

RYE FREE READING ROOM

2023 Annual Report



From The President



Kirstin Bucci
President, Board of Trustees



On any given day at the Rye Free Reading room, one can find children and caretakers attending programs, seniors settling into a comfortable spot to read a newspaper or socialize with friends, students flooding the Library in search of a place to chat or study, and residents attending a wide range of educational programs and workshops in the evening. We are inherently social beings, and our search for community is a fundamental aspect of our nature. In addition to providing a place for reading and learning, our Library provides spaces for collaboration and social connection.

As trustees, we recognize the central role our Library plays within Rye, promoting knowledge, literacy, and education. In planning for the future, one of our key responsibilities is to ensure that the Rye Free Reading Room remains a core resource for Rye's residents. Our 2023 - 2025 strategic plan outlines the key pillars for the Library - community, families, and literacy. Our goal is that our Library continues to serve as a hub for the City of Rye by welcoming the current and next generations and providing a breadth of learning opportunities.

Our ongoing conversations with other community partners, such as the Rye YMCA, the Rye Youth Council, the Rye Chamber of Commerce, Rye Recreation, the City of Rye, as well as the Rye City School District, enable us to stay current with the evolving needs and interests of our community. From afternoon music programs and story hours to teen volunteer clubs to one-on-one technology appointments to reservable spaces for business meetings and interviews, the Library strives to provide programs that create a welcoming environment for everyone.

Our talented and devoted staff, led by Library Director Chris Shoemaker, remains committed to inspiring a lifelong love of reading among our patrons. In addition to organizing a broad range of programs, the staff painstakingly selects materials for our collection, and recommends books to individual readers. These efforts promote reading, learning and intellectual exploration. Some of the new initiatives include Wonderbooks, a fabulous new tool to encourage reading confidence in young readers, and stocking more copies of the bestselling, most-popular titles on our shelves. Our membership in the Westchester Library System continues to facilitate access to more materials.

Hurricane Ida reminded us how susceptible our Library's lower level is to flooding. Over the past year, the Board of Trustees evaluated both short and long-term strategies to increase resiliency. Based on this analysis, the Board decided to undertake the ambitious project of relocating the children's collection from the lower level to the first floor. Illuminated by the double-height windows, families can browse the picture book and fiction collections, which were restored through generous community donations after Hurricane Ida. Book-bin style bookcases invite young readers to flip through books to find their next story, and families can enjoy reading together in the book nook seating areas. Responding to community feedback, the Library also created a Discovery Zone on the lower level, giving children a creative play space with educational toys and books to further imagination and learning goals, while preserving a space for others to read quietly. In 2024, we'll be working on making this space even more inviting so keep an eye out for improvements.

Perhaps one of our Library's biggest successes is the popularity of the teen room. Teenagers flock to their new space in the lower level. In a town where sports often dominate the conversation, the Library provides another social outlet for teenagers, and the already popular teen room has seen a 10%+ increase in teen attendance at the Library this year. From a practical perspective, the elevated bookshelves provide much-needed peace of mind when there is torrential rainfall, and the Blind Brook begins to rise.

Your support of the Rye Free Reading Room is critical to maintaining and further developing the three pillars of our strategic plan: community, families, and literacy. Thank you for support over the last year, and we look forward to working with you all this year!

The Director's Message

Chris Shoemaker
Director



Do you remember Bunny Watson? Bunny is the librarian character played by Katherine Hepburn in the 1957 movie *The Desk Set*. Computers are invading the reference library, and the librarians are concerned over their future. It's the battle of decades of training and knowledge versus mechanical switches, with the very future of the library at stake. It is also a premise I feel connected to, as my library career started with professional worries about how search engines would replace librarians and screens would replace all books. Now, seeing how libraries have responded to technology trends by becoming training centers, offering one-on-one appointments, and expanding collections to be available 24/7, I am confident libraries can and will nimbly adapt to whatever paradigm shifts are ahead. The Rye Free Reading Room has been adapting to changes for years, after all!

2023 was a year of changes big and small at the library. On the smaller side, we introduced a brand new program calendar and appointment system, which is mobile-friendly, visually appealing, and packed with features. We expanded our notary program and one-on-one technology booking appointments and launched a reservation system for the library study rooms. Over 500 appointments were booked in the first 6 months, highlighting the community's demand for quiet spaces to work, study, and meet. On the bigger side, we flipped the youth service departments, moving the children's collection to the first floor while the teens relocated to the lower level. Our teen patrons have embraced the larger space they now have, and parents and children appreciate the easy hop from the morning programs to the Children's Room to collect their next reads. My thanks to all for their patience during the construction process.

Collections remain at the core of the work that we do, and 2023 saw Rye residents grabbing bestsellers and past favorites from the library shelves! Nearly 138,000 books were borrowed in 2023, a nine percent increase over last year. We welcomed 838 new cardholders to the library and connected 261 people to new digital accounts. Overdrive, Kanopy, and Hoopla are beloved by all those who are looking for material on the go, with almost 40,000 items borrowed. Digital circulation rose by 15% in 2023, and we added 1,352 new titles to the virtual shelves.

In 2023, the most borrowed books were:

- *Demon Copperfield* by Barbara Kingsolver – Adult Fiction
- *Spare* by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex – Adult Non-Fiction
- *Amsterdam* – Movie
- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid – The Getaway* by Jeff Kinney – Juvenile Fiction
- *The Pigeon Needs a Bath* by Mo Willems – Picture Book
- *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier – YA Fiction

As a bonus circulation fact, *Nora Goes Off Script* and *Same Time Next Summer*, both by the talented local author, Annabel Monaghan, were in the top 50 items borrowed from the library in 2023.

Librarians answered almost 41,000 questions, such as how to connect to a wifi hotspot to download an item to Libby, to the best books on slime, to finding a good beginner's guide to Dungeons and Dragons. One librarian even helped a patron on a planting journey, from composting at home to planting a native garden to creating decorative items from dried flowers grown in their own yard. I am proud to lead a wonderful team here at the Rye Free Reading Room and appreciate the care and thoughtfulness each member of the team brings to serving the Rye community.

Over 152,000 visitors passed through the doors in 2023, looking for their next read, an inspiring program, or a comfortable spot to work and study. 27,708 people attended 1,186 programs, from floral arrangement classes with The Flower Bar to intergenerational jewelry-making programs, to gingerbread house engineering challenges to a crafty tour across the world. Noted authors Joseph Polisi, Julie Gerstenblatt, Sara Leman, Eric Glickman, Susannah Marren, Jacqueline Friedland, and Patti Hartigan spoke to literary fans from all around Rye, and we hosted local author Suki van Dijk and beloved Robert Markowitz for chats about their respective books too. In collaboration with the other Sound Shore libraries and CURE, we hosted an engaging conversation on the life and work of Lorraine Hansberry, featuring a discussion with Director John Collins, conceiver/actor Greig Sargeant, and actor April Matthis of "Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge".

It was a busy social year at the library as well! Vehicle Fair went off without a hitch on the Village Green in the spring, a welcome start to warm weekend activities. My thanks to the Vehicle Fair Committee, and to the community sponsors who help make that day of family fun possible. Despite rainstorms and high humidity, the library book sale bookended the back-to-school week, and just happened to take over the Village Green and the inside of the library! And, thanks to the tremendous work of the Auxiliary Board, Casino Night guests experienced a taste of vintage Vegas in the main reading rooms. High-stakes funny-money poker tournament, an Elvis impersonator, a roving mentalist, and a host of roulette wheels – definitely a changed look for the library spaces. I am incredibly grateful to the hardworking committee who helped transform the library for the event, and to all the attendees for our inaugural Casino Night fundraiser.

My thanks to the 393 donors to the 2023 Annual Campaign! Your membership gifts truly keep the doors open, and fill the shelves and spaces with the materials and programs that keep Rye readers and learners thriving.

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A Word From The Auxiliary Board

It’s a full house at the Rye Free Reading Room, thanks to the tremendous work of the Auxiliary Board! Each year, the volunteer members of the Auxiliary Board organize exciting fundraising activities for the community to enjoy, all while supporting the programs and collections of the library.

2023 was a busy year for the Auxiliary Board, as we rolled the dice on a brand new event - Casino Night! We transformed the library into a vintage Vegas destination, with blackjack tables, roulette wheels, and a high stakes poker tournament. Elvis was in the building, crooning out some of his biggest hits, while a mentalist demonstrated his amazing talents. The house was definitely the winner in this case, with over \$70,000 going to the library for children’s programs and library furniture. We were incredibly lucky to have talented co-chairs Valerie Chuebon, Madison Walsh, and JoDee Weis in place, and thank you to all the committee members who helped with décor, entertainment, and more.

The beloved Book Sale took place in September, and raised nearly \$11,500 for the library’s Express and Overdrive collections, which make bestselling titles available in the library and for easy download. Around 8,000 books were sold, and the library worked with HOPE Community Services and other charitable organizations to find a new home for the majority of the children’s books that remained at the end of the sale. We are incredibly grateful to Casey Spiss and Lianne Tidman for serving as co-chairs, and coordinating the table wrangling from our members as well as community partners like the Rye YMCA, Rye Rec, and the Rye Nature Center.

Melissa Giovinazzo and Olia Herchel were in the driving seat for the 2023 Vehicle Fair as co-chairs, and they took the wheel to deliver an impressive day of family fun. This was our biggest Vehicle Fair yet, with over 1,119 attendees and a total of \$30,000 raised, which will underwrite the museum passes, the summer reading programs, and many other events throughout the course of the year. This revved up event wouldn’t have been possible without the hard work of the Vehicle Fair committee, as well as our generous sponsors.

In addition to funding Bilingual Music with Marilyn, Robert the Guitar Guy, Wiggle Giggle, as well as the museum pass program and the Express collection, the Auxiliary Board helped fund \$40,000 worth of new furniture for the library. This provides comfortable seating, easy access bookcases, and family-friendly reading nooks, to foster a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Heading into 2024, we know there’s tremendous excitement for Novel Night “It Was All A Dream”, which will be October 19th. Check out the library website for information about when tickets will go on sale. We are also grateful to the fantastic members of the Auxiliary Board, especially those who are finishing their terms after dedicating three years of their time to make the library a center for the whole community. Thank you for all your enthusiasm, and for volunteering your time with us. We can’t wait to see you all in 2024!

Georgia Dyer, **Diane Martin,**
Co-President *Co-President*

Auxiliary Board

Georgia Dyer <i>Co-President</i>	Kelli Jarvis	Casey Spiss	Madison Walsh
Diane Martin <i>Co-President</i>	Sara Keeshan	Lourdes (Luly) Teasdale	JoDee Weis
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Gwendolyn Boyce	Laura Laura	Lianne Tidman	Whitney Whipple
Molly Boyle	Kelly LeGaye	Valerie Vena	Grace Yang
Cally Bruce	Samantha Manning	Cristina Wade	Lydia Zolman
Avery Bullock Rossello	Krissie Martinez		
Jen Cain	Victoria McMahan		
Adrienne Chen	Samantha Nagelberg		
Valerie Chuebon	Maureen Neckles		
Margaret Fabian	Sarah Pasqua		
Danielle Froelich	Kiren Patel		
Despina Gandhi	Eva Rooney		
Diana Giannasca	Meghan Rossi		
Melissa Giovinazzo	Meredythe Ryan		
Lorraine Godfrey	Bettina Scott Funk		
Jessica Grundberg	Kelly Shaw		
Olia Herchel	Katie Sibson		

Sustaining Auxiliary Board

Emily Cawley	Sarah Olivo
Adrienne Chen	Ashley Prichard
Megan Evans	Jennifer Reddington
Katie Finnegan	Cristina Skumpija
Laura Laura	Katie Vernace
Suzy McKay	Jane Waluch
Caitlin Moffett	Grace Yang
Suzanne Napoli	

The 2023 Mayor's Award: Harold Holzer

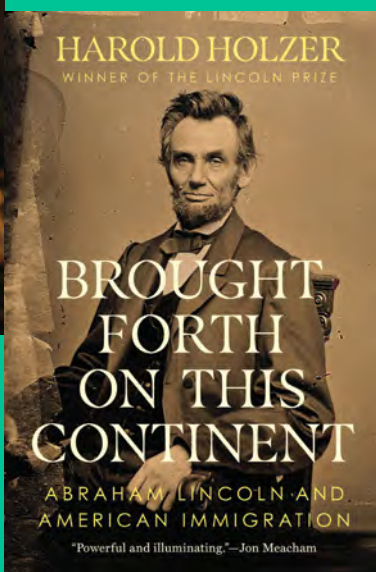
The Rye Free Reading Room's Mayor's Award celebrates the literary legacy of Rye and acknowledges an individual with strong connections to Rye who has made significant contributions to the advancement of literary arts. This year, we honor Harold Holzer, one of the country's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln and the political culture of the Civil War era.

Harold Holzer, winner of The 2015 Gilder-Lehrman Lincoln Prize, is a prolific writer and lecturer, a frequent guest on television, and served for six years (2010–2016) as Chairman of The Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation. For the previous 10 years he co-chaired the U. S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC), appointed by President Clinton. President Bush awarded Holzer the National Humanities Medal in 2008. And in 2013, Holzer wrote an essay on Lincoln for the official program at the re-inauguration of President Obama. He is now chairman of The Lincoln Forum.

Holzer's literary legacy includes 55 authored, co-authored, or edited books. His latest major book is "The Presidents vs. the Press: The Endless Battle Between The White House and the Media—From the Founding Fathers to Fake News (2020)". His previous book was the award-winning "Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion". Among his acclaimed works are "A Just and Generous Nation: Abraham Lincoln" and the "Fight for American Opportunity" (co-authored with Norton Garfinkle). Holzer also issued the 2014 book "The Civil War in 50 Objects", written for The New-York Historical Society, for which he served for three years as Roger Hertog Fellow. His other recent volumes include "Lincoln: How Abraham Lincoln Ended Slavery in America", the official young adult companion book to the Steven Spielberg film, for which he served as historical advisor.

A dedicated scholar, Holzer has written more than 600 articles and reviews for both popular magazines and scholarly journals, including Smithsonian, American Heritage, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post. After 23 years of service, Holzer retired from his post as Senior Vice President for Public Affairs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2015.

Holzer and his wife Edith lived in Rye for 42 years. They have two daughters, Meg and Remy, along with two grandsons, Charles, 15, and Leo, 3. In recognition of his outstanding achievements, we congratulate Harold Holzer, and his name will be permanently added to the Mayor's Award plaque proudly displayed in the Library's main reading room.



Happy Readers: Book Sale 2023

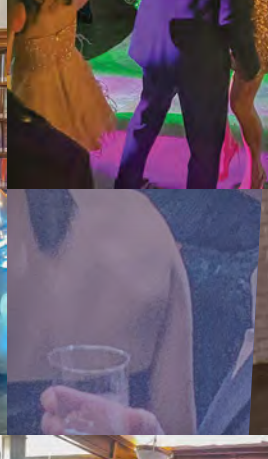
The Rye Free Reading Room's annual Book Sale was conducted on Saturday and Sunday, September 9 and 10, 2023. Despite the weather forecast, hundreds of community members of all ages came out to load up on bargain books and support the Rye Free Reading Room.

An estimated 9000 books were donated, raising \$11,378 for the Library. All remaining children's books were donated to Hope Community Services, among other charitable organizations.

Georgia Dyer, Co-President of the Auxiliary Board of the Rye Free Reading Room said, "We want to thank everyone who worked so hard to put this together and those who came and made this such a successful event for the Library."



Casino Night: A Big Win



Saturday, November 4, 2023, the Rye Free Reading Room transformed into a Las Vegas casino for its first-ever Casino Night fundraiser.

Dressed in Vegas and festive glamour, a crowd of over 300 came to try their luck with “funny money” at blackjack, craps, and roulette gambling tables. Guests enjoyed grazing on gourmet bites or dancing to lively DJ tracks, while being entertained by an Elvis impersonator and amazed by a roaming Mentalist. A few daring guests won commemorative trophies at the High Stakes Poker Tournament.

The sold-out event raised \$70,000 for the Library. Auxiliary Board Event Co-Chair JoDee Weis said, “Thanks to the incredible committee and all the sponsors for making this such a successful and memorable event!”

Proceeds directly benefit the Auxiliary Board’s mission to support children’s programming, STEM programming, offer the Summer Reading Program, provide museum passes, and various other Library events.

Vehicle Fair Victory

The 2023 Vehicle Fair on May 21 finished with a victory – 500 families attended raising \$30,000 for the Library and its programs.

Thanks to our 2023 sponsors for supporting this event:

Race Car Sponsors:

Gabelli Funds, Houlihan Lawrence, Ontra, Rye Reads, Rye Subaru

Bulldozer Sponsors:

Carpet Trends, Coldwell Banker Realty Adriane DeFeo, Rye Pediatric Dentistry, and Smart Playrooms.



The Sixth Annual Spelling Bee

Each year, on Veteran's Day, the Rye Free Reading Room invites Rye Middle and High School students to come and test their spelling skills in the Library's annual Spelling Bee.

This year on Saturday, November 11, 2023, Library Director Chris Shoemaker welcomed the young participants and thanked Mayor Josh Cohn and Rye patron Cara Giacomo for joining in as official word readers.

After eight rounds, 7th grader Emma Crozier emerged once again as the middle-school winner by correctly spelling "mohair". Emma is a two-time winner and reigning middle-school champion as she won in last year's competition.

It took 15 rounds for high-school 10th grader Calvin Holler to claim the title by spelling "piano". Competition was stiff as four of the five high-school challengers were either previous winners or contestants. Calvin was the middle-school champion in 2020.

Emma Crozier's and Calvin Holler's names will be inscribed on the permanent Spelling Bee trophy that is displayed in the main reading room at the Library. Each will be awarded a trophy, and scholarship prize money at the Library's annual meeting in February 2024.

The \$2,500 High School scholarship prize is provided by Carpet Trends. The \$500 middle school scholarship is donated by the Riccio and Mecca families.



Middle School Winner
Emma Crozier



High School Winner
Calvin Holler



Official Word Readers: Rye patron
Cara Giacomo and Mayor Josh Cohn.

Features:

Spotlight: Joseph Polisi

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Rye Writes Joseph Polisi Shines a Light on Lincoln Center

BY DOREEN MUNSIE

In his latest book, "Beacon to the World", longtime Julliard president and Rye resident, Joseph Polisi, delivers an informative and engaging history of Lincoln Center.

As a youth and fledging bassoonist, he had always been fascinated with Lincoln Center as a unique destination that he found "magical". Asked why he wrote the book he says, "The place presents the power of the arts to a world audience. It's important to understand the philosophy and roots of the Center."

Since its inception during post-World War II politics, under the leadership of John D. Rockefeller III, the goal was to display the United States not only as a superpower, but as a cultural and intellectual power as well. The Center was to be a new face of great art — all in one place.

Polisi takes us through decades of the complex evolution and growth of the Center. He explores its challenging management and maintenance, which proves to be a delicate balance of artistry and business. It's a dramatic account of the difficulties and conflicts that were navigated, or



sometimes created, by the variety of leaders who help forged this cultural asset.

Opera diva Beverly Sills, who served as Chairwoman of Lincoln Center, was a popular personality and "wonderful artist" who "couldn't make tough decisions." During a \$1.2 billion redevelopment project that needed strong leadership, her time at the helm was

problematic and fraught with tension.

Polisi shares a memorable story of the legendary dance choreographer George Balanchine's New York City Ballet's Stravinsky festival in 1972, a week-long tribute to Igor Stravinsky involving 35 Stravinsky scores and 31 ballets, 21 of which had never before been performed. It was deemed an artistic sensation,

"which couldn't have happened anywhere else." The final night culminated in a Balanchine toast and the entire audience was handed glasses of vodka to drink in celebration.

There's an amusing anecdote about French artist Marc Chagall's two mammoth murals commissioned for the Metropolitan Opera lobby that were accidentally installed in reverse order causing the artist to scream and state that he "yelled as I never have before. My mother, when she gave birth to her children, didn't yell as much. I doubtless could be heard all over Lincoln Square." Thankfully, Chagall decided he liked the placement and let it stand.

Lincoln Center has had its controversies — from its inception, the politically- and financially-driven decisions led by powerful urban planner Robert Moses to displace thousands of families from their homes to accommodate the Center's master plan, to today, with the recent social reckonings of the #MeToo movement, The Black Lives Matter movement, to dealing

with the lost revenue of Covid shutdowns. Art is struggling and institutions are trying to bounce back.

Polisi is hopeful. He says, "Art is essential for our society and great art experiences address the human ethos. There is nothing like the experience and energy of a live artistic performance."

He poetically describes how the beauty of the lighted fountains on Lincoln Center Plaza at night underscores the venue's unique splendor. Which reminded me of the last time I was at the Met, in 2018. Misty Copeland, the first all-season African American principal ballerina, was performing "Swan Lake". From the spectacular Lohmeyer chandeliers to the stunning talented woman dancing on stage, to being moved by the number of little black girls in the audience clutching their mothers' hands — it was an incredible experience. And it's been too long.

Joseph Polisi will share his behind-the-scenes view of Lincoln Center at the Rye Free Reading Room on January 26 at 7 p.m.

What's New?

Pies & Pages for Adults



“We chose Rye for our pie store because we felt such a strong sense of community here.”

It was a full house when the Library introduced its first Pie & Pages event in July 2023. Local pie makers Leslie Noble and her husband/partner Tom told the amusing and inspirational story of how they started their business. They shared their apple pie recipe, some pie-making tips, and everyone enjoyed tasty samples of their seasonal pie favorites.

“The library is a great place to come together as a community, learn new things, and make new friendships. We really enjoyed ourselves and the pairings were perfect! I was inspired by the books and I now have a new list of books I want to read.” [Leslie Noble]

Our librarians paired books ranging from “Agatha Raisin and The Quiche of Death” by M.C. Beaton to John Grisham’s “Camino Winds”. The pie makers will be back for future seasonal Pies & Pages program with tastings, demos, and pie raffles.

Teens:

Opening Sliding Doors

By Sarah Prosser – Teen Librarian

The late 1900’s, as my teens love to refer to it, that may or may not bring a twitch to my millennial eye, brought with it a paradigm shift within the children’s and teen librarianship field. A phrase that’s become almost a colloquialism at this point outside of academia, that books intended for developing minds are both “windows and mirrors” for readers to see themselves and experience other perspectives. Dr. Bishop, the originator of that oft-quoted line, also included another phrase– that books are also “sliding glass doors”.

A critical distinction, to be sure, from the “windows and mirrors” line. Books that can allow readers to not just see a different perspective, but step fully through into another world, filling the shoes of a character in a way that resonates with them long past the final page. Those are the “sliding glass doors” readers encounter when they find the perfect book. Something ephemeral as “perfect” is a tall bill, but the way someone’s eyes light up when I help them find the right story makes it so impactful as well.

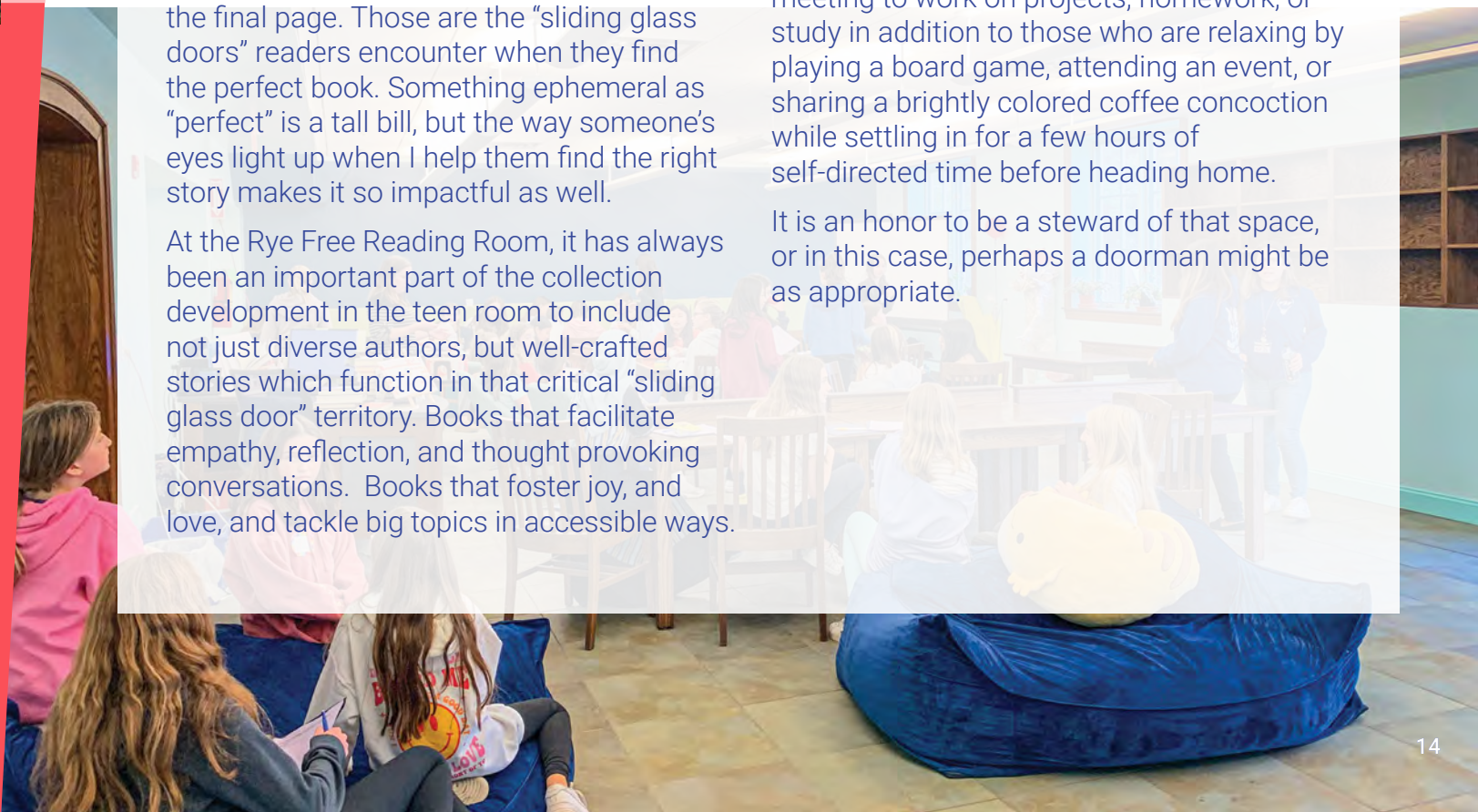
At the Rye Free Reading Room, it has always been an important part of the collection development in the teen room to include not just diverse authors, but well-crafted stories which function in that critical “sliding glass door” territory. Books that facilitate empathy, reflection, and thought provoking conversations. Books that foster joy, and love, and tackle big topics in accessible ways.

Obviously not every story out there needs to fill all of those roles, and I am a staunch advocate for finding the perfect fluff read as well, since books also offer an escape when life can be overwhelming. Striking the right balance between those ends of the spectrum is one of the joys of librarianship; finding the right book for every reader.

Our collection and mission has never just ended with books though – films, games, activities where all are welcome to explore their interests and challenge themselves to try new things. We are a space that continuously makes shifts to better meet the needs of our community, and the new teen room is no exception.

On any given day in the teen room, there are middle school and high school aged people meeting to work on projects, homework, or study in addition to those who are relaxing by playing a board game, attending an event, or sharing a brightly colored coffee concoction while settling in for a few hours of self-directed time before heading home.

It is an honor to be a steward of that space, or in this case, perhaps a doorman might be as appropriate.



Features:
Kids On The Move

This past summer, the Rye Free Reading Room took an immediate step to help protect its core collections and prevent disruptions to service from flooding.

The Children's Collections were relocated to the mezzanine and first floor to ensure they can be accessed by children and removed from the flood zone. The Teen Room and the Teen Collections were moved to the lower level, and the bookcases were installed a minimum of 4 feet off the ground.

New easy-to-access kids shelving, cozy reading nooks, and expanded play areas have been met with enthusiasm. Children's Librarian Elizabeth Emery says, "I am so happy about our new children's spaces! The children's room is so bright and inviting, and the kids seem to love the bigger discovery zone."

Senior Children's Librarian Lisa Fitzmaurice adds, "Our new space upstairs is a bright and sunny area filled to the brim with books. We love how the new picture book shelves are more accessible to our tiniest patrons now, without having to worry about the risk of flooding. Patrons love the new area and the separate play space, which helps meet all of the needs of our community."



A Changing of the Guard:
The Osborn Library Branch

In Memoriam: Marjorie Shapiro

Marjorie Shapiro started at the Osborn Librarian in May of 2014. She loved being part of the Osborn family, getting to know residents and their reading tastes. She was truly the perfect concierge librarian, remembering the numerous residents and their reading preferences. When the next book in a series came in, she would know just who to set it aside for, and would call them to let them know the book was waiting for them.

Prior to starting at the Osborn, Marjorie also worked as a librarian at Mamaroneck High School, New York Medical College, and Larchmont Temple Library. Before heading into the world of libraries, she spent many years in the world of fashion apparel.

Marjorie embodied the open and welcoming library spirit all librarians strive for, and we will miss her.



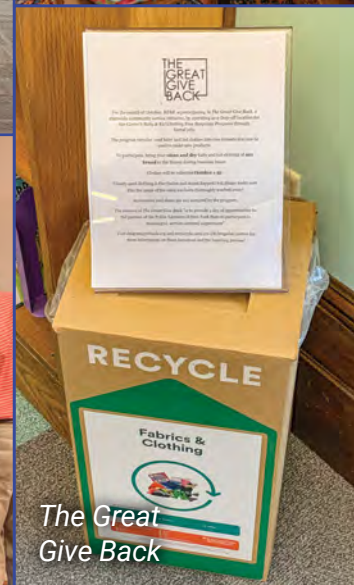
Welcome: Lisa Olney

Lisa Olney joined the Library's team as our new Library Manager at the Osborn branch in March of this year. Lisa was an adult services librarian at the John C. Hart Library, where she had previously worked as a page and technical services clerk. Prior to that, she worked in communication and public relations.

She shares her thoughts on how it's going there: "Working with the prolific readers of the Osborn community from reader advisory work and book clubs to instructing on the use of WLS digital reading apps is as rewarding as it is stimulating. Making people's days better through reading -- what could be better?"



The Year in Pictures



Opening Doors For the Community

Circulation and Digital Usage
Grew In 2023!

Circulation
Grew 9%: **137,921**

Adult/Teens Circulation
Grew 11%: **91,666**

838
New Cards Added

Digital Circulation
Grew 15%: **39,719**

Children's Circulation
Grew 5%: **46,255**

42,757 Answered
Reference Questions Grew 5%

1,186
Programs

152,512
Visitors

12,552
WiFi Sessions Grew 51%

8,030
Items Added

27,708
Program Attendees

57,036
Web Visitors Grew 5%

3,052
Computer Users

2023 Staff Picks

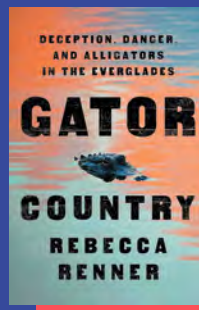
Check out what the Library's staff recommends you put on your reading list:

Susan Aufrichtig –
Adult Services Librarian

Gator Country: Deception, Danger, and Alligators in the Everglades

by **Rebecca Renner**

A fascinating glimpse into the many moral quandaries involved in undercover police operations and endangered species management. With the larger than life characters and fast paced action, you won't be able to put this book down, and you'll be left pondering the issues raised, long after you finish the last page.

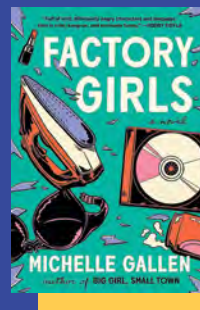


Tara Montini –
Instructional Librarian

Factory Girls

by **Michelle Gallen**

After a childhood of NYC parades with "England Get Out Of Ireland" signs that I was never really given an answer about, this book gave me a glimpse of that part of the world and more context for what those signs were about. The author's personal experience of the Troubles and little details she sprinkled in help to make this dark comedy a well-enjoyed read, especially since the light outshone the dark just enough.



Lisa Fitzmaurice –
Senior Children's Librarian

Mirror to Mirror

by **Rajani LaRocca**

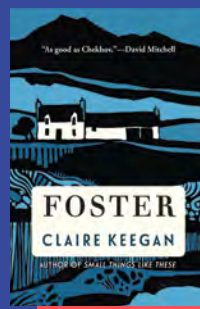
This book in verse is such a quick read, but packs so much into the pages. This is a story about twins and how they deal with challenges in their everyday lives.



Doreen Munsie –
Communications Officer

Foster by **Claire Keegan**

This spare and beautiful novella is about a young girl who is taken by her father to a rural Ireland farm to live with relatives who are strangers to her. The powerful prose and pitch-perfect dialogue is deeply moving and the book has made Keegan one of my new favorite authors.



Stacy Lavelle –
Business Manager

Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland

by **Patrick Radden Keefe**

An incredibly researched nonfiction story of the time called "The Troubles", that reads like a novel. Highly recommend it for true crime fans, as well as to learn about the IRA and better understand the conflict in Northern Ireland.

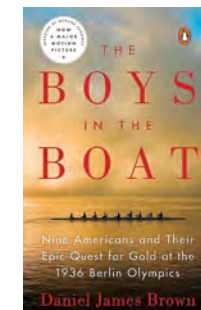


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Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Olympics

by **Daniel James Brown**

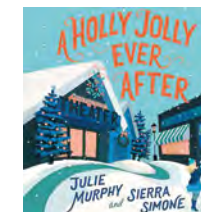
Arguably, one of the best sports books ever written, Brown delivers not only the rare feat of a nonfiction page turner, but also an eyewitness experience to the tumultuous yet triumphant underdog journey of the Great Depression era University of Washington crew team who against the odds competed at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.



Sarah Prosser –
Teen Librarian

A Holly Jolly Ever After
by **Sierra Simone and Julie Murphy**

A return to the setting of Christmas Notch, this romance novel has a completely different feel to it than its predecessor. It appeals to spiritually divested readers who are doing the hard internal work to make their lives have meaning and purpose that matters to them, even if the people who are supposed to love and support them have made that conditional.



Catherine Riedel –
Assistant Director

The Bell in the Fog

by **Lev AC Rosen**

This is a historical mystery that focuses on finding your family and how far you'll go to protect them. Part 2 in the Evander Mills series (Lavender House, Book 1), further develops the engaging characters of Book 1 and sheds a light on a time of our history that is not frequently explored in literature. I really enjoyed this book and would recommend the entire series.

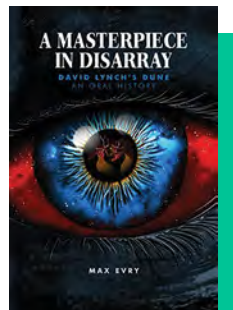


Chris Shoemaker –
Director

A Masterpiece in Disarray: David Lynch's Dune. An Oral History

by **Max Evry**

As a lifelong Sci-Fi fan, I've always appreciated the scope and mythology of *Dune* in all forms - print, movies, TV series. This is peek behind the curtain of a core work of the genre, and a delight to read.



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2024 Save-The-Dates Calendar

Vehicle Fair

Sunday, May 19th

Summer Reading Program Begins

June 1st

Library Card Sign-Up Month

September

Book Sale

Saturday and Sunday, September 14th & 15th

Annual Campaign Kickoff

September 23rd

Novel Night

Saturday, October 19th

Seventh Annual Spelling Bee

Monday, November 11th

Winter Open House

Saturday, December 14th

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The Rye Free Reading Room – Opening Doors:

Thanks to all the generous contributors to the 2023 Annual Campaign, \$306,618 was raised – 25% over our goal!

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Albert & Barrie Zesiger

New Corporate & Organization members
The Brooks Foundation
Arthur & Elinor Fredston Fund
Bryan Murtagh & Margaret O'Brien Charitable Fund
Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Troop 02375
Rachel Stone, Canterbury School
T.I.S.H. Fund
Chris A. Wachenheim Foundation
Watershed Literary Festival



2023 Financial Report

Operating Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2023	\$ 367,790
Receipts	
City of Rye	\$1,360,000
Annual Campaign	\$306,618
Endowment Transfer	\$105,000
Fines & Fees	\$18,370
Miscellaneous	\$65,957
Total	\$1,855,945
Disbursements	
Library Collections & Programs	\$179,368
Library Operations	\$192,919
Building Operations	\$206,853
Transfer to Capital Projects	\$129,000
Personnel	\$1,236,050
Total	\$1,944,190
Closing Balance 12/31/2023	\$279,545

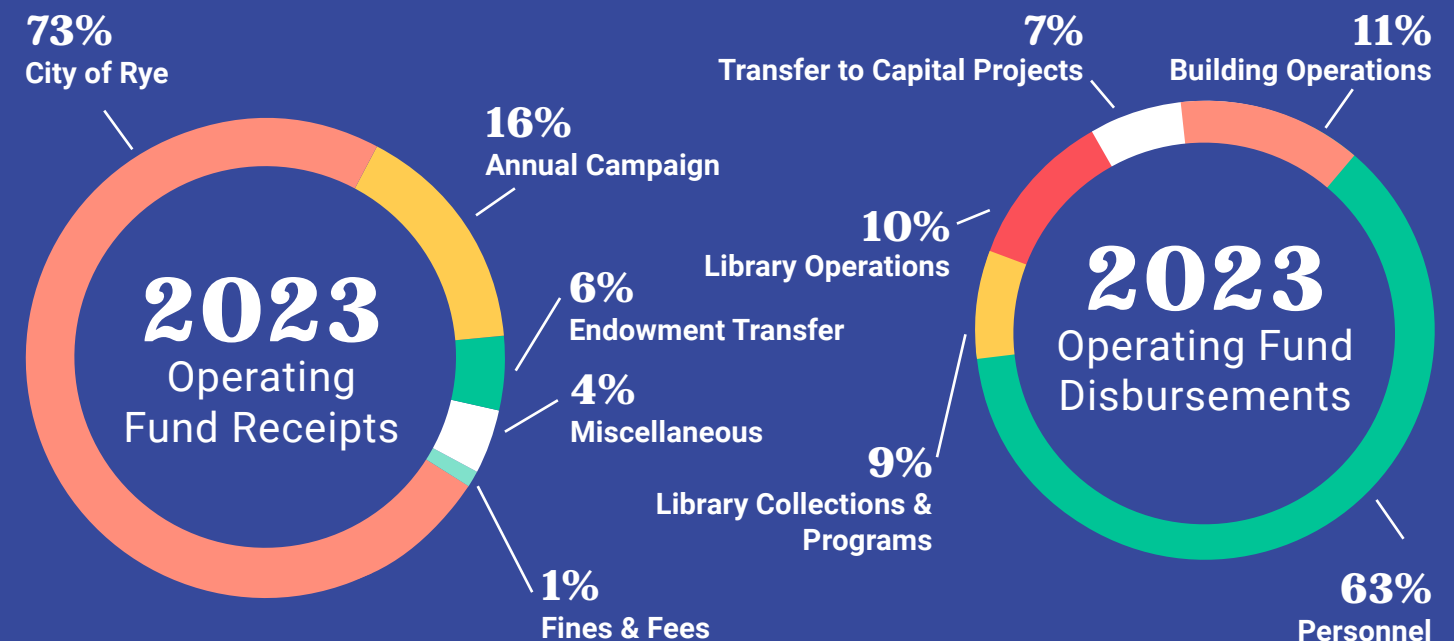
Endowment Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2023	2,109,493
Receipts	
Investment Income	\$53,480
Total	\$53,480
Disbursements	
Fees	\$14,636
Transfer to Operating Fund	\$105,000
Total	\$119,636
Unrealized Gains	\$117,063
Closing Balance 12/31/2023	\$2,160,400

Designated Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2023	\$ 573,856
Receipts	
Auxiliary Board Programs	\$177,543
Interest Income	\$35,715
Miscellaneous	\$218,073
Transfer to Capital Projects	\$129,000
Total	\$560,331
Disbursements	
Library Collections & Programs	\$105,499
Children's Collection Replacement	\$39,333
Library Operations	\$45,674
Building Operations	\$308,414
Total	\$498,920
Closing Balance 12/31/2023	\$635,267

These statements are unaudited.



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