

Cambridge Public Library  
FY16-17 Major Accomplishments

The Library launched its standing room only **Our Path Forward Series**, created to encourage public discourse, understanding of key issues and civic involvement. Programs have included a panel of leading local voices on immigration, civil rights, journalism and mass incarceration including Susan Church, chair of the American Immigration Lawyers of New England; a keynote talk by foreign policy expert and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns; a Democracy Day celebration with a public participatory reading of the Constitution and a special talk by US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer; and a media literacy workshop on fake news led by Adult Service librarians. Library staff also created guides to immigration and refugee resources, detecting fake news and a top 10 list of books to challenge perspectives.

The Main Library offered a new six-week **Beginner's Genealogy Workshop**. For two hours each week, staff lectured on genealogy and offered one-on-one help to 23 participants researching family history. This course included guest speakers and a tour of the City Clerk's vault. Participants received a certificate of completion at the end of the course. Additional summer and fall workshops are being scheduled based on waiting list demand.

The Library launched an early literacy initiative encouraging all children and families to read **1000 Books Before Kindergarten**. Sponsored by the Curious George Fund, the program was developed with the intent of expanding on communicating to families: 1) Reading is important 2) The Library is for you 3) You can do it. Participants receive a tote bag and a free book at registration, as well as free books from the Library the more they read toward this goal. When children reach 1000, they receive a t-shirt celebrating their achievement. The program launched in September and, to date, 1800 children have registered and are actively reading. 75 of those readers have already reached 1000 books!

The Library organized the first annual **Margret and H. A. Rey Curious George Lecture Series**, which connects children and their families to the magic of reading through a memorable experience with an author or illustrator. For this inaugural event, we hosted **Kate DiCamillo**, a two-time Newbery award-winning author and former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. The Library lecture hall was packed with grade school children who have found inspiration and joy in Kate's work.

During the **2016 Summer Reading Program**, the Library presented 241 public programs at its 6 open locations and hosted 11,900 participants. We also circulated 73,280 books and 11,073 audiovisual items. In addition, Youth Services librarians made 50 visits to camps, parks and other locations outside of the Library to deliver stories, songs and art to children and families throughout the city.

A **Laptop Kiosk** was unveiled at the Main Library in September. Purchased by the Friends of the Library, the Kiosk represents best practice in terms of providing access to public computers. People without a personal laptop can now enjoy the same experience as those who own their own devices – to be able to take a laptop to any area of the Library to work. The automated checkout, return, charging and software resets that the Kiosk automates makes this service feasible. In nine months, more than 4400 people have checked out a Windows or Macintosh laptop for 3 hour sessions. The longer sessions have facilitated people taking exams, applying for work, and working collaboratively

with others. It has proven extremely popular with teens; all 12 laptops are often checked out on weekday afternoons.

With Egov funding, the Library purchased two **hotspots** which allow us to take Sierra (the Library's circulation and catalog software) with us to remote locations. Now with a tablet in hand, staff are signing people up for library cards, checking out books, placing reserves and answering reference questions in parks, senior living facilities and schools, at events anywhere in the city, and from anywhere within the Main Library building.

The **renovation of the Boudreau and O'Connell branches** were significant projects this year – neither branch had been thoroughly renovated since opening – 36 and 74 years ago respectively. At the Boudreau Branch, the entire interior was painted, and the furniture and service desk restored. The collection was evaluated and shifted to increase seating in both the adult and youth sections. This smallest branch in the system reopened with 50% more seats, new windows and doors. With both Cambridge Preservation Award and municipal funding, the O'Connell Branch had energy efficient replicas of the original windows and a more historically accurate (and ADA compliant) front door installed. All exterior woodwork and internal architectural details were refurbished. New furniture and rugs were purchased and additional computers installed. The renovation was recently acknowledged with a Cambridge Historical Commission Preservation Award.

#### **New formats made available at the Library for the first time this year:**

Responding to patron demand, the Library acquired **two new digital streaming services** in April, Hoopla, which offers access to music, movies, audiobooks, e-books, comics and television shows and Flipster, which offers full page browsing of our most popular magazines. The Library also acquired Launchpads; for children – think indestructible ipad with entertaining and developmentally appropriate content, and for adults - lifelong learning and mental acuity ranging from studying French or playing Sudoku. **VOX** is the latest innovation in children's audio books – it's a traditional book that can also read the story – no CD's to manipulate. **Cell-phone power cords and circulating bike locks** were added to each library location for patron convenience.

Main Library and O'Neill Branch were two of the five **early voting locations** in Cambridge, together collecting 8775 ballots and almost half of all early voting ballots collected across the city.

The Library hit a **new library card registration milestone!** In August, we signed up 1,183 patrons—the last time we registered so many new patrons was 1182 in July 2013.