

M.G. Parker Library
Annual Town Report
2009

The M G Parker Library has experienced yet another very busy and strikingly similar year in 2009 compared to that of the previous twelve months. Fiscal concerns continue to plague the nation as well as impact locals, making the Library a necessity to the people of Dracut for recreational reading, job searching, and access to community events. Not unlike last year, townspeople are utilizing the library regularly and frequently as evidenced by the statistics which are tallied at the library. Patron attendance for calendar year 2009 totaling 161,231 reflected an increase of 13.6% from the previous calendar year. A 13.50% increase from 2008 concerning the total number of items checked out was 4th highest of the 35 libraries within in the Merrimac Valley Consortium. This statistic which accounted for 270,025 library items circulated such as books, magazines, music cd's etc, is testimony to the considerable impact that this library has made on the community.

The collection development of DVD's, Children's Books, Adult Fiction, Musical Compact Discs, Audio Books, and Periodicals all remained steady in terms of maintaining a collection which is both current and includes the necessary variety to sustain the people of Dracut. Early in the year, the VHS collection, with the exception of a few smaller sub collections within this grouping, was rendered inactive. DVD's which are smaller, of a higher quality, and more easily stored, have replaced the VHS collection. The advent of downloadable movies for home use, while still relatively new, maybe the next wave coming, however it is still in the early stages and we still do not know how this may play out and effect the Library's role in making this mode of access readily available.

Public computer access remains a large draw for patrons. It is especially important during these fiscally challenging times when households may be forced to cancel non-essential utilities such as cable or internet access. 19,535 computer usage events were tallied for 2009 and that was down significantly from 23,064 events of the previous year. Lack of sufficient bandwidth may have deterred patrons from utilizing the free access to the internet at the library. A specialized software was acquired allowing patrons to book their own museum passes online without having to appear in the Library. Feedback has been extremely positive and has spawned ideas and possibilities of additional online access to other offerings at the Library.

In July, due to a change in regulations from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissions, the Library was able to alter its required number of hours open. Thursday evening hours were chosen as the time frame that would be cut from the schedule as statistically it is the slowest evening at the Library. The change was received with minimal negative feedback, possibly due in large part to an active communication campaign alerting the patrons and allowing them time to plan for the schedule change.

Friends of Dracut Library ran several successful programs on behalf of the Library beyond the annual May book sale which included a wreath auction and a program which partnered with local restaurants. Through the generous and continued support of the Friends of the Dracut Library, museum passes continue to be a well received benefit of having a Dracut Library card.

The children's room has maintained its position as one that is indispensable to the Library. Last summer the Library's reading program hosted over 900 children, which is a new record for Dracut. Additionally, attendance at the afterschool groups for children in kindergarten through sixth grade was very active and increasing in membership, corroborating the theory that Library programs are not just for preschoolers and babies.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees,

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