

PUBLIC LIBRARY



A highlight of 2023 was the August concert given by David Crohan on the grand piano he donated to the library in 2020.

To the Honorable Select Board and the Citizens of Edgartown:

In 2023, the Edgartown Public Library continued to expand its mission as a vital hub of civic life—maintaining our tradition of excellent service, fostering life-long learning, and partnering with other Island assets to enhance our community’s educational and cultural well-being.

The children’s room was visited by thousands of patrons—including both local and visiting families as well as students—all year round. Children’s Librarian Elyce Retmier offered a weekly story hour that encouraged movement and song and drew upwards of 75 participants each week during our busiest months, as well as a roster of weekly programs throughout the year that included a toddler paint group, a drop-in Play-Doh group, weekly Fit Camp class with personal trainer Bonnie Kingsbury, Musical Mondays, Flashback Fridays, and Discovery Days, a joint program with the Family Center. During the school year, hundreds of kids utilized the children’s room after school to unwind, do homework, play outside, and visit with friends. Every Tuesday afternoon, Maria Moreira taught basic cooking to an eager (and hungry) crew; many kids reported bringing their newly acquired skills home to their own kitchens.

The children’s room hosted another exciting summer reading program for our youngest patrons. A record 408 readers participated in this year’s program, whose theme was “All Together Now.” Prizes for readers were donated by local businesses, including Edgartown Meat & Fish, Dairy Queen, Edgartown Pizza, Great Harbor Market, and Rosewater Market & Takeaway. The library

deeply appreciates the generous and ongoing support of Edgartown’s business community toward our children’s room programming.

For the fourth year in a row, Chris Look also led teens in five separate Dungeons & Dragons campaigns, continuing to engage a creative and dedicated group of kids every week.

For adults, the library offered regular monthly programs as well as a menu of fresh offerings. Regular weekly programs included a drop-in knitting group with master knitter Cindy Bonnell, restorative yoga classes with Department Assistant Jelisa Difo, Vinyasa yoga classes with Colleen Macsuga, and the library’s popular Salt Water Wednesdays series, where patrons learned how to properly handle (and sample) various seafood, including oysters, scallops, and clams. New Programs Coordinator Claudia Taylor launched a four-part introductory Mah Jongg class, in partnership with local Mah Jongg game experts and teachers, which transitioned into weekly drop-in sessions and drew a regular group of players.

Brand new offerings for adult patrons included Saturday morning sound baths, using crystal singing bowls and other instruments to create a relaxing soundscape. Dukes County Register of Deeds Paulo DeOliveira led a program on researching real estate records. Yoga teacher Molly Flam introduced prenatal yoga classes, and Friend of the Library and pianist Adele Dreyer gave a musical presentation featuring works by Chopin, Schubert, and Bach. Patrons enjoyed a live performance by musician Maryse Smith, a book talk with author Ursula Goodenough and photographer Maria Thibodeau, and a talk on ayurvedic practices. Donald Nitchie offered online poetry workshops, and

local band Workman's Song performed in the program room. Delia De Mello offered an in-person program on Social Security benefits, and Sonja Josephson and Jacqueline Foster taught a class on common pantry herbs that can provide healing properties. Director Len Morris and producer Petra Lent followed a screening of their film *Butterfly, Butterfly* with an audience Q&A. Pamela Means gave a musical presentation on the Power of the Protest Song. Author Thomas Dresser stopped by to discuss his new book about the Roaring 20s on Martha's Vineyard, and Friend of the Library and poet Ellie Bates discussed her new collection of poetry, *Seasonal Wonderings*. Artist Jeanne Staples taught an introductory oil painting workshop, and teacher and artist Julie Brand taught a watercolor workshop. Katherine Scheidler discussed her book *Renegade Teacher*, and Naomi Goldberg Haas offered a class on modern dance. Island birding expert Robert Culbert led a solstice bird walk, and Juneteenth was celebrated with a widely attended family picnic and concert by Boston-based singer/songwriter Andrew Sue Wing. Jade Alicandro discussed beach medicine and medicinal herbs found along coastal areas of New England. Richard Johnson came by to discuss ticks and tick-borne



Author Charlaine Hunter-Gault discusses her book, *My People*, with her daughter, Suesan Stovall, in the Program Room.

illnesses on Martha's Vineyard, including the emerging alpha gal syndrome. Charlaine Hunter-Gault discussed her book *My People*, in conversation with her daughter, artist and singer Suesan Stovall. Sherry Sidoti discussed her new memoir, *A Smoke and a Song*, in conversation with author Paul Samuel Dolman. Author Steven Raichlen talked about his new book on barbecuing, and there was a film screening and discussion with producer Michael Collins on his film *By My Side*. Author Antonia Deignan discussed her memoir, *Underwater Daughter*, and the library held its second annual Disability Pride Party, a celebration with food, music, and dancing. Online programs included a job-seekers networking group, a talk on the Harlem Renaissance with art historian Janet Mandel, a talk about how NASA is combating climate change, and an author talk with Erica Cirino on her book *Thicker Than Water: The Quest for Solutions to the Plastic Crisis*. In the fall, Programs Coordinator Claudia Taylor brought the popular weekly international film series back to the library, and encouraged patrons to participate in a statewide read-in.

A new season of art exhibits were on display in the library's program room during the summer months. Photographer Peter Dreyer displayed his work in June. In July, a month-long exhibit was held for artist Bill Buckley. August concluded the summer exhibit season with photographer Bruce Mathew's beautiful and ethereal work, inspired by the natural world.



Afternoon reading: a good book and a cozy chair in the library's main lobby.

Our busiest season also brought the return of the library's Sounds Like Summer music series, a tradition now a decade and a half old. The series was kicked off in July by local musician Willy Mason. Weekly performers included favorites such as The Jeremy Berlin Trio, The Joel Harrison Quartet, Jon Zeeman, Johnny Hoy & the Bluefish, The Jaywalkers, and Missis Biskis, as well as a new act, jazz guitarist Abe Ovadia.

The library also partnered with IGI from late June through August to offer free lunches Monday through Friday. Hundreds of Island families took advantage of these delicious meals.

Beloved Island musician David Crohan visited the library in mid-August and played to a standing-room-only crowd on the Mason & Hamlin piano he generously donated to the library in August 2020. His performance included personal anecdotes, several encores, and a standing ovation.

Library Assistant (and former chef) Chris Look had a busy year of cooking demos, both in person and online. The year began with his online Chef Look series, teaching viewers how to make everything from bao buns to scallion pancake pizzas. In February, he introduced an in-person Dough Series, where he demonstrated how to make empanadas, pasta, bao buns, and scallion pancakes, with plenty of samples for tasting. The Chef Look Cooks series continued online throughout the summer months, and in September transitioned to in-person classes, closing out the fall months with his very popular Batter Series, teaching an engaged audience how to make waffles, crepes, Takoyaki, and cornbread.

Music and art were highlights of fall programming. Photographer Alida O'Loughlin's work was on exhibit in the program room, and the library hosted a three-week concert series funded by the Friends of the Library and the MV Bank Charitable Foundation that included local musicians Rose Guerin, Johnny Hoy & the Bluefish, and the Lucas Ostinato Trio. The Martha's Vineyard Chamber Music Society presented a concert to a full audience, and Opera Club made its return with Sunday afternoon screenings.

In mid-December, Director Lisa Sherman proposed an initiative recognizing that the foundation of a great library is a great staff. The Library Board of Trustees voted to support sending seven full-time staff members to a three-day national library conference in spring 2024, supported in part by a grant from the Herb and Anita Foster Staff Education Fund. The Board is proud of this initiative to

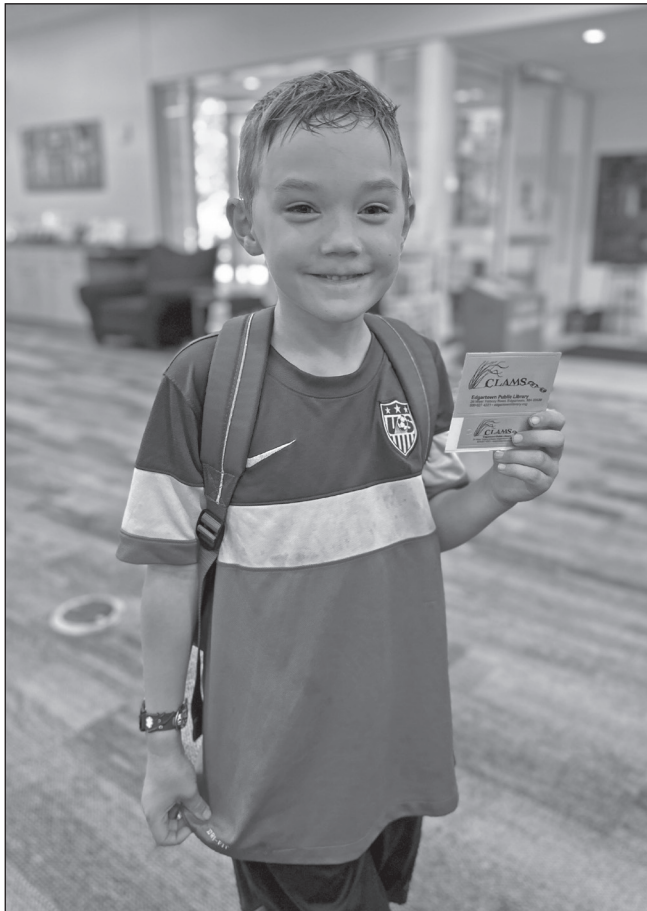


The secret of a great library: a great staff. From left are three of them—Department Assistant Jelisa Difo, Children's Librarian Elyce Retmier and Angela Luckey, Circulation Supervisor.

invest in our talented and valued staff because it will directly benefit the community that we serve.

The library continued to strengthen its partnership with the Council on Aging through a variety of in-house and off-site programs. Throughout the year, Reference and Technology Librarian Rizwan Malik scheduled monthly Tech Time sessions at The Anchors, giving seniors one-on-one assistance with all manner of tech challenges. This is a service that is always available at the library, but the importance of offering tech help in-person at The Anchors, an environment seniors regularly frequent and feel comfortable visiting, cannot be overstated. The library staff believes strongly in providing service where it is needed. Early in the year, the library also partnered with the Council on Aging to bring the AARP Tax Aide Program to the library, offering free income tax preparation services to residents to help them navigate the increasingly online nature of the income tax return process. Technology trainer Kathy Lavieri also offered several in-person iPad tutorial sessions in the library's program room throughout the year in collaboration with The Anchors.

The Friends of the Library provide year-round financial support for a significant portion of library programming. Their support is essential to providing the wide array of enriching programs and events that our patrons enjoy,



Library joy: Sam Ignacio receives his first library card.

and we are grateful for the many fundraisers, events, open houses, and volunteer hours that this group gives to support the library. In addition to providing library program funding, the group also oversees an ongoing partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which provides free age-appropriate books to registered Edgartown children from birth until age five, and currently provides monthly books for more than 50 local children.

Early in the year, the Friends held their first Herb and Anita Foster Staff Education Fund fundraising event, dedicated to supporting library staff professional development. Some fifty participants braved the weather to attend the event, hosted by Herb and Anita's daughter Donna Foster and with music by Missis Biskis. We thank this volunteer organization for their ongoing support of the library and our community.

Edgartown Free Public Library Board of Trustees

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Trustees meet on the second Thursday of each month.

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LIBRARY STAFF

LISA HORTON SHERMAN, Director
JELISA DIFO, Department Assistant
ELYCE RETMIER, Children's Librarian
ANGELA LUCKEY, Circulation Supervisor
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CLAUDIA TAYLOR, Programs Coordinator/Library Assistant
CHRISTOPHER LOOK IV, Library Assistant
ROSA PARKER, Library Assistant
BARBARA KEANE, Library Assistant

www.edgartownlibrary.org

Facts at a Glance

fiscal year ending 6/30/2023

Collection size.....	90,789
Books	34,686
Subscriptions.....	57
Audio CDs	1,942
Video	7,813
Downloadable audio	12,592
Downloadable books.....	32,408
Circulation.....	106,722
Edgartown residents holding library cards	2,136
Edgartown library cards total	5,143
Volunteers	91
Volunteer hours	345
Total number of library programs, live and virtual	577
Total attendance at programs.....	11,299
Total annual foot traffic	68,893

