

# PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Sounds Like Summer concert series, underwritten by the Friends of the Edgartown Free Public Library, featured live performances by Island bands and drew enthusiastic crowds every week in July and August.

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Edgartown:

*“Our Mission: We remain responsive and relevant to the needs of both our local and global community by maintaining our tradition of excellence in service, fostering lifelong learning, and enriching the lives of the community we serve. We are committed to maintaining equitable access to information and ideas in a continually-evolving public library that is welcoming to all.*

*“Our Vision: The library will be recognized as a civic anchor of the town, a partner with other agencies, organizations, and services, and a dynamic contributor to the town’s cultural and educational well-being.”*

These core statements frame the Edgartown Free Public Library’s Strategic Plan for years 2020 to 2024, a document formally adopted in October by the Library Board of Trustees. The 27-page plan, available on the “About Us” page of the library website, charts strategies that will enable the library to grow, evolve, and continue to respond to the needs of our community for the next five years and beyond.

The opening of Edgartown’s new library building in March 2016 was a milestone in the history of this 128-year-old institution. Now, as we look to the completion of our first four years in this new facility and the beginning of the fifth, is the time to heed the words of Henry David Thoreau: “If you have built castles in the air . . . that is

where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.”

Maintaining the high standard of professional service that our patrons have come to expect is a central goal for the Edgartown Public Library. From training newly hired staff, to preparing technical manuals for such library resources as AV equipment, to providing opportunities for professional development, this will continue to be a primary focus. In 2019, the library began offering scheduled weekly sessions of one-on-one help for patrons with questions about use of their personal computers, phones and other technology. At year’s end, the library was making plans together with its sister institutions across the Island to institute fine-free lending for all materials. Looking ahead, the library plans to bolster its presence online with its monthly email newsletter, its website, and on social media platforms.

Youth services is the fastest-expanding front for the

library staff, which is still growing into the possibilities presented by our proximity to the Edgartown School next door. The Children’s Room is a bustling center of activity every day after school, and all through the day during the busy summer season. The library continues to connect with collaborating organizations in the community, from Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary and the FARM Institute to the Family Center at Community Services, offering programs that enrich the lives of our youngest patrons. And Young Adult Game Night has become a fixture of the week for a number of teens who happily



Story hour with Children’s Librarian Elyce Retmier.



Virginia Munro leads her popular winter class, Adventures in Slow Cooking.

turn their phones off and engage each other in play, the old-fashioned way.

Programming for all ages is another important focus, as we continue to explore the possibilities offered by the library's Program Room. In 2019 the library offered a series of gallery displays by Island artists, book talks and poetry readings by Island authors, and informative workshops on topics from the college admissions process to marketing on Facebook and Instagram. The library partnered with AARP to provide counseling at tax time, and with the Edgartown Council on Aging to provide tutoring for iPad users. Library music programs ranged from choral music to a Celtic duo, from the Scottish Society Singers to the MV Spirituals Choir and The Pinkletinks, a favorite Island band that gives concerts for children. And as always, the Sounds Like Summer series of concerts on the library lawn (and indoors when it rains) was a popular favorite with all ages.

In the Program Room, there were curated movies presented almost every week, cake-decorating classes for children, guitar and ukulele lessons, slow-cooker classes for adults, public forums sponsored by the Vineyard Mediation Project and the League of Women Voters, and a wide variety of meetings involving outside community groups, from Island educators to police officers, from neighborhood associations to Edgartown town hall staff. The Martha's Vineyard Vegan Society distributed free food on all but the busiest summer months of the year, and the Island Grown Initiative served several free family lunches during the winter season. And for one weekend day in November, the Program Room became a shopper's paradise for hundreds of visitors to the library's fourth annual Clothing Swap event.

Continuing to build high quality, innovative and diverse programming for all ages that entertains, educates, sparks dialogue, and brings our community together is an important goal of the library's Strategic Plan for the next five years.

At the public forums that launched the library's strategic planning process back in June 2018, many citizen participants were surprised to learn that the Edgartown Library maintains such a diverse collection and offers such a broad array of services and programs at a cost that represents only a bit over 2 percent of the town's total operating budget. In fact, the richness of the library's programming throughout the year is made possible by the Friends of the Edgartown Free Public Library, who raise essential financial support with events, fund drives and fund-raising sales throughout the year. The

Friends entirely underwrite such vital library programs as the Sounds Like Summer concert series and the children's summer reading program. The Edgartown Library's calendar would be much sparser without the support of this dedicated group, and their work is greatly appreciated by the staff and trustees.



Painting lantern globes in a summer crafts program.

The reach of the Edgartown Library extends far beyond our physical building, thanks to the increasing richness of the materials offered to our patrons online. The Overdrive service of the CLAMS library network, at year's end, included 7,855 downloadable audiobooks and 30,883 e-book titles. And in 2019, eight of the Commonwealth's largest library networks agreed to share electronic materials—





A cozy nook of the Children's Room makes the perfect spot to enjoy a picture book together.

which means an Edgartown patron's card now gives access to digital titles from across the state. On behalf of our patrons, the Edgartown Library also subscribes to Kanopy, an excellent source of curated films from around the world; to Hoopla, a digital media provider with a rich catalogue, and to Mango, a powerful language learning service.

On any given day at the Edgartown Public Library, a college student may be taking a proctored exam in one of the upstairs study rooms while the weekly knitting group meets in another. Old friends might be catching up over coffee (provided by the Friends) at one of the tables downstairs, while children enjoy a creative crafts project or story hour and adult patrons read today's newspapers. Upstairs, the public computers are busy with patrons checking mail, printing and scanning documents. One staff member might be setting out chairs in the Program Room for the evening's documentary or international film—perhaps an Opera Club program—while another steps from behind the circulation desk to lead a patron to a book they were seeking. At a table by the front entrance, a parent and child might be deep into a game of chess while other patrons browse the giveaway shelves of free books and videos.

Each day at the library in 2019 was unique and filled with opportunities to assist and educate, to foster social connections, to enrich the lives of the community we serve. For seizing each of these opportunities, for creating such a consistently welcoming space at the center of Edgartown's civic life, we are deeply grateful to the staff, to the Friends, and to all the supporters of the Edgartown Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Edgartown Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
 Olga Maranjian Church, Co-Chair (2022)  
 David Faber, Co-Chair (2020)  
 Herb Foster, Secretary (2021)  
 Justine Shemeth DeOliveira, (2022)  
 Julie Lively (2021)  
 Chris Scott (2020)

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 EDGARTOWN, MA 02539  
 (508) 627-4221

Trustees meet on third Thursday of each month.

### LIBRARY STAFF

Lisa Horton Sherman, Director  
 Eric J. Alexander, Department Assistant  
 Elyce Retmier, Children's Librarian  
 Thomas Ignacio, Circulation Supervisor  
 Nis Kildegaard, Reference Librarian  
 Alison Leslie, Technical Services Librarian  
 Virginia Munro, Programs Coordinator/  
 Library Assistant  
 Christopher Look IV, Library Assistant  
 Rosa Parker, Library Assistant

[www.edgartownlibrary.org](http://www.edgartownlibrary.org)

## Facts at a Glance

*fiscal year ending 6/30/2019*

Collection size.....	86,510
Books .....	35,661
Subscriptions.....	104
Audio CDs .....	2,515
Video .....	8,376
Downloadable audio .....	7,855
Downloadable books.....	30,883
Circulation.....	88,878
Edgartown residents holding library cards .....	2,419
Edgartown library cards total .....	6,674
Volunteers .....	32
Volunteer hours .....	1,010
Total number of programs held at the library .....	712
Total attendance at programs.....	13,789
Total annual foot traffic.....	97,143

