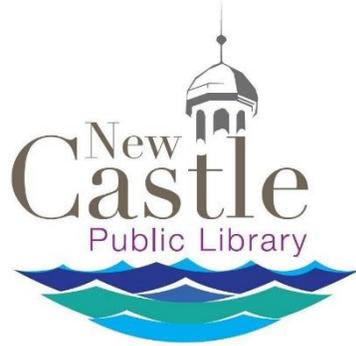


New Castle County Department of Community Services

New Castle Public Library



**FY 2024
End of Year Report
And
Goals for FY2025**

**Prepared by
Julie Kirk
October 11, 2024**

**New Castle Public Library - End of Year Report
Accomplishments for FY24 and Goals for FY25**

Mission and Vision Statement

Mission: The New Castle Public Library's mission is to facilitate the community's pursuit of knowledge and enjoyment through provision of materials, information services, access to technology, and community events.

Vision: New Castle Public Library strives to be a hub of lifelong learning and discovery, working with every generation of our diverse and historic community to offer inspiration, connection, opportunities for growth and renewal, and a celebration of the transformative power of knowledge.

Facility enhancements and challenges

- The HVAC system has generally performed well, but the ERV units are a priority for replacement.
- The annual meeting between the library and the Trustees Property and Maintenance Committee was held in January 2024. A review of projects completed was followed by a listing and prioritization of new maintenance and repair projects.
- A new phone system, VoIP was installed in July 2023. The equipment is reliable. Staff faced challenges in using the new equipment and learning new processes. The new phone equipment was funded in part by the Friends.
- Roof and window leaks continued to occur throughout the year. The roof, downspouts, and drainage systems were evaluated and repaired. The internal water damage to the windows and walls was also repaired.
- The light fixtures in the children's room and lower-level hallway need to be replaced. The electrician is no longer able to get bulbs nor replace the broken shades on the current fixtures. It has been a challenge getting a reliable electrician to commit to the work.
- Exterior doors were painted. Some windowsills also were repainted.
- The updated software for the access control system failed. New key cards produced did not allow interior access. After several months of attempts to have Johnson Controls come back to remediate, another vendor was engaged. The corrections were made within a few days. However, troubles continued with a switch box needing to be replaced, and incorrect reconnection to the switch box which resulted in the exterior doors not responding to the key cards. Lastly, the Lenel license needed to be renewed. Several quotes were obtained. A three-year license is in effect.
- Gem Pest evaluated and mitigated an infestation of drain flies in the Community Room and mechanical room.
- Community Room was painted, and chair rail installed.

Training

- Youth Librarian presented a DLA Public Libraries Division workshop titled *Serving the Underserved: Strategies for Identifying, Connecting, and Engaging with Underserved Families*.
- Youth Librarian presented a Southeast Collaborative Library Conference session titled *Library Outreach to Underserved Children and Caregivers*.
- Executive Director and Youth Librarian attended the Public Library Association Conference held in Columbus Ohio. Workshops on the topics of banned books, serving underserved youth populations, and adults with special needs were attended.
- Webinars on the topics of marketing, personal productivity, fundraising, hiring/personnel/human resources, AI, data gathering, and conflict management were attended by staff.
- Adult Services Librarian attended the MLA/DLA conference.
- Library Specialist Nicole Worth attended the LibLearnX ALA Conference in Baltimore

Partnerships

- Prime Time Family Reading, a six-week program, in partnership with Community Collaboration of Delaware and sponsored by Delaware Humanities is a program for children ages 6-10 and their families. Through storytelling and discussion, the foundations for a lifelong love of reading and learning are developed.
- The library held the third annual Winter Market and Festival in conjunction with A Spirit of Christmas, a city event. In partnership with A Spirit of Christmas committee, the library hosted planning meetings, coordinated market vendors and the vendor listings for the event.
- Arasapha Garden Club partnered with the library to provide gardening programs, sponsored by the club.
- Summer History Camp, provided by New Castle Courthouse Museum, in partnership with National Park Service, George Read House, NC Historical society and the library, met daily during the week of camp at the library. The campers worked on projects that reinforced the concepts and ideas explored during their other camp activities. The camp week concludes with a presentation of the projects and lunch held at the library.
- New Castle Public Library donated over 100 children's books to the Hope Center in partnership with New Castle Lions Club. The Club maintains a small library at the Hope Center and asked for any surplus children's books the library had.

Staff

- Staff turnover included hiring a new Youth Aide, Shelver, and a Circulation Aide.
- Staff actively participated or co-chaired in county library projects and initiatives including but not limited to 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, 500 Books Before Middle School, New Castle County Reads, Longwood Garden Community Reads and Read for the Record. Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and Blue Hen Awards are state-wide initiatives.
- Many staff are active members of the Delaware Library Association. All full-time and some part-time staff are members.
- The library hosted an intern during the spring semester. Her project consisted of evaluating the DLC catalog and New Castle Public Library collection for the inclusion of banned books. She also assisted with cataloging and preparing Library of Things items and learning about the Rodney Room Delaware collection.

Friends

- The New Castle Library Friends membership remained level.
- Their Annual Meeting included a speaker from Delaware Humanities and a light soup/salad meal.
- They offered several book sales in partnership with other community non-profit organizations and participated in virtual fundraising events. They worked closely with New Castle Community Partnership on ticket sales for A Day in Old New Castle for which they received a portion of the net income from the event.
- The Friends provided funding to the library for programs, digitizing New Castle Weekly, the walk-in collection, and other operating expenses.
- Plans to renovate the back garden to make it a usable program space with seating began. The Friends are working with the Trustees of New Castle Common, the city and other stakeholders to get permission to move ahead with design and implementation.

Programs and Events Highlights

General

- Volunteers remain steady at 3. They come in daily to pull holds.
- Winter Festival and Market grew in attendance, activities offered and vendors from the previous year.

Adult

- Adult programs included the summer music series, book discussions, craft programs and gardening programs.
- Outdoor evening movie showings during the summer and early autumn months highlighted classic, camp or cult films.

- The adult book discussion group joined forces with The Usual Suspects book discussion group for a potluck meal based on recipes from Agatha Christie books. Each participant read the book from which the recipe came and then shared their thoughts about the book and the recipe.
- Programming for New Castle County Reads included The Usual Suspects discussion of the chosen title, **The Violin Conspiracy** by Brendan Slocum and a violin performance by Maria Rusu of the Music School of Delaware.

Teen

- Several anime drawing classes were held throughout the year. This began with a partnership with Delaware Collage of Art and Design. When the school closed, the instructor continued to offer the classes.
- Dungeons and Dragons program is growing. The group is divided by age for older teens and younger teens/tweens.
- Teen craft programs included DIY haunted houses, cake pops, citrus garland,
- Teen Library After Hours programs gained in popularity with themes of Mafia: role playing party game, murder mystery night, and escape room.

Children

- Library on the Loose, an outreach program aimed at reaching underserved neighborhoods in the community was supported by City of New Castle Councilman Mattaway and the New Castle City Police. Weather was a challenge as was a personal family emergency for the librarian. Only two of the four planned outings took place.
- Paws for Reading was cancelled due to inconsistency in attendance by both dogs/owners and readers.
- Youth programs such as story time, toddler play group, Lego Club, crafts and STEAM were popular with full registrations.
- Toddler Play Group, which follows story time twice a month has given families the opportunity to connect and create friendships among the children as well as the parents and caregivers.
- Vision to Learn clinics were held eleven times throughout the year. The mobile clinic provides free eye exams and glasses to eligible school age children and teen. Each clinic filled quickly with a waitlist.
- The library distributed over 100 winter coats through Operation Warm.

Library operations

- Seed library and Library of Things expanded. The Seed Library provides flower and vegetable seeds for home gardeners. The Friends sponsor this service. LOT now includes many games and jigsaw puzzles. The garden tools are circulating more often.

- A grant for summer programming was requested and received. The New Castle County Council grant helps fund youth and teen programs and supplies for Summer with the Library programming as well as other initiatives for that age group.
- The library has been offered a bequest that is to be used for ensuring patrons have access to banned books. The amount received will grow over time. The library will ensure that banned books are available for checkout either from the shelf, through the DLC or ILL. Electronic books are also acceptable.
- The development committee of the board created a new mission/vision statement to better reflect the activities and values of the library following the pandemic.
- The Delaware books held in the Rodney Room are now in the DLC. Patrons wishing to view these materials can find them in the catalog and visit the library to access them.

Goals for FY24

- Add the non-circulating Delaware collection in the Rodney Room locked cases to the Delaware Library Catalog. This is an ongoing project with progress. Items with a record already in the catalog are added. Items that require a record still need to be added.
- Continue partnerships with City of New Castle and other organizations through collaboration, education of library services, and creating opportunities for mutual benefit and seek new partnerships as opportunities arise.

Statistical Measures:

FY22, the library opened 6 days per week with reduced hours. Full hours reinstated April 2022.

Measure	FY22	FY23	FY24	% Change FY24/FY23
Hours Open	2294	2468	2481	0.53%
User Visits	34879	42438	45474	7.15%
Circulation	50943	49855	54822	9.96%
Registered Patrons	5124	4984	5716	14.69%
Reference Transactions	4528	3928	3265	-16.88%
Programs Held	219	363	353	-2.75%

Program Attendance	3739	6545	7353	12.35%
Public Computers Sessions	5839	5576	5313	-4.72%
Wireless Use	3310	4647	5555	19.54%
Meeting Room use	254	527	708	34.35%
Summer Reading Club				
Registered	45	79	47	-40.51%
Completed	6	25	22	-12.00%
Completion Rate	13.33%	31.65%	46.81%	47.91%
Turnover	n/a		1.3	

Goals for FY25

- To provide library services to underserved families in the community by offering programs and services that will meet the basics needs of children and families. The library will offer 2-3 programs to support youth literacy, basic needs of clothing and food, and inclusivity.
- To continue to cultivate the partnerships the library has formed. The library will participate in 3-4 community/city events throughout the year. Such events might include National Night Out, A Day in Old New Castle, or Separation Day,
- To extend library outreach beyond going to schools and tabling at events. Services through outreach may include story times, free book giveaways or community gatherings with other partners at sites within the community.
- Work with the New Castle Library Friends on their Capital Campaign to fund the garden renovation.

Challenges:

The library faces challenges in promoting one-off programs. The monthly and serial programs often see high participation and repeat visitors to the library. One-time programs often have low attendance.

An anticipated challenge is the ability to maintain an adequate supply of books for the outreach events in which free books are given away. Sources such as donations of children's books and weeded library books are identified.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Keeping the collection fresh by more frequent weeding
- Planning new promotional strategies for programs

Goals for FY26

Priorities: it is important to utilize strategies for staff retention to continue with quality programs and collections

Increase funding needs and justification: operational costs increase each year.

- Contractual services such as cleaning services, accounting services, building inspections, and security monitoring
- Programming, especially for children and young families, which is a major component of our library services
- Staff expenses such as wages and benefits

Each of these expenses, as they increase, demand more while the materials and supplies continue to be cut.

Increased funding to maintain the current level of materials for collections and supplies to process the materials is needed.