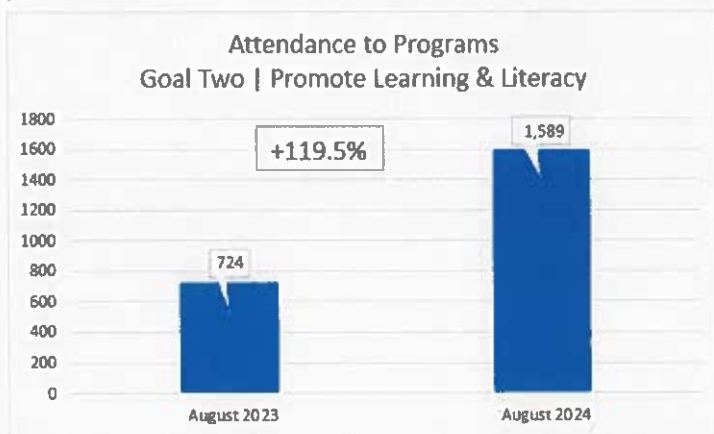
One of the more interesting and joyful programs held over the summer was a four-day display held Wednesday, July 17 through Saturday, July 20. In conjunction with Monano Art, 452 family attendees enjoyed exploring a *Cardboard World* -- an interactive display which invited kids and families to creatively express themselves by coloring, taping, and stickering a massive cardboard landscape.



## Goal 2 Promote Learning & Literacy | August 2024



- Engage community in learning
- Promote digital literacy with a commitment to eliminating the digital divide
- Encourage curiosity and exploration



The continuation of outsized numbers and per cent increases is due to a more precise mode of accounting for attendees and a focus on right-sizing programs. These are not inflated numbers, just accurate numbers.

The library recognizes the importance of the summer reading sponsors, without whom the library simply could not afford to present such wide-ranging and enjoyable programs. UniBank, Mattina Proctor Foundation, Cornerstone Bank, Country Bank, Price Chopper Golub Fund, bank Hometown, Bob's Discount Furniture, Walmart, the Worcester Public Library Foundation, and the Friends of the Worcester Public Library.

### Engagement

49 programs held. Shout-out to Tween Librarian Ms. Alicia Rogers for a Boba 'Par-Tea' program where 48 attendees played boba bingo and made a bubble tea keychain

### Digital Divide

This portion of the new strategic planning is being rebooted to attract and retain learners needing the skills and tools necessary to join the digital world.

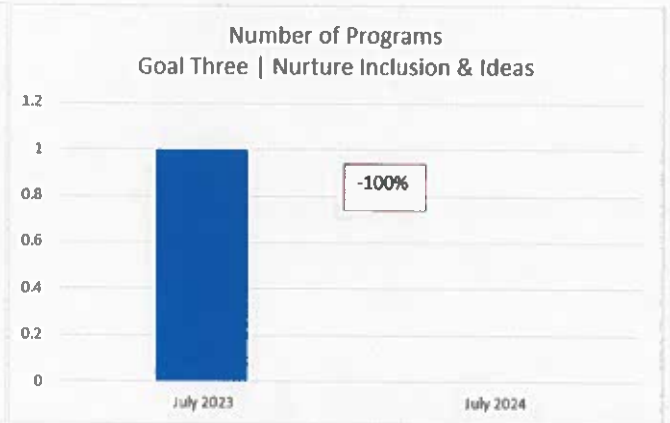
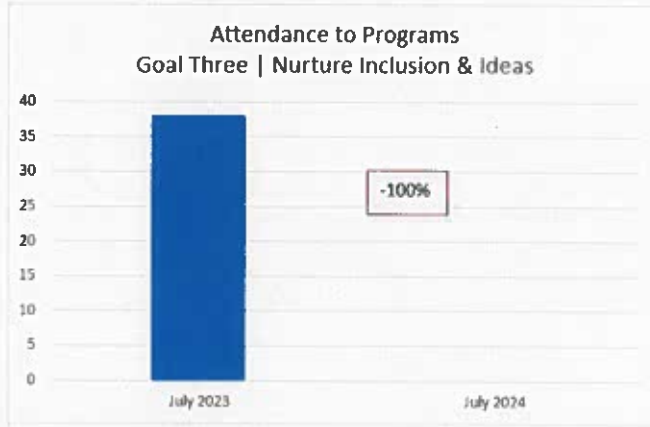
### Curiosity & Exploration

57 programs held, including children's librarian Ms. Alyssa Ebaugh's well attended (42) Percy Jackson Party for ages 9+ where families enjoyed snacks and Percy Jackson related activities. Ms. Dorothy (a.k.a. Dot) Sachs coordinated a Floral Arranging workshop for 25 adult attendees with a master floral designer who gave approaches for arrangements, information on sourcing flowers, designs, and color. And children's librarian Ms. Rachel Archeron's STEAM Engineering Challenge drew 30 attendees who planned and then created a crate to protect a piece of chalk during a fall.

# Goal 3 Nurture Inclusion and Ideas | July 2024



- Make improvements in accessibility to all library resources
- Create culturally responsive programs & events that reflect community
- Shape inclusive and diverse library collections



Accessibility Improvement Work is ongoing and included the reintroduction of ASL CART service. CART - 'Communication Access Real-time Transcription'- is a service that has been gaining in popularity in the COVID/Zoom boom and provides transcription from a live professional instead of machine translations.



Culturally responsive programming included efforts by Lee Anne Hooley, Head of Talking Book Services, starting a dementia-friendly reading group in conjunction with [Reading2Connect](#) and is also resurrecting quarterly Zoom meetings of TBL's Consumer Advisory Council.

Ms. Hooley is also working to bring a large, traveling, tactile art program to Worcester. Tactile Images' traveling exhibits illustrate art to the blind and low vision community via touch. Plans are to host and exhibit in May, 2025.

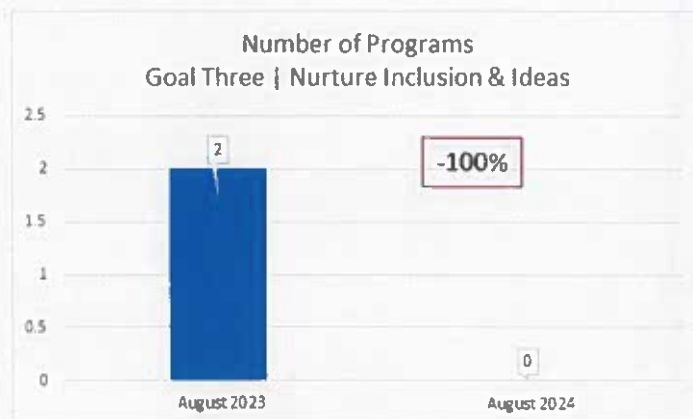
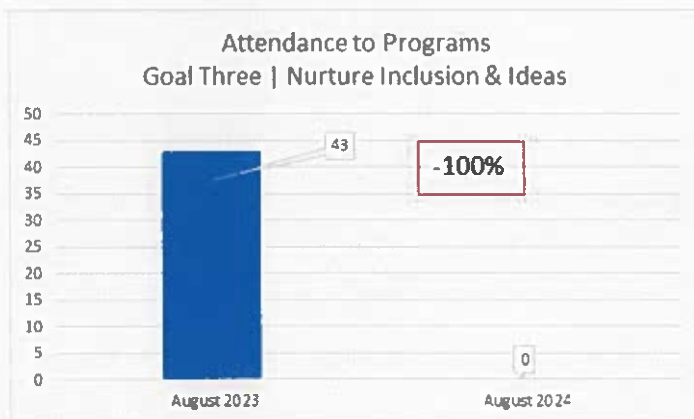
Collections The library is amid a diversity audit on its collections, projected for completion in October. There are several ways to perform such an audit, still relatively new to the profession, including contracting expensive software. The process WPL has chosen (technically known as a 'reverse audit') ensures that materials from notable bibliographies and booklists are included in the collections. Materials selectors already have a strong focus on diversifying collections as much as possible given the charge in the library's strong Collection Development policy.



# Goal 3 Nurture Inclusion and Ideas | August 2024



- Make improvements in accessibility to all library resources
- Create culturally responsive programs & events that reflect community
- Shape inclusive and diverse library collections



## Improvements in accessibility to library resources

After much work and many meetings, the Worcester Talking Book Library (TBL) has a certified recording studio program. TBL is now capable of recording and uploading audio books into BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) that can be accessed by patrons both local and worldwide. The first recorded book, read by Mr. Joel Keisling, is *The Combat Zone: Murder, Race, and Boston's Struggle for Justice* by Jan Brogan.

## Create culturally responsive programs and events that reflect our community

Though summer time is more focused on nonspecific 'reading is fun' programs, all programmers focus on service to Worcester's many communities with responsive, meaningful offerings. As will be seen in coming months, these take the form of multicultural storytelling, celebrations of heritage and holidays, cultural arts offerings, and programs on local history. The library also partners and allies with many community organizations to put on film screenings, workshops and classes that consider facets of the many cultures of Worcester, all with the specific intention of creating inclusive spaces.

## Shape inclusive and diverse library collections

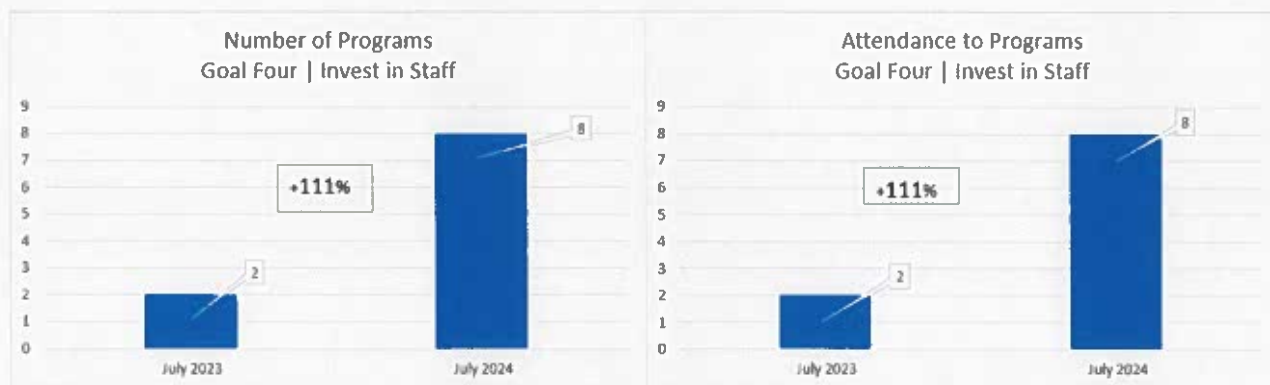
Mr. Douglas Lord (Library Services) attended a National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) session focused on Reproductive Health and how to provide appropriate levels of service, consideration, and collections for this area of people's health.



## Goal 4 Invest in Staff | July 2024



- Foster professional development
- Enhance leadership development and produce career pathways
- Shape mentorship and feedback initiatives



As this goal becomes more operationalized the results will prove more noteworthy.

Four adult reference staff attended seven different training sessions on cybersecurity, advanced usage and instruction techniques for aspects of the online card catalog, and building security. Additionally, one staff member attended an ALA webinar called *Supporting Neurodiverse and Atypical Leadership in Libraries*.



### Supporting Neurodiverse & Atypical Leadership in Libraries



#### Foster professional development

Ms. Linnea Sheldon, Community Relations & Communications Manager, attended Using Public Relations and Marketing to Catapult Growth. During the June staff development day, Ms. Christina Connolly provided a departmental overview and introduction to WPL's Critical Incident Stress Management Plan to all staff, and Ms. Azajuah Johnston-Fils presented *Communication 102: Making Communication Work at Work*.

#### Enhance leadership development and produce career pathways

Over the course of the summer the library hired a GL2 for Youth Services in the Teen Department and completed one internal promotion – a GL2 for Adult Services.

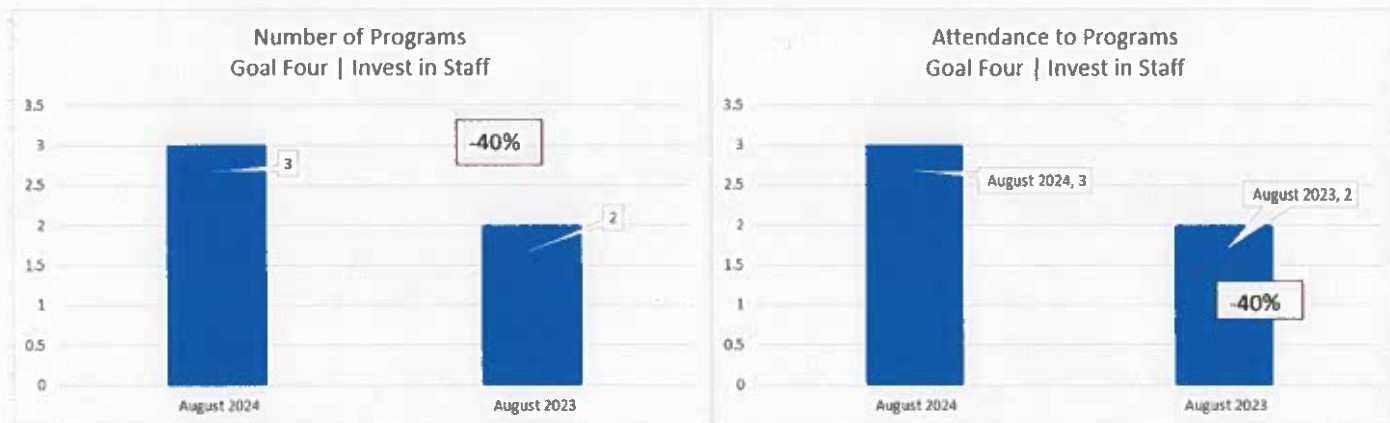
#### Shape mentorship and feedback initiatives

Currently, five staff members take advantage of a tuition reimbursement option made available through the trust funds.

## Goal 4 Invest in Staff | August 2024



- Foster professional development
- Enhance leadership development and produce career pathways
- Shape mentorship and feedback initiatives



### Foster professional development

Ms. Azajuah Johnston-Fils (Community Services) completed the Crisis Prevention Institute's Verbal Intervention 'Train the Trainer' course and will soon be training WPL's first responder group.

One adult reference staff attended two different training sessions on patron supports. Volunteers including a group from Leominster Credit Union assisted at the 4th Annual Block Party.

### Enhance leadership development and produce career pathways

The position of Deputy Director for Borrower Services was filled by internal promotion - Garrett Morin.

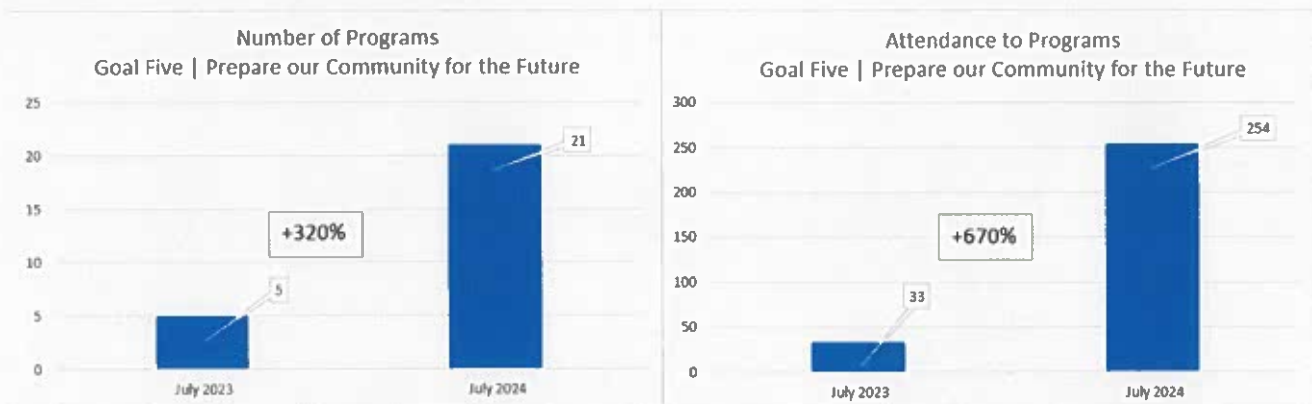
### Shape mentorship and feedback initiatives

Feedback was in the spotlight this month with – literally – dozens of excellent suggestions about service point improvements and procedural suggestions. This month's security incident underscored the critical importance of ongoing training and community engagement for the safety of both staff and patrons. As we move forward, we are committed to identifying and implementing targeted training opportunities that will equip our team with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent and mitigate future security risks. This strategic initiative will foster a culture of security awareness and collaboration, ensuring the well-being of our organization and those we serve.

## Goal 5 Prepare our Community for the Future | July 2024



- Enhance digital resources and invest in technology infrastructure
- Update spaces for creativity and innovation
- Build sustainable practices



This is an area in which the library's efforts reflect particularly well.

### Enhance digital resources and invest in technology infrastructure

The library received a \$100,000 grant from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) for a project to serve the digital equity needs of Worcester. The proposal will create a system of classes and learning sessions that lead participants to a final stage wherein they receive a smart device (e.g., a laptop, Chromebook, etc.) and discounted home broadband service. The project also plans to provide many more connection kits for patrons; these consist of a laptop and hotspot. Similar to the wildly successful ESOL Navigator program, a Digital Navigators program is on the way.

### Update spaces for creativity and innovation

A reconfiguration of the first floor was studied, discussed, and undertaken which frees up much-needed space for individual and small-group productivity to support the increasing number of people who need connectivity and the benefits of work-shared type spaces. During this improvement the Biography collection was reduced, and in subsequent moves the two service desks will be relocated.

### Build sustainable practices

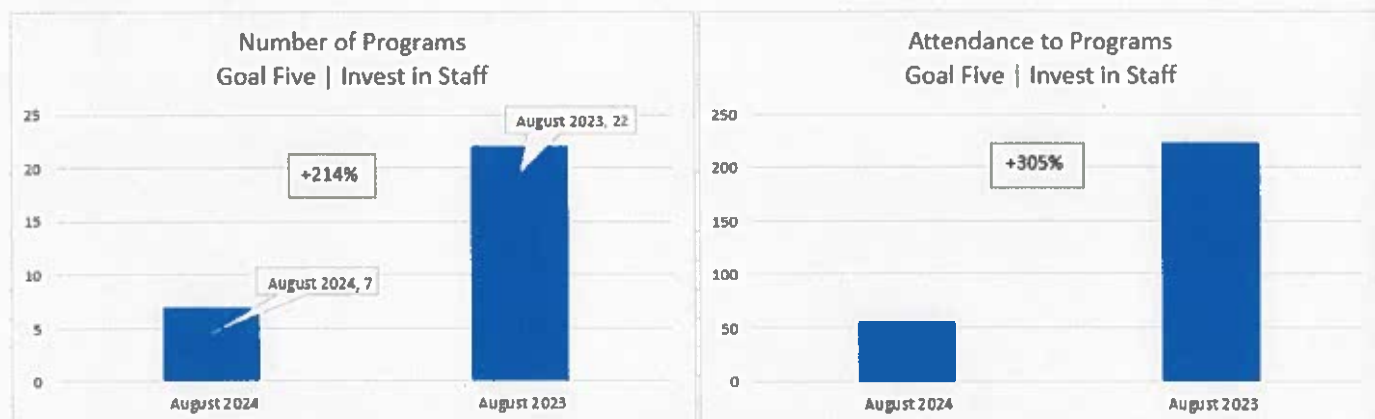
In addition to programs that focus on building individual resiliency like *Candlelight Yoga with Aromatherapy*, children's librarian Cara Young coordinated *Disney Cooking with chef Litani* for 79 of the library's youngest patrons and their caregivers -and- attracted 46 to two sessions of *Scrumptious Summer Cooking for Kids*. Other programs were *Om-M-G! Yoga for Tweens* (12 attendees), a Zumba class, a class on the power of vegetables and another on planting herb gardens, and three sessions focused on small businesses and personal finance: *Retirement Planning*, *Finding Grants for Nonprofits*, and *Working with Government Agencies*.



# Goal 5 Prepare our Community for the Future | August 2024



- Enhance digital resources and invest in technology infrastructure
- Update spaces for creativity and innovation
- Build sustainable practices



## Enhance digital resources and invest in technology infrastructure

A Notice of Funding Opportunity was issued for National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s Digital Equity Competitive Grant in August and the library is being encouraged to apply for a grant by allies and partners. The project would create a local / regional office of digital equity served by staff and a ‘Tech-Mobile’ that travels to locations convenient for the covered populations.

## Update spaces for creativity and innovation

The office pods were ordered and are on the way. In preparation, staff shifted collections and spaces and took the opportunity to weed and deep clean. When installed, the pods will provide privacy for in-person and Zoom meetings for patrons.

## Build sustainable practices

The library’s robust slate of health and resiliency programs continued throughout the summer with 24 sessions focused on sustainable practices. Yoga for Tweens, Candlelight Yoga with Aromatherapy, Zumba, Scrumptious Summer Cooking for Kids, and Lunchtime Yoga.

Sustainability regarding food insecurity was addressed with one cooking program using fresh veggies for succotash and one workshop with a registered dietitian on the health benefits of fruit.

**Highlight:** Each Tuesday throughout the year the UMass Road to Care Van provides free health visits with a group of medical providers from UMass Memorial Health. Visits include primary care, substance use disorder treatment, screenings, (e.g., blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.) and lab and medication Services. 57 persons were helped throughout the month.

# Report of the Human Resources Director

Staff Development and Engagement The Human Resources Office (HRO) is leading the planning for the library's Staff Development Day scheduled for October 24th.

Recruitment and Employment Substantial activity, partially covered under Goal 4.

At the end of August there were 12 open positions.

Six are scheduled to be filled in September:

- (1) L2 OCOL – External hire – Eff. 9/3/24
- (1) PT L2 Circulation – Internal Promotion – Eff. 9/3/24
- (1) L4 GBV – Internal Promotion – Eff. 9/16/24
- (3) Pages Circulation – External hires – Eff. 9/16/24

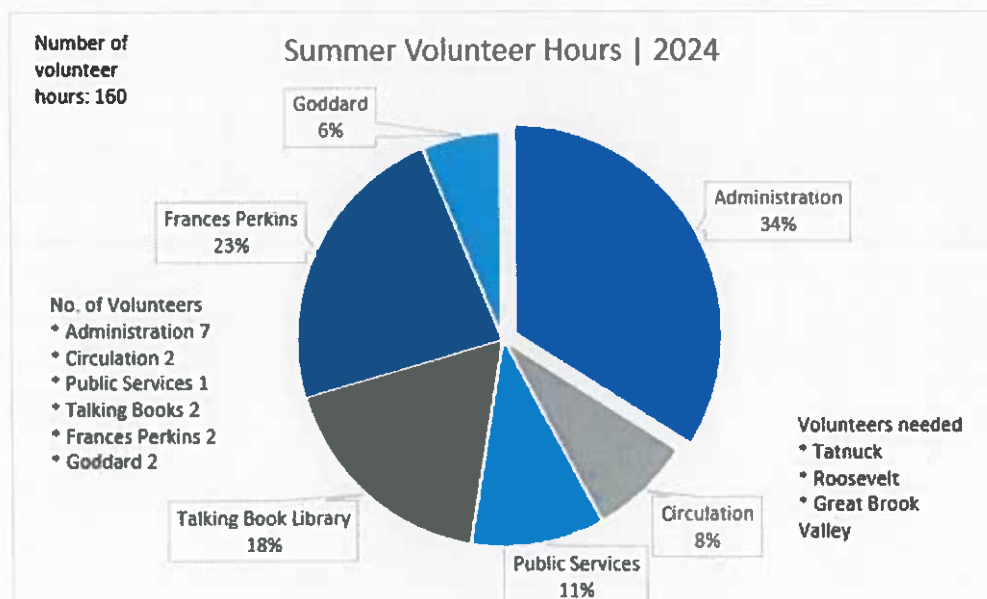
One is scheduled for interviews:

- (1) GL2 TBL – Posting closed 9/6/24 – Three candidates will be interviewed

And five are in process:

- (1) PT GL2 Adult Services – Candidate withdrew – Will need to repost
- (1) GL4 Adult Services – Repost until filled, not enough qualified candidates
- (1) L2 OCOL – Reposted – Closing 9/16/24
- (1) L5 Circulation – Posting closing 9/16/24
- (1) L2 GBV – Need approved RFP to post with the City

Also partially covered in Goal 4, volunteer efforts were strong for Great Brook Valley, Administration, and Talking Books. Goddard, Public Services, and Circulation also received help from volunteers. All told 16 volunteers provided 160 hours of assistance, per the chart:



# Report of the Administrative and Operations Division

## HIGHLIGHTS, Summer 2024

Administration Division includes Communications, Information Technology Services, Talking Book Library, Borrower Services, Community Resources, Security, and Financial Services.

### Communications

WPL and the Foundation had ~60 press mentions during the summer months including articles about building security and early voting. In addition to three press releases, efforts to promote summer reading, the annual Block Party, and Library in Every Classroom were successful. Other projects included:

- Finalizing the new logo and related branding
- Preparatory work on Stand with Libraries (12/5) and the art installation (10/5)
- Submitting the 2025 IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) nomination
- Submitting for other awards Library Journal Marketer of the Year Award, Erskine Award, Worcester Business Journal Award and two Urban Libraries Council Awards

### Community Resources

The department closed out the \$60,000 earmark created by Rep. John Mahoney (D-13). Funding provided furnishings, library materials and databases, English classes, and a deposit collection at Chandler Magnet's La Familia School.

Outreach efforts were greatly successful. Assisted by Circulation and Teen staff members, Ms. Katelyn Duncan presented at South High School to 88 students in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Ms. Azajuah Johnston-Fils, Mr. Kaseem Hargrove and Ms. Christina Connolly tabled at the City's annual Overdose Vigil at City Hall. The department also created a relationship with the UMass Preventative Health Clinic.

Ms. Johnston-Fils and Mr. Homer were interviewed by FOX25 News, broadcast August 12th. Over the summer, organizations including QCC, Better Life Partners, and New Start Brain Injury Center tabled and staff from SMOC, the Sheriff's Office, Safe Exit Initiative, and Everyday Miracles Peer Recovery Center spent 46 hours in the Community Resources Offices providing outreach support to patrons on a drop-in basis. and hosted the first community blood drive at the library in several years. The next blood drive is scheduled for 12/2.

Combining Ms. Duncan's and Ms. Johnston-Fils' office hours and impromptu 1-on-1's provided by all Community Resources staff show that 247 patrons received focused, expert help, for average of 20 minutes each on resources including immigration, citizenship, language translation and ESOL learning, writing and resume help, mentoring, first aid, and social services of all kinds.

### Summer Programming Highlights

- 179 attendees to Conversation Circles
- 47 to ESOL Navigators
- 51 to Citizenship Classes
- 881 to Everyday English sessions

## HIGHLIGHTS Summer 2024 | Administration & Operations Division, continued

### Talking Book Library

Advocacy efforts of the Library Caucus, the MBLC, the Talking Book Libraries, WPL, and other advocates have increased the TPL by 5% for a FY25 budget of \$711, 942. This presents many opportunities for improved service to patrons.

NLS Enhancements The National Library Service (NLS) has recently provided talking book libraries with resources that enable magazines to circulate locally via the in-house 'on demand' system. NLS has also improved BARD, an app-like service in which registered patrons stream talking books to their smart devices and desktops.

## Report of the Library Services Division

### HIGHLIGHTS, Summer 2024

The Library Services Division includes Collections, Youth Services including the four OCOL branches, and Adult Services including Newspapers & Magazines and the two branches.

### Youth Services

Summer '24 saw 22,229 visitors in the Pappas Center – quite busy - and teens were particularly engaged in the Teen Center this summer, clocking 7,447 visitors.

Program highlights included two Bluey parties which attracted a wide range of ages. Families gathered at both the Main branch and Frances Perkins, listened to stories, created art, and shared the joy that comes from watching the series. Families also got to meet Bluey in person during the 4th Annual Block Party.

Summer's most out-of-the-box event was made from actual boxes. *The Cardboard World* filled the Children's Room Ellipse for a week in July. Visitors were able to play, build, cut, decorate - the possibilities were endless - with boxes of various sizes. One of the favorites was a ball-pit box and the week ended with a workshop attended by 70 people.

### Outreach

August's victory was attracting 1,056 people to different outreach events around the city. Events with the highest numbers came from two crucial, annual events: Spree Day and Getting Ready for Kindergarten, both held at Polar Park. New outreach opportunities included Youth Connect at YWCA, JumpStart at Sullivan Middle School. The library has been requested at twelve different 'Know-Your-School Nights' in September.

Summer reading numbers held steady compared to 2023. This program will transition prior to 2025 to accommodate successes from this year - counting 'days read' (instead of minutes or page/book quantity) and bringing back paper logs instead of using software.

One City, One Library OCOL branches were quiet, allowing for onboarding of two new GLs and hired L2s. Staff are grateful for the help received from other departments and look forward to returning to normal hours and fresh programming.

Librarian Melody Friedenthal recorded 4 short stories in the recording studio.





**WORCESTER  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

# LIBRARY USE

**JULY**

**AUGUST**

**15,166**

**39,757**

**12,958**

**39,709**

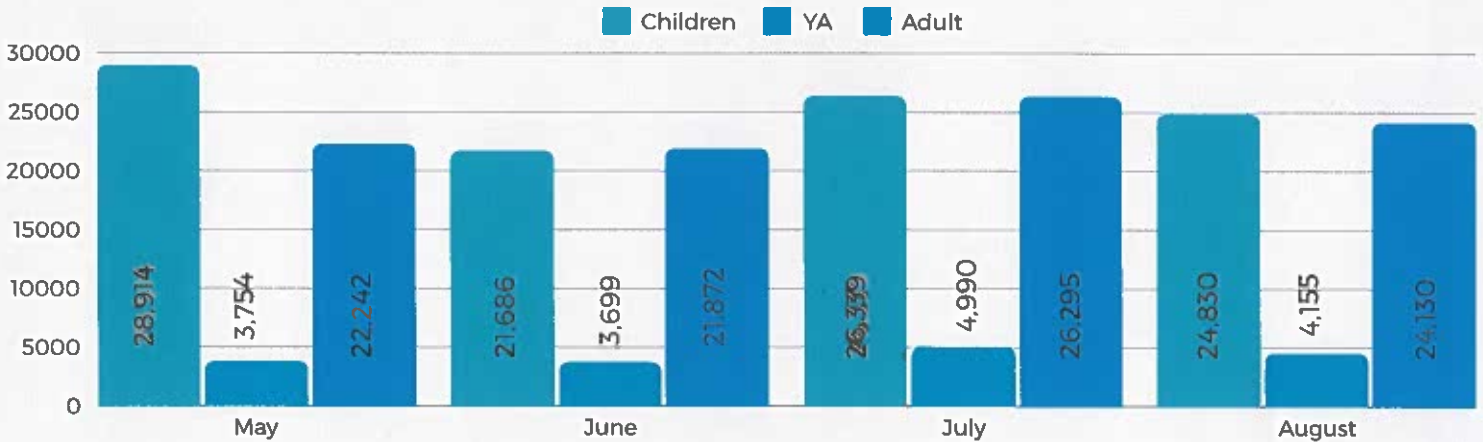
Patron Assists  
(all transactions)

Patron Visits  
(all branches)

Patron Assists  
(all transactions)

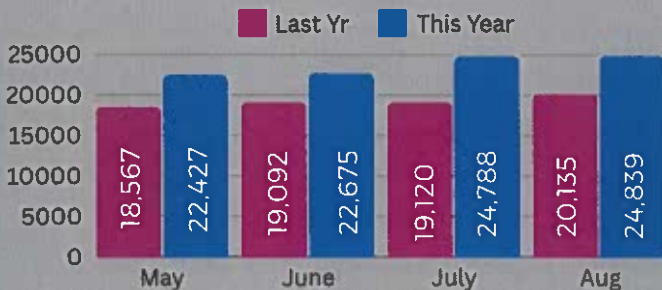
Patron Visits  
(all branches)

## CIRCULATION (PHYSICAL)



Circulation remains steadily increasing overall and is highlighting that month to month can vary by library activity. July was unusually strong, as we typically dip down in that month, but the success of Summer Reading allowed for strong growth. August often starts slow and becomes busier as school gets back on everyone's mind, and although we had difficulties in the month, the usage of the library did not significantly go down as we feared it would.

## EBOOK CIRC



eBooks continue to see increases with the average for the last 4 months of a 23% increase, and July at the highest increase of 30% year over year.



## JULY & AUG Express Sessions

2,583

## Computer Sessions

10,414

**Wireless Sessions** 27,013

**Website Visitors** 85,069

## TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

With a vacancy in the outreach librarian, TBL has seen a small dip in usage, highlighting the need to invest in this team and ensure they have the bandwidth to push outreach for this vulnerable population.

