

Annual Report

2020



Millburn Free Public Library
200 Glen Avenue
Millburn, NJ 07041

www.millburnlibrary.org

January 6, 2021

Thank you for your interest in the Millburn Free Public Library and for reading this annual report. First, I would like to wish you all the best as we all continue to grapple with this global pandemic – a crisis that has changed so many aspects of our lives. I hope you are, and remain, safe and healthy.

No one could have even envisioned the circumstances we were handed in year 2020. The year has certainly changed the way we do so many things, including the way we delivery library services. The year also dealt a blow to some of our ever-increasing usage statistics, which had been on a constant rise and setting new performance records for the last several years. Nevertheless, I am very proud of the efforts we made this year, first by virtualizing our operation and then, when allowed, by implementing a careful reopening plan that balances new limitations, community safety, and excellent service. I look forward to what the New Year brings and invite you to be part of our future, whether you visit the library in-person or online.

*Michael Banick
Library Director*

Pandemic Response and Safe Reopening

The Millburn Library closed to the public at 5:15 p.m. on Friday 3/13/2020 in response to the growing COVID-19 pandemic. The initial plan was to close for 2 weeks -- the quarantine period -- with the hope of reopening on or about 4/1. It was thought at that time that the crisis would ease and that a brief pause in the operation was all that was needed.

On 3/23/2020, Governor Phil Murphy signed Executive Order 107 which, among other things, closed all public libraries in the state until further notice. The decision to reopen was no longer a local one. All libraries, including Millburn, had to wait for EO 107 to be modified or lifted before reopening could occur.

The Millburn Library quickly virtualized its operation and was one of the first libraries in the state to offer a full suite of online services including e-books, streaming services, online programming, text-a-librarian service, video reference service, virtual library cards, and more. Staff meetings were held 3x a week via Zoom and the Millburn Library truly became a leader in online library services – an example for other libraries to follow.

In May, the library formed the READ Committee – Reopening with Educated and Appropriate Decisions. This group met several times via Zoom in order to draft a reopening plan based on recommendations from government agencies and professional associations. This plan was vetted by the local Office of Emergency Management and approved by the Board of Trustees on 5/28. The MFPL now had a formal reopening plan; Executive Order 107 just needed to be lifted.

At noon on Fri 6/12, Governor Murphy announced that libraries would be allowed to begin outside pickup services on Mon 6/15 --the very next business day. The MFPL quickly mobilized, staff were

recalled to return on-site starting 6/15, and after getting a few things ready, we began contactless outside pickup on Wed 6/17. Millburn was one of the first libraries in the area to resume this level of service.

On Thurs 7/2, the governor allowed library buildings to reopen to the public at 25% capacity. The Millburn Library reopened on Mon 7/6 in order to synchronize its reopening with the other public buildings in Millburn Township. New rules were put in place in order to safely accommodate the public. The library's first few weeks with limited capacity were very successful. Patrons were very grateful, very understanding of the new rules, and made no complaints. Since reopening, attendance has been around 200-250 people per day -- considerably less than usual, but in light of the reduced capacity and general climate of caution we are now living in, these lower numbers were expected. It should be noted that Millburn was, once again, one of the few libraries in the area to resume inside service. Many neighboring libraries were just starting outside pickup in July.

One week later, on Mon 7/13, the library began to bring its public internet workstations back online. Five of our 20 workstations were made available, in line with the reduced capacity limits and to maintain social distancing. Initially, users were allowed one 30-minute computer session per day. As a courtesy and to reduce a touchpoint, we temporarily waived printing charges within reason. Users wipe down their workstation and devices at the beginning and end of their computer session with alcohol wipes that the library provides.

In September, the library expanded service to include Sunday hours and expanded computer access to include 8 public workstations with one 45-minute session per patron per day. Visitation time increased to 60 minutes. The operation continued to go very well and with no issues or serious complaints. After several weeks at this stage, in November, the MFPL resumed evening service, starting with Monday and Tuesday nights. Evenings remain slow but we are happy to provide this expanded access, as not everyone is able to get to the library during daytime hours due to work, school, or other obligations.

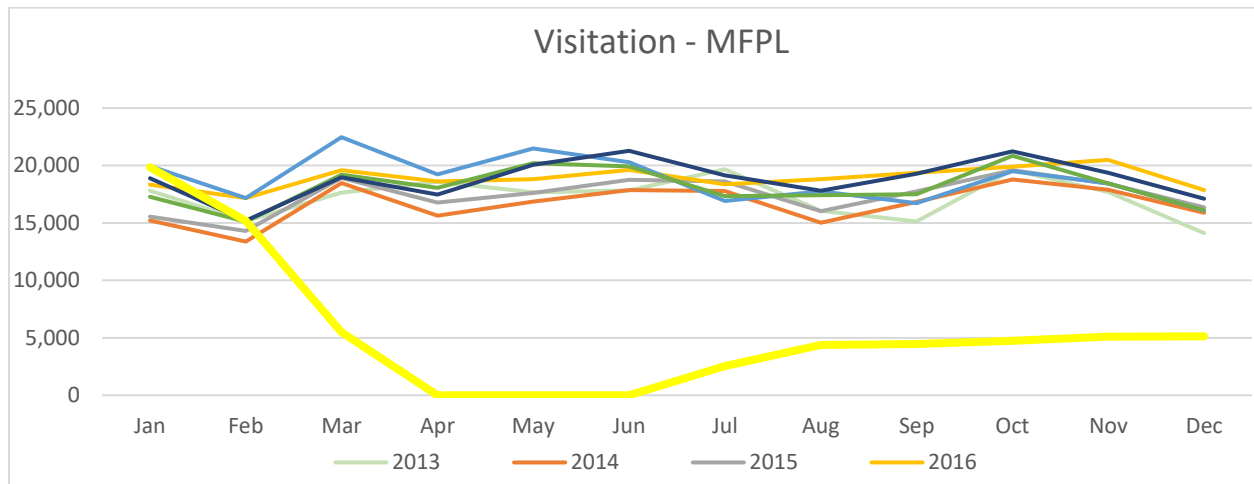
However, by mid-November, reports of vastly increased transmission of Covid began making the news, with large numbers of new Covid cases in Essex County. Many libraries began to revert to outside pickup only. (Indeed, some libraries in NJ never even started inside services.) Out of an abundance of caution, and in striving for the right balance of service and safety, the Millburn Library adjusted its operation. On 11/23, visitation was reduced again to 30 minutes and 6 public computers were turned off, leaving only 2 in service. Then, due to continued increases in Covid cases, and out of concern for touchpoints, overstaying visits, and excess capacity, the MFPL reverted out doorside service on Sundays only, beginning 12/20. The Millburn Library also temporarily switched off its last two public PCs. Inside service remains available Monday through Friday.

In summary, the following modifications are now in place:

- Current maximum capacity is 39 patrons.
- Library is open 6 days a week, Sunday through Friday. Sundays are doorside service only. Inside visits are allowed Monday through Friday. The library is also open Mon and Tues evenings.
- There is a 30-minute time limit and a 10-item checkout limit.
- Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult who stays with them. This is to prevent the library from becoming a drop-off center, which we cannot be right now.

- The 2nd floor hallways and meeting rooms are closed to the public. The elevator is for staff only and is used mainly to bring returns from the book drop to the auditorium, where they are quarantined for 72 hours, in line with prevailing guidance.
- HVAC filters have been temporarily increased from MERV 8 to MERV 13 for better filtration. Fresh air dampers remain open in order to ensure a healthy mix of outside air in the system.
- Plexiglass barriers are in place at the circulation desk, reference desk and children’s desk, and in between workstations in the staff workroom.
- Visitors must wear masks. Masks are worn by staff in common areas and public spaces.
- Four large hand sanitizer stations have been put in place in the building.
- The township installed a thermal camera at the entrance of the library to take the temperature of all who enter.
- All public seating has been temporarily removed in order to encourage quick “grab-and-go” visits. Chairs are being stored in the auditorium, which is closed to the public.
- On-site meetings, programs, and events are cancelled. Programming is now entirely online.

Visitation

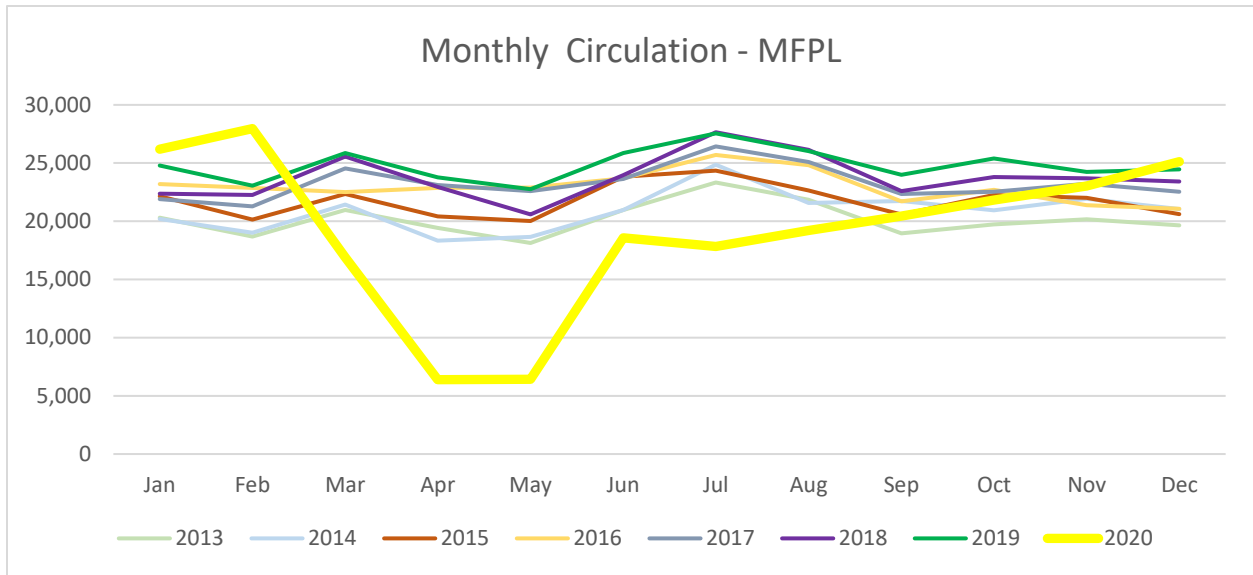


Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Visitation	206,991	199,635	208,700	226,913	226,005	217,416	225,823	66,935

As noted above, the pandemic dealt a serious blow to the library’s visitation numbers in 2020, first with the state-imposed building closure, then with cautious visitation after reopening. What is notable is that every month since reopening has been busier than the previous month, with increases in attendance from July through December.

Of special note: This chart only counts physical in-person visits inside the Millburn Library. It does not count doorside service in June, nor does it count virtual visits to the library’s website or e-resources.

Circulation

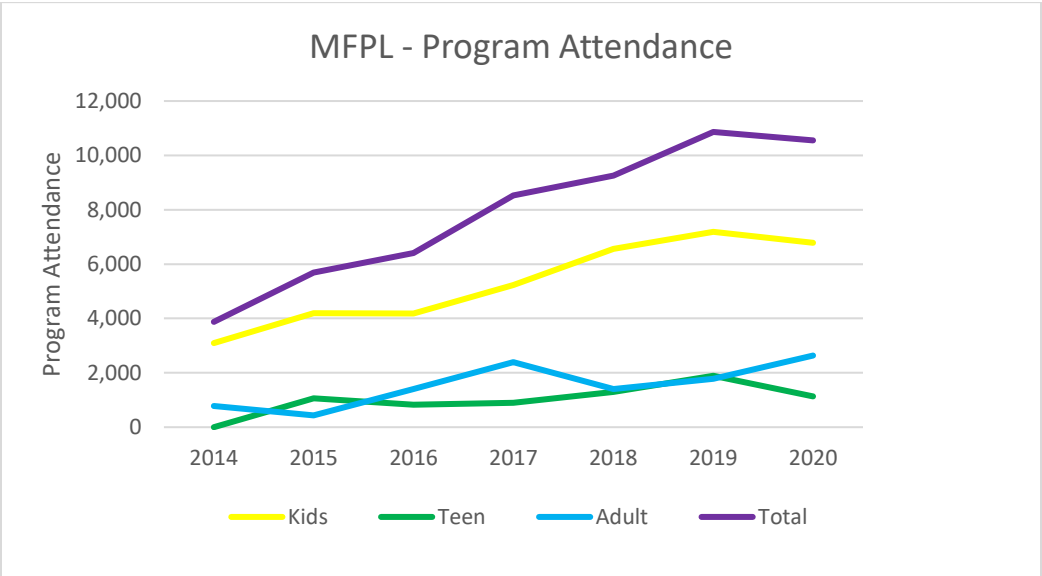
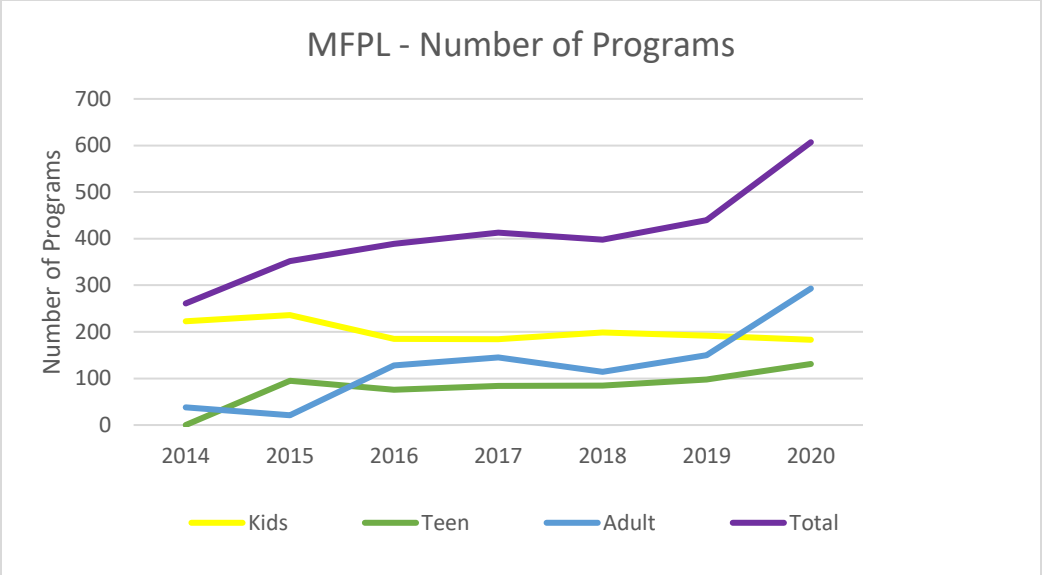


Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Circ	242,184	250,676	261,397	275,405	279,250	285,032	297,792	230,065

The pandemic and state-imposed closure dramatically lowered the 2020 circulation numbers, as shown above, but thanks to the Millburn Library’s robust collection of e-books and streaming services, those numbers never hit zero. As the chart shows, 2020 circulation figures for the end of the year are running on par with all previous years. This is attributed to strong borrowing by patrons who are visiting plus tremendous use of the library’s electronic resources from home. In year 2020, e-book and streaming service usage is up 93% over last year. E-books have always been the Millburn Library’s greatest area of growth, but the actual numbers had always been a rather small percent of overall borrowing, accounting for only 6% to 10% of all borrowing. Now, electronic resources account for 25% of all library checkouts.

Programming

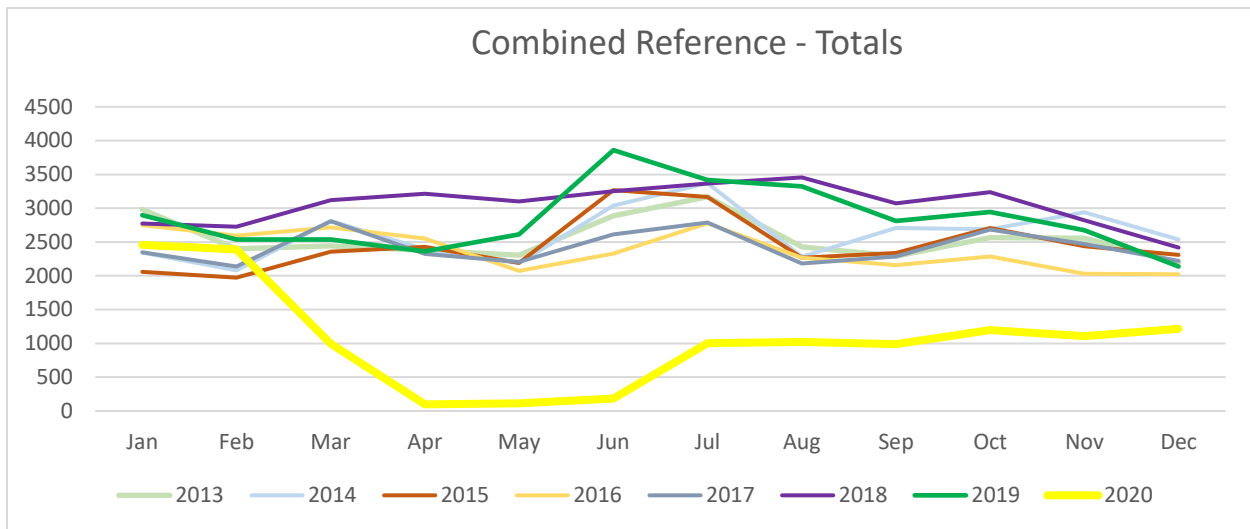
<u>YEAR</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u># of PROGRAMS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>Attend. per Progr.</u>
2014	Kids	223	3,094	14
	Teen	0	0	
	Adult	38	781	21
	Total	261	3,875	15
2015	Kids	236	4,198	18
	Teen	95	1,060	11
	Adult	21	434	21
	Total	352	5,692	16
2016	Kids	185	4,180	23
	Teen	76	825	11
	Adult	128	1,401	11
	Total	389	6,406	16
2017	Kids	184	5,234	28
	Teen	84	896	11
	Adult	145	2,396	17
	Total	413	8,526	21
2018	Kids	199	6,566	33
	Teen	85	1,296	15
	Adult	114	1,400	12
	Total	398	9,262	23
2019	Kids	192	7,188	37
	Teen	98	1,891	19
	Adult	150	1,784	12
	Total	440	10,863	25
2020	Kids	183	6,783	37
	Teen	131	1,136	8
	Adult	293	2,636	9
	Total	607	10,555	17



Excellent programming for people of all ages has been a point of pride for the Millburn Library for the last several years. Whether informational, educational, cultural, or just plain fun, there is a program for everyone at the MFPL.

This might have been a challenging year, but programming has been as amazing as ever. Look at the surge in programs this year! Programming has been on a steady climb for the last several years, but this year alone has brought a 30% increase in total programming. Adult programming alone is up 95%. The library also came within 3% of last year's record attendance numbers. This is impressive, considering the majority of the year's programming has been virtual – a new undertaking for the Millburn Library.

Reference Interactions



Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ref	30,603	31,377	29,502	28,554	29,067	36,561	34,114	12,771

This chart shows the combined count of interactions at both the Children’s Desk and the Adult Reference Desk, as well as all of the interactions between librarians and the public while the building was closed and staff worked off-site. This includes all interactions by phone, e-mail, video chat, computer chat, and text message.

Personnel

In 2020, the MFPL changed its internal reporting structure. Staff are no longer organized by job title or task, but are grouped by patron experience. The former Information Services, Technical Services, and Circulation departments have been merged into one Public Services Department with one supervisor. This novel approach has boosted staff morale, improved internal communications, and improved customer service.

The Millburn Library said farewell to three full-time staff members in 2020. Diane Bratton, Head of Circulation and Technical Services, retired on March 1. Fran Eckhardt, Circulation Assistant, left on August 18. And Amil Maccie, Circulation Assistant, retired on September 1, 2020.

Jon Michaud was promoted from part time children’s librarian to full-time collection management librarian on February 18. Eden Mazer Schwartz was hired as a new part-time children’s librarian on July 13. Part-time circulation assistant Paul Toussaint was promoted to full-time circulation assistant on August 31. In January 2021, the MFPL will welcome Insha Fitzpatrick as its newest full-time circulation assistant.

The labor agreement between the Millburn Free Public Library and the Communication Workers of America Local 1031 expired on December 31, 2020. We will enter a status quo period and look to negotiate a successor agreement in the near future.

Professional Development

Professional development and continuing education are an important part of library work in order to stay abreast of developments in computer systems, publishing, e-books, library service ideas, and more. Due to the pandemic, all in-person conferences and trade shows were cancelled and all continuing education was virtualized. In year 2020, the MFPL staff logged 195.5 hours of continuing education through online meetings, workshops, and professional development programs. This is an impressive 25 percent increase in training hours over last year.

Strategic Planning

The Millburn Library is now in year two of its current strategic plan, which runs through year 2022. Our plan identifies the values of the MFPL: Respect. Professionalism. Kindness. Knowledgeability. Fairness. Equal Access. And Privacy. It also lists the vision of the library: People want to be at the MFPL. The MFPL inspires and informs. The MFPL helps people live better lives. The three broad goals outlined in the plan are: (1) Enhance the Library Facility; (2) Connect with the Community; and (3) Strengthen and Protect the MFPL Brand. Details can be found at www.millburnlibrary.org > About > Strategic Plan. In year 2021, members of the MFPL Board of Trustees will attend a workshop on strategic planning in order to prepare for the next plan, which will be written in 2022 and implemented in 2023.

Goals for the Future

Renovate. In 2017, New Jersey voters approved a statewide referendum for \$125 million for library construction and renovation grants. With an eye toward getting state support, the MFPL began planning a renovation that year, starting with the children's room and expanding to include most of the interior, as well as some mechanical systems. Those plans have been held in abeyance pending the release of state funds.

The bond regulations were finally approved in 2019 and applications for support were accepted in 2020.

The Millburn Library applied for support but was not awarded any funds in this first round of grants. Therefore, the Board of Trustees approved a modified plan that will allow the library to renovate using local resources only. The project will be scaled back to meet our funding and we will proceed with a building project without any assistance from the state.

These plans will be set in motion in early 2021 and will include:

- Renovated and expanded children's room
- Renovated and remodeled lobby and circulation desk
- Renovated and remodeled staff workroom

- Relocated computer room
- New reference desk and office
- Other aesthetic improvements including new lighting and carpeting

Of note, the Township of Millburn has approved \$150,000 in support for the children’s room renovation.

Future building projects will include renovating the auditorium, renovating meeting room B, renovating the mezzanine (including a proposed glass-enclosed quiet reading room), and relocating the teen area to a space under the mezzanine for better noise mitigation.

Evolving Job Roles. In November 2020, we received word from one of our longest-serving staff members that they will be retiring effective 3/1/2021. We are taking this opportunity to reimagine their position and transform the job from a “traditional” librarian role to one that focuses on digital resources, including e-books, streaming services, research databases, and the library website. We expect to fill this position on 3/1.

New and improved website. The library will design and launch a fully renovated website in 2021. The site will be fresh and clean, easy to navigate, and will include a mobile version for smartphones. Planning for this will begin with the hiring of the aforementioned Digital Resources Librarian.

Expanded digital services. Year 2020 showed us just how important online resources are. The Millburn Library will grow its digital holdings by purchasing access to more e-books and e-content. The library will also subscribe to additional resources, including the much-celebrated Kanopy platform.

New services and outreach. The library is always looking for ways to expand its services and strengthen its connection with the community. We have some ideas in mind including the elimination of microfilm, the digitization of local resources, and new ways to borrow from our collection. We look forward to sharing the details about these plans – and more – with you in the coming year.

Board of Trustees - 2020

Guilford W. Gaylord, President	Term expires 12/31/2020
Ruthie Binder, Vice President	Term expires 12/31/2021
Judith Eisner, Treasurer	Term expires 12/31/2024
Amy Ipp, Secretary	School Superintendent’s Rep. Statutory seat.
Cheryl Burstein	Mayor’s Rep. Statutory seat.
Dorothy Kelly, Trustee	Term expires 12/31/2022
Sara Sherman, Trustee	Term expires 12/31/2023

The MFPL Board of Trustees meets on the third Monday of the month, unless it is a holiday. The Board has excellent attendance and has never had to cancel or reschedule a meeting due to a lack of a quorum. The meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes are available on the library website www.millburnlibrary.org > About > The Library > Board of Trustees and Administration.