

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.



Strategic Plan for FY2026 to FY2030

In 2024, the Library created a new strategic plan to guide its path for the next 5 years. Four priorities emerged from an extensive community engagement and planning process, led by consultant Ruth Kowal and Library Director Martha Feeney-Patten.

1. Foster connections and community

We support and strengthen the community by fostering social cohesion and cultivating opportunities for Carlisle residents to come together through shared spaces, resources, programs, and events (both in person and virtually) that inform, educate, and entertain.

2. Reimagine access

We continually review and analyze how our collections, programs, spaces, and services are used in order to identify opportunities to enhance our offerings. As a community resource, we commit to providing spaces, collections, and experiences that are welcoming, safe, and respectful of the Carlisle community. We are a place where everyone belongs.

3. Inspire minds and enrich lives

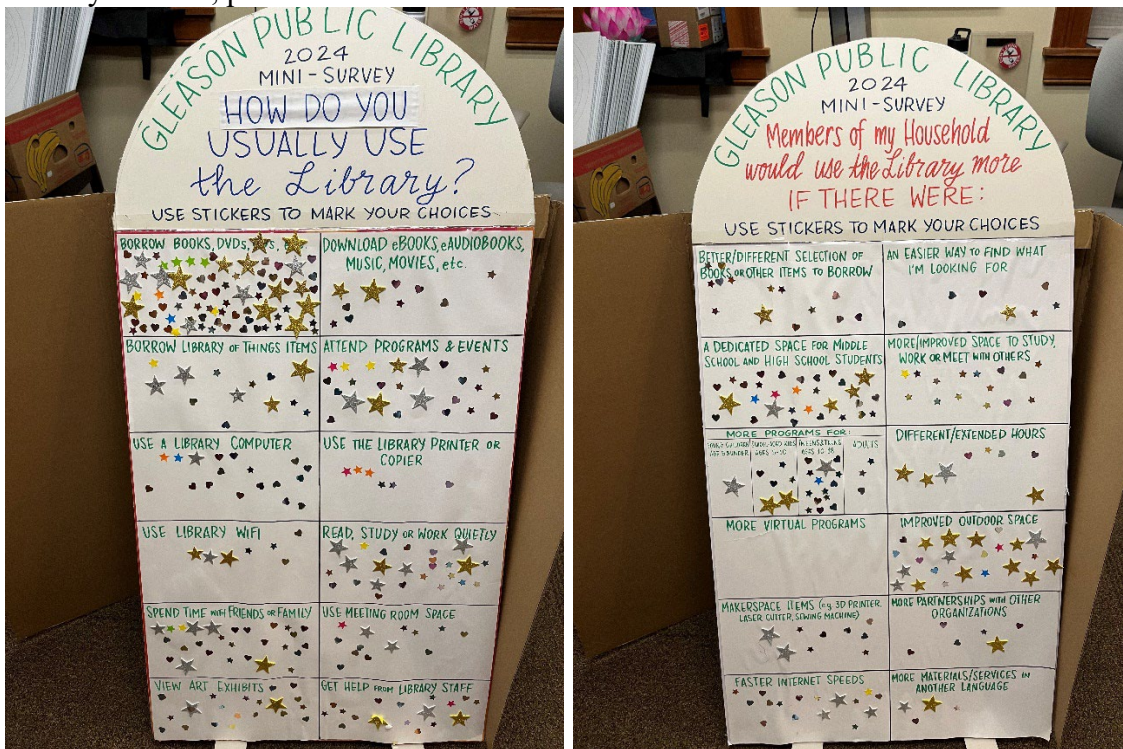
We reaffirm our commitment to fostering learning, personal growth and discovery. We celebrate the cultural and intellectual vitality of our community, and serve as its center for arts and culture.

4. Focus on our future

We are committed to continual improvement and renewal, providing excellent customer service that responds effectively to the changing needs of our community.

Representatives from the community (Jenny Hart and Kelleen McGee), Library Trustees (Kaitlin Waterson), Friends of the Library (Maxine Crowther), Teen Advisory Board (Helen Sutton), and Library Staff (Jennifer Pike) formed the core Planning Advisory Group, and community members and Library staff were invited to focus groups. Altogether about 50 individuals, ranging in age from 18 months to 80+ years, provided detailed input on their hopes and aspirations for Carlisle and how the Library could help support those aspirations.

Rather than a traditional survey, the planning group gathered broad public input via two “survey boards”, pictured below.



The Gleason is greatly indebted to the Planning Advisory Group, the people of Carlisle, and our staff for their contributions to the planning process and for their ongoing support of the Library.

The full plan is available for download at <http://gleasonlibrary.org/planning>

General Services

The Gleason maintained a wide range of established services, including access to about 43,300 locally-held books, audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and equipment, 82,600 downloadable ebooks and e-audiobooks, and three million items via membership

in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC). The Library also provided access to computers, printing, online research databases, and the Internet.

2024 saw the Gleason's highest circulation in 10 years, with digital circulation soaring 25.6% higher than the prior year, and physical items up 1.3%.

The most-circulated books of the year for adults included *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese, *The Women* by Kristin Hannah, and *North Woods* by Daniel Mason. The most popular DVD was *Oppenheimer* and the most-used children's book was *The Wild Robot*.

GLEASON PUBLIC LIBRARY

2024 RECAP

24 WRAPPED - 2024 WRAPPED

TOP ADULT BOOKS

- Abraham Verghese
The Covenant of Water
- Kristin Hannah
The Women
- Daniel Mason
North Woods
- Ann Patchett
Tom Lake
- Ann Napolitano
Hello Beautiful

TOP FEATURE MOVIES

- Oppenheimer*
- Dune*
- Notorious (Criterion Edition)*
- The Holdovers*
- Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*

TOP KIDS' CHAPTER BOOKS

- Peter Brown
The Wild Robot
- James Ponti
Framed!
- Katherine Applegate
Dogtown
- Jeff Kinney
The Deep End
- Rebecca Stead
The Lost Library

TOP PICTURE BOOKS

- Diana Murray
Unicorn Night
- Greg Pizzoli
The Book Hog
- Mo Willems
Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late
- David Ezra Stein
Dinosaur Kisses
- Julie Leung
The Truth about Dragons

And we're just getting started.

Thank you for being an incredible community!

Collections and Services Updates

- Decodable Reader collection supporting early literacy and updated school curriculum
- 36% reduction in wait times for e-Books and e-Audiobooks thanks to a new “Overdrive Advantage” program for purchasing extra copies
- “Library of Things” additions included: under-desk elliptical and other fitness equipment, moisture meter, badminton set
- New MVLC Mobile app launched, presenting a more modern and user-friendly interface.

- Online account renewal offered more convenient access for continuing patrons
- Updated borrower registration policies and procedures provided smoother access for new patrons, including full privileges for online ecard registrants and streamlined non-resident registration.

Program Highlights

A lively lineup of programs included weekly story times, monthly book groups for all ages, presentations on art, music, travel and other topics, Early Release Day movies, teen crafts and weekend reading kits, and more. Programs were primarily coordinated by Jenn Buliszak (Children’s and Intergenerational Programming), Tahleen Shamlian (Teen and Children’s), Jennifer Pike (Adult), and Martha Feeney-Patten (Adult), with assistance from other staff members and volunteers.

January kicked off with a Winter Reading Challenge¹ for all ages, completed by 95 participants, and an intergenerational Hula Hooping program with Wild Kat Hoops^{1,2,3}.

In February, Zhonghe (Elena) Li taught attendees about the Ancient Art of Chinese Paper Cutting⁴, and kids created their own cardboard box cars for a “Drive-In Movie Night”¹.

April saw two new events: a Short Story Contest^{1,4} planned by the Friends of the Gleason Library and Gleason staff, and a Craft Supply Swap coordinated by Jenn Buliszak, Sinead Sinnott, and Jennifer Pike.

In May, the Library held their first-ever car show as part of the “Art of the Automobile” art exhibit, and participated in Carlisle’s first all-ages Pride Festival^{1,2,4}, with keynote speaker Gregory Maguire. The Piti Theatre Company performed *To Bee or Not To Bee*⁴ on the Library Lawn, and a special story time visited baby piglets at Clark Farm¹.

In June, local author Kay Hurley launched her book *Lichenpedia*, and the “Read, Renew, Repeat” Summer Reading Program kicked off with an Ice Pop Party¹.

Summer performers included Teddy Bear Picnic with Julie Stepanek¹, Drum & Rhythm Circle with Otha Day^{1,2,3,4}, Shark Tagging & Tracking with the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy⁶, Strega Mama story times¹, Stacey Peasley^{1,3,4}, the BackTrack Band^{1,2,3,4}, and Didgeridoo Down Under¹.

Library staff coordinated summer crafts on the lawn¹, stuffed animal story times¹, a StoryWalk¹, book bingos¹ for young and old, reading raffles¹, and other fun activities.

Participation in the Summer Reading Program was strong, with 976 program attendees, 202 Book Bingos and 130 Bingo Blackouts completed, and 131 Reading Raffle participants logging 141,105 minutes read.

Fall programs included a Grandparent/Grandchild Story Time^{1,2}, a Musical Instrument Petting Zoo^{1,3}, the return of music lecturer Richard Travers^{1,2}, a Secret Pizza Party with

Strega Mama¹, a Night Sky Paint Night¹, and a Stargazing Party^{1,3}. The Great Pumpkin Spectacle¹ featured Spooky Stories with Tony Toledo in its 41st year.

December's programs wrapped up with Copper Ornaments¹ for adults, Felted Gnomes¹ for tweens and adults, and Gingerbread House Workshops¹ and a Holiday Sing-Along with Steve Blunt¹ for families.

2024 Art at the Gleason exhibits:

- *Natural Histories: Joomchi Technique Paper Art* by Max Payne & Fiber Sculptures by Louise Berliner
- *Art of the Automobile*: stylized photographs of vintage cars by Steve Edson and an amazing vintage spark plug collection from Jim Roberts
- *CPS Student Show*
- *Carlisle Biodiversity as seen through the lens*, hosted by Judy Asarkof, Kay Hurley, and Joeth Barlas
- *Texture, Color, Fire*: Ceramics by Tucker Nuzum-Clark

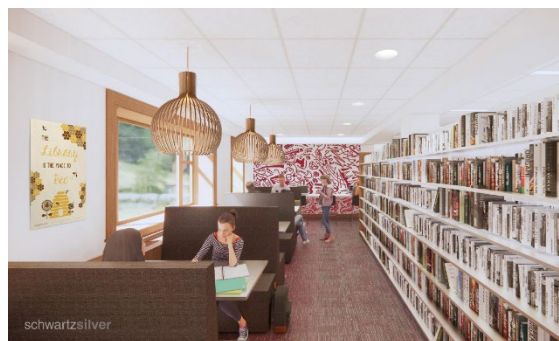
Renovation Project and Capital Campaign

The Gleason Public Library Endowment continued a capital campaign to raise the projected \$2.3M cost for an interior renovation. By year end, over \$2M was committed, including private donations and grants awarded, with \$1M cash in hand. Special fundraising events included Library Mini-Golf in January, an Adult Spelling Bee in March, and Books and Brews in October.

The Library Building Committee (LBC) was appointed, including: Christine Stevens (Chair), Karen Gettings (Trustee liaison), Bill Risso (MFC liaison), Suzanne LeBlanc, Gregory Felch, Ryan McLane (non-voting ex officio member), and Martha Feeney-Patten (non-voting ex officio member). The LBC conducted a procurement process for an Owner's Project Manager and recommended CMS of Marlborough, MA.



Lobby – Proposed



Teen Area – Proposed



Reading Room – Proposed



Conference Room – Proposed

Building & Grounds

In 2024, facilities maintenance moved further towards centralized management by the town facilities director.

No major building projects or repairs were undertaken. Thanks to a Green Communities grant received by the Town, additional weatherization was added to exterior doors. Planning was conducted for future work on HVAC units and the Library elevator.

Personnel

Circulation Assistant Kathleen Taffel retired after almost 5 years at the Gleason. Library Assistants Bárbara Carrera and Rebecca Bromark also moved on this year.

Joining the team were Circulation Assistants Cheryl Kelly and Cassidy Wenstrom, and Reference Assistant Julianna King.

Staff professional development included Mass. Library Association conference, Women Leading Government Conference, Association of Rural & Small Libraries conference, and trainings in CPR, Cybersecurity, and Harassment and Discrimination Prevention.

Library staff expanded their community outreach at events including the COA Women's Breakfast, COA Luncheon, Carlisle Garden Club Seed Swap, Read Across America Day, Route to Sustainability Day, Carlisle Family Connection Story Time, CCHS Volunteer Fair, PTO Trunk or Treat, and the COAHS Wellness Fair, as well as visiting the Carlisle Public School and local preschools.

Support & Collaboration

The Gleason 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: The Friends continue to support the Library with funding for special events and services. Donations from 250 members supported a variety of museum passes, many special events, and technology enhancements. The Friends fundraised through their annual membership drive, pop-up book swaps, and an Old Home Day Book Swap. Their annual meeting in November featured a Nutcracker reading/performance for children by members of the Commonwealth Ballet Company.

Volunteers & Senior Tax Program: In addition to the Friends, dozens of volunteers and tax workers donated their time and energy in 2024. Volunteerism and the involvement of Senior Tax Workers keep the Library 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 the Gleason operating. Altogether, about 850 hours of work were contributed by 51 volunteers, board members, Friends, and Tax Workers.

Other Organizations: The Library continued and expanded successful collaborations with other town departments and community organizations including the Carlisle Council on Aging and Human Services, Carlisle Recreation Department, Carlisle Public School, Environmental Sustainability Committee, Carlisle Cultural Council, Carlisle Conservation Foundation, Carlisle Garden Club, Gleason Knitters, Carlisle Boy Scouts, and Carlisle Fire Department.

Library Statistics*

Hours open per week	
September-June:	55
July-August:	51
Items owned (physical):	43,295
Items owned (downloadable):	82,630
Items provided by other libraries:	15,580
Items provided to other libraries:	22,790
Registered Carlisle patrons:	3,288
Total direct physical circulation:	86,292
Digital circulation:	11,167
Usage of electronic subscriptions (databases, e-magazines, etc.):	52,886
Number of visitors:	68,526
Number of reference transactions:	3,371
Meeting room uses by public:	256
Public computer sessions / wifi sessions:	2,704 / 21,400
Number of programs / attendees:	255 / 4,612

Library Staff

Director: Martha Feeney-Patten
Assistant Director/Head of Technology: Jennifer Pike
Children’s Librarian: Jennifer Buliszak
Staff Librarian: Tahleen Shamlian
Reference Assistants: Joseph Sorrenti, Julianna King
Head of Circulation: Jane Iwanowicz
Library Assistants: Claire Gordy, Cheryl Kelly, Helen Lyons, Ellen Royalty (substitute), Deena Scaperotta (substitute), Sinead Sinnott, Alexa Skrivanek, Cassidy Wenstrom
Assistant to the Director: Seema Peterson
Custodians: Dan Brainard, Dan Flannery

Library Pages: Claire Beckley, Mia Kablotsky, Chen-An Lin

Board of Trustees

Karen Gettings, Treasurer

Term expires 2026

Christine Lear, Secretary

Term expires 2027

Kaitlin Waterson, Chair

Term expires 2025

Submitted by Martha Feeney-Patten, Library Director.

*Data in this section is based on FY2024 (July 2023-June 2024) as reported to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

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

¹Friends of the Gleason Public Library ²Carlisle Council on Aging and Human Services

³Carlisle Recreation Department ⁴Carlisle Cultural Council

⁵Carlisle PTO DEICAC ⁶Susan Zielinski Natural Science Fund