

From The President



Lina Eroh
President, Rye Free Reading Room

To the Friends and supporters of the Rye Free Reading Room,

As we wrap up the year, I want to take a moment to say something simple but deeply felt: thank you.

The Rye Free Reading Room is one of those rare places that makes our community feel like a community. It's where children discover their first favorite stories, where teens find a quiet corner to connect with friends after school, where families come together for developmentally appropriate play, and where all of us get reminded—sometimes without even realizing it—how much joy and connection a shared public space can bring.

This year, that spirit of connection shone brighter than ever. Across topical discussion groups, author talks, mahjong games, and countless informal conversations in the stacks, the library continued to be a place where big ideas take root. A true highlight was hosting our first-ever exhibition in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution. Made possible by the initiative of local teens, this exhibit

brought together neighbors of all ages for thoughtful conversations on systemic bias—bringing to life the power of learning and debate in our community.

At the same time as we explored big ideas, the Board and library staff have been hard at work tending to the small but essential details that keep a 112-year-old building running smoothly. With support from New York State, we upgraded our fire and security systems, ensuring the building and collections entrusted to us are safe in case of emergency. Visitors will soon enjoy refreshed first-floor bathrooms, which received a much needed facelift after more than 20 years of service. And we continue to partner with the City to develop a comprehensive flood mitigation plan for Blind Brook and the Village Green.

We are especially grateful to the City Council this year for fully funding the library's operating budget for 2026. Their commitment to the library strengthens our financial resiliency and allows us to

devote more of your donations to programs, services, and experiences that enrich life for all Rye residents. This includes things like expanding our digital collection, author visits, and our museum pass program, which enabled 635 visits this past year, extending the library's commitment to exploration and curiosity well beyond our walls.

Looking ahead, we're excited about what we can continue creating together. Your feedback will help shape our next strategic plan—so whether there's a program you hope to see, a service that inspires your family, or an idea sparked during a visit, we want to hear from you. This library is, at its heart, a shared endeavor.

Thank you for your support, your enthusiasm, and your belief in what this place means. As we imagine what comes next, I'm reminded of how powerful it is to invest in a space where people can learn, grow, and feel at home—together.



Chris Shoemaker
Director



From The Director

For suddenly I can see, the magic of books - Ilona, "She Loves Me"

Such a simple phrase captures the wonderful nature of libraries! Visitors stop by, find what they want, and depart with a portable treasure. In 2025, we added over 600 titles in our young reader series, so that our beginning readers can experience the magic of books. I'm grateful to the Auxiliary Board for funding the shelving to make that collection expansion possible. And it wasn't just investments in books! There are now tablets available for use in the library so that readers can browse magazine from around the world, and fans of British TV can enjoy BritBox through the Roku sticks. Families can check out one of three American Girl dolls from the Children's Desk and create

their own story about the adventures they have together. We can't wait to see these writer's voices develop.

Teens brought their voices to the library as well – not only through the "You're In Command: Historical Miniatures Games" but in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute. Two local teens worked to bring "The Bias Inside Us," a traveling exhibition that raises awareness about the science and history of bias and what people can do about it, to the library; they also planned out a range of great public programs to encourage community conversations about the topics highlighted through the show panels. It was a privilege to work with future civic leaders, and to have our first Smithsonian Institute exhibition at the library.

Strengthening community through the collections and services at the library is central to the work of a library! Rye cardholders borrowed over 175,000 items over the course of 2025, and we welcomed nearly 168,000 visitors through the doors. 6,000 new items joined the library collection. From historic miniature battle recreations to introductory book clubs for children and their families, over 1,400 programs took place at the library, and nearly 30,000 people checked out the library program offerings.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE ►

175,253
items borrowed

6,872
items added

167,761
visitors

From the Auxiliary Board

Dear Friends of the Rye Free Reading Room,

As we reflect on the past year, we are thrilled to share that 2025 was a truly stellar fundraising year for the Auxiliary Board. Our three annual events—Vehicle Fair, Book Sale, and Casino Night—collectively raised more than \$125,000. This would not have been possible without the extraordinary dedication of our Auxiliary Board volunteers, the generosity of our Rye community, and the continued support of friends and local businesses.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our first-ever **Annual Events Sponsors**—the **Rye Professional Firefighters Local 2029, Fiona Dogan and Sotheby's International Realty, Carpet Trends, and The Osborn**—whose generosity provided the foundational gifts that made our events and educational programs possible.

This year's **Vehicle Fair** hosted by **Sophie Sandford and Neena Ballard on June 1** was unforgettable and record-breaking. Vehicle Fair sold over 700 tickets and welcomed over three thousand visitors. A special thanks to Rye Reads for serving as the Firetruck Sponsor! This family-favorite event reached new heights with the addition of new vehicles, including a popular rescue boat, and live performance by "Taylor Swift," delighting library patrons across all age ranges and creating a joyful, festival-like atmosphere. The energy, enthusiasm, and turnout made this our most successful Vehicle Fair to date.

The community favorite **Book Sale** from **September 12–14, 2025** once again proved to be a cornerstone event for the Auxiliary Board and the community. We were especially proud to donate all unsold inventory at the conclusion of the sale to non-profit programs supporting literacy for children and adults throughout the Northeast—ensuring that every book continued its journey in service of learning and access. We are grateful to our Book Sale chairs, Deniz Plimpton, Meg Fabian and Kristen Nicholson, for their generosity in time and contributions to this huge success!

We closed out the year in spectacular fashion with our second-ever, **biannual Casino Night on November 8**. The library was fully transformed into a veritable casino royale, welcoming 375 guests for an evening of table games, dancing, and a high-stakes poker tournament. Thanks to tremendous support and enthusiastic participation from the community, this event capped off our phenomenal year. Congratulations and thank you to our event co-chairs, Avery Bullock Rosado, Ani Oliver, and Diana Whelan.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to share that the Auxiliary has welcomed **12 new members**, strengthening our community and bringing fresh energy to our work. Planning is already underway for **Novel Night 2026**, and we look forward to another year of meaningful programming, memorable events, and continued support for the Rye Free Reading Room.

2025 Annual Report

Bettina Funk, *Co-President* Meredythe Ryan, *Co-President*



2025 Annual Report

Annual Campaign

Friends Make It Possible

The generous contributions of 515 Rye Friends helped us exceed our campaign goal by 35%—bridging the public funding gap and ensuring the Library can continue offering vital resources to the community.

LIBRARY CONTRIBUTORS – 2025

We are deeply grateful to the Friends who have contributed to the 2025 Annual Campaign and all those who also supported Casino Night, the Vehicle Fair, and the Library's other fundraising activities.

Donor Recognition: *5+ Years, **10+ Years

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Chris Shoemaker
Director

From The Director (Continued)

In 2025, our most borrowed items were:

- Adult Fiction: "It's a Love Story" by Anabel Monaghan
- Adult Nonfiction: "The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About" by Mel Robbins
- Adult Biography: "Be Ready When the Luck Happens" by Ina Garten
- DVD: "Aladdin"
- Teen Fiction: "Sunrise of the Reaping" by Suzanne Collins

- Teen Nonfiction: "Player's Handbook: Everything a Player Needs to Create Heroic Characters" by James Wyatt
- Juvenile Fiction: "Claudia and the New Girl" by Gabriela Epstein
- Juvenile Nonfiction: "Ultimate Reptile Rumble" by Jerry Pallota
- Early Reader: "I Broke My Trunk!" by Mo Willems
- Picture Book: "The Pigeon Needs a Bath!" by Mo Willems

My thanks to the Library Trustees, Auxiliary Board members, and library staff for their hard

work this year. Serving the community is at the core of the work we all do, and none of it would be possible without such a fantastic team.

Friends of the Rye Free Reading Room support the collections and programs that make it possible for us to accomplish our mission. My incredible gratitude goes out to the 515 Friends of the Rye Free Reading Room, whose support makes all things possible at the library. The collections we have, the programs we offer, the services we provide – all these things are funded by the donations you make to the Annual Campaign. Thank you for supporting lifelong learning in Rye.

47,546
questions asked

1,408
programs

29,397
attendees

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Kids Book Club



Book Sale 2025



"The Bias Inside Us"



2025
Annual Report

Picture: Wisdom Gallery 2025

2025 Financial Report

Operating Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2025	\$381,769
Receipts	
City of Rye	\$1,427,000
Annual Campaign	\$388,735
Endowment Transfer	\$100,000
Fines & Fees	\$18,532
Miscellaneous	\$61,612
Transfer from Designated	\$80,000
Total	\$2,075,879
Disbursements	
Library Collections & Programs	\$175,559
Library Operations	\$191,933
Building Operations	\$192,800
Transfer to Capital Projects	\$100,000
Personnel	\$1,385,760
Total	\$2,046,052
Closing Balance 12/31/2025	\$411,596

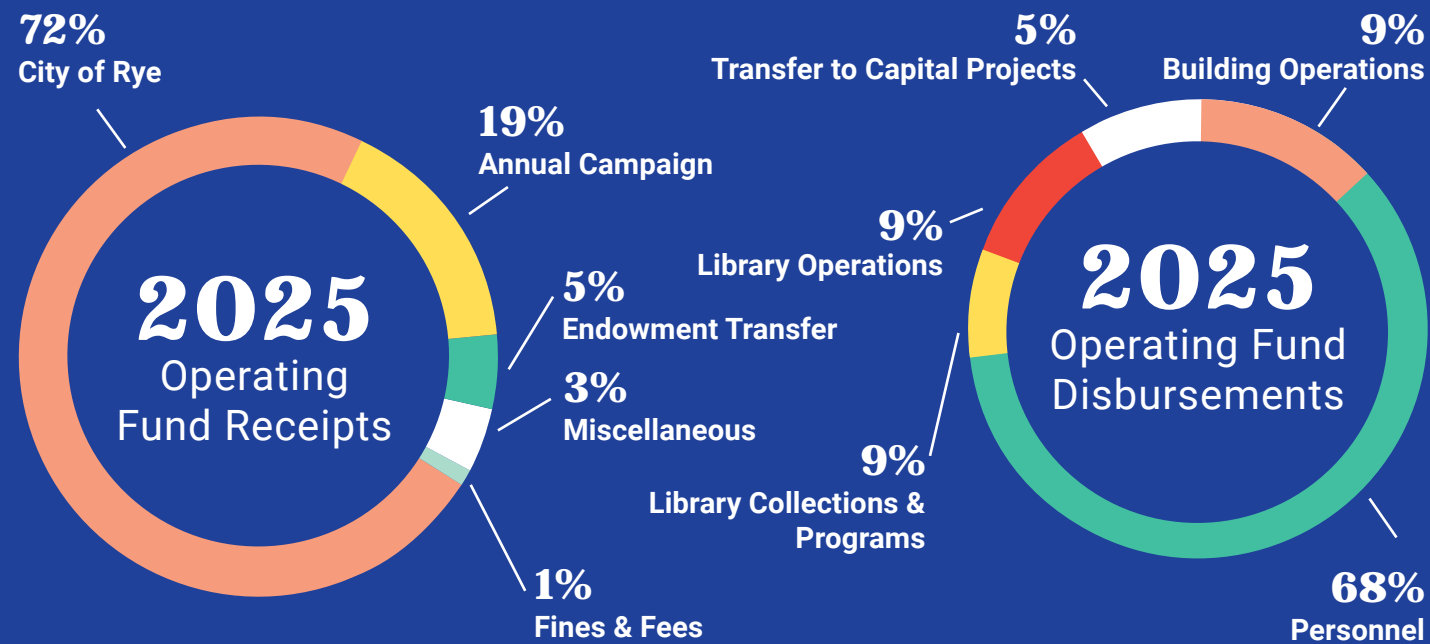
Endowment Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2025	\$2,221,126
Receipts	
Investment Income	\$72,776
Total	\$72,776
Disbursements	
Fees	\$15,603
Transfer to Operating Fund	\$100,000
Total	\$115,603
Unrealized Gains	\$157,220
Closing Balance 12/31/2025	\$2,335,519

Designated Funds

Starting Balance 1/1/2025	\$739,946
Receipts	
Auxiliary Board Programs	\$215,913
Interest Income	\$15,904
Miscellaneous	\$70,916
Transfer to Capital Projects	\$100,000
Total	\$402,733
Disbursements	
Library Collections & Programs	\$181,278
Children's Collection Replacement	\$3,303
Library Operations	\$4,323
Building Operations	\$184,013
Transfer to Operating	\$80,000
Total	\$452,917
Closing Balance 12/31/2025	\$689,762

These statements are unaudited.



Working Together to Serve the Community

2025 Annual Report



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The Rye Free Reading Room Auxiliary Board Annual Sponsors



2025 Annual Report

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