

Gleason Public Library

Gleason Public Library Mission Statement

The Gleason Public Library facilitates life-long learning and growth for all community members through free access to materials and services; collaborative partnerships; and opportunities to engage and learn from one another.

General Services

GPL maintained a wide range of established services, including access to 49,000 locally-held books, audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, magazines, and newspapers, 48,000 downloadable ebooks, e-audiobooks, and downloadable videos, and about three million items via membership in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC). Circulation of digital downloads (ebooks, e-audiobooks, and downloadable videos) increased significantly due to the pandemic. GPL also provided access to computers, printing, online research databases, and the Internet. In 2020, GPL added the following services and resources:

New Collections/Services:

- Rosetta Stone: Online language learning
- New York Times Online: Home access to the full site
- Universal Class: Online courses and continuing education on a wide variety of topics
- “Library of Things” additions¹: Light Therapy Lamps; Family Yoga Kits
- Automatic Renewals: Books and other materials checked out at the library automatically renew up to two times

New Equipment/Technology:

- “MVLC Mobile” app was added early in the year, allowing users to manage their account and search the catalog from mobile devices
- Redesigned library website^{1,5} (www.gleasonlibrary.org) went live in December 2020. The updated site was created by Stirling Brandworks, and the project was coordinated by Library Assistant Director Jennifer Pike.
- Enhanced wifi access¹: Additional wireless access points were installed to improve internet access from the library grounds and parking.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, the Library closed to the public on March 13, 2020. For the next 10 weeks, library staff provided remote services, including assistance with digital collections, new online products, and virtual storytimes, book groups, and more.

On June 1, GPL began offering curbside pickup service for items available in Carlisle, with home delivery service offered by Carlisle Neighbor Response Team volunteers. Interlibrary delivery service resumed later that month. New quarantine procedures were instituted both for items returned by patrons, and those received from other libraries. “Pop-Up Library” events were held on the lawn regularly during August through

October, to allow safe browsing in an outdoor setting. In-library appointments for browsing and computer use began on August 31, and were suspended on December 14 due to rising case numbers in the area.

Throughout the year, library staff, library trustees, and other town officials remained committed to providing excellent service to the people of Carlisle while maintaining the safety of staff and users. Library users were vocal with their support and appreciation for curbside pickup, virtual library card signup, and other new services.

Building & Grounds

GPL is fortunate to be housed in a beautiful facility that is well used and well loved by the community. In 2020, regular maintenance and improvements included:

Carpeting: The carpeting throughout the 1st and 2nd floors was replaced in January 2020. The work was conducted in stages over the course of a week, with access to some sections limited each day.

HVAC System: Municipal Facilities Manager Steve Bastek and volunteer Bill Risso repaired the rooftop ventilation unit, which had been non-functioning for several years.

Love of the Written Word

From story times for young children to book clubs for kids, adults and seniors, GPL fosters a love of reading for all ages. Most of these activities transitioned online in spring of 2020 and remained online through the end of the year. GPL was pleased to offer the following in 2020:

Story Times: Story times were offered for babies through children aged six. 45 sessions were attended by almost 500 people. Story times were led by Miranda Griffiths, Jennifer Buliszak, and Tahleen Shamlan.

Book Clubs: A variety of book discussion groups met regularly, including the Mysterians Book Club (led by library assistant Janet Hentschel) and the Community Book Club (led by volunteer Mary Zoll) for adults, and book clubs for children in grades 1 through 8 (led by Miranda Griffiths, Tahleen Shamlan, Jennifer Buliszak, and John Toothaker).

Poetry: GPL held its tenth Annual Poetry Contest¹ during National Poetry Month in April. The theme was “Diamond.” The winners were Henry Kliger, David Fan, Drew Cohen, and David Freedman, with an honorable mention to Rick Blum. The “Reading Poetry Anew” group met monthly to read and discuss poetry, led by Mary Zoll.

Children’s Events & Services

In addition to regular story times, crafts, book discussions, and family movies, the Children’s Department offered a variety of special events in 2020. All events were coordinated by Miranda Griffiths (January through June) and Jennifer Buliszak (July through December), with assistance from Tahleen Shamlan, unless otherwise noted.

Summer Reading: 120 children signed up for this year's program, themed "Imagine Your Story", and total participation and attendance at events for all ages was over 300. A virtual reading challenge for kids, teens, and adults was conducted via Beanstack software (through a state grant), with prizes provided by the Friends of Gleason Public Library. Special summer reading events included "Imagine That!" with Bates & Tincknell^{1,6}, Jungle Jim's Balloon Magic Show¹, Family Trivia with the Trivia Brothers¹, Big Joe's Storytelling Adventure¹, Mr. Vinny's Hodge Podge Hide & Seek¹, and a Drive-In Concert with Steve Blunt and Marty Kelley¹. All programs except for the final two were held online.

36th Annual Pumpkin Spectacle¹: The annual pumpkin contest was held outdoors on the library lawn, with the awards announced via a Facebook video. More than 30 students in grades K-4 carved and decorated pumpkins for the event. A virtual performance by Talewise was also provided.

Polar Express Story Time & Gingerbread Houses¹: Holiday events were held online this year, with craft and gingerbread kits available for pickup at the library.

Special Events: Other special events included a Stuffed Animal Sleepover in February, a Pop-Up Library Card Signup event outdoors for new kindergartners and their families, a Pumpkin Cupcake Baking Class¹, Disney Challenge Trivia¹, and a number of popular take-and-make craft kits¹.

Teen Events & Services

GPL offered a variety of regularly scheduled and special events for Carlisle teens and tweens. Teen and tween events were coordinated by Tahleen Shamlian, and by John Toothaker during January through March.

TAB¹: The Teen Advisory Board was on hiatus for much of the year but resumed meeting in late 2020. The Teens also provided valuable advice on collections and programs most appealing to a teen audience.

Special Events¹: Special events included Bad Art Creations, Henna Alchemy and Rainbow Macrame with Mandy Roberge, and Brush Lettering and Bullet Journaling with CCHS student Claire Sun.

Take and Makes¹: The popular "make and take" craft activities flipped to become "take and make" kits for pickup at the library, including pony bead crafts, DIY sleep masks, and New Year's Eve party kits.

Early Release Movies¹: In January, February, and March, on the Carlisle School's early release day, GPL screened a movie for students in grades 5-8.

Adult Programs & Events

GPL offered a wide-variety of educational and entertainment events for adults throughout

the year. Adult events were coordinated by Martha Feeney-Patten with assistance from the Council on Aging, local organizations, and a variety of volunteers.

Art at the Gleason¹: As part of its mission to provide for the cultural needs of Carlisle's citizens, GPL offers space for art exhibits. These exhibits are curated entirely by volunteers. There were 2 shows in 2020:

- Photography by Liz Cardoso, Miniature Set Designs by Melissa Mariano, and Photography by Genevieve de Manio (January-March)
- Built and Imagined by Beth Galston (installed in March and extended through the end of the year due to the library closure)

An after-hours Friday evening reception, featuring live music, wine, and snacks, was held for the winter exhibit.

Community Conversations²: Community Conversations were held in January through March, on Brain Healthy Cooking, Taming Windows 10, and Securing Your Mobile Device.

Summer Reading¹: For the seventh year, GPL offered a special Book Bingo reading challenge for adults. Participants were encouraged to read books in a variety of genres to enter a raffle for a subscription box prize.

Cultural and Educational Programs: Online armchair travel talks were presented in the spring, on Botswana and Namibia, and Sevilla. In the fall, cultural and educational lectures^{1,2} included "The Cold War" with Gary Hylander, "Immigration" with Jason Giannetti, and music presentations with Sivan Etedgee. Local volunteer Claire Smith continued to present monthly genealogy classes, and Claire Sun led a multi-week brush lettering workshop for adults.

Nature & Science Programs: Talks related to science and nature included Thoreau and the Language of Trees^{3,4} and Backyard Birds¹.

Cooking Programs¹: In the early part of the year, the Cookbook Club met with the theme of "Cooking for Health and Happiness". In the fall, online videos with Chef Rob helped viewers with cooking their Thanksgiving turkeys and baking Chocolate Snowstorm Cookies.

Saying Goodbye and New Beginnings

The library was sorry to see the following staff move on: Children's Librarian Miranda Griffiths, who resigned in June, library assistant Emma McKenna, and library pages Sally Duscha and Marisa Ih. Librarian Kay Edelberg retired in August after 38 years at the Gleason, during which time she worked in every department and was beloved by library users of all ages.

Jennifer Buliszak, previously a part-time library assistant, took on the role of Children’s Librarian in July. Daniel Flannery was hired as a new part-time custodian, replacing Vincent Carfagno. New library assistants included Victoria Fiske and Nicholas Bodanza.

Support & Collaboration

GPL could not offer the range and quality of services we do without ongoing support from the community as a whole. The Library staff is greatly indebted to the following:

Friends of the Library: FOGPL continue to support GPL by providing funds for special events and services. Donations from 242 members supported a variety of museum passes, many special events, and technology enhancements. The Friends fundraised through their annual membership drive, book sales in the library foyer, and a “pop-up” book sale in February.

Volunteers & Senior Tax Program: In addition to the Friends, dozens of volunteers and tax workers donated their time and energy in 2020. Volunteerism and the involvement of Senior Tax Workers keep GPL rolling by helping with shelving, cleaning, displays, programs, landscaping, marketing, and completion of special projects. Additionally, the Library Trustees and other committees and groups, including the Art at the Gleason Curators, donate countless hours of their time to keep GPL operating. Altogether, over 800 hours of work were contributed by volunteers, boards, Friends, and Tax Workers.

Library Statistics*

Hours open per week

January-March:	55
June (curbside and remote service):	15
July-August (curbside and remote service):	37
September-December:	42
Items owned by GPL (physical):	49,624
Items owned (downloadable):	48,167
Items provided by other libraries:	11,616
Items provided to other libraries:	16,893
Carlisle patrons:	5,467
Total direct circulation:	50,344
Digital circulation:	9,456
Number of visitors:	50,432
Number of reference transactions:	2,353
Meeting room uses by public:	260
Public computer sessions / wifi sessions:	4,921 / 19,392
Number of programs / attendees:	189 / 2,919

Library Staff

Director: Martha Feeney-Patten

Assistant Director/Head of Technology: Jennifer Pike
Children's Librarian: Jennifer Buliszak
Teen and Children's/Reference Librarian: Tahleen Shamlian
Reference and Special Collections Librarian: Janet Hentschel
Reference Assistant: Nicholas Bodanza
Head of Circulation: Deena Scaperotta
Library Assistants: Linda Dodge (substitute), Victoria Fiske, Leslie Kmiec (substitute),
Helen Lyons, Shoba Ramapriya (substitute), Marie Rice, Ellen Royalty, Kathleen Taffel
Assistant to the Director: Kathryn Untermeyer
Custodians: Dan Brainard, Dan Flannery

Board of Trustees

Karen Gonzalez Gettings, Chair	Term expires 2023
Christine Stevens, Treasurer	Term expires 2021
Dale Joachim, Secretary	Term expires 2022

Submitted by Martha Feeney-Patten, Library Director.

*Other than operating hours, data in this section is based on FY2020 (July 2019-June 2020) as reported to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Endnotes denote sponsorship/co-sponsorship by the following organizations:

¹Friends of the Gleason Public Library

²Friends of the Carlisle Council on Aging

³Susan Zielinski Natural Science Fund

⁴Carlisle Garden Club

⁵Melone Trust Fund

⁶Carlisle Cultural Council