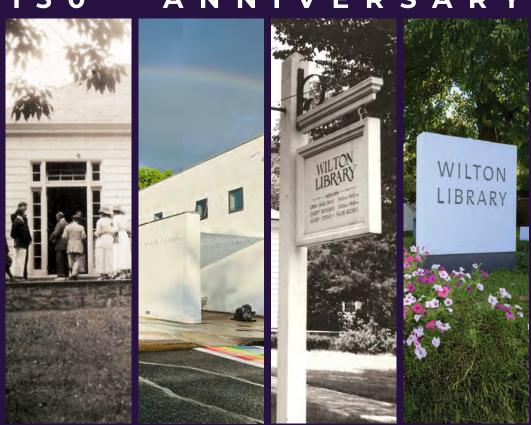
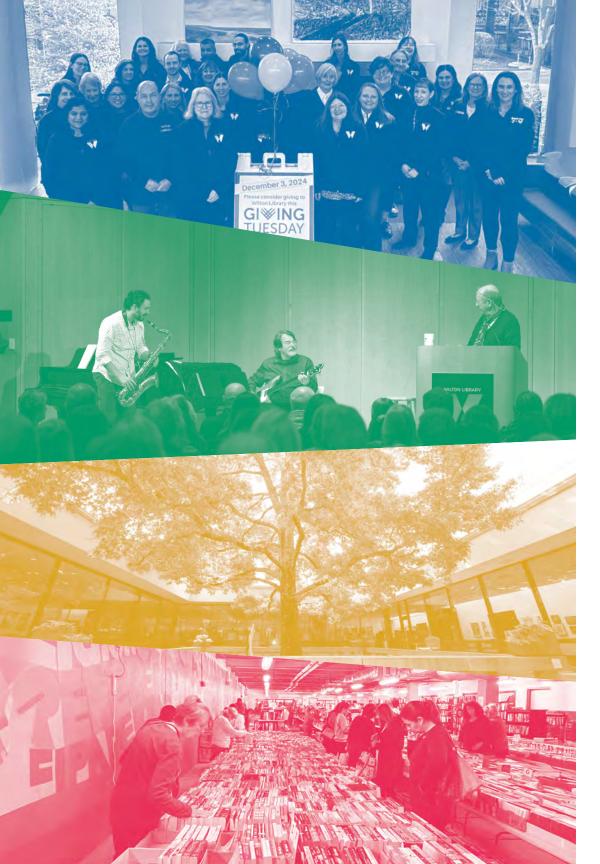
# WILTON LIBRARY

# 130<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Annual Report 2024 - 2025



# A Message From the President & Executive Director

This past year, as we celebrated our 130th year as a library, we continued to embrace our mission to serve as the cultural and intellectual center of Wilton, and our vision to be an environment where everyone is made to feel safe and welcome.

Thanks to the support of our patrons, Board, donors, volunteers and community partners, and because of the dedication of our staff, we continue to grow and to explore new ways to inform, enrich, connect, and inspire our community. We are also thankful for ASML's incredibly generous investment in Wilton Library. Thanks to their new multi-year commitment, we look forward to sharing expanded high-level programming, technology, and new services for all of our patrons.

We were honored to win the Connecticut State Library Award for Community Engagement, which was given in recognition for many of our new programs and initiatives that you will read about in the coming pages, all of which are designed to strengthen engagement and a sense of belonging for residents of all ages. Additionally, The Brubeck Collection won two awards this year – an Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of Museums, and most recently an Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History, which is the nation's most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

Over 130 years, Wilton Library has grown exponentially and is certainly different in many ways from its earliest years. And yet, fundamentally, many things remain the same, including the support and the commitment of our community.

We are very grateful to our trustees, our staff, our volunteers, and our friends whose continued support of our valued institution ensures that it will remain the cultural and intellectual center of our community for generations to come.

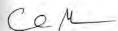


Carol Johnson
Board President

Caral T. Janara



Caroline Mandler **Executive Director** 



### Wilton Library

# Celebrating Our 130th Anniversary

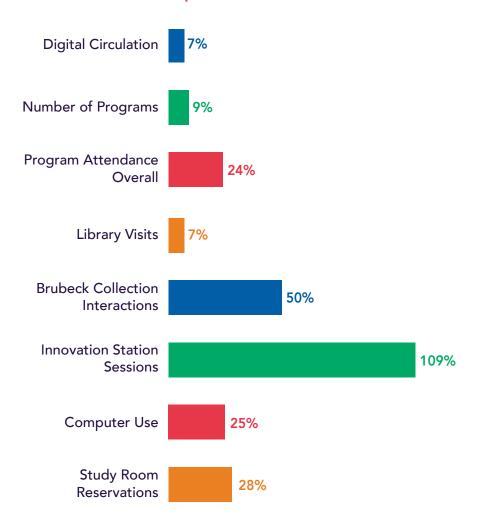
This was a unique and special year in many ways for Wilton Library, notably because we celebrated an important milestone in our history - our 130th anniversary. From our humble beginning in 1895 with a collection of 150 books in the corner of a post office, we have grown immensely over the years, evolving into the vibrant community hub that we are today. This year, the library was extremely honored to receive the first-ever CT State Library Excellence in Public Libraries Award for Community Engagement. We were recognized for our collaboration with more than 70 community partners annually, and new programs and initiatives designed to strengthen engagement and build a sense of belonging for residents of all ages. We'll tell you more about these initiatives in the pages to follow. Indeed, one thing became clear - our steadfast commitment to outreach while working to meet the changing needs of our community was a resounding success - we saw strong growth in program attendance and the number of visits throughout the year.



While much has changed over the past 130 years for Wilton Library, much has also remained the same. We continue to strive every day to fulfill our mission: to inform, enrich, connect, and inspire our community. We are still extremely grateful for our friends, donors, volunteers, trustees, and staff, whose full-fledged support ensures that we will be able to grow and flourish in the years to come. As we celebrate our past including this exciting and rewarding fiscal year, we now look eagerly towards the future. Imagine what might be possible here in the next 130 years!

# A Year of Growth Snapshot of Circulation and Activity

#### As Compared With the Prior Year



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# **Experiences and Resources for Our Community**



Throughout the year, Wilton Library continued to play a vital role in the lives of town residents - providing engaging and informative programs, innovative resources and technology, and outstanding services in an environment where everyone is made to feel safe and welcome. We continued our campaign to offer "Work in Wilton" library cards to individuals employed at Wilton organizations and businesses, including on-site visits. We also expanded our digital collection, and added the Crafts & Hobby database to our long list of Digital Library resources. Use of our Innovation Station Makerspace soared, with the embroidery machine in especially high demand, while our study rooms and rental rooms were constantly busy with meetings and work and study sessions.

The library offered an engaging mix of programming that brought new experiences and knowledge to patrons of all ages. We hosted several significant author events including bestselling author Fiona Davis and award-winning author Daniel Mendelsohn, who discussed his new translation of The Odyssey. Another big literary highlight: a unique and memorable poetry and jazz collaboration between former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and musicians Chris Brubeck and Lucas Pino. Other enrichment programs included seminars on music, art, history, and literature, book discussions, and much more.

### Friends of Wilton Library Association

Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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(\$10,000 & higher)

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This year, we collaborated with a diverse range of community partners to present new programs for all interests. With Voices of Hope, we hosted a Kristallnacht commemoration event featuring 93-year old Ruth Weiner speaking about the Night of Broken Glass, attended by more than 300 people. Partnering again with Wilton Pride, we co-hosted the inaugural Come Out & Run 5K in September and our third annual Wilton Pride "Be You" Festival in June. To kick off the #Wiltoniswhereyoubelong campaign, we hosted our first-ever Volunteer Fair with Wilton Youth Council's Mental Health Task Force, with 28 organizations and more than 500 community members in attendance. We also hosted several informative "Get Well, Stay Well" presentations with local health providers including ONS and Stamford Health. And we teamed up with RVNAhealth to launch our monthly Memory Café program, a monthly gathering for individuals living with memory challenges and their care partners.

We were delighted to greet 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, Cannon Grange's Agricultural Fair, and the Pumpkin Parade. In June, we hosted our annual Ice Cream Social, a fun afternoon full of popsicles, snow cones, and lots of smiles. We also held four successful book sales, thanks to our hardworking and dedicated team of book sale volunteers.

Michael & Tracy Sutka Gary & Sheila Wakoff Wilton Kiwanis Club

Women's Business Development Council

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# **Children and Teens**

With inviting spaces filled with resources to encourage a lifelong love of reading, learning, and discovery, the Children's Library and Teen Services department continued to engage younger members of our community. Thanks to the hard work of our devoted Children's Library staff, children participated in a wide variety of activities and programs, including our popular summer reading club, Friday family playgroup, music, arts and crafts, and a packed schedule of storytimes including visits by Wilton police officers and firefighters. We also hosted our outdoor reading series "Books and a Blanket," a collaboration with Wilton Go Green and Wilton Land Conservation Trust. Fun-filled scavenger hunts and afternoon STEAM programs were also very popular. Children enjoyed visits from *Pinkalicious* author Victoria Kann and Newbery Award-winning author and Wilton High School graduate Veera Hiranandani for our summer reading kickoff event. Another big highlight: a day-long Medieval Camp, featuring lots of fun activities, a fencing demonstration with armored knights (!), and delicious mulled cider.

Tweens and teens attended STEAM programs including an "Intro to Java" camp, Dungeons & Dragons campaigns, acting workshops, crafting and cooking sessions, college planning programs, and much more. The library also co-sponsored an "Ask Me Anything Teen Edition" panel discussion for LGBTQ+ community members with Wilton Pride, and collaborated with Kids In Crisis to host "Lighthouse," a new monthly drop-in session supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Our Teen Library Council, a group for Wilton teens interested in becoming more involved with the library, enjoyed spending time together making buttons and friendship bracelets. They also volunteered at library events including the Holiday Stroll and Medieval Camp, and created special items for fundraisers, such as our 3D printed pickleball keychains.





# Congratulations to Singularity Technology

A big congratulations to Wilton Library's teen robotics team, Singularity Technology! The team had an incredibly successful year, winning a spot to compete at the FIRST Technology Challenge World Championship in Houston, Texas in April. They were one of only two teams in the State of Connecticut to qualify at this level, a prestigious achievement placing them in the top 3% of teams internationally.

At the five-day championship, they competed with more than 200 teams from nearly 60 countries. In addition to troubleshooting, practicing, and getting their robot ready for matches, the team was able to connect with STEM professionals and peers in an energetic and collaborative environment. A big thank you to our community for helping the team with their fundraising goal so that they could participate in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Singularity Technology is headed into its twelfth year at Wilton Library, and it is currently the only library-based team in the state of Connecticut. The team is ready and eager to tackle next year's challenge.

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#### "Thank you for a wonderful library!"

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"As a new-ish Wilton resident and mom...I wanted to reach out and commend you...Between the beautiful rainbow crosswalks at the library and the involvement in this year's Pride activities in town... I am happy and proud to be part of a community which is so inclusive."

Every effort has been made to acknowledge all donors

Susan Larsen Homes - William Raveis

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#### **AUTHOR'S CIRCLE** (\$500 to \$999)

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Clarissa Cannavino



"Wilton Library is the jewel of our community!! We truly appreciate all your hard work and dedication. You make a difference in our lives every day."

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Chapey Family

Savet Constantine & Craig

Muraskin Marcia Cooper

James Coyle

Keith & Ilinca Creveling

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Connie Jo Dickerson & Jon Young



# **Music and Art**

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

In music, our popular Hot & Cool Jazz series brought world-class jazz concerts to the Brubeck Room stage, with Alan Broadbent, Jerry Bergonzi, and others performing in front of wall-to-wall crowds. In a special and historic Hot & Cool jazz concert, saxophonist Jon De Lucia performed the world premiere of the unrecorded music of the Dave Brubeck Octet, after years of research in part involving The Brubeck Collection. Audiences also enjoyed an Argentine guitar recital, a performance by Yale's famous "Spizzwinks(?)" a cappella group, and our Connecticut's Own chamber music series. At our Summer Music Concert Series, patrons of all ages had a great time singing and dancing to popular tunes in the Brubeck Room and Courtyard.

The library showcased rotating art exhibitions on its walls throughout the year, 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 '25, once again saw very strong community interest and participation. We also hosted the "Weir Inspired" art exhibition, the premiere show of the Weir Farm Artist Collective, and our 78th annual Summer Show Art Exhibition, showcasing local artists who live and work in Wilton.





# THE Brubeck COLLECTION

#### Wins Awards and Launches Social Media Channels

We are immensely proud that The Brubeck Collection and its Digital Archive were honored with two awards this year! In October, the Digital Archive received an Award of Merit from the Connecticut League of Museums, recognizing excellence in museum work by individuals and organizations in Connecticut. In addition, The Brubeck Collection and Digital Archive won an Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History, the nation's most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

This year, engagement with the archive soared dramatically. In the spring, we launched The Brubeck Collection's dedicated social media channels on Facebook and Instagram. In just 3 ½ months, our posts were viewed over a million times by more than 700,000 accounts! In addition, The Brubeck Collection's website views have more than tripled in recent months, with thousands of views for a new online exhibit about The Dave Brubeck Octet. We also hosted a full-day Open House in the archive to celebrate International Jazz Day, plus visits for students and staff from Wilton Public Schools seeking to learn more about Dave Brubeck's legacy, including 30 student musicians from the Cider Mill School Jazz Band.



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"I love the displays and always find something interesting to read. It shows that the librarians enjoy putting them together."

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"Wonderful Library for The Arts. The Hot & Cool Jazz concert with the Jon De Lucia's Octet was incredible! Thank vou."

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"I have loved your programs and activities. Thanks for giving me a great summer."

- Child Patron

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Every effort has been made to acknowledge all donors

# **Our Partnerships**

This year, Wilton Library teamed up with our valued community partners to open doors to new experiences, skills, and knowledge - with programs such as a helpful senior care series for "Sandwich Generation" caregivers, a panel discussion with successful local women business owners, an introduction to square dancing, and much more. Thank you to our partners who made our performances, seminars, programs, and workshops possible.



# New Partnership with **ASML**

At our 130th Annual Meeting for Friends in June, Wilton Library was proud to announce a new and significant partnership with ASML. An expansion of the company's generous support of the library over the past several years, ASML's partnership will now provide both multi-year funding as well as volunteer support for a variety of key initiatives: funding for an annual jazz festival, an ASML Author Series, The Human Library®, a new monthly children's music program, the addition of a Bloomberg Terminal, a Digital Navigators program offering one-on-one tech assistance, additional funding for the library's Robotics Team and staff development, and a variety of technology enhancements. We sincerely thank ASML for their incredible partnership and support, and we look forward to launching these new programs and services for our community in the coming months.



#### **Partnerships**

AARP
A Better Chance of Wilton
Amadeo Family
American Foundation for Suicide
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**ASML** 

Block Party USA
The Brubeck Family

Burn Boot Camp

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Kids In Crisis - Lighthouse

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New England FIRST

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Norwalk Symphony Orchestra

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Wilton Health Department

Wilton High School PTSA

Wilton High School Team STEAM

Wilton Historical Society

Wilton Interfaith Action

Committee (Wi-Act)

Wilton Land Conservation Trust

Wilton League of Women Voters

Wilton Loves

Wilton Mental Health Task Force

Wilton Police Department

Wilton Pride

Wilton Public Schools

Wilton Republican Town

Committee

Wilton Scouts of America

Wilton Senior Center

Wilton SEPTA/WWC

Wilton Social Services

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Wilton Youth Services

Wiltonians, Newcomers and

Neighbors

Women's Business Development

Council

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# Securing Our 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

\$100,000+ Cornerstone Society Pinnacle

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Greg + Gina Jansen

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The Turnover Shop of Wilton, Inc.



\_\_Building a Bridge for the Future

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

Anonymous Donors (2)

Thomas T. Adams, Esq.

In Memory of Alyssa Eden Alechman

Annette + John Ambler

In Memory of Henry (Bud)

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Betsy + Jesse Fink

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Joan Waldie Savage

Curtis + Katharine Welling



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# By the Numbers

#### Revenue

**Town Grant** 

\$3,028,162

Annual Appeal

0 2021 0 000000

\$344,804

**Fundraising Events & Other Donations\*** 



\$415,596

Operating Income (Including Investment Income)



\$249,963

Total Revenue: \$4,038,525

\*Excludes Endowment Donations

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

#### **Expenses**

Salaries & Benefits



\$2,668,445

**Library Content** & Programs



\$485,414

**Building Maintenance** & Utilities



\$341,128

**Technology** 



\$254,883

Library Operations



\$103,389

Fundraising & Development



\$213,744

**Total Expenses: \$4,067,003** 

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# Facts & Figures



**Total Items** 





Attendance at 203 **Innovation Station** Sessions 300



**Questions Answered by** Reference Librarians 52,752



**Total Number of Items** Available in the Collection 789,399



**Total Number** of Programs 989



**Library Visits** 229,644



Museum Passes **Borrowed** 195



**Digital Library** Loans 71,020



**Total Program Attendance** 38,741



**Number of Times** People Logged in to **Library Computers** 44.607



Meeting and Study **Room Uses** 5,087



Number of **Website Visits** 192,439



Brian Crocker David Cross Keri Cueff Runfang Cui Tara & Tim Cummins Chuck & Mary Cunningham

Suzy & Evans Curtice Sara Curtis Jason Cutler

Susan Dailey Doug Davison

**Emily Dawson** 

"My daughter LOVES...all the children's librarians! Thank you for offering such wonderful programming for the whole family."

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Keith & Jennifer DeAngelis Cathy & Don DeCesare John DeFrancesco Roberta Delano Matthew Dellapina The Demasi Family Sebastian & Penny Denault Keith Denning Joseph DeSanctis Shawn & Matthew Detroy Dianne deWitt DiCenzo Family Susan Dicosola John DiDomizio

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### Our Fundraising Events

# "Autumn Aces" Golf & Pickleball Classic

From our earliest days in 1895, fundraising has been truly 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.

In October, we were excited to host the "Autumn Aces" Golf & Pickleball Classic, our first-ever joint fundraiser with Riverbrook Regional YMCA. Guests enjoyed a lively day full of fun at Rolling Hills Country Club, featuring a golf outing, pickleball tournament, luncheon, cocktails, dinner, silent auction, and more.



# "Decades" Spring Gala

In April, we celebrated 130 years of Wilton Library at our largest fundraiser of the year, our "Decades" Spring Gala held at the library. At the festive event, guests honored our major milestone and took a nostalgic journey through time, starting with the Roaring '20s and traveling all the way to the present day. Many guests dressed up in their favorite "Decades" attire and had a blast dancing the night away to a live DJ, after enjoying an elegant sit-down dinner and bidding for silent auction items. A special paddle raise emceed by Michael Crystal was also one of the evening's highlights.

Our community shines brightly at these fundraisers, as 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.



Photos by Justin Baiad Photography

24 Wilton Library Annual Report 2024-2025 Wilton Library Annual Report 2024-2025 25

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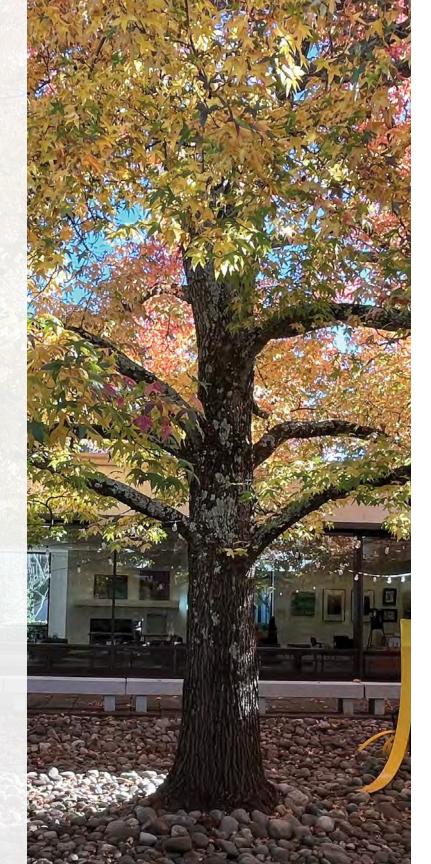
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"We appreciate the library so much!"



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Staff Member of the Year: Seema Saksena



Pictured left to right: Melissa Baker, Seema Saksena, Karen Zeibak

# Volunteers of the Year: **Book Sale Team**

We congratulate our "Volunteers of the Year" - Wilton Library's Book Sale Team! Our entire Book Sale Team consists of approximately 45 incredibly hard-working volunteers who work year-round, coordinating four major book sales as well as ongoing book sales in the library's Gallery. Thanks to their deep dedication and their impressive level of knowledge and detail, our high quality book sales attract buyers from all over Fairfield County and throughout New England. Our sincere thanks to our Book Sale Team, who play an invaluable role in our fundraising efforts that support the library's mission and vision.



### Volunteers

Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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