

# PUBLIC LIBRARY



In June, the staff transformed the program room into a quarantine space for returned library materials.

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

In January 2020, The Martha's Vineyard Library Association, a consortium of all six Island libraries, launched the Fine Free MV initiative, eliminating overdue fines for all Martha's Vineyard library cardholders. Waiving past fines impacted 7,374 Island library patrons. This initiative was an effort to remove barriers to library services and make access easy, equitable and enjoyable for all.

Little did we know at that time that the libraries' entire service model would be put to the test just two months later in March, almost four years to the day since the new Edgartown library building opened to the public.

January and February saw the usual steady pace of winter life at the library. Adult programming during these months included programs coordinator Virginia Munro's Fat Free Film Festival, weekly dance classes, opera club, slow cooking class, book group, drop-in knitting, tech time appointments, and the MV Vegan Society's healthy foods giveaway. The library held its first Great Edgartown Type-in, welcoming patrons to the program room to explore reference librarian Nis Kildegaard's collection of vintage typewriters. The library also hosted community forums, including a renewable energy forum and housing rehabilitation information session. In the children's room, kids stopped by daily after school to do craft projects and homework, toddlers attended weekly open paint sessions, and the Family Center held their Discovery Days program on Friday mornings. Teens dropped in weekly to attend game nights and book clubs.

In February, special programs at the library included the premiere of *A Beautiful Place to Die: A Martha's Vineyard Mystery*, a Hallmark Channel film based on Island author Philip Craig's novel. Edgartown Police Sgt. Jamie Craig, the author's son, introduced the film. Nancy Jephcote gave a concert of live music. The library hosted a town hearing on VTA charging stations and another renewable energy talk. The children's room buzzed with after-school activities

including a cake decorating workshop, Valentine's Day crafts, live music with Sara Piazza, Zumba classes with Julie Meader, and a big birthday party for Clifford the Big Red Dog, with special guests Emily Elizabeth (daughter of author Norman Bridwell), her mother Norma Bridwell, and several boisterous puppies from Sandy Paws Rescue Inc., all available for adoption.

February also saw the retirement of reference librarian Nis Kildegaard after almost fourteen years of service. Nis left his imprint on the library in myriad ways, including the design of the library's Carnegie window logo and the creation of such interesting programs as Edgartown 101, a six-week civic literacy series which featured Edgartown officials describing their roles in Town government, which won the state library association's top award for public programs in 2009.

March began with a successful fundraiser event at Offshore Ale hosted by the Friends of the Edgartown Library. A new film series began, as did the Anchor's AARP Tax Assistance program which is offered annually in March and April in the program room. A free four-part Conflict Resolution Course with the MV Mediation Program kicked off on the first Saturday of the month. The Children's Room held another cake decorating class. Felix Neck brought reptiles to an after-school program.

On Friday, March 13, all town departments were instructed to close for a period of two weeks effective Monday, March 16 due to concerns related to the novel coronavirus. Almost immediately, the CLAMS network had a shared spreadsheet reflecting current status of operations, while flurries of emails inundated library directors' inboxes daily with emerging information. As libraries, schools, and other government buildings were shutting down, online library conferences and workshops were being offered at the state level to inform and educate libraries on newly developing procedures and protocols, and library staff shifted toward promoting remote services and access to online databases and materials. It was not lost on this staff that the building's



Nis Kildegaard filled the program room with three dozen vintage machines in January for the Great Edgartown Type-In, and typists of all ages sampled them.

sudden closure provided a tremendous opportunity to spotlight existing digital resources for patrons who needed access more than ever. It also became urgent to resolve issues of delivery management, communication via website, social media and newsletters, inventorying of cleaning supplies, and ensuring that staff had adequate remote access in order to stay connected and provide service. Such new phrases as flattening the curve, social distancing, quarantining, deep cleaning, and PPE quickly became part of the daily lexicon.

In April, the library newsletter highlighted the network's existing digital offerings, which included Kanopy, a streaming video service, Hoopla digital media service with free access to movies and ebooks, Mango language learning (and Little Pim for children), and Libby (by Overdrive), the app that provides access to the CLAMS catalog and offers library patron account management. As the year went on, library newsletters spotlighted access to a growing spectrum of free digital offerings including The Great Courses, Lynda.com, Headspace meditation app, The HistoryMakers, and access to the Jazz Music Library. Library staff learned to provide online programs via Zoom and Facebook Live; highlights included the Living Room Readings with Fan Ogilvie and Arnie Reisman, and a live story hour every morning with children's librarian Elyce Retmier.

In May, the Martha's Vineyard library directors developed a comprehensive Phased Resumption of Full Services Plan that was shared with all Island staff and town officials. Outlining six service phases, it was implemented at every Island library. Protocols addressed all levels of service and operations – from entering and exiting the building to materials pickup and handling, computer access and use, library interior space use, and at-home delivery of library materials.

The staff prepared the interior library space for contactless material pickup service, rearranging all service desks to follow distancing guidelines, purchasing and installing acrylic dividers for safety, and developing internal staff protocols, service guidelines, and operational procedures. Newly developed virtual platforms enabled programs coordinator Virginia Munro

to provide such programs as weekly Restorative Yoga classes with former library assistant and Florida resident Jelisa Difo, classes that enjoyed a regular following throughout the year.

Contactless pickup of materials began on Monday, June 15, after a building closure of three months. Staff were overjoyed to once again be able to provide library materials and interact with the community, and patrons expressed much positive feedback at having a small piece of their physical library back. June also saw the expansion of the library's free WiFi network to the big parking lot. Town elections in June, postponed from April, brought a new member to the Library Board of Trustees: Denise Searle, who

previously served as trustee during the library's building project, replaced Chris Scott, whose contributions to the library as both a building committee member and library trustee were immeasurable.

The summer months saw a flowering of virtual programs and collaborations, including poetry readings, author talks, performances by Island musicians, a film discussion group, restorative yoga, Magic the Gathering, weekly Dungeons and Dragons for teens, opera listening class, the Men Will



Department Assistant Eric Alexander helps a patron at the library's vestibule, which was converted to a contactless materials pickup area.

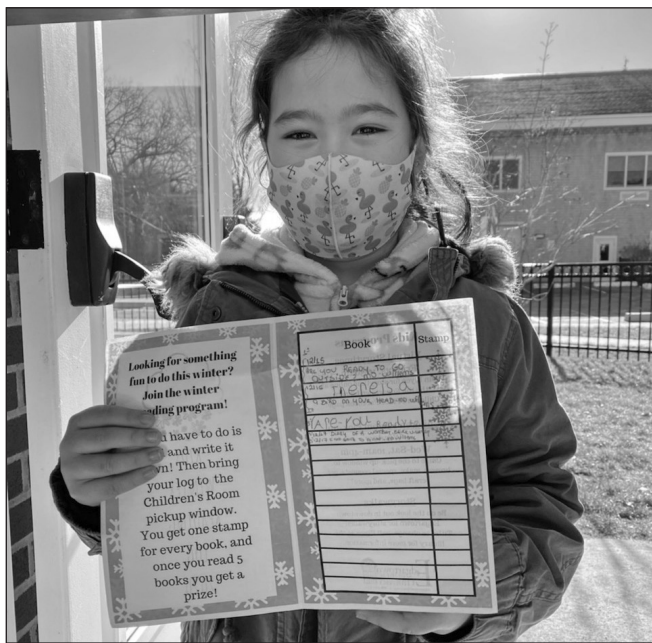
Grill cooking series, iPad workshops with Kathy Lavieri, and the fascinating "Zoom U" series, which featured in-depth looks at various subjects including photography, archaeology, and ornithology. The summer reading program was modified to accommodate remote recording of books read, and special online story hours for children were presented by guest readers, including authors Kate Feiffer and Tara Reynolds, as well as Sheriff Bob Ogden, Kara Shemeth from the Edgartown Fire Department, Ryan



New Reference Librarian Rizwan Malik shared his culinary skills in the library's Men Will Grill series of cooking programs.

Ofsthun from Felix Neck, Ben Retmier from Tri Town Ambulance, and Sarah McKay from the Misty Meadows Equine Learning Center.

In August, curbside hours were expanded to six days per week, and the library introduced a new outdoor seating area with tables and umbrellas to provide comfortable access to the library's free WiFi. Legendary Island pianist David Crohan donated his Mason & Hamlin grand piano to the library. The beautiful instrument was delivered in mid-September and awaits the day when patrons can once again gather in the program room and enjoy live music.



A young patron shares her completed Winter Reading Challenge log.

August witnessed the sudden passing of beloved Friend of the Library, Mary Jane Carpenter. Mary Jane shared her many talents, energy and infectious enthusiasm as a member of the Friends for more than a decade. Her positivity, graceful leadership, and many

contributions to the library are acutely missed.

In the fall, as schools introduced limited opening plans, the libraries maintained contactless service while bolstering online services and digital offerings. Links to the library's newest and hottest titles in CLAMS were made easily available both in the monthly newsletter and on the website. Credits for Hoopla and Kanopy were increased from 10 to 30 checkouts per month to provide patrons more access to materials and streaming videos. Five new WiFi hotspots were purchased and introduced for checkout, and free online access to the Wall Street Journal was offered.

Facing a difficult winter, the library continued to embrace the value in providing engaging programming and services to foster the well-being of all patrons. The library's program calendar was filled with workshops, musical performances, poetry readings, book group discussions, film discussion groups, live children's story times, and author talks. The



Children's Librarian Elyce Retmier provided young patrons with access to make special requests for checkout.

children's room expanded services when children's librarian Elyce Retmier opened up the garden door so that young patrons could browse new books through the windows and safely make special requests for checkout. Elyce also developed a winter reading challenge to encourage young readers, and handed out hundreds of themed craft bags. The children's room also collaborated with the Edgartown Board of Trade in presenting a downtown Story Walk, which featured well-loved children's books.

In November, home delivery to Edgartown residents was introduced to reach patrons who didn't feel safe using the library's contactless pickup area. Sidney Morris generously enabled the library to extend this service to the residents of Chappaquiddick. All six Island libraries collaborated to provide Brainfuse HelpNow, a free online program that offers academic assistance and live tutors for all students, including adult learners.

When nearly 100 families lined up outdoors for a socially distant visit with a masked Santa in December, it was a



A masked Santa greets a young visitor.

poignant reminder of what the library staff and patrons have missed most: community, connection, and gathering together.

As the library looked back on what is no doubt the most unique year in its 116-year history, the most stunning numbers involved digital materials checkouts. Patrons' embrace of online platforms was clear in the statistics: January through March (pre-pandemic) saw a 7% increase in e-circulation over the same period in 2019. March through June, the first months of the pandemic, saw a 72% surge in eBook and audiobook checkouts over the previous year. The summer months saw a 32% increase, and fall months saw a 53% increase. The library staff kept pace with the many requests for technical assistance with equipment and databases, new library card applications, and suggestions for eBook purchases throughout the year.

In December, the Edgartown Library received a three-star rating in a national ranking of *Library Journal's* annual review of public libraries. *Library Journal* reviews public library data reported to the government including visits, checkouts, program attendance, e-material circulation, public computer use and WiFi sessions per capita, and ranks the best performing libraries within budget categories. A total of 5,608 US libraries were rated across the country, and only 262 qualified as star libraries. This recognition ends our year on a positive note.

We look ahead to a brighter future: with deep gratitude for the library staff who provide exemplary service, the Friends of the Edgartown Free Public Library who continue to make our programs possible, and for the community it is our pleasure to serve. Thanks so much for your support.

Edgartown Free Public Library Board of Trustees

OLGA MARANJIAN CHURCH, Co-Chair (2022)

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Trustees meet on the third Thursday of each month.

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#### LIBRARY STAFF

LISA HORTON SHERMAN, Director  
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ELYCE RETMIER, Children's Librarian  
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CHRISTOPHER LOOK IV, Library Assistant  
KERITH MCFADDEN, Library Assistant  
ROSA PARKER, Library Assistant

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

### Facts at a Glance

*fiscal year ending 6/30/2020*

Collection size.....	81,629
Books .....	35,426
Subscriptions.....	90
Audio CDs .....	1,924
Video .....	7,134
Downloadable audio .....	9,294
Downloadable books.....	25,193
Circulation.....	82,801
Edgartown residents holding library cards .....	2,216
Edgartown library cards total .....	6,066
Volunteers .....	22
Volunteer hours .....	662
Total number of programs held at the library .....	683
Total attendance at programs.....	15,479
Total annual foot traffic.....	67,283

