

East Brunswick Public Library 2013 Annual Report

The East Brunswick Public Library, the Townships' house of knowledge, continues to be a place of enormous activity and engagement. In 2013, residents borrowed 684,000 items from the library's collection; that amounts to 220 items every hour the library was open! Every month approximately 33,000 residents visit the library building with almost 66,000 visiting us remotely each month through the EBPL website. This past year, our residents requested, from the comfort of their homes, 10,000 items to be pulled off the shelves and held, to be picked up at their convenience.

The Information Services librarians and Customer Service representatives responded to 250 information requests daily. Our staff continues to go the extra mile to get what residents want by locating and receiving 3,591 items from other libraries across the state and country. In response to the changing interests of our customers the library added the new Global Insights Database, aimed at the business community; the Jobs/Intern Database to help job seekers find "*real-time job postings*" and the Gale Health & Wellness Resource Center Database to support health literacy. In 2013 our online databases received over 300,000 searches and the library-created Health Portal, wellinks.org, received 223,000 visitors.

Adult Services librarians engaged our community with book discussion groups, English as a Second Language classes, musical programs, lectures, and created the first Adult Summer Reading Book Club, which attracted sixty adult participants. Special programs drew numerous attendees, none more so than April's Holocaust Remembrance program where 200 people listened to Dr. Michael Kesler, an East Brunswick Holocaust survivor. Other unique oral history programs included "Survivor Stories" wherein Chanty Jong shared her experience of escaping Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, and "Celebrating Negro League Baseball" wherein Bob Scott, a Negro League baseball veteran, recalled his time spent with the Black Yankees which was sponsored by a grant from the NJ Council for Humanities.

In 2013 the Youth Services Department expanded the slate of programming offered to customers. In response to resident requests for increased STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programming, the department developed a monthly Science Scene program, which educates, entertains, and engages children on a different topic each month. The department continued the popular Lego Engineering programs and Duplo playtimes for younger children. YS librarians continued to offer a full slate of regular story times, craft and music activities, visiting performers, and school visits. In addition, the department debuted a popular new Yoga story time and purchased manipulative toys for toddlers to play with after story times to encourage physical play among children and create a space for community caregivers to meet and mingle.

One core mission of the Youth Services department is getting children ready to read and develop pre-reading skills so they are ready for kindergarten. To support this goal, the Youth Services department began a series of initiatives aimed at increasing the collection's accessibility. The first of these was aimed at increasing the browsability of the department's extensive picture book collection. Recognizing that caregivers (and children) often want easy access to picture books about specific topics, librarians created three subcollections – transportation books, princess books, and concept (alphabet, numbers, colors) books. The

success of these subcollections has been phenomenal: in December, 70% of the princess books and almost 40% of the transportation and concept books circulated!

The Information Technology department, which includes the oversight of EBTV, is the engine in the background running the many services offered by the library. In 2013 a significant amount of IT staff time was devoted to migrating EBTV onto new High Definition systems. In addition, IT staff improved existing library workflows and business processes, including making changes to the website and library catalog, offering more staff training for library and township staff, updating computer hardware and software and leasing new copiers.

The Library is particularly proud of the many awards that EBTV won at this year's "*JAM Video Awards Festival*," - eleven videos entered were finalists in their category and seven took home the top trophy.

The Library's Business Resource Center (BRC) continued to prosper in 2013 by proactively forging partnerships with external organizations under the guidance of our BRC Leadership Team. These partnerships enabled us to better understand the needs of our local businesses and job seekers and respond by offering targeted workshops and training. We were privileged to partner with New Jersey Library Association, SCORE, the Internal Revenue Service, Central Jersey Business Alliance, the Middlesex County Workforce Development Board, InfoGroup, and the Professional Services Group-New Brunswick. The BRC offered specialized training such as a 5-part Tax Workshop for Small Business; SCORE StartSMART, 5-Part Series for Entrepreneurs; One-on-One Resume Review, Online Job Application Assistance; Mock Job Interviews, Jobs in the IT World; Free Government Training for the Unemployed and Jobs/Intern Database Training.

A final highlight of 2013 is the paid contract between the EBPL and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital to promote health literacy through the library's "Just for the Health of It" initiative. Our specially-trained medical librarians conducted weekly visits to the New Brunswick and Old Bridge RWJ Fitness & Wellness Centers to answer questions and encourage customers to use their public libraries to gather accurate information on health and wellness issues. Librarians interacted with fitness members and hospital patients, participated in hospital fairs and blood drives, and offered presentations to the Parkinson's Support Group to promote health literacy. EBPL Librarians used this partnership to introduce the BARD digital books service for disabled customers to a wider audience. Four specially trained Medical Librarians performed 534 hours of research and addressed 404 health-related research questions on a myriad of topics to the delight and satisfaction of each RWJ customer. Three of our medical librarians attained Certification in Consumer Health by the Medical Libraries Association (MLA) after completing the required hours of webinar training from the National Libraries of Medicine and submitting a research project for review by the MLA staff. EBPL is one of only a handful of public libraries nationwide that can boast this impressive achievement. East Brunswick Public Library is a pioneer public library in promoting health literacy and for constantly seeking to engage our residents in the lifelong quest for enrichment, entertainment and community engagement.