Dear Friends,

In reflecting on the events of FY2019, we are gratified by Wilton Library’s role as the cultural and intellectual heart of our community. It was a year filled with a wide variety of activities and resources by which we continued to inform, connect, enrich, and inspire our patrons. The predominant themes of the year that emerged were community, collaboration, and conversations. We brought the community together in so many different ways, some of which are highlighted in the following pages. Unquestionably, Wilton Reads 2019 was a major accomplishment for us. For this annual community reads event, we selected *The New York Times* bestseller “The Tattooist of Auschwitz” by Heather Morris. The goal in selecting this book was to foster awareness of the Holocaust, thereby heightening the community’s knowledge of this human catastrophe, and to promote tolerance in general.

It was a very ambitious undertaking; however, thanks to our partnership with the Wilton Public Schools, and to our collaboration with several local organizations and businesses, hundreds of residents participated in a comprehensive slate of programs. And, what a collaboration and conversation it was!

Other events, such as our second Human Library Project and our annual Innovation Day, throughout the year, inspired conversations and collaboration. Our world-class jazz concerts, monthly art exhibits, our first Gingerbread House Contest, and many other activities attracted visitors to our library where they connected with each other to enjoy shared interests. The year was indeed one of which Wilton Library can be proud, and it has fueled us with enthusiasm as we begin to celebrate our 125th year.

Finally, we would like to thank our many Friends, donors, sponsors, and volunteers for their loyal support. As a private organization, Wilton Library could not offer all of our resources, programs, and events without the support of others. Many thanks also to the Board of Selectmen for their commitment via our public-private partnership.

We now invite you to peruse this report and discover our ever-evolving Wilton Library. Enjoy!

Michele Klink  
President  
Wilton Library Association

Elaine Tai-Lauria  
Executive Director
Creating Conversations
@ Wilton Library

Long gone are the days of “Shh” as the predominant sound in the library. Today’s Wilton Library is a place where the community comes together to access not only information, but also each other. It is here that we congregate and connect. It is here that we access, discover, use, and share information, opinions, entertainment, and resources. It is here that we gain the knowledge and experiences necessary to create conversations with our friends, our families, our colleagues, our community, and often just within ourselves. Library surroundings change only the volume; we aspire to spark conversation.

More than just a repository for the printed word, Wilton Library is a place for community participation. We provide an atmosphere that generates active learning and promotes the freedom to relax, reflect, enjoy, and discuss. Living in an era of cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other personal screens, we seek to create opportunities that encourage our community to lift up our eyes toward each other and converse.

Our fiscal year 2018/2019 in particular was a year for creating community conversations. Despite the increasing reliance on personal devices for information and entertainment, the need for face-to-face communication remains. People need a space where they can connect with other people—a place that is free, welcoming and safe for all. Wilton Library is such a place. Creating conversations has become an essential component to fulfilling our mission as Wilton’s intellectual and cultural center; informing, enriching, connecting, and inspiring our community. Here’s what we talked about most this past fiscal year…
Perhaps Wilton Library’s most conversation-inspiring event this year was Wilton Reads 2019, in which the community came together to read *The New York Times* bestselling book, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris.

The goal of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* book selection was to foster awareness of the Holocaust and thereby heighten the community’s knowledge of the Holocaust in a comprehensive way. The decision in selecting this topic was inspired by the realization that with each passing day, the world is losing the important oral histories of Holocaust survivors and the cumulative voice of the generation that lived through World War II.

Guided by the library’s mission to “Inform, Connect, Enrich, and Inspire our Community,” Wilton Public Schools were invited to collaborate and partner with Wilton Library in the Wilton Reads 2019 endeavor. The comprehensive slate of programs both in the library and in the Wilton schools gave the community a full appreciation of events leading up to the Holocaust, what happened during the Holocaust, what happened afterwards, and the impact on humanity.

The library offered 250 free books to the community thanks to Fairfield County Bank and fifteen programs ranging from book discussions, a history lesson putting events in context, a survivor talk, a Holocaust-inspired art talk a musical performance, and so much more. Students in Miller/Driscoll, Cider Mill, Middlebrook and Wilton High School read age-appropriate books, while the lower grades had guest readers and authors. High school students produced a documentary with Holocaust survivors or their descendants. The entire experience culminated with a visit by the author, Heather Morris, who spoke before 300 very engaged high school students, and later that day was warmly greeted by more than 400 people for her talk at Wilton Library.

Both Wilton Library and Wilton Public Schools were recognized with the National School Public Relations Association’s Golden Achievement Award, recognizing “exemplary work in all aspects of school public relations, communication, marketing and engagement” for the Wilton Reads 2019 programming.
The hum of the hovercraft was the white noise behind a day of fun, discovery, conversation and laughter at Wilton Library’s **Innovation Day**. Held October 13, 2018, the celebration was a hands-on community festival of building, tinkering, and exploring. The community day attracted more than 700 enthusiastic visitors who came together to enjoy high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech activities. The theme of “Discover, Dabble and Do-It-Yourself” encouraged patrons to participate in 33 crafting opportunities, workshops, and presentations.

There was fun to be had for all ages. Kids socialized around the Touch Table where they got messy with Oobleck and Fluffy Slime while crafters created giant paper flowers and explored English Paper Piecing. All ages enjoyed the Cricut die cutter, making personalized monogrammed keychains; creating Modpodge necklaces and marble magnets; and pumpkin painting with pumpkins donated by Wilton Kiwanis Club. Tech enthusiasts had fun assembling LED flower pins and bow-ties; had a smashing good time at the Take-Apart Table and learned about robotics from Wilton Library’s own robotics team Singularity Technology.

Very popular among the crowd was the virtual reality with HTC Vive. Made possible with the support of the Amadeo Family Fund, this device enabled participants to visit virtual places and have adventures they may not otherwise be able to experience.

The community’s enthusiasm to learn new skills and try new technologies on Innovation Day was contagious among all ages. It was such a successful day in terms of showcasing the talent of the community, the resources of the library, and the opportunities for continued enrichment and conversation at any age.

Many thanks to our sponsor Ring’s End, our many community partners and media sponsor **GOOD Morning Wilton**.

“I love the creative, clean, quiet spaces to work! There are awesome rooms and resources for research writing and reading.”
A real conversation starter at Wilton Library was our Human Library event held March 23, 2019. On this day, our library books became real human beings that conversed with participants in personal dialogues. You ‘read’ the living books’ stories through one-on-one conversations.

Some background - The Human Library is an international movement that started in Denmark in 2000. The concept was designed to shatter stereotypes through open conversations between two people in a non-judgmental environment. It’s an opportunity for those who’ve faced prejudice to tell their story and show people who they really are. And it’s a chance for others to change their preconceived notions about a person. Wilton Library was the first non-academic library in Connecticut to receive permission from the Human Library Organization to host an event.

The tagline for the event was ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover.’ Our 25 human books were community members who volunteered to share their stories in order to break down barriers based on age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, lifestyle choices, or other aspects of their identity. Our books told stories of facing the stigma of Alzheimer’s; coping with mental illness in the family; overcoming adversity as a minority in a not-so diverse, town; being blind in a visually-oriented world; practicing pagan ways; discovering adult ADHD; and living in fear of the Nazis in Germany; journeys with depression; anorexia; dyslexia; living and thriving with chronic illness; life after near-death experiences; religious choices; perspective from a female corrections officer in a men’s prison; surviving civil rights prejudices in the ‘60s South, and so many more.

More than 150 readers showed up for conversations during the four-hour event. In just a few short hours, Human Library participants gained understanding and compassion for others – their personal challenges, experiences and prejudices – and, at the same time, debunked their own preconceived notions.

The Human Library was made possible thanks to the support of Mountainside Treatment Center of Wilton and the John and Patricia Curran Teen Fund.
We may be partial, but we think that we live in one of the sweetest places on earth here in Wilton, CT. That sweetness came to life in the form of ginger, vanilla and cinnamon with the first-ever “How Sweet It Is in Wilton” Gingerbread Contest held at the library in December 2018.

Wilton’s love for its community knew no bounds as evidenced by the overwhelming response to the gingerbread house contest. The contest invited families, groups, and individuals to submit gingerbread or other edible models of Wilton houses, landmarks, or buildings to be put on display in the library. In total, 31 extraordinary gingerbread creations were submitted and adorned the library throughout the month. Edible models of Ambler Farm, Merwin Meadows, Schoolhouse at Cannondale, Wilton Library, Old Town Hall, Minks to Sinks, plus many more were on exhibit. The sight and scent of the delicious display drew crowds eager to see the incredible show of town talent and spirit. Proudly, and justly so, the contest was the talk of the town.

“The librarians & staff are so loveable and helpful.”

The submissions were judged based on two groups, 12 and under and ages 13 to adult, in three categories–best historical Wilton house, best creative Wilton building and best whimsical design–plus the most coveted award as judged by the town’s vote, the Community Favorite. Winners were awarded Wilton Chamber of Commerce gift certificates.

Many thanks to the Wilton Chamber of Commerce for co-sponsoring the contest and Fairfield County Bank for providing the gift certificates.
## Speaking of the Figures

*(unaudited)*

### Revenue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Grant</td>
<td>$2,777,453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Appeal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events and other donations*</td>
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<td>Operating Income (including investment income)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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*Excludes Endowment Donations*

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### Expenses:

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<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
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<td>Building Maintenance and Utilities</td>
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<td>Fundraising &amp; Development</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus</strong></td>
<td><strong>$74,302</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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“I came across this quote and it reminds me of what Wilton Library does for our town: ‘Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.’”

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- **Library Visits**: 256,728
- **Total Items in our Collection**: 578,430
- **Circulation**: 266,868
- **Reference Questions**: 35,019
- **Library Programs**: 851
- **Program Attendance**: 25,039

*Excludes Endowment Donations*

It would not be possible to deliver all the content, services and programs we offer, without the generous support of our donors.
We are so very proud of the programming we present for the community. However, what truly makes us happy is the conversations that our patrons create based on these experiences — the information that you share, the history that comes alive, the books you get inspired to read and discuss, the music that transports you, the art that delights you, the technology that advances you, the fun that makes you smile, and the awareness of issues that makes you better citizens. Your conversations energize us.

**Articulating Art**

Art creates joy, learning, beauty and dialogue. Each month, the community gathered at Wilton Library to enjoy a vast array of artwork, encompassing diverse mediums, styles and subject matter. Local and regional artists and photographers of all ages shared their works in ten inspiring main shows displayed in our front gallery and throughout the first floor. Our volunteer art chairman Ed MacEwen and his team continued to work tirelessly to ensure that Wilton Library provided art enrichment to the community. The library also served as the monthly exhibition and reception space for the Weir Farm Artist-in-Residency program.

"After attending one of your literary programs, I am now reading Joyce with more understanding than ever before.”

**Talk- Provoking Programs**

Our strong tradition of musical programming was among our most well-attended events, drawing audiences from near and far. Popular musical series including the Hot & Cool: Jazz at the Brubeck Room concerts, Connecticut’s Own performances and the Summer Music & More series continued to fill the Brubeck Room with patrons appreciative of our diverse musical offerings.

The jazz series welcomed numerous award-winning musicians including The Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Alan Broadbent with Harvie S and Billy Mintz, and guitarist Martin Taylor among others. The Hot & Cool: Jazz at the Brubeck Room series is funded by the William and Karen Tell Foundation with special thanks to Ed and Catherine Romer and Chris and Tish Brubeck. For the 18th consecutive year, The Summer Music & More Concert Series gave patrons the opportunity to kick back, dance, sing and enjoy music thanks to the ongoing sponsorship of the Village Market.
A wide variety of adult programs held throughout the year offered something for everyone to talk about. Highlights for adults included the **Author Talk** series which welcomed such notable names as Susan Orlean, Martha Stewart, Jack Mitchell and Stephanie Land among others. The 12th year of the **Scholarly Lecture Series** collaboration between Wilton Library and Wilton Historical Society focused on the theme of “Sex, Scandal, and Upheaval: 1919 - What’s Changed?” The four-part series explored the headlines that defined the year 1919, from the Treaty of Versailles to the Black Sox Scandal to the women’s suffrage movement, including how events impacted Connecticut. Certainly lots to talk about.

**Adult literature seminars**, made possible with the support of the Literary Series in Memory of Amy Quigley, explored poetry, mythology, and the classics with experts Judson Scruton and Dr. Gerald Weiss. The **Wilton Library Readers** book group was led once again by Susan Boyar. **Senior Center Book Discussions** brought together a variety of community discussion leaders to explore great literature with patrons at the Wilton Senior Center. The **Get Well, Stay Well** health literacy series presented by Western Connecticut Health Network and Wilton Library examined such topics as strokes and alternative medicine. Program partnerships with SCORE and the Wilton Chamber of Commerce benefited our local business audience.

No conversation about Wilton Library would be complete without discussing our **Thomas T. Adams, Esq., Innovation Station** maker space. Here exploring, creating and learning happens full-throttle through a multitude of equipment offerings, classes and one-on-one instruction, ensuring our patrons are up to date with new technologies.

**Talking Teens and Children**

Our Teen and Children’s departments continue to focus on creative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) programming that offers the opportunity for our youth to explore new technologies, equipment, and avenues of inspiration that might not otherwise be available to them.

The **Children’s Library** organized several successful STEAM initiatives for children up to grade six. These included a Reading is Out of This World Summer Reading Program, Garden Club, Science Through Sound programs, coding programs, story times, crafting, animal programs and many more.

**Teen Services** continued to support our thriving robotics team Singularity Technology and offer programs including STEM Club, Girls Who Code, recycled objects crafting, rocketry, Arduino circuits, Reading Takes You Everywhere Summer Reading, mindfulness, virtual reality, and many more, as well as numerous offerings on college preparedness.

Our STEAM and STEM programming for youth is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Amadeo Family.

*The Wilton Library is like an iceberg, there are so many resources available below the surface!*
Wilton Library
Endowment Fund

Connecting, inspiring, enriching, informing…
These adjectives hold as true today as they did
nearly 125 years ago to describe the ideals and
mission of Wilton Library. While we respectfully
acknowledge the past, we must boldly make
plans for our future.

The Wilton Library Endowment Fund was
established to build a permanent endowment
for the Library. This fund will create a stable and
enhanced source of funding for programs and
services at the library, and serve as a legacy to
ensure the viability of the programming in the future.

The following listing includes donors who have
generously given to the Wilton Library Endowment
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The Cornerstone Society recognizes donors who
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“A library outranks any one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert.”

Andrew Carnegie