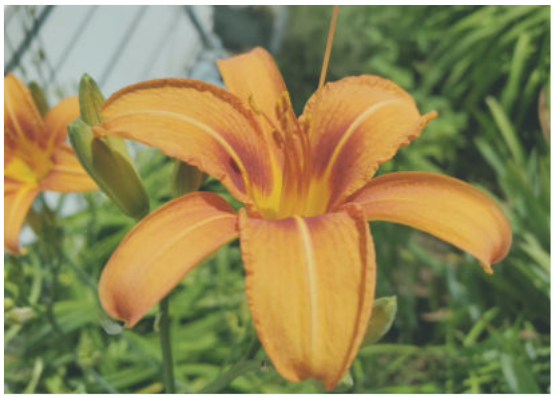
FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Shh! This is a Library!

You may have heard the above cliche in reference to libraries–and, if you've visited the Fort Plain Free Library recently, you may also know that it's wildly outdated. Sure, we *do* have quiet spaces available (as the tutors, students, and other patrons working and studying here can attest). But on any given day, our library is a place where you can hear *many* noises, including:

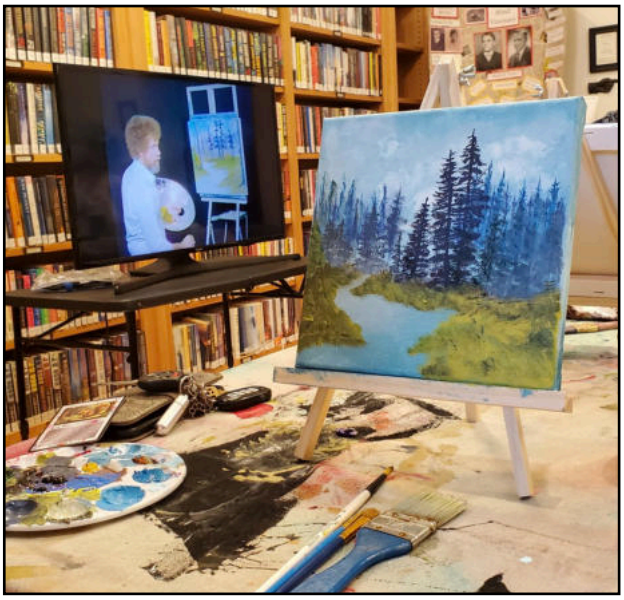
Kids blowing giant bubbles and performing other science experiments at Camp Curiosity (a new program for students ages 8 to 13, so successful that we brought it back for a second run during our Summer Reading Program).

The sounds of several different instruments drifting out of our music room, where we offer free music lessons (and if you're here in the evening, you may also hear the practice sessions of our Library Ensemble, which had its first public performance at last year's Winter Open House).

Lively debates and passionate opinions at our book discussion group (which just saw its highest attendance ever in January, after more than a year of reading and discussing a new book every month).

Ideas and inspiration shared by participants in Kids of Earth, a new student-led group focusing on how kids can practice conservation in their communities.

And that's only a small sample of the programs offered here, which also include debates and discussions at the Philo Cafe, paint-along events for all ages, afternoons devoted to Lego building and cookie decorating, and much more. Beyond the boundaries of the library itself, we've been delighted to continue visiting the preschool classes at Harry Hoag Elementary School, and to participate in last summer's Water Music New York Festival (where we created a special set of trading cards honoring the Erie Canal's 200th birthday). We were also proud to host a food drive in November, collecting donations to benefit the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry here in Fort Plain.



In all the noises of our library, we're privileged to hear the sounds of a vibrant community: people looking for things to do, sharing their knowledge and passions with one another, and fostering a love of reading in the next generation. The talent, joy, and excitement that can be found in Fort Plain are abundant when spending a day in the library. We're proud to be a place where the people of our community can flourish.

There is, of course, another sound that can often be heard at the library: questions and comments from patrons who've come to visit. And while almost all of this feedback is positive, there is one bittersweet phrase we occasionally hear, usually uttered by patrons who are surprised and delighted to find a library like ours in Fort Plain: "I didn't even know this place was here!"

Clearly, this will not do. Our goal for 2026 is to make sure that *everyone* knows we're here, and that they also know what a wonderful community we're a part of. We hope you'll help us spread the word–and as always, we'll see you at the library.

– The Fort Plain Free Library
Staff & Board of Trustees

FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY
NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

2025

14,040 ANNUAL VISITS

303 CLASSES & EVENTS

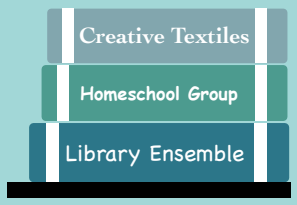
4,034 CLASS & EVENT ATTENDANCE

40,000 + MATERIALS IN COLLECTION

22,941 BOOKS & MATERIALS CIRCULATED

HOW DO WE STACK UP?

Check out just a few of the programs at our library!



01 ACCESS TO OUR LIBRARY'S COLLECTION OF BOOKS, DVDS, MAGAZINES, AUDIOBOOKS, AND MORE

02 DELIVERY OF ITEMS FROM EVERY LIBRARY IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM AND SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK LIBRARY SYSTEM

03 PUBLIC SPACES FOR MEETINGS, INDEPENDENT WORK, AND COMMUNITY-RUN PROGRAMS

04 PRINTING, FAXING, COPYING, AND SCANNING SERVICES

05 GAMES, CRAFTS, TOYS, PUZZLES, AND INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE AT THE LIBRARY FOR PATRON USE

06 E-BOOKS AND E-MAGAZINES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE COMFORT OF HOME

07 A WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO SPEND TIME

08 PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, ADULTS, & FAMILIES, INCLUDING STORY TIME, FAMILY NIGHTS, SUMMER READING PROGRAM, MUSIC LESSONS, BOOK DISCUSSIONS, ART CLASSES, TEEN CLUB, TUTORING, LIBRARY ENSEMBLE, AND MORE...

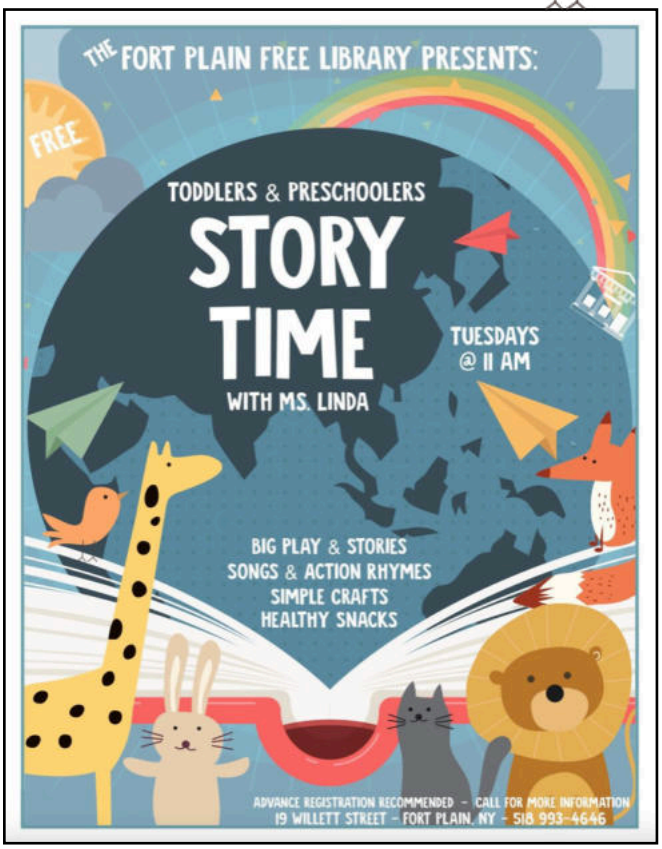
Weekly Morning Story Time

Ms. Linda

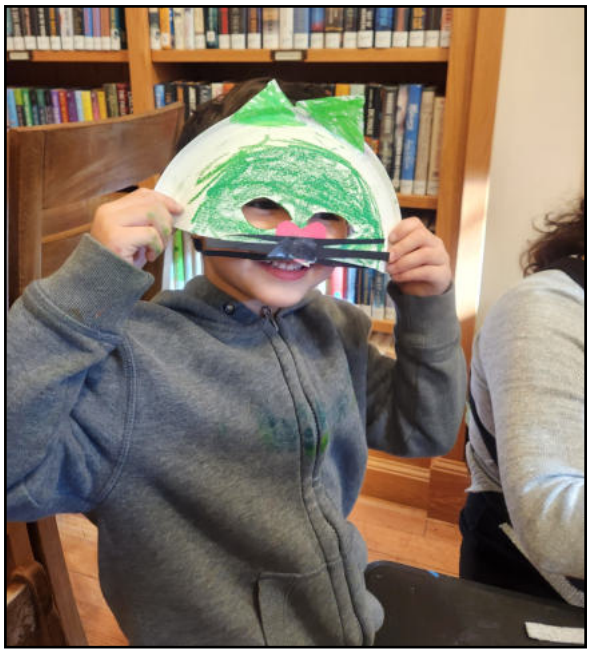
Every Tuesday - year round

Led each week by Linda Kellett, Story Time is a program featuring interactive stories, crafts, and songs for toddlers and preschoolers. Through imaginative art projects, sing-alongs teaching basic sign language, and access to a wide variety of educational toys (along with many more activities), this program offers children a chance to develop social skills and learn new concepts via creative play.

In addition to the structured portion of Story Time, a wide variety of open play activities—including blocks, marble runs, wooden train sets, letter and picture puzzles, and more—allow children of various ages to learn and explore new concepts at their own pace.



(Above) Participant in our story time proudly shows off painted pumpkin. (Left) Story time takes a pause for a group photo!



Each Tuesday's hour-long session features activities designed to build skills in early reading, math literacy, hand-eye coordination, and small motor control. This year, in addition to Sam's ukulele playing, library staff also introduced simple American Sign Language gestures into the musical portion of our program!

School Visits
Ms. Linda

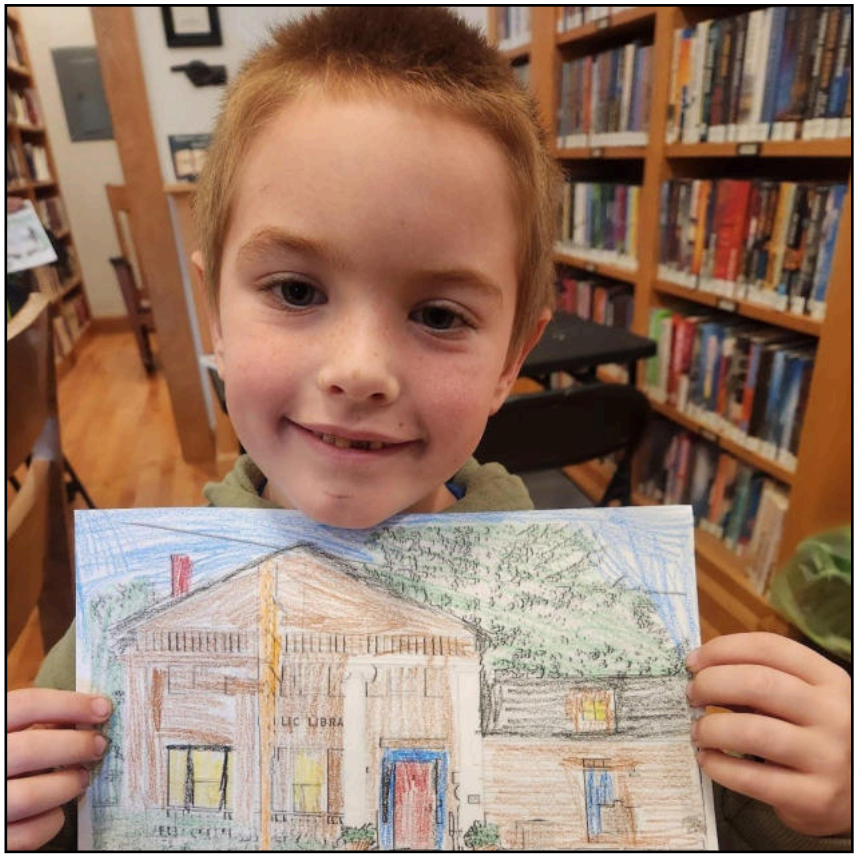
(Above) A group of visiting first-graders says hello to Mr. Jacob at the circulation desk.

Bi-monthly First Grade Programs at the Library

Our collaboration with the Harry Hoag School's first grade classes consists of interactive programs with a focus on library literacy skills (for example, learning the difference between fiction and nonfiction). Every other month, the classes are bussed to the library for a half hour of instruction and fun. Each session consists of a story and/or activity such as the introductory tour and scavenger hunt, the creation of a class book, and a final culminating program during which students get an invitation to get their own library cards.

The goal is to make the students and their families aware of all the public library has to offer. We want to make the library a destination: a place to learn, to have fun, to meet people with similar hobbies and interests, to gain access to a wealth of information and materials, and to develop a lifelong love of reading.

We appreciate the school's and teachers' willingness to partner with us in both of these educational programs!



(Above) The first-grade classes always bring their artistic talents during visits to the library! (Below) Ms. Linda and a group of preschoolers at Harry Hoag Elementary School show their handmade creations. Picture source: www.facebook.com/FortPlainCentralSchoolDistrict/

Monthly Pre-K Story Time Programs at the Harry Hoag School

Each month, we visit the Harry Hoag School's pre-kindergarten classes for half-hour story time programs. Each educational, interactive program consists of a story, songs, action rhymes, and an age-appropriate craft. The goal is to spark a love of reading.

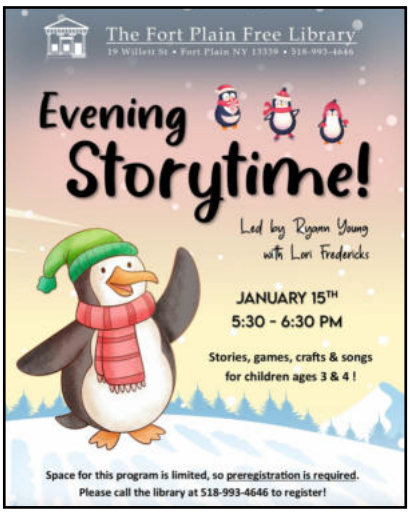
The activities are engaging and fun, but they also foster the development of early literacy and cognitive skills such as eye-hand coordination, visual perception, motor coordination, color identification, and more. The collaborative partnership with the school allows us to introduce the students to the Fort Plain Free Library, creating a positive (and hopefully lasting) impression about what we have to offer.

Monthly Night Story Time

Mrs. Young & Mrs. Fredericks

October — April

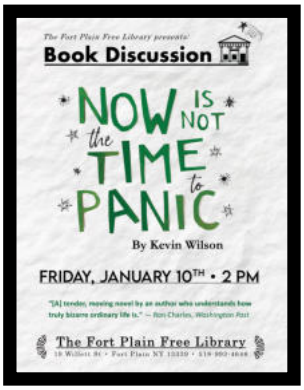
Ryann Young and Lori Fredericks returned to the library this year with their Evening Storytime program, offering games, crafts, stories and songs for children and their families!

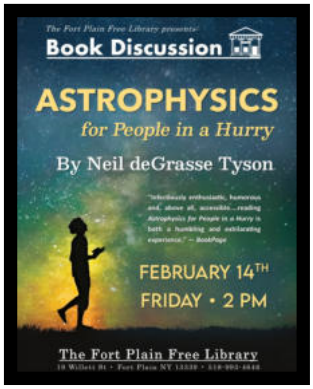


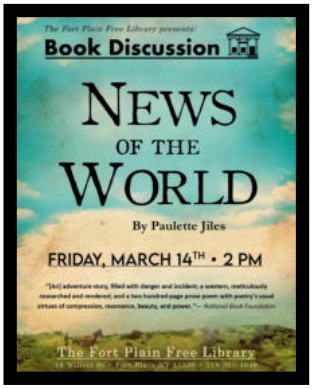
BOOK CLUB

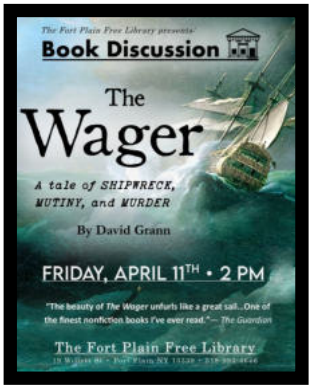
At the library

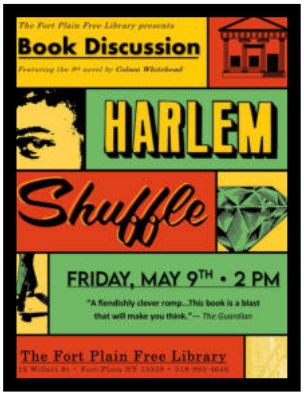
Led by the library's own Jacob Trahan, our Book Club is an opportunity to read and discuss a new book together every month, alternating between novels and nonfiction. Whether you loved the book, hated the book, or didn't even manage to finish the book, everyone is encouraged to give their perspective—and we've found that diverse opinions make for the best discussions! We've also found that having a group to read with is a wonderful way to explore genres and subjects you might otherwise have missed, and to develop a deeper appreciation for books outside your comfort zone. Copies of the latest Book Club title are always available to borrow at the library, so we hope you'll join in too!

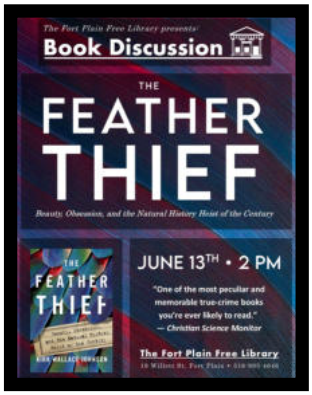


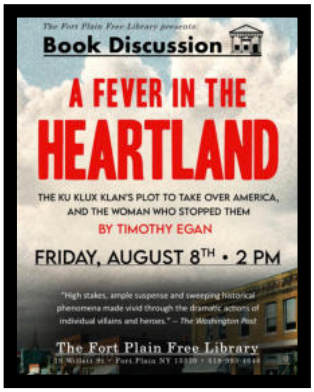


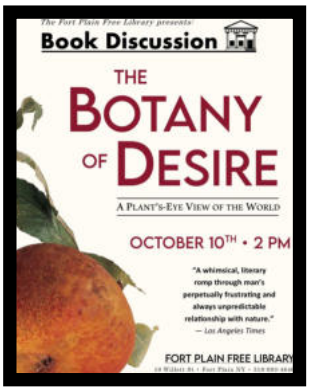


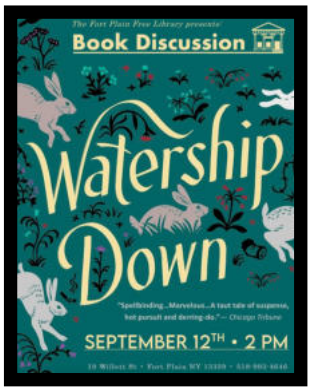


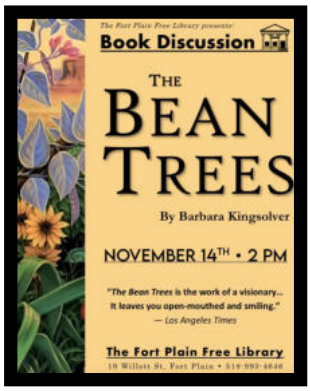


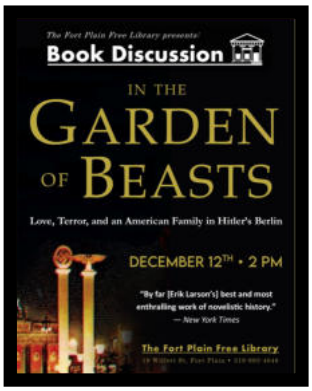












What are those sounds?

The Library Ensemble is an open community band where anyone, of any instrument, is welcome to join us every 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings. We play a variety of songs, many of which are custom arranged for the ensemble. The flexibility in arrangements truly allows the ensemble to accept all instruments at all playing levels. The goal of the Ensemble is to provide a space for those who want to experience the joy of playing music in a group setting and to give back to the community through musical performances.

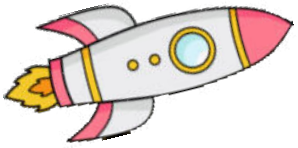
LIBRARY MUSIC LESSONS

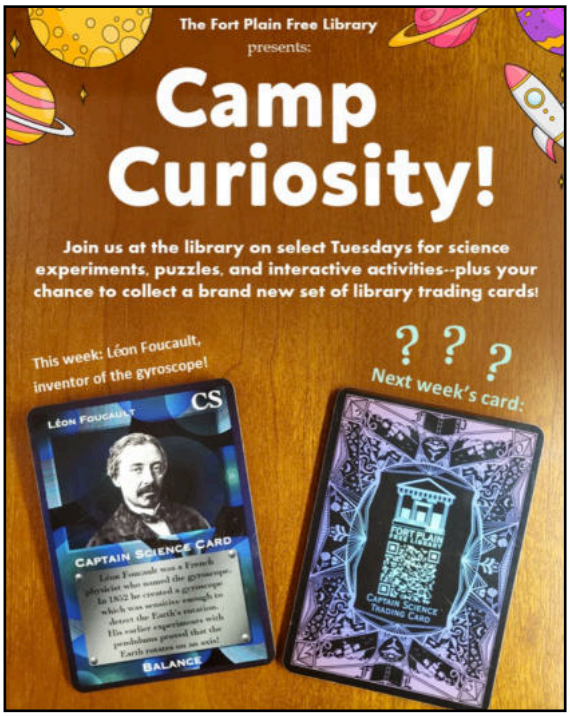
The Fort Plain Free Library offers free music lessons every Wednesday from 3-5pm hosted by Sam, a trained k-12 music educator. These free lessons are available for anyone in the community who wants to try a new instrument, learn another, improve reading skills, or further the mastery of their current instrument. The goals of our music lessons are to develop music literacy, strengthen the joy and appreciation of listening and playing music, and to strengthen a way to connect with your community.

Scan the QR code to learn more about how to sign up for free music lessons!

Science in the library

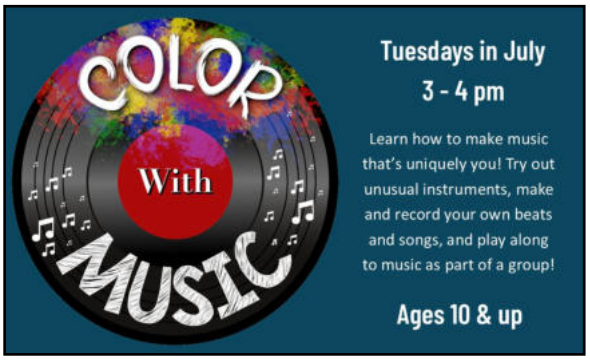
John Laffan (better known to many of our patrons as "Captain Science") brought interactive science experiments featuring magnets, bubbles, static electricity, and much more to the library this year as part of a new program: Camp Curiosity! The initial ten-week run of Camp Curiosity was so successful that we brought it back for our Summer Reading Program, which concluded with Captain Science demonstrating a rocket-powered wagon ride!





A Colorful Summer

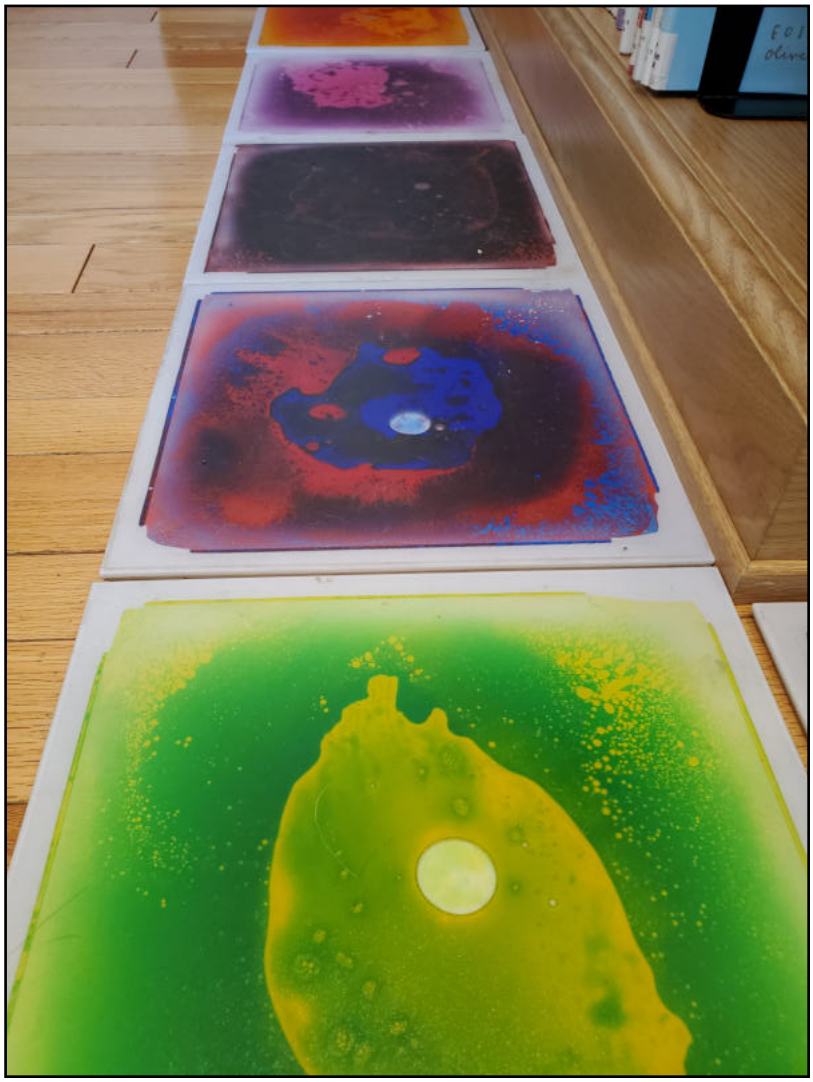
This year's Summer Reading Program featured art, science, music, and more! Just a few highlights: creating artwork in the style of Eric Carle; painting along as a group with Bob Ross; blowing gigantic bubbles at Camp Curiosity; and creating original music with Ms. Sam. (Plus: the return of our library trading cards, which encouraged kids to collect them all by reading books, attending programs, and completing challenges at the library!)

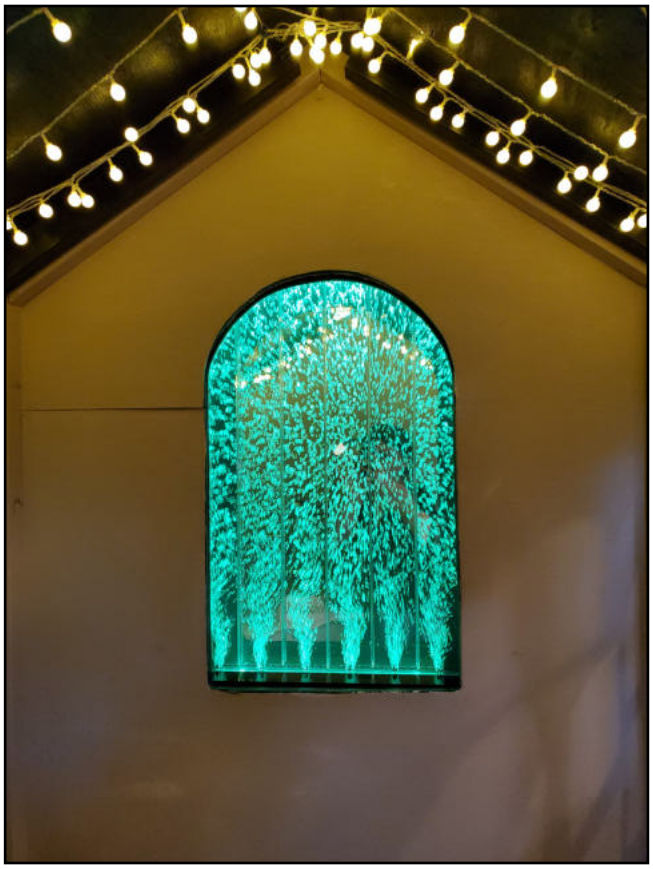


Scan the QR code to take a look back at our program line-up from this past summer!

Bring on the SPECTRUM

The bubble wall, liquid floor tiles, and other new sensory items in our children's room were generously donated by **Bring on the Spectrum**, a nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the lives of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in the greater Capital Region. We are grateful for their assistance in making our children's room a more welcoming, fascinating, and inclusive space!





(Above) Kids and adults alike enjoy stepping on these colorful sensory floor tiles to see the different color swirls they can create!

Scan the QR code to learn more about Bring on the Spectrum and their services!

BOOKS, PLANTS, COOKIES AND MORE.....

Held every spring and fall, our annual book sales are both the library's biggest fundraisers and a chance to catch up with a ton of our patrons at once! Each sale involves sorting through thousands of donated books (and pricing hundreds of rummage sale items), a massive undertaking made possible only through the efforts of our volunteers. Whether carrying crates (so many crates), tallying prices, or simply greeting patrons at the door, their cheerful and unflagging assistance makes every book sale feel like a celebration!

Library book sales are not just a great selection of books you can buy, they are an opportunity to find inspiration, explore new ideas, find the perfect book for a loved one, and connect with others (like your library staff and volunteers!).

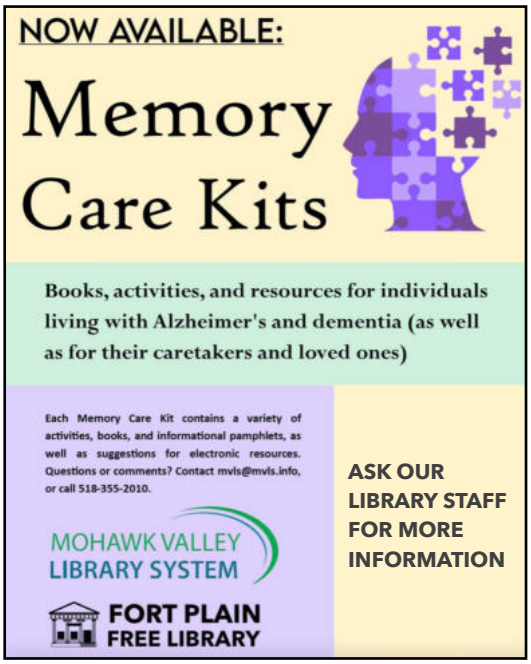
(Left) Liberty volunteers donate plants they start from seed every year for our spring Plant, Book, & Rummage sale. (Right) Two book sale enthusiasts who came prepared with their own book bag!

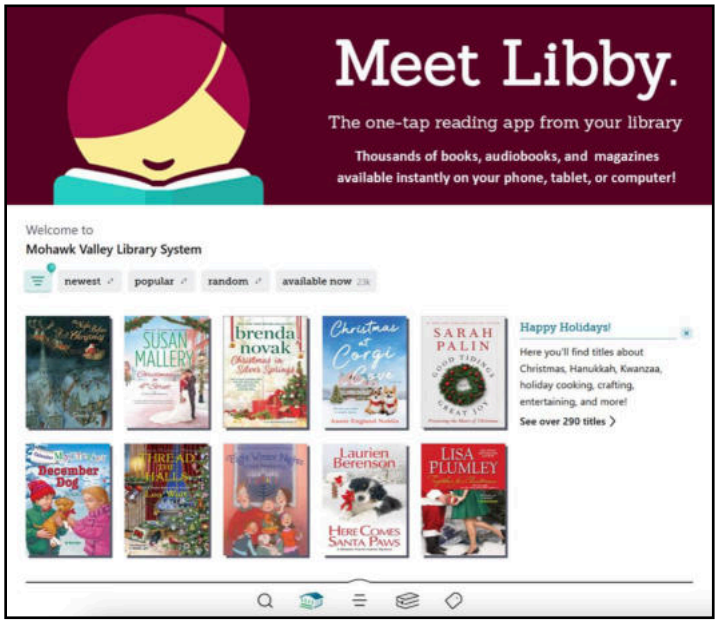
There have been many occasions when the library is in need of extra hands, another pair of eyes, or an expert of something specific, and we have been extremely fortunate to have many of our calls to action met. Whether in plain sight, or behind the scenes, the act of volunteering at our library is always appreciated and can significantly improve our ability to dedicate more time and energy to library services and programming.

(Bottom Right) Volunteers step in to help library staff with the task of cleaning over 100 plastic totes that were dropped off at the library. What did these totes contain? Interesting that you should ask! You will find out in six more pages.

Mohawk Valley Library System

In addition to our own collections, library patrons can access many other resources through the Mohawk Valley Library system: ebooks and other digital materials via the Libby app; homeschool resources through Educate Station; memory care kits featuring resources and activities for those with dementia and their families; collections of children's books available as part of the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program; and more!





Start With Science kits promote science and reading literacy skills among children ages 4 & 5. Each kit focuses on a science theme, and includes stories, activities, and science equipment.

THE ARTS FACTORY TAKES UP RESIDENCE

We collaborated with the Arts Factory of Montgomery County to showcase the work of a new artist each month in 2025. It was wonderful to have some new art on the library walls, and to experience the depth and variety of artistic talent found in our area!

MAY 2025 EXHIBIT

WELCOME TO MY GARDEN

PHYLLIS LAPI

SEPTEMBER 2025 EXHIBIT

KATHY VAN LOAN

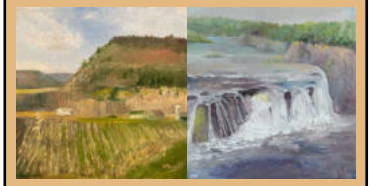
JULY 2025 EXHIBIT

WHO ARE WE?

AN INDEPENDENCE DAY OBSERVATION

TIM SHAFFER

OCTOBER 2025 EXHIBIT



DRAWN FROM LIFE

MARY BETH VOUGHT

the Arts Factory of Montgomery County

The Arts Factory of Montgomery County, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support, encourage and cultivate local arts, artisans and venues of the Mohawk Valley of New York State.

https://theartsfactory518.com

The ARTS FACTORY [TAF] WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS!

Erie Canal: Bicentennial Celebration

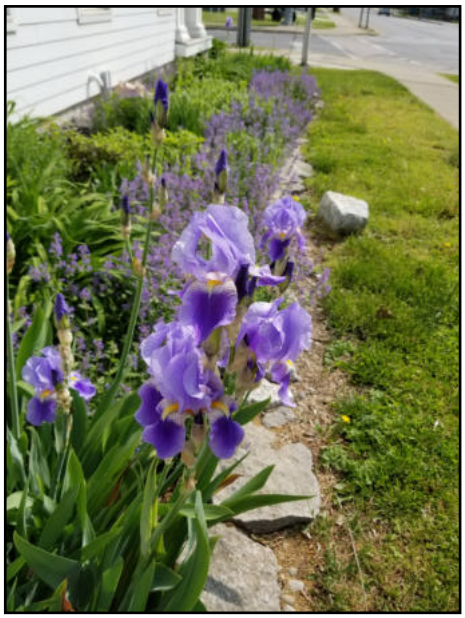
In celebration of the Erie Canal's 200th birthday, we teamed up with the Albany Symphony to create trading cards celebrating performers at their "Water Music New York: More Voices" festival!

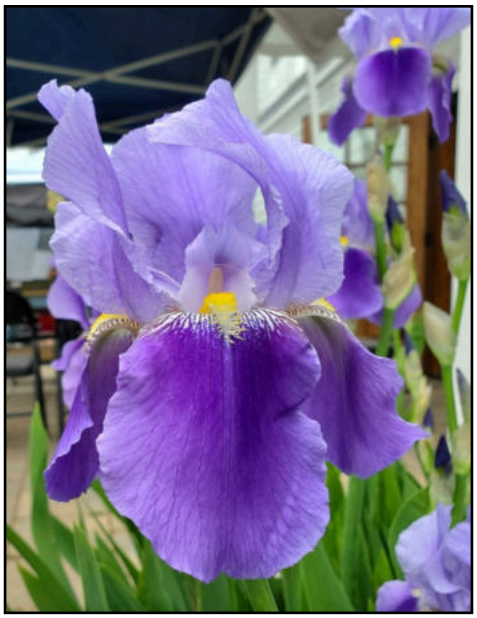
(Left) Artist and astronomer, Dr. Tyler Nordgren, was commissioned by the New York State Canal Corporation to design the 2025 Erie Canal Bicentennial Poster. NYS libraries were among the 100+ locations given copies of the poster to give away for free.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the Water Music Festival!

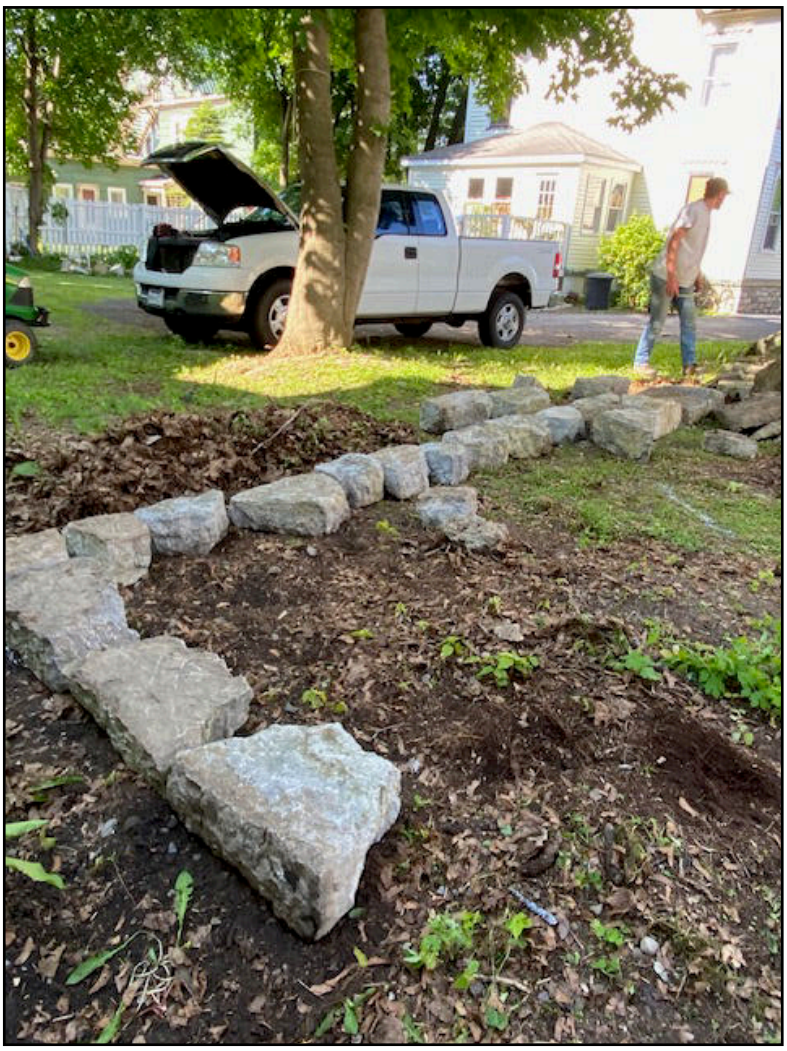
SURROUNDED BY NATURE

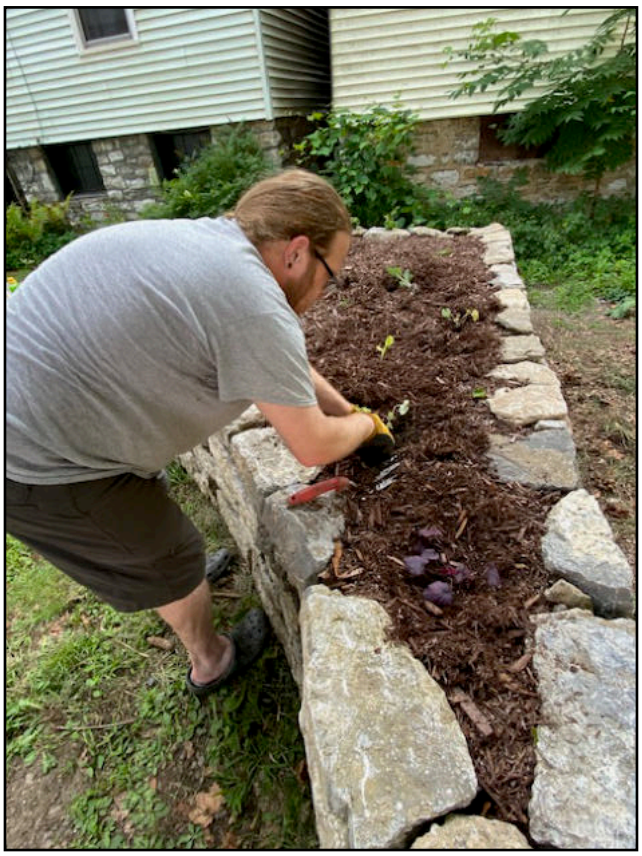
The first bright colors of spring emerge in library garden!





These colorful flowers are curated by volunteer Sherri Byrne, whose tireless efforts keep our library garden blooming!





Our long-term plan to create a reading garden in the library's backyard saw major progress this year, with the creation of a new stone wall and raised garden bed!

Canajoharie-Fort Plain Garden Club

Floral arrangements donated by the Canajoharie-Fort Plain Garden Club can often be found at the circulation desk. We always look forward to seeing their designs!

Can you have too many cookbooks?

A massive book donation that arrived at our library this spring contained an unexpected surprise: more than 3,600 recipe pamphlets, compiled from communities and organizations across the country. Hoping to keep this extraordinary collection in one piece, we reached out to Kansas State University, who graciously agreed to accept these materials into their foodways collection.

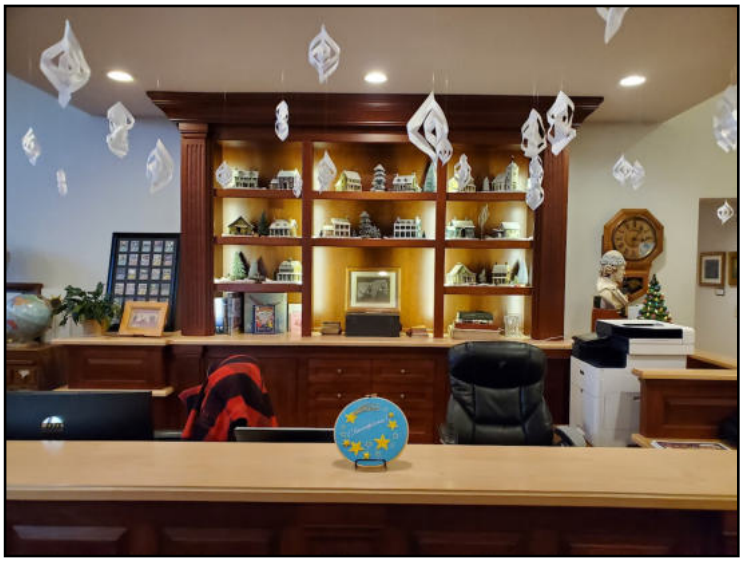
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Kansas State University's 'cookery collection is the largest collection of its kind that is available at a public university. Many of the cookbooks represent a specific place and time, allowing researchers insight about the socio-economic status of the cookbooks' contributors as well as what ingredients were available in that location at the time the cookbook was published.' (Source: https://lib.k-state.edu/research-find/archives-and-special-collections/collections/cookery/)

A Library Illustrated — 2025 in MORE Pictures

Captain Science launching himself down the bike path at our Summer Reading Program finale.

Story time friends share a book with the rest of the group.



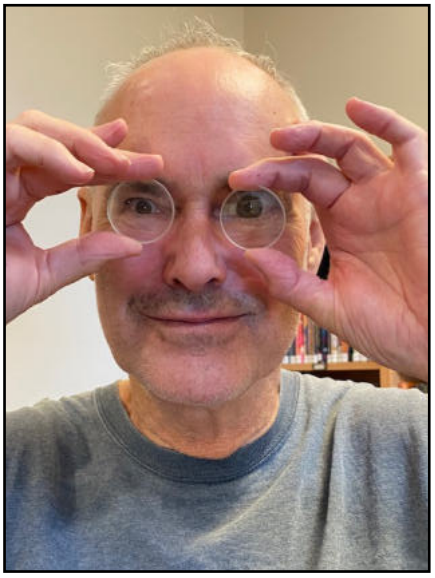
Community yarn collection! Take or donate as you wish!

Jacob and Sam – channeling Bob Ross for the paint-a-long.

The best view in the library overlooks Haslett Park.

Dressed in green for St. Patty Party!

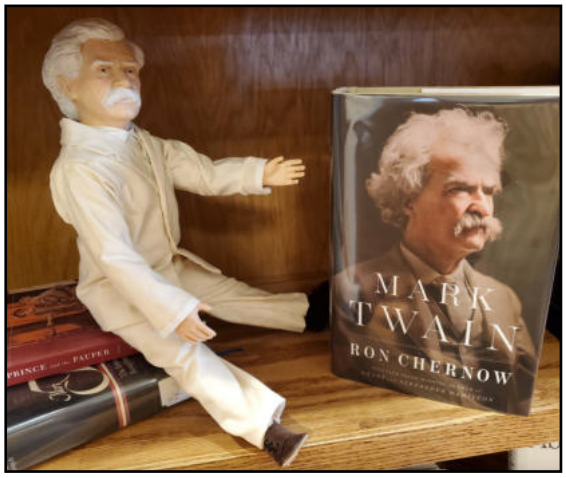
(Mid. Left) View through children's room. (Mid. Right) Beautiful handmade quilt barn pins created and donated by Liz Argotsinger. (Bottom Left) Front local history room. (Bottom Right) Captain Science showing off lenses.



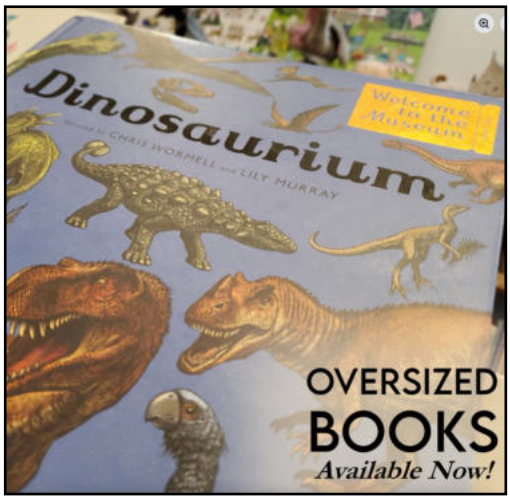
Fort Plain Free Library
January 8 ·

What kind of books live in this corner of the library? We'll give you one guess 👀

(In addition to our own collection of chapter books, this section of our children's room also features a brand new set of rotating fiction for kids from the Johnstown Public Library, and new issues of The Week Jr. magazine! All now available to borrow with your library card 📚)



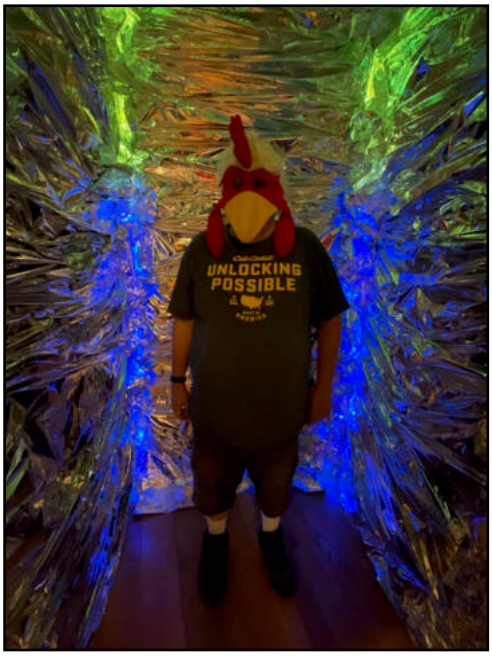
Mark Twain, robots, Shakespeare, dinosaurs and foxes – all can be found at your local library!



(Left) Meeting at the library on the final Tuesday of each month, Camera Club is an opportunity for photographers of all skill levels to show off their work, trade techniques, and learn some new tips. We look forward to seeing new contributions from our talented club members every month! (Right) Welcome sewers, quilters, knitters, crocheters, needle pointers, etc. and those who want to learn!

Is there a program you would like us to offer? Please feel free to share your ideas for programming, classes and events at the library.

The Library is glowing



(Top Left) Whimsical colors reminiscent of aurora borealis emanate from our graphic novel and fantasy section. (Top Right) 'Don't be a stranger to a good book' beckons this illuminating sign in the children's room! (Bottom Left) Jacob from 2009 appeared in a photo booth created by library staff. (Bottom Middle) A trio of musicians serenaded library staff while posing for their band photos. (Bottom Right) Somehow a chicken also made its way into the photo booth.

FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY
2025 OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

19 WILLETT STREET FORT PLAIN, NY 13339 — (518) 993-4646 — FORTPLAINFREELIBRARY.ORG

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

CATEGORIES	BUDGET	YEAR END TOTAL
SALARIES & PAYROLL TAXES TOTAL	**$130,395**	**$128,570.50**
BOOKS (OTHER MATERIALS)	**$5,500**	**$7,184.11**
BUILDING MAINTENANCE		
GAS	$3,500	$1,823.72
ELECTRIC	$3,500	$3,292.09
OTHER UTILITIES	$1,000	$940.22
CUSTODIAL SUPPLIES	$1,000	$1,407.55
INSURANCE	$6,000	$6,267.47
MAINTENANCE/CLEANING	$2,000	$1,033.04
SNOW REM./LANDSCAPING	$1,000	$1,226.43
SECURITY	$1,000	$3,189.00
BUILDING MAINTENANCE TOTAL:	**$19,000**	**$19,179.52**
LIBRARY MISC.		
LIBRARY SUPPLIES	$14,305	$7,458.63
PROGRAMMING	$14,000	$7,966.43
ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES	$2,000	$0.00
TELEPHONE/INTERNET	$4,000	$4,867.35
POSTAGE	$500	$163.41
PUBLICITY	$200	$170.05
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	$3,500	$2,835.76
LIBRARY SYSTEM FEES	$7,000	$5,555.90
ACCOUNTING	$1,600	$1,750.00
PAYROLL SERVICE	$1,000	$997.50
MISC./TRAVEL REIMB.	$1,200	$4,038.00
LIBRARY MISC. TOTAL:	**$49,305**	**$35,803.03**
OPERATIONAL EXPENSE BUDGET TOTAL:	**$204,200**	**$190,737.16**

FORT PLAIN FREE LIBRARY
2025 OPERATIONAL INCOME

19 WILLETT STREET FORT PLAIN, NY 13339 — (518) 993-4646 — FORTPLAINFREELIBRARY.ORG

OPERATIONAL INCOME

CATEGORIES	BUDGET	YEAR END TOTAL
LOCAL PUBLIC FUNDS		
TOWN OF MINDEN	$3,000	$3,000
VILLAGE OF FORT PLAIN	$3,000	$3,000
TAX LEVY	$100,000	$100,000
LOCAL PUBLIC FUND TOTAL:	**$106,000**	**$106,000**
SYSTEM GRANTS & STATE AID	**$10,000**	**11,697.20***
TRUSTS	**$32,600**	**$27,788.45**
GIFTS		
GRANTS	$34,000	$33,912.00
DONATIONS	$7,000	$5,761.35
FUNDRAISING	$10,000	$10,798.28
GIFTS TOTAL:	**$51,000**	**$50,471.63**
OTHER (FAX, PRINTER, ETC.)	**$4,600**	**$5,391.82**
OPERATIONAL INCOME BUDGET TOTAL:	**$204,200**	**$201,349.10**

*FUNDS FROM THE 'SYSTEM GRANTS & STATE AID' CATEGORY ARE ALLOCATED TO BE USED FOR PROGRAMMING OVER SEVERAL YEARS.

FORT PLAIN
FREE LIBRARY