Dear Citizen of Concord,

We are pleased to send you this Annual Report from the Concord Free Public Library Corporation for fiscal year 2017-2018. We are delighted to report that we exceeded our annual fund goal. We are extremely grateful for this strong support of the Library since we believe it reflects donors’ recognition of the Library as a significant cultural and intellectual center — the heart of our community. The Library Corporation contributed over $650,000 to the Library in FY 2017-2018 for the maintenance, preservation, and enhancement of the buildings and grounds; Special Collections exhibitions, programs, and acquisitions; insurance; security; equipment; books and materials; and scholarships.

Fred Lovejoy recently retired from his position as Clerk of the Library Corporation. We thank him and Trustee of the Library from his position as Clerk of the Library Corporation. We thank him and Trustee of the Library Corporation. The Library truly is a welcoming and enriching place for everyone in the community. Program attendance for all age groups, including adults, teens, and children has increased. In fact, many of our programs are overcrowded — a good problem to have but nevertheless a problem that needs to be solved if we want to accommodate the needs of the community.

People continue to use the Library for reading, writing, studying, and doing research, and we are fortunate to have the historic spaces that are conducive to quiet activities. But patrons are also looking for social spaces where they can connect — collaborate, explore and learn together. Teens want more space to call their own. Families want spaces where children can engage not only in quiet activities but also noisy and messy ones. Patrons want access to a wide range of technology. Many people also want more daytime programming. To meet all of these needs, we are actively fundraising for a building project informed by our long-range plan and community input.

For those who might question the relevance of libraries in today’s world...sociologist Eric Klinenberg points out that “liber,” the Latin root for “library,” means both “book” and “free.” He eloquently states, “Libraries stand for and exemplify something that needs defending: the public institutions of a democratic society.” Our Library is more relevant than ever in a democratic society. It is a safe place for civic discourse, for quiet reflection, for active thought, for reading, for writing, for gathering, for learning, and for entertainment — a hub, a forum, a commons, a sanctuary — a Library!

Best wishes,

Sherry Forman Litwack
President, CFPL Corporation
The Concord Free Public Library's mission is to inspire lifelong learning and to actively promote personal enrichment by connecting community members to information, ideas, culture, unique historical resources and each other in a tradition of innovation and excellence.

The Library continues to thrive by providing comfortable and inviting spaces alongside interesting and varied programming for all ages. Over the course of the year, collaborations with area organizations have contributed to mission fulfillment. Among these were the introduction of mindful baby yoga and Mindful Mornings intergenerational yoga on the Main Library lawn with Ivy Child International, a three part Mapping the Road to Town Meeting voter education series with the League of Women Voters of Concord Carlisle, and the Beede and Books story time and swim program with Concord Recreation. The Fowler Branch Library was pleased to host an exhibition featuring the work of resident artists from Newbury Court. In observance of National Library Week, the Library Committee and CFPL staff members launched Concord Community Readers bookmarks featuring area educators, leaders, and business people who promoted several of their favorite books. We are grateful to the following participants: Dr. Robin Cicchetti, CCHS Head Librarian, Ben Elliott, Owner of Saltbox Kitchen, Jim Terry, 2018 Concord Honored Citizen, Steve Verrill, Owner of Verrill Farm, Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent of Concord-Carlisle Regional District, and Debra Stark of Debra’s Natural Gourmet. Debra Stark also promoted library services in a window display during the month of April and has generously offered to host a monthly library book discussion in her store. These community partnerships have been valuable in expanding the Library’s influence in the community and helping us to reach new audiences.

There has been an increase in teen participation at library programs. CFPL is flourishing at the Fowler Branch Library with an 82% increase in the number of programs offered and an 84% increase in program attendance.

There has been an increase in teen participation at library programs. CFPL is hosting a robust weekly Girls Who Code club in its successful third year. The new Q5 program at the Concord Carlisle High School enabled CFPL to host two groups of students enrolled in a course “I’d Rather be Reading” for a behind the scenes tour of library operations. Additionally, the Library supported the Concord Middle School auction by offering a group sleepover for several sixth grade students and their adult chaperones.

Thanks to the generosity of residents, the Library expanded weekend service hours to coincide with the school year and to open on two additional Saturdays in the summer. A Green Communities Grant the Town of Concord received enabled the Library to upgrade lighting at both locations to LED. This supports the Town’s sustainability goals and we have begun to realize the savings and efficiency gained from this upgrade.

We are fortunate to have an exceptional staff that we honored at an employee appreciation luncheon co-sponsored with the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library and with a community cake and coffee event during National Library Workers Day. During the year please follow CFPL on Facebook @ConcordLibrary and Twitter @CFPL_Updates to learn more about library programs and services.

In 2018 our Poetry at the Library series hosted poets Naushen Eaves, Natalie Shapiro, Duy Duyan, Ben Pirkert, and Jana Prikryl. We screened foreign films on select Fridays in January, February and March for our Friday Flicks at Fowler.

Our gifts and programs are funded through memberships, sales of donated books, and sales of Historic Concord, a book published by the Friends. Online sales are managed by Empire Books, and books are for sale every day on the Friends Book Sale shelves at the Main and Fowler Libraries.

The Friends’ Holiday and June book sales are our biggest sources of revenue, and they’re also much-loved and well-attended community events. The June 2018 Book Sale on the lawn raised $23,473.80 and the Holiday Sale in December 2017 raised $12,372.10 – both record-breaking! The heart and soul of this operation is a team of over a dozen enthusiastic volunteers who sort the many volumes donated to the Friends each year and prepare them for the book sales. If you have books you’d like to donate, see the reference librarian at the Main Library. 

The Next Chapter Gatherings

The Next Chapter, a fun Saturday evening in the Rotunda, meets a few times a year to learn more about the Library and enjoy cocktails and conversation.

To be added to the mailing list for this group, please contact Mary at friends@concordlibrary.org.
The year 2017/2018 began with a major celebration of Henry Thoreau's two hundredth birthday. Having researched, planned, and publicized the gallery exhibition “Concord, which is My Rome: Henry Thoreau and His Home Town” throughout 2016/2017, the William Munroe Special Collections opened the show—consisting of one hundred and fifty items drawn entirely from library holdings—on July 14, 2017. Thoreau biographer Laura Dassow Walls spoke before a riveted audience of more than three hundred people. Many were seated in the Children’s Room, where the proceedings were simulcast.

Largely through the generosity of Judith and Matthew Fichtenbaum, some fourteen hundred copies of the printed catalog to accompany the exhibition were distributed to viewers during the run of the show. Thoreau bicentennial programming continued with lectures in September and October by distinguished scholars Elizabeth Hall Witherell, Robert Torson, Robert A. Gross, and Robert N. Hudspeth. All of the presentations were subsequently mounted on YouTube and made accessible via concordlibrary.org.

Curator Leslie Wilson led four public gallery tours and several privately scheduled tours (including school groups) between July and the deinstallation of the display at the end of October, and explored the show in September with more than one hundred members (in four separate groups) of the Surveyors Historical Society. The surveyors also spent time in the Special Collections reading room examining manuscript Thoreau surveys under the supervision of Assistant Constance Manoli-Skocay.

Once the Thoreau exhibition was installed, the department turned to planning the Spring 2018 gallery show “No picture could be more lovely: Ada Shepard with the Hawthornes in Florence, 1858.” Wilson curated the show, Manoli-Skocay managed publicity, and the digital work for the exhibition and catalog was handled by Digital Assistant Renee Williams. Ada Shepard—a gifted, well-educated young woman skilled in European languages—lived as a member of the Hawthorne family while they traveled in England and on the Continent between 1857 and 1859. She served as the governess to Una, Julian, and Rose and also as the family’s interpreter. The exhibition drew on Shepard’s original letters home from Italy and her sketchbooks (given to the library in 2015 and 2016 by Susan D. Abele, a great-grand-daughter of Ada Shepard Badger) as well as the journals and letters of Nathaniel and Sophia Peabody Hawthorne. Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Megan Marshall spoke to a crowd of two hundred and thirty at the opening of the exhibition on April 6. Additional lectures associated with the show were delivered by Phyllis Blum Cole and Jenny Rankin in May and June, respectively. Two hundred printed catalogs (the entire press run) were distributed to library visitors between April and the end of June.

All year long, Manoli-Skocay kept the Special Collections, lobby, and Fowler showcases filled with interesting materials on a wide range of topics: Operation Crossroads/the Wilbur Walthworth Collection; artist Charles Hovey Pepper; “Mid-Century Modern”; LWV/town meeting; the Concord-Nanay Sister Cities program; veterans’ oral histories; “Up Assabet”; and Concord High School Class of 1924 photographs.

Staff engaged in a variety of other outreach efforts over the year. In July, Wilson presented to two sessions of a secondary teachers’ seminar (about seventy-five attendees, total) funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In October, she took part in a panel discussion (“What Would Henry Do?”) at the Thoreau Farm on Virginia Road. Three groups of Concord Academy students visited Special Collections for focused research in September. Interterm students from Calvin College came in January, students from the Tremont School in March. Also in March, Jayne Gordon brought her Concord Academy students to visit Special Collections in 2017/2018. Major gifts included a compilation of a digital obituary index for in-house use. Over the year, a rate of use just about identical to that experienced the previous year. The beginning of the 2018/2019 Little Women sesquicentennial of the first publication on 1868 Roberts Brothers edition of Little Women and annotated on the reverse by Louisa May Alcott, the item joins a collection of sixty-six other Merrill illustrations for the book already among Concord Free Public Library holdings. Early in this Little Women anniversary year, it was thrilling to add this piece to one of our well-known and much-used collections.

The department was able to accomplish a long-standing preservation objective thanks to a gift from Judith and Matthew Fichtenbaum specifically to fund the conservation at the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover of the fragile, content-rich first volume of original Concord Lyceum records, spanning the period 1828-1859. The volume was returned to the library clean, intact, and usable for the first time in decades. NEDCC also prepared digital images for future Web access to the conserves records.

Wilson participated in the Trustee initiative to develop a digital tour of art in the library for on-site and remote access. She selected the pieces to be covered in the tour and prepared and edited the descriptive content for each.

We responded to 1,827 on-site and remote requests for research assistance over the year, a rate of use just about identical to that experienced the previous year. The beginning of the 2018/2019 Little Women sesquicentennial of the first publication on 1868 Roberts Brothers edition of Little Women and annotated on the reverse by Louisa May Alcott, the item joins a collection of sixty-six other Merrill illustrations for the book already among Concord Free Public Library holdings. Early in this Little Women anniversary year, it was thrilling to add this piece to one of our well-known and much-used collections.

Water lilies, Esther Howe Wheeler Anderson

CFPL SNAPSHOT 29
Technology stations for public use
Campaign Update

We are all fans of the beautiful, historic spaces that are so closely identified with the Library: the Rotunda, the Reference Room, and the Thoreau Room to name a few. Those spaces that have served us so well for many years will not be changed by the upcoming project. The building project will create entirely new spaces that allow us to expand the volume and range of services we offer. Particularly notable are a 50% increase in the size of the Children’s Library, addition of a makerspace with video editing and podcasting resources, a forum that will accommodate 140 people for daytime and evening programs, a special area for ‘teens, new meeting spaces, and a commons where patrons can converse over coffee and tea. And as been the case since 1873, all Library resources will be provided to the community free of charge.

If we are able to reach our fundraising goals — the Trustees have set a campaign goal of $10 million — we will break ground this fall and complete the project 14 months later. If we are able to reach our fundraising goals — the Trustees have set a campaign goal of $10 million — we will break ground this fall and complete the project 14 months later. We have raised more than half of that goal over the past 18 months, and this spring we will commence the community phase of our fundraising.

For this exciting project to go forward, we will need your support — everything from supporting Articles 7 and 22 at Town Meeting (which together will unlock $1.05M in project funding), to making a personal contribution, to volunteering on a committee, to helping spread the word among your neighbors. We invite you to reach out if you’d like to get involved. The Concord Free Public Library has always sat at the heart of this community, and we are excited to work with you as the project unfolds.

John and Johanna Boynton, Campaign Chairs

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TOTAL NUMBER OF DONORS: 123

RAISED TO DATE: $5,660,662

PERCENTAGE RAISED: 57%

TOTAL CAMPAIGN: $10 million

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

William Munroe, the Concord native who established our Library in 1873, was a genuine visionary. Not only did he conceive the public-private partnership between the Town and the Corporation that has functioned so well for nearly 150 years, but he bequeathed $4,000 in his will to accommodate an expansion 50+ years into the future. Quoting from Article 8 of his hand-written will in 1877, “...after another half-century of prosperity in New England, the said [Library] corporation will find it desirable to add to their present Library Building an auxiliary structure for the purposes of the institution.” After 142 years of prudent stewardship, that fund has grown to $272,000 and the time for that expansion has come.

The Corporation acquired the historic Heywood-Benjamin House at 151 Main Street in 2013 and, following five years of invaluable community input, has finalized designs for a renovation and expansion project that will increase the Main Library’s square footage by nearly 40%. The current Library is filled to capacity and this extra space will enable us to accommodate an expansion 50+ years into the future.

For this exciting project to go forward, we will need your support — everything from supporting Articles 7 and 22 at Town Meeting (which together will unlock $1.05M in project funding), to making a personal contribution, to volunteering on a committee, to helping spread the word among your neighbors. We invite you to reach out if you’d like to get involved. The Concord Free Public Library has always sat at the heart of this community, and we are excited to work with you as the project unfolds.

John and Johanna Boynton, Campaign Chairs

CFPL SNAPSHOT

# of home-bound Concord citizens who receive FREE Direct To You home delivery 9

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Rosanne E. and Michael J. Zilk

*Deceased

**Includes donors who wish to remain anonymous

TOTAL NUMBER OF DONORS: 123
We strive to make this list as accurate as possible. Please accept our apologies for any mistakes. You can email updates to meckle@CPLFCorp.org.
Concord Free Public Library: How We Work

A productive public-private partnership established at the time of the Library's founding in 1873 advances the Library's work. The Town of Concord allocates municipal funding for its operating budget, including staff, utilities, and books and materials. Dependent entirely on private philanthropic support from the community, the nonprofit Concord Free Public Library Corporation owns and oversees the buildings, grounds, and Special Collections and is responsible for their preservation, maintenance, and expansion. The Library Corporation also raises and manages the endowment and the Annual Fund — providing essential funding to augment the operating budget.