

# 2020 HYDE PARK LIBRARY COMMUNITY REPORT

It's not especially easy--or pleasant--to write about 2020, but despite all the bad associations we all certainly have about this past year, we feel we can legitimately look forward to a better and brighter 2021. And beyond.

As we noted in last month's newsletter, we were able to lay some groundwork in 2020 for some definite strides forward in the coming months and years. We began working with the architectural firm Butler, Rowland and Mays on plans to renovate the adult stack area. We applied for (and received) significant grant funding for that project, one that will create a brighter, more inviting and more energy efficient space.

We also were able to get make some much needed improvements in our children's room in 2020, painting the walls and laying down colorful new carpet.

## Conceptual Drawing For Planned Renovation



## Coming Back From Crisis (And Closure)

In March of 2020, we joined every other library and a majority of businesses in New York State in (rather abruptly, it seemed) closing our doors. We had little idea for how long at the time. A few weeks? A month? Two months?

We were able to re-open in June for curbside service, and then by mid-July (after establishing some necessary safety protocols and necessary renovations), we were able to re-open to the public (albeit with somewhat limited hours).

We were more than glad to welcome back our patrons and to start providing them with library materials and services.

Things were slow at first but as time went on we welcomed more and more of our regular patrons and greeted a number of new ones as well.

Online patron registration--i.e. the provision of "electronic library cards"--allowed many new users to access our electronic materials (eBooks, downloadable audio and films) even before we actually opened our doors.

In fact, electronic content use increased significantly in 2020, with over 15,600 downloads and retrievals.

And between our regular hours at the beginning of the year, the curbside service after June and the return to in-house service as of July, we were able to circulate over 10,800 adult level books and just under 6,400 children's books.

Audio-visual materials were also popular in 2020 as well, with over 12,400 items circulated.

Overall, just under 30,000 physical items were circulated during the period we were open in 2020. We calculate that for the months we were open we averaged just under 3,300 a month--which is a bit under the previous year's average of 4,000, but a good indicator of how we were able to begin to meet the pent up demand once we re-opened.

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## **PROGRAMMING DURING THE PANDEMIC--MEETING THE CHALLENGE**

For several months--even after re-opening for circulation--live programming remained challenging, if not impossible. Once we mastered ZOOM, we were at least able to do some virtual programming and managed to do some "live" programming outdoors. By September and October, the infection rates were coming down sufficiently that we were able to do some limited in-person programming (book club meetings, film screenings and even a Big Read related workshop) in the Library Annex. Pre-registration for all live events became a virtual must. And once the post-Thanksgiving surge in COVID cases seemed inevitable, we did indeed have to go back online programming for the most part.

Given the realities of closure and a very limited re-opening, our programming statistics are encouraging. Total attendance for the 210 program sessions offered in 2020 was over 1,300 people. As with materials circulation, these numbers suggest that the community demand for our programming remained a healthy one and that even in a pandemic, we were able to begin to meet that demand.

# PROGRAMMING & EVENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

The collage features 18 individual event posters from the Hyde Park Free Library. The events include:

- Open Mic:** Sunday, Nov. 22nd at 1:30pm with featured performer Pat Lamanna.
- Backyard Story:** Celebrate National Teddy Bear Day with a teddy bear and weather-related activities.
- Big Read Film Fest:** Fridays at 7pm featuring films like 'Mystery (Drama) 1941', 'The Sandlot (Comedy) 2003', and 'The Sandlot 2 (Comedy) 2005'.
- Halloween Scavenger Hunt:** Saturday, October 31st at the Hyde Park Free Library, 11-2pm.
- Build Along with Brad:** Monday, Aug 3rd at 6:30 PM.
- Mystery Book Club:** 'Festive in Death' by J.D. Robb, meeting Friday, Dec 4th at 12pm.
- General Book Club:** 'Where the Crawdads Sing' by Delia Owens, meeting Monday, Dec 14th at 6:30pm and Friday, Dec 18th at 12pm.
- Story Time with Mrs. B:** Includes 'The Grinch' and 'The Snowman'.
- Informational Hike:** Saturday, Oct. 10th at 10 a.m. at Roosevelt Farm Lane.
- Food Drive:** 'Close the Book on Hunger' through the month of October.
- Battle of the Books:** 2020 'Oopie Daisy' Team!
- Oopie Daisy Quilt Raffle:** Saturday, Oct. 31st 2020, tickets for \$1 or \$5.
- 2020 Summer Reading Program Kickoff:** June 24th at 4 PM.
- Comedy Series:** 'The Winter Blues and Be Home Before Dark'.
- Open Mic:** Monday, Nov. 27th at 7pm with featured performer Frank Murasso.
- Chair Yoga:** Tuesday mornings at 10am with Mary Ellen.

## 2020 HALLOWEEN FUN -- OUTDOOR EVENT (FESTIVE SCAVENGER HUNT)

As long as the weather held out, Mrs. B. was able to organize outdoor children's programs, such as the Halloween Scavenger Hunt (left)

We also held outdoor story hours on a number of occasions.

Virtual story hours also became a weekly event in 2020.

We continue to do both outdoor AND virtual programs in 2021. If you have questions about how to have your family participate call us at (845) 229-7791.



## BIG READ OUTDOOR EVENT--FARM LANE TRAIL HIKE LED BY PARK RANGER OLDENBURG



Outdoor events for adults and teens were not ignored either. During the Big Read festival in the fall of 2020, Park Ranger Kevin Oldenburg led an enthusiastic group of hikers on a trek down the Hyde Park's Roosevelt Farm Lane Trail. Staff member Janet Battistoni took part and also took these photographs.

Mrs. B. noticed this particular tree along the route was not only decorated with a trail marker, but was also wearing SUNGLASSES. (We've heard of a SHADE TREE, but a tree WEARING SHADES?!?! Only in Hyde Park, Kids, only in Hyde Park.)



## SOME LIGHTER MOMENTS FROM 2020

(Yes, There WERE Some, e.g. The Great Duck Rescue!)



As if it wasn't hard enough to figure out how to get people INTO the library, last spring we had to figure out how to get DUCKLINGS OUT OF LIBRARY (or at least, how to get them out of the grated outside window wells).

As if things weren't getting surreal enough around here, we were notified by a patron that there seemed to be a brood of ducklings trapped in the window well on the Rte. 9 side of the main library. We thought at first they were "quacking up," but lo and behold--even though it was just about twilight time--you could see the little critters dashing about beneath the grate that covered the window well.

Those grates are heavy suckers--and bolted down, to boot. No way this old codger was going to be able to rescue them--especially in the gloaming light.

Enter Officers Berkowitz and Monaco of the HPPD. They were able to pry the grate, climb down into the well, and rescue the five baby birds trapped below, while our neighbor Tatiana shone a flashlight and your intrepid library director shouted words of encouragement.

The officers boxed up the little ones and made a call to Dutchess Wildlife Rescue. We were informed that they would be placed with wildlife rehabilitators until they could once again be released into the wild.

Well, we were feeling pretty good about that little rescue and were ready to tell the tale, when lo and behold AGAIN the very next morning, our handyman Walt, informed us that there were five MORE ducklings trapped in the window well on the Main Street side of the building. Another day, another duckling rescue!

This time it was Officers Rodriguez and Stallone who came to our aid. They fished four out of the well--and even managed to get to the bold little one who had crawled through a break in the glass and was now sandwiched between the outside window and an internal energy saving "storm window." It was an impressive feat indeed.

We did lose one little guy, which made us think that the little ones might have been trapped for some time. How did it happen that two batches of duck babies ended up trapped in two separate window wells, we wondered. Could their mother have hidden them there to escape a predator? We'll never know, but we thank all four officers for the rescue of our little feathered friends.

As for the mother, well, Walt did say that he had spotted her, and that she was definitely a concerned parent. We hope she recovers well from the separation trauma. It was much better that her babies were discovered and rescued than if...well, you can guess what the alternative outcome would be.

As we say, these are surreal times. Here we are trying hard to figure out how to get people back in the building, while trying to get ducks out. We would have issued them all library cards, but they didn't have ID.

Hyde Park Free Library | 2 Main St., Hyde Park, NY 12538