

2016 Annual Report (UHLS)

TOWN OF WESTERLO PUBLIC LIBRARY (Westerlo)

Laura Tenney, Board President

Sue Hoadley, Director

This year the Library marked its 30th Anniversary of service to the Town of Westerlo. Our grand opening was held on June 8, 1986. The journey began in earnest ten years earlier when the town's national Bicentennial Committee established a public library fund with monies left over from the bicentennial celebrations. But, the big breakthrough came in December 1983, when Harold Bell donated his general store building to the Town in memory of his wife, Helen Taylor Bell.



For two and a half years, a variety of community organizations and individual volunteers dedicated innumerable hours renovating the building, which had no plumbing or central heating. Local librarians volunteered to catalog the books, most which had been donated. More volunteers typed thousands of catalog cards (sometimes wearing gloves in the unheated building during the winter) to get the books shelf-ready for the public.

Since then the Library has moved forward into the electronic age with high speed internet access, Wi-Fi, an on-line catalog and account management, all while maintaining our friendly personalized service, relaxed atmosphere and providing an ample selection of new items on the shelves for our browsing patrons.

This Library has been a community project from the beginning. We are committed to providing the highest level of library services to the people of Westerlo for many years to come!

In 2016, the Library was open to the public 29 hours per week, six days a week, for 303 days. 8375 children and adults entered the building. We circulated 16,827 items. Of those, 5857 items were borrowed from member libraries in the Upper Hudson system. In turn, we loaned 5783 items from our collection to patrons at the other member libraries. In addition to physical books, audios and movies, our patrons downloaded 1079 items of e-content from Overdrive in the form of e-books, audiobooks, videos and magazines. Our two public computers were used 1004 times and many more took advantage of our 24/7 WiFi service.

We offered 76 programs attended by 364 children and young adults. “Read to Angus,” the certified therapy dog, continued on a monthly basis. We participated in the State Summer Reading Program, held annually to encourage school-aged children to read for pleasure during summer vacation, with the theme “On Your Mark, Get Set, Read!” Our adult book discussion and quilting groups met 29 times with attendance of 101.

Library service to adults expanded with the creation of a new Memoir Writing Group in October. This group provides its members a supportive and accepting place to learn about the practice of remembering and writing. Led by Lila Hollister Smith, this group is open to all who are interested in self-expression through the art of writing. The group meets once a month on the second Saturday of each month.

The trustees raised \$345 at their annual Mother’s Day Book & Bake Sale in May. The Library received a \$500 grant from Stewart’s Charitable Foundation. We also raised \$950 in our Memorial Brick fundraising program for capital projects. And over the course of the year we received two major gifts totaling \$30,000 for our Capital Fund.

In 2016, the Library was awarded a 75% Public Library Construction Grant in the amount of \$75,000. The grant was matched by \$25,000 in library capital funds for a total project budget of \$100,000. The major focus of this project will be the creation of a new 600 square-foot program and community room in the space formerly occupied by the Town Museum. Construction will begin in early 2017.

Thanks to our dedicated trustees, staff and volunteers, we connect the Town of Westerlo to a world of ideas and information. We could not do it without the support of our Town Board and the community as a whole. Together we contribute to building a richer quality of life for all of the citizens of Westerlo.