



2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

Rathbun Free Memorial Library
36 Main Street, East Haddam, CT 06423
860-873-8210

East Haddam Free Public Library
18 Plains Road, Moodus CT 06469
860-873-8248
easthaddamlibrarysystem.org

Highlights of 2023-24

We're proud of all that has happened this past year! The library staff showed once again they can manage several changes in a short time. I became the new Director in March of 2024 replacing Allison Murphy who went on to become the Director of the Scranton library in Madison. One of Allison's important contributions this past year is the "Goodspeed Good Neighbor" program with the Goodspeed Opera House. They offered free vouchers for two unsold tickets each week. This popular program had our phones ringing and people lining up!

We also welcomed Anastasia Wilson, a recent library school graduate and a long-time employee at the EHFPL Branch, as our new Children's Librarian in April. Anastasia brought with her an understanding of the whole community and many creative ideas for children's programs. Her summer reading program was a big success, and her events for children of all ages attracted many families. She's also reaching out to the home school community and her "Home School Hangout" is a popular new program.

With the help of a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, we've worked with a web designer to create a new logo and website for the East Haddam Library System. The logo is on the front page of this report, and the web page is planned to roll out at the beginning of April. We think you'll find it a refreshing and easily navigated tool.

Community alliances continue to grow. Last summer an East Haddam Land Trust board member asked if we could co-sponsor a nonfiction book club describing the new scientific studies about our forests and woodlands. We named it "Words from the Woods" and have had lively discussions each month. It's outgrowing our limited space so we're moving it offsite so everyone can attend!

Speaking of space, the planning for one new combined Library is continuing as we consider the best place for building it. Meanwhile both the EHFPL Branch and the Rathbun Branch continue to find ways to operate as one library system. We have monthly all staff library meetings. Pat Griswold and Joe Riley, our two branch managers and I also meet weekly. Both branches saw increased traffic and circulation as you'll see in the statistics provided. We love our beautiful buildings, but it's time to find a place where we can add conference rooms, study rooms, and 21stC services in one combined Library.



Here's to another productive and inspiring new year!

Evelyn Morgen, Director
East Haddam Library System

NUMBERS TO BE PROUD OF

25,064

Library visits for fiscal year 2023-24 – up 11%

53,823

Items borrowed from the library – up 17%

300

Total library programs for all ages – up 15%

7,842

Sessions on public computers – up 5%

2,903

Number of residents with library cards - up 8%



2024 Events

Month by Month

- ❖ **January:** Allison Murphy, Library Director, Resigned. Laurie Prichard appointed Interim Director. Karen VanZetten, Children's Librarian at Rathbun, retired
- ❖ **February:** Celebrated graduates of the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. Search Committee interviewed candidates for Director Position
- ❖ **March:** Evelyn Morgen hired as Library System Director with a start date of March 4, 2024. Grant received from CFMC to update Library Website
- ❖ **April:** Anastasia Wilson chosen as new Children's Librarian. The Goodspeed Opera House box office staff offered to continue the Good Neighbor Program.
- ❖ **May:** The Friends of the Rathbun sponsored a program featuring the Tanglewood Marionettes *Hansel & Gretel* production. Adults and children loved it!
- ❖ **June:** Kicked off our summer reading program with fun and games at the Grange for all ages. Paintball painting, hula hoops, Frisbees and more
- ❖ **July:** Hours at both branches extended from 4pm to 5pm. Summer reading programs included the Balloon Lady and a make your own stuffed toy
- ❖ **August:** Library staff worked with Maureen Sullivan to choose objectives for Strategic Plan. The East Haddam Land Trust offered to co-sponsor a book club
- ❖ **September:** Friends of Rathbun sponsored a delightful and well-attended Fairy House Workshop by the Florence Griswold Museum staff. Lovely creations
- ❖ **October:** East Haddam Friends held their book sale. Rathbun Friends hosted the popular Half Pint Hamlet. Library participated in Safe Halloween at MOC
- ❖ **November:** East Haddam Community Lions Club showcased their Light Up the Holidays auction at the Rathbun Library. The Holiday Market moved to the Grange Hall and Old Town Hall and raised \$700 in registration fees. The two Library Friends groups sponsored an Author Showcase - their first joint program. Very successful
- ❖ **December:** Library helped staff *Kids Night on the Green* event and Dawn Barlow, Board Chair, was Mrs. Claus riding in a firetruck with Santa. We also received a collection of Rathbun family letters from the grandchild of Louise Rathbun Higgins. Nancy Price, our historical collection expert, has them safely filed away.

Thank You!

There are so many ways you inspire us and provide support! We wouldn't be able to do all these things without your suggestions, your volunteer time, and your donations to our Friends, and your visits to our Libraries! Keep them coming!

Here's How:

If you would like to make a monetary donation to help fund future success for the library, please consider writing a check payable to the East Haddam Library System. Your tax-deductible contribution will help kickstart innovative programs, provide seed money for fundraising projects, and meet critical needs of the library system for which Town funds are not available.

You can also make a tax-deductible contribution to the East Haddam Free Public Library Friends or the Rathbun Free Memorial Friends. Both of these volunteer groups raise money all of which is used to support library programs. They are happy to welcome new members too!

