



BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

brookslibraryvt.org

224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Dear Friend,

We're not going to lie to you, since our last Annual Appeal letter we've been hard at work making the library even more inclusive, even more event-filled and even more a center of interlocking communities.

Whether you want to read a book by yourself, have it read to you in your car by a professional actor, play chess or Scrabble with friends you haven't met yet, hold a meeting large or small, search out grant donors for your nonprofit, watch British mysteries at home on your television set for free, attend lectures by highly knowledgeable people about fascinating subjects or have a conversation with one of our friendly librarians, the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library, the Trustees and the library staff are with you every step of the way.

Before we ask you for your contribution to the 2018 Annual Appeal, here are some of the exciting things that have happened at the library this past year which you might not yet know:

- The Trustees have put a book drop in the parking lot in back of the library. Come in the entrance from Grove Street and just as you reach the lot, on your left is a big blue drop box that you can reach from your car window.
- Speaking of the back parking lot, now that the police have moved to Putney Road, the town is allowing everyone two hours of free parking. This makes going to the library a lot easier. Also note that we have two handicap spaces back there.
- Brooks Memorial Library is among the increasing number of libraries across the country that have joined the growing trend to eliminate fines. The Trustees recognize that fines disproportionately affect people with low income and people who are dependent on others for transportation. We are investing in our community and social equity by making the library equally accessible to all through this reform.
- The Trustees are also spending time and money on safety equipment and training to make sure the library is a safe place for staff and patrons.
- The air handling system replacement, which has been in the works for years, came in at double the town's budget. The Trustees are picking up the bill for that \$170,000 – that's 48 percent of the total upgrade.
- Brooks is one of the busiest libraries for interlibrary loans in the state, lending and receiving more than 1000 items in each direction every year. The Catamount Library Network gives patrons ready access to the collections of 15 partner libraries and extends our reach to libraries throughout the country and sometimes even into Canada.
- In an affirmation of the importance of the First Amendment, a core tenet of public library service, the Friends joined with The Commons, the Brattleboro Reformer and the Latchis Theater to present a series of narrative films on the importance of journalism to a free society.
- Brattleboro Rotary came to the Friends with the idea of creating seven Little Free Libraries-wooden houses something like bird houses that can be filled with books and mounted on well-travelled streets and roadways. Take a book, leave a book. The Rotary built the boxes, local artists painted them, and the Friends sold them. All told, we added approximately \$2,000 to our coffers.
- The Friends were thrilled to donate 50 of our black, tougher-than-nails tote bags to refugees in Sarajevo, where children, some of whom are living in subway stations, need book bags for school.
- The Friends put on a Dessert Social in April that was so well received it has become our annual signature event.
- The Friends consolidated our book sales into two successful large events, one in the summer and one our "Almost New" event in December in time for holiday shopping.

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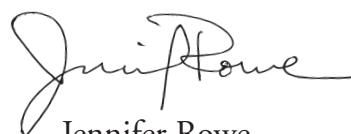
- The Friends sponsored many children's room programs over the course of the year, including one that caused a man in a very large llama costume to run down Main Street.
- The Friends are providing the library with a free take-it-home monthly magazine called "Bookpage," which offers a wide variety of book reviews.
- For entertainment (as well as education), the Friends are now sponsoring two streaming services. Kanopy offers a wide variety of independent narrative films and documentaries. Acorn has all the British television dramas we've come to love from watching public television. Both are available on all screens with a library card.
- The Friends hosted an Annual Appeal Donor Appreciation Event in September to thank everyone who gave to the 2017 Annual Appeal.
- The Friends sponsored a blues/jazz concert by local star vocalist Samirah Evans and her colleague, Evelyn Harris, formerly of the amazing African-American a cappella women's group Sweet Honey in the Rock, in October.

And that's just some of what has been happening here. Add these to the many free museum passes we offer, the First Wednesdays Lecture Series, the technology we provide and the gatherings we hold, and you will see why we're asking you to contribute to the 2018 Annual Appeal. That way we can continue our vision of engaging all members of the community with the library to spark curiosity, enrich lives, and achieve aspirations.

Sincerely,



Joyce Marcel
President of the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library



Jennifer Rowe
President of the Board of Trustees