Stronger Together





A Message from the President & Executive Director

In January 2023, we launched a new and ambitious Strategic Plan to guide the Library's goals and objectives over the next three years. At the core of the plan was a vision that centered on fulfilling the diverse needs of our changing community, and providing "opportunities to explore, learn, and create in an environment where everyone is made to feel safe and welcome."

As we reflect on the past year, it is both inspiring and gratifying to see the ways in which both we as a Library, and Wilton as a larger community, have begun to make this vision a reality.

We co-sponsored the "Confronting Acts of Hate" panel at the Riverbrook Regional YMCA, and in collaboration with the Wilton Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, we hosted an author talk with New York Times columnist and Pulitzer grantee, Mark Oppenheimer. Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh held a yoga program at the library and we co-hosted the "Darshana Exhibition," offering the community a glimpse into Hindu Civilization. We proudly co-hosted the 2nd Annual Wilton Pride Festival. In collaboration with Wilton Public Schools, this year's Wilton Reads featured *The Great Divide* by Cristina Henriquez which gave us all a glimpse into the untold stories of those who built the Panama Canal.

We have also worked to highlight and build upon the Library's unique assets. In April 2024, we celebrated the international launch of the digital archive for The Brubeck Collection, which was featured both nationally and internationally by NBC New York, NPR Morning Edition, The GRAMMYs, International Day of Jazz, The Detroit Jazz Festival, and many others.

In addition to our expansive digital and print collections, we now offer a record number of programs for all ages. From our popular Friday Family Playgroup that brings new parents together in community, to STEAM programming, square dancing, and an impressive lineup of concerts, literary and historical programs, and art shows, we continue to embrace our core mission to serve as the cultural and intellectual center of Wilton.

With the support of our friends, donors, volunteers, trustees, staff, and our incredible community partners, we have demonstrated that we are all **stronger** when we come **together**. Please join us in celebrating the last year, and in looking forward to the future.



Carol Johnson
Board President

Carul T. Junior

Caroline Mandler **Executive Director**

Cer

Wilton Library

Stronger Together: From Vision to Reality



This year, a patron described Wilton Library as "...more than just a place for books; it's a lively and inclusive center that promotes learning, creativity, and connection, making it a highly recommended destination." It is very gratifying to hear how much our patrons appreciate the library. As Wilton's cultural and intellectual center, our vision is to "fulfill the diverse needs of our changing community, by providing opportunities to explore, learn, and create in an environment where everyone is made to feel safe and welcome."

This vision is at the heart of our three-year Strategic Plan, and our exciting year was truly marked by the spirit of community engagement and collaboration. We teamed

up with a diverse range of local organizations to create engaging new programs that would appeal to all ages and interests. In turn, we saw that our commitment to outreach and embracing unity and diversity was resonating with our community. We saw growth across the board in the number of visits, program attendance, new cardholders, and circulation of materials. Indeed, our vision was turning into reality - proving that as a library and a community, we are all stronger when we come together. Looking forward, we will continue to work diligently to ensure that Wilton Library is a place where everyone feels that they belong, and to fulfill our purpose and mission: to inform, enrich, connect, and inspire our community.

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Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

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Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024

Every effort has been made to acknowledge all donors

Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024 5

Experiences and Resources for Our Community

As an important community hub at the center of town, Wilton Library continued to provide exciting and informative programs, comprehensive resources, innovative technology, and stellar services throughout the year. In the fall, the library kicked off a new initiative offering "Work in Wilton" library cards to individuals employed at Wilton businesses. This program allowed us to establish strong partnerships with local businesses and demonstrate the value that the library brings to their employees. We also continued to boost our digital collection and added the eReading experience *The Palace Project* to our long list of Digital Library resources.

This year the library offered a dynamic mix of in-person and virtual programming that brought new experiences and knowledge to patrons of all ages. Enrichment programs included several author talks, seminars on literature, history, art, and music, book discussions, and much more. For the seventeenth year, we teamed up with the Wilton Historical Society for our scholarly lecture series "Innovation, Disruption, Revolution: The Impact of Technological Advancement." Our community-wide reading program in partnership with Wilton Public Schools, *Wilton Reads* 2024, featured the book *The Great Divide* by Cristina Henriquez, which highlighted the untold stories of those who built the Panama Canal and included a visit from the acclaimed author.

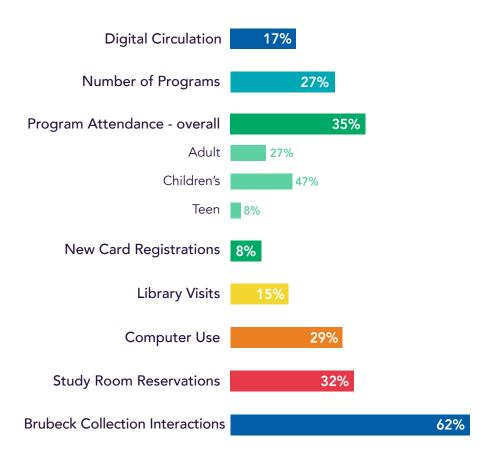


Throughout the year, we collaborated with a diverse range of local organizations including the Wilton Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Wilton Pride, and many others to create engaging new programs for all interests. We also held a Chinese music program with the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, and we were active participants in Mental Health Awareness Month, along with Wilton Youth Council, the Wilton Mental Health Task Force, and many other local organizations.

We were very happy to see friends and families at Wilton's big community social events - the Holiday Stroll and Winter Carnival, the Wilton Farmers' Market, the Street Fair and Sidewalk Sale in July, and Cannon Grange's Agricultural Fair. In June, we hosted our fourth Ice Cream Social, where we greeted many new and familiar faces. We also held four successful book sales and a "free books day," all thanks to our dedicated and hardworking team of book sale volunteers.

A Year of Growth Snapshot of Circulation and Activity

As Compared With the Prior Year



Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024 Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024 7

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Wilton teens interested in becoming more involved with the library, participated in engaging discussions and activities every month. And Wilton Library's teen robotics team, Singularity Technology, wrapped up another successful season. The team competed in the Connecticut FIRST Tech Challenge State Championship in February and were runners up for the Innovate Award, based on their creative design choices for their robot. They are excited for next year's challenge.

Building a Strong Future for Children and Teens

For the younger members of our community, the Children's Library and Teen Services department have long served as inviting, safe, and welcoming spaces dedicated to encouraging a lifelong love of reading, learning, and discovery. Our hardworking Children's Library staff created a wide variety of innovative programs and activities, including our popular summer reading program, STEAM workshops, music, arts and crafts, and countless storytimes including visits by Wilton firefighters and police officers and a special outdoor reading series "Books and a Blanket," a collaboration with Wilton Land Conservation Trust and Wilton Go Green. At the request of patrons, we started a new family playgroup program to help parents and caregivers build connections. Another big highlight: a Percy Jackson-inspired Demigod Camp, featuring mythic tales, fun activities, live animals, and yummy ice cream floats.

Tweens and teens attended STEAM activities including coding camp and a Women in STEM panel with ASML, along with acting workshops, cooking and crafting sessions, college planning programs, and much more. Our Teen Library Council, a group for



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Children's Library - Summer Programs and Reading Recommendations:

"...thank you...for everything you have done for my daughters...both girls thoroughly enjoyed all of the programming. We were received so warmly by everyone and I wanted to let you know how much we appreciate all that you do."

Every effort has been made to acknowledge all donors

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"Wilton Library is a truly special place, taking such good care of the minds and spirits of our little town. Thank you!"

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A Strong Tradition of Music and Art

Wilton Library's strong tradition of arts and music programming continued this year, enriching and inspiring our community with the diverse talents of well-known musicians and local artists.

In music, our extremely popular Hot & Cool Jazz series brought world-class jazz concerts to the Brubeck Room stage. with the Brubeck Brothers Quartet. Judy Carmichael, and others performing before packed audiences. Classical music concerts included our Connecticut's Own chamber music series, while patrons of all ages enjoyed singing and dancing to popular tunes at our Summer Music Concert Series held in the Brubeck Room and Courtyard.

Rotating art exhibitions filled the walls of the library every month, including the Fine and Performing Arts Department of Wilton Public Schools (FAPA) Student Library Show, featuring artwork and live musical performances by students in grades K through 12. In the spring, the Wilton Arts Council annual photography exhibit, FOCUS '24, saw a significant increase in local entries, demonstrating our community's strong interest in participating in this exhibit. We also hosted our 77th annual Summer Show Art Exhibition, showcasing local artists who live and work in Wilton. In December Ed MacEwen retired after serving as the library's Art Chairman for 27 years, and we welcomed new Art Co-Chairs Betsy Huffman and Petra Saldutti.







On International Jazz Day April 30, Wilton Library was proud to launch the digital archive of The Brubeck Collection, making the 22,000+ item collection catalog easily searchable and browsable online for the first time to everyone worldwide. The new digital archive includes unreleased music, interactive tour maps, rare photos, videos, and more. The international launch was featured across the world by NBC New York, NPR Morning Edition, The GRAMMYs, and many others; online visits to The Brubeck Collection's website more than tripled. The Brubeck Collection is one of the world's premier jazz archives, a unique asset, and a point of pride for Wilton. With this expanded access, The Collection will continue to draw the interest of those seeking to experience and appreciate Dave Brubeck's legacy - from Wilton High School jazz musicians to jazz scholars and enthusiasts from around the globe.



Photo by GOOD Morning Wilton.

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"You do amazing things at the library and are truly a force for good!"

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Securing a Strong Future in the Community



The Wilton Library Association (WLA) Endowment Fund links our organization to the future. Established for the long-term preservation of WLA and its mission, the Endowment Fund provides a strong and enduring source of support, contributing to the library's present and its future. The Cornerstone Society recognizes donors who have made a minimum contribution of \$10,000 to the Fund.

The Cornerstone Society

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Thanks to our donors, we have established and grown an Endowment Fund for Wilton Library, safeguarding the crucial role the library plays in the fabric of our community, today and in perpetuity.

\$10.000-\$24.999 **Cornerstone Society** Bronze

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Community Partnerships

Wilton Library teamed up with our valued community partners to open doors to new skills, experiences, and knowledge - with programs such as practicing yoga, listening to Chinese instruments, learning American Sign Language, swinging into square dancing, and much more. Thank you to our partners who made our performances, seminars, programs, and workshops possible.

Partnerships

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NASA

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By the Numbers <</p>

Expenses

Revenue

Town Grant

\$2,967,471

Annual Appeal

1 2021 U 000000 000000

\$327,426

Fundraising Events & Other Donations*



\$390,000

Operating Income (Including Investment Income)



\$263,608

Total Revenue: \$3,948,505

*Excludes Endowment Donations

Our collection, programs, and services would not be possible without the generous support of our donors.

Salaries & Benefits



\$2,494,753

Library Content & Programs



\$548,706

Building Maintenance & Utilities



\$340,437

Technology



\$272,776

Library Operations



\$111,706

Fundraising & **Development**



\$175,797

Total Expenses: \$3,944,175

Joe & Ann Fiteni

Philip & Alix FitzGerald Michael Fitzsimmons

Nancy Flaherty

Thomas F. Flynn

list Martha Foderaro This

Patrick Ford

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John & Peg Lagnese

Facts & Figures



Total Items Circulated 236,771



Total Number of Programs 907



Total Program Attendance 31,293



Attendance at 97 **Innovation Station** Sessions 271



Library Visits 214,546



Number of Times People Logged in to **Library Computers** 53,709



Questions Answered by Reference Librarians 56,250



Museum Passes **Borrowed** 156



Meeting and Study **Room Uses** 4,088



Total Number of Items Available in the Collection 777,849



Digital Library Loans 67,246



Number of **Website Visits** 188,447



Susan & Paul Lauricella The Law Family Donna Lawrence Christopher Lawther Elizabeth Lazarou Paola Lazzaro Fran LeBarron Robert Leidner

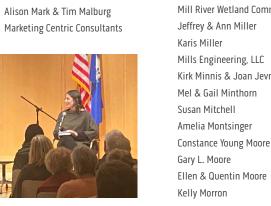
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Casino Night and Spring Escape Fundraisers

Fundraising is absolutely essential to the successful operation and growth of Wilton Library. We are not a fully tax-supported municipal library. We rely on donations from individuals and corporations to fund all of the collection materials and programs we offer.

With another spin of the wheel and roll of the dice, our very popular Casino Night FUNdraiser returned for its second year in November. For this event, the library was transformed into a Vegas-style party, complete with the lights, sounds, and excitement of real gaming tables and dealers, plus a new sports lounge that was very popular.





Another big success - our Spring Escape fundraiser in April. At the event, guests took a journey around the world to visit exotic destinations and vacation spots such as Mexico, Greece, Italy, China, and more. As they traveled through the library's open spaces, they sampled cuisine and cocktails unique to each destination while soaking in beautiful scenic decorations and enjoying fun activities.

Our community truly shines at these fundraisers, and they are a perfect illustration of how we are stronger when we unite and come together for a great cause. We sincerely thank all of the attendees, donors, and sponsors who helped to make these special events possible, as well as our creative and committed volunteers and staff who worked so hard behind the scenes to ensure their success.

24 Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024 Wilton Library Annual Report 2023-2024

rom

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Gabriel Tully

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Tusk & Cup

The Two Oh Three

Dee Unterbach

Merziye Vadzhypova & Oleksandr Ierenkov

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Anastasia Valassis

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GOOD Morning Wilton

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Edda Gusman

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"...this is probably the best online program anywhere anytime. Thank you."

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Pictured left to right: Suzanne Verrilli, Sue Stengrim



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Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

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Volunteer of the Year: **Betsy Huffman**

Pictured left to right: Caroline Mandler, Betsy Huffman, Carol Johnson



Anne Marie Case

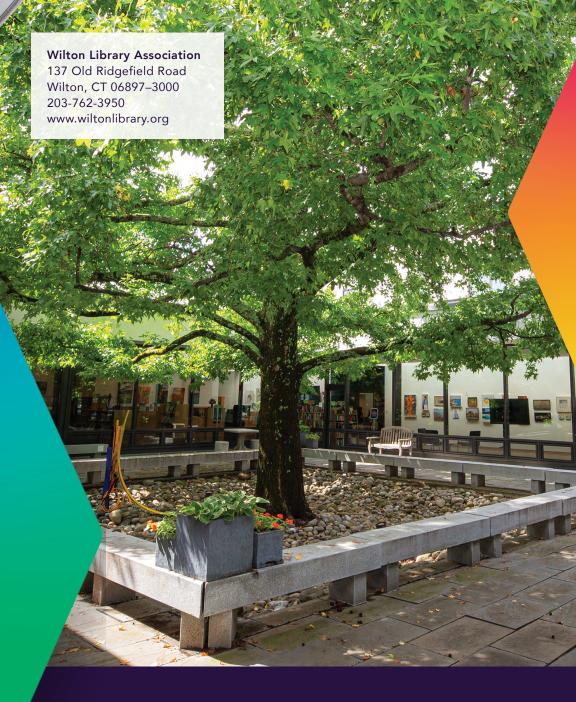
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