

WILTON LIBRARY



Cornerstone of Our Community

Annual Report 2021-2022





A message from the Executive Director

Caroline Mandler

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to write to you as the new Executive Director of Wilton Library.

This was a year of both transition and growth, as we emerged from the pandemic and reconnected with each other. In this year's Annual Report, you will see the many accomplishments of our staff, Board and volunteers, as well as the incredible legacy of our former Executive Director, Elaine Tai-Lauria.

Most notably, we celebrated the grand opening of The Brubeck Collection with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Library in October of 2021. The Brubeck Collection was established by Dave Brubeck and his wife, Lola, as a "living archive." As one of the preeminent jazz archives in the world, it is an incredible asset to both the Library and to Wilton, and signifies Wilton's unique contribution to the music world.

Throughout the year we welcomed 1,200 new cardholders and were thankful to return to our full schedule of in-person programs. We participated in annual Wilton events such as the Winter Stroll and Farmers' Market, in addition to hosting four book sales as well as our second annual Ice Cream Social to which the entire community was invited. In the spring of 2022, the Library held its 16th *Wilton Reads*, an annual community-wide reading program which this year featured ***Wilton, Connecticut: Three Centuries of People, Places, and Progress*** by Robert (Bob) H. Russell. Bob was a true friend of Wilton Library, and his lasting impact on both the Library and our town is immeasurable.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you, our donors, for your generosity. Wilton Library Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that raises approximately 25% of our budget annually from private support. These funds are critical as they are added to the annual grant that we generously receive from the Town of Wilton.

Together, you enable us to serve you as the **cornerstone of our community**, and carry out our mission to **inform, enrich, connect, and inspire** each and every day.



A message from the President

Rob Sanders

Dear Friends,

Throughout the past year, Wilton Library Association has been delighted to welcome the Wilton community back to a reinvigorated library, striving to provide outstanding services, programs, and resources to our friends old and new.

This past year has been a momentous one in the 127-year history of the library, when we bade farewell to Elaine Tai-Lauria, and concluded our successful search with the appointment of Caroline Mandler as our new Executive Director. The community and staff have welcomed Caroline with enthusiasm, and she has smoothly taken the helm with a fresh outlook on our services and programs.

And what terrific services and events we have in store for 2023: opportunities for your learning and engagement so that you may explore our constantly-updating collection of physical and digital books, see inspiring art, enjoy poetry readings and author talks, and thrill to musical performances. The library is truly Wilton's intellectual and cultural center.

We are appreciative of the Town of Wilton's significant funding, but rely on donations from our friends to support programming which comprises approximately 25% of our total budget. Whether you're new to town, a first-time donor, or a long-time supporter, we count on you to make our programs and initiatives happen.

So come in and feel the new spirit of Wilton Library. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and all the staff, we thank you for your support.

Wilton Library

Cornerstone of Our Community

One definition of cornerstone is: “something that is essential, indispensable; most important part; foundation.” Wilton Library truly embodies this meaning of the word cornerstone. It was in the actual corner of a post office where the library was founded in 1895, before it moved to its current location in Wilton’s town center. Over the years, the library has grown and evolved into what it is today: a cultural and intellectual center at the heart of our community.

This year, a Wilton teen wrote in a column published in *The Wilton Bulletin*: “The Wilton Library has always been there to catch me when I fall, when I need an adventure or the comfort of an old favorite. The Wilton Library, for me, is a wonder, a dream come true.” It is always heart-warming and gratifying to hear about how much our library means to our patrons. We are proud to play a significant and meaningful role in the lives of



Wilton’s residents. So whether you choose to attend our programs, explore our stacks, or connect to our digital library from home, we will be the cornerstone that is here for you. For our part, we will always work diligently to fulfill our purpose and mission: to inform, enrich, connect, and inspire our community.

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Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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“Wilton Library
gives us a gift
every day,
a beautiful,
friendly, peaceful
place to come in
and wander, say
hi and pick up
some awesome
books!!!!!!”

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**"Bad libraries
build collections,
good libraries
build services,
great
libraries build
communities."**

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**"...such a great
library in Wilton
and such nice
library staff. I am
a big fan of Wilton
Library and
borrowed lots of
wonderful books
over the years."**

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**"Thank you so
much. I really
appreciate the
purchase of the
book and having
this available in
our wonderful
library!"**

Experiences and Resources for Our Community

As the cornerstone of our community, Wilton Library continued to play a vital role in the lives of Wilton's residents - providing exciting and informative programs, innovative resources and technology, and stellar services in an environment where everyone is made to feel welcome.

Under guidance from town health officials, the library was able to restore full operating hours last September. With a generous grant from Wilton Kiwanis Club, the library installed new digital signage throughout the library building to communicate and connect the community with real-time up to the minute information. We continued to boost our Digital Library resources, including launching free access to *The New York Times Online*, *Consumer Reports Online*, and *Mango Languages*.

Throughout the year the library continued to offer a dynamic mix of in-person and virtual programming that brought new experiences and knowledge to patrons of all



ages. All generations participated in a long list of enrichment programs, including author talks, seminars on art, music, history, and literature, book discussions, and much more. We teamed up with the Wilton Historical Society for our scholarly lecture series "Tycoons: Bane or Benefactors?"

We were also happy to see everyone at Wilton's big community social events that returned this year – the Street Fair & Sidewalk Sale in July, the Holiday Stroll/ Gingerbread House Display, the Winter Carnival, the Memorial Day Parade, and the Wilton Farmers' Market. In May we hosted our second Ice Cream Social that saw a great turnout despite the cooler weather. We also held four popular book sales and a free book giveaway that were truly community events.

Enriching and Inspiring Our Community Music and Arts

This year Wilton Library continued its strong tradition of music and arts programming, enriching and inspiring our community with the diverse talents of local musicians and artists. After a two-year pause due to the pandemic, rotating art exhibitions returned to the walls of our building. We welcomed back 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. Our June art exhibition featured the Silvermine

Community Artists in Residence, a diverse group of local artists.

In music, one highlight was our special concert broadcast in December featuring the Brubeck Brothers Quartet, offered free to the town by our Board of Trustees as a gift of thanks for the holidays. In June, the Connecticut's Own chamber music series returned to the Brubeck Room, featuring Wilton residents Ralph Kirmser and Kyong Hee Cho playing "Music for Spring with Oboe and Piano" in front of a large crowd.



Grand Opening of The Brubeck Collection

This year we were immensely proud and honored to celebrate the grand opening of The Brubeck Collection at Wilton Library with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 30, 2021. The family of late jazz legend Dave Brubeck and Connecticut state dignitaries attended the celebration, including U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, State Senator Will Haskell, State Representative Stephanie Thomas, and current and former Wilton Selectmen. Special guests included renowned musicologist Stephen Crist, Professor of Music History at Emory University, and friends of the library who played a special role in providing funding and support for The Collection to be housed at the library.

The Brubeck Collection is one of the largest and most prestigious jazz archives in the world, featuring thousands of music-related materials housed in a specially designed and constructed archival room. The archive has drawn interest from researchers around the globe and other visitors who seek to experience and appreciate Dave Brubeck's genius and legacy.



David & Debra Bauer
Linda Baumstein
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Judge & Mrs. Joseph Bellacosa
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Michael & Meryll Wolfman
Carolan Workman
Brooke Zelesnick
Jay & Arlene Zelesnick
Judith Zucker
Lisa & Daniel Zucker



Stephen Crist/Gil Harel program: "I thank you so much for this fabulous event!!!!!! Learned so much - and am inspired to seek out some of these wonderful recordings -- and hopefully to someday visit the Wilton Library Brubeck Collection room!!!!"

"I have enjoyed your many series of lectures over Zoom with the Wilton Library so much over the past two years! Thank you for this wonderful opportunity."

ASSOCIATE'S CIRCLE (to \$249)

Anonymous Donors (18)
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Inta & Taggart Adams
Rachel & Russ Albanese
Monroe S. Alechman & Niall McMorro
Jacqueline Algon
Alight Solutions
Melissa B. Allen



Engaging Teens and Children in Our Community

Our Children's Library and Teen Services have long served as inviting places filled with resources to engage younger members of our community and encourage a lasting love of reading, learning, and discovery. This year children participated in a wide variety of in-person and virtual programs, including STEAM workshops, summer reading, 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. Another highlight: an amazing performance by Chinese acrobat Li Liu to celebrate the Lunar New Year and Take Your Child to the Library Day.

Popular programs attended by teens and tweens included several college planning workshops, crafting and cooking sessions, a special girls' coding camp, and much more. The Teen Library Council, a monthly group for Wilton teens interested in becoming more involved with the library, re-started in January. And Wilton Library's Teen Robotics team, Singularity Technology, finished another successful season, competing in the Connecticut FIRST Tech Challenge State Championship in February and winning the Design Award for the innovative design of their robot. They are looking forward to next year's challenge.



This list continues from page 11

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"What an impressive program by Ms. Liu...! Thank you for your work in bringing it to us."

Susan Bottini
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Nancy Cross
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"Emma really enjoyed the storytime today. Thank you so much!"

"Warmest appreciation to all of you at WLA who have long made our treasure-filled library the most beloved resource in town!"

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Suzy & Evans Curtice
Jason Cutler
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Susan Florido
Thomas F. Flynn

“Thank you
for your
wonderful
programs
and being
a resource
to the
community.”



Bidding Farewell to Elaine Tai-Lauria

Elaine Tai-Lauria retired as Executive Director of Wilton Library Association at the end of January 2022. Under her leadership for more than nine and a half years, the library greatly expanded its range of programs and services that it provides to patrons. One of Elaine's main missions was to invest in digital access and services. She also oversaw several enhancements to the library, such as the launch of the Innovation Station and the creation of the Children's Library entrance. During her tenure, the library received numerous awards, including its Singularity Technology high school robotics team winning the Connecticut State championship. One of her greatest achievements was bringing The Brubeck Collection to Wilton Library. Elaine's contributions to the library have been tremendous and we owe her an enormous debt of gratitude.



Informing and Connecting Our Community

With the arrival of many new residents, we decided it was an opportune time to educate all Wilton residents about the rich and vibrant history of Wilton. For our community-wide reading program *Wilton Reads 2022*, the library staff selected the book *Wilton, Connecticut: Three Centuries of People, Places, and Progress* by Robert (Bob) H. Russell, a comprehensive record of Wilton's 300-year history. The selection celebrated Wilton and its past and reflected upon the meaning of community through insightful programming and a collaboration with the Wilton Public Schools.

The *Wilton Reads* program culminated with an author talk by Bob Russell in May. At the event, it was announced that the Wilton History Room in Wilton Library would be dedicated to Bob and his wife, Carol, and renamed the "Carol and Robert Russell Wilton History Room." This archival collection of local historical records is a unique collaboration between Wilton Historical Society and Wilton Library, and over the years Bob and Carol worked tirelessly to support, preserve, and organize the archives.

In June, Bob Russell tragically and suddenly passed away. He was a very dear friend and loyal supporter of Wilton Library, and his dedication and contributions to our library have been profound. He will be greatly missed by the Wilton Library team and the Wilton community.



This list continues from page 14

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Nerina R. Klobas
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Carolyn Kobsa
David & Linda Koch

"Thank you for being the very best of Wilton every day!!"

Beth Kohl
Anita Kohli-Pamnani M.D.
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Noel & Bruce Konrad
Rosaria Konstantin
Peter & Susan Kosche
Marty & John Kozlowski
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Our Community Partnerships

Wilton Library teamed up with our valued community partners to open doors to new skills, information, and experiences – such as understanding Medicare, learning to live with less plastic, reading to dogs, sharing poetry, and much more. Our sincere thanks to our partners who made our performances, seminars, programs, and workshops possible.



Partnerships

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Tim & Nicole Moylan
Melanie Moyna

**A Giant Awakes:
Understanding
China series:
“...very
informative with
valuable data
and interesting
guidance on the
topics. Each
lecture kept me
longing for the
next lecture.”**

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**“We can’t
begin to
express how
much your
efforts and
kindness
meant to both
my mother and
entire family.”**

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By the Numbers

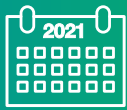
Revenue

Town Grant



\$2,722,000

Annual Appeal



\$234,651

Fundraising Events and other donations*



\$351,461

Operating Income (including investment income)



\$186,604

Total Revenue: \$3,494,716

*Excludes Endowment Donations

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

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits



\$2,335,013

Library Content & Programs



\$474,911

Building Maintenance & Utilities



\$229,828

Technology



\$171,216

Library Operations



\$89,195

Fundraising & Development



\$29,959

Total Expenses: \$3,330,122

This list continues from page 21

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Cynthia Ward
Jennifer Webb
Lynda & Jeff Webb
Angela & Jim Wei
Martha & Gerald Weiss
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Writing a Legacy Letter program: "... this was one of the best 90 minutes I have spent in recent memory. Jay is a great presenter and I am thankful to Wilton Library for bringing him to us!"

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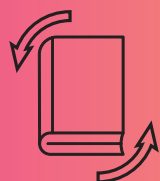
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Facts & Figures



Total Items Circulated
207,270



Total Number of Programs
480



Total Program Attendance
14,916



Attendance at 48 Innovation Station Sessions
166



Library Visits
132,276



Number of times people logged in to library computers
46,745



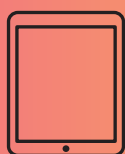
Questions answered by reference librarians
11,065



Museum passes borrowed
113



Total number of items available in the collection
557,181



Digital Library loans
51,729



Number of website visits
279,466

This list continues from page 23

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IN HONOR OF...

Susan Boyar
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Inge Maerowitz
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Mark Schenker
Mark Schmidek
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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 an 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.

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

Unveiling of Glass Wall in Honor of Cornerstone Society

In June, Wilton Library celebrated the unveiling of a special glass wall in honor of the library's Cornerstone Society members. The glass wall captures the names of each member, and as patrons enter the library and pass through the gallery, they will look out onto the Brubeck Courtyard through the names of friends past and present who have made a generous and significant gift to the library and represent a bridge for future generations who will benefit from their philanthropy.

The Cornerstone Society was established in 2011 under the leadership of Katharine Welling, who also served as President of the WLA Board of Trustees from 2004 to 2007. The drive and dedication of late former Trustee Nick Davatzes inspired the building and growing of the Endowment Fund during his Board tenure and well beyond.

The Cornerstone Society

\$100,000+ Cornerstone Society Pinnacle

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Nick & Dorie Davatzes/
Davatzes Family Foundation
Paul & Carol Evanson Family
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\$50,000-\$74,999 Cornerstone Society Gold

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**“Even though
we no longer
live in Wilton,
the library
was a big part
of our lives
for over 20
years.”**

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Sister Michaela Durkin
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