

## Report from the State Librarian Catherine Delneo to the Vermont Board of Libraries

October 10, 2023

### Department In-Service and Staff Appreciation Day

The Department held its annual full-staff in-service day on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was held in Hubbard Park. During the meeting, the staff reviewed the Department's State of Vermont Strategic Plan for FY2023 and shared accomplishments with one another. The team also set goals for its FY2024 State of Vermont Strategic Plan.

Following the meeting, staff enjoyed a meal together and played board games and lawn games.



### New Director's Summit

The Department hosted a New Director's Summit on Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was held onsite at 60 Washington Street and was attended by 18 library directors from around the state. Library Consultant for Operations, Kevin Unrath, and Joy Worland, Library Consultant for Continuing Education and Small and Rural Libraries hosted the all-day event, which provided newer directors with in-person opportunity to gain new skills and confidence in their positions and engage with a cohort of other new library directors.

Topics included:

- The landscape of Vermont libraries: municipal/incorporated/community libraries—what does this mean and how does it affect your work?
- In what ways are Vermont libraries similar or not to libraries in other states?
- Support systems for libraries with small staff

The day featured presentations and interactive activities that provided directors with practical ways to prioritize and streamline their everyday work. Directors were also provided with information and ideas to support their growth including leadership, community engagement, and long-range planning. All the Department's Consultants, the two Assistant State Librarians, and the State Librarian presented attendees with an overview of the Department, then joined the attendees at no-host lunch in various restaurants in Barre.

### **July 2023 Storm Response**

In the days following the storm, the Department surveyed every public library in the state to ascertain whether their buildings had been damaged by the storms. Department staff did extensive phone banking to reach public libraries that had not responded to the email check-in. Through this effort, the Department was able to reach every one of the 188 public libraries in the state. The Department created a map of the reports of damage from the storm, which can be viewed on its website.

<https://libraries.vermont.gov/2023Flood>

Public libraries that reported damage to the Department:

- Ainsworth Public (Williamstown)
- Aldrich Free Library, York Branch (East Barre)
- Burnham Memorial Library (Colchester)
- Cabot Public Library
- Calef Memorial Library (Washington)
- Chelsea Public Library
- Craftsbury Public Library
- Ilsley Public Library (Middlebury)
- Jaquith Public Library (Marshfield)
- Johnson Public Library
- Kellogg-Hubbard Library (Montpelier)
- Morrill Memorial and Harris Library (Strafford)
- Pope Memorial (Danville) - Electrical damage from thunderstorms
- Richmond Free Library - Electrical damage from thunderstorms
- Roxbury Free Library
- Shrewsbury Library
- South Londonderry Free Library
- Swanton Public
- Varnum Memorial Library (Cambridge)
- Wilder Memorial Library (Weston)

Through this effort, the Department learned that 20 public libraries had suffered storm damage. Additionally, the storm caused issues with high humidity at the Durick Library at Saint Michael's College (Colchester) issues in the collection due to high humidity and flooding at the Davis Family Library at Middlebury College.

In the weeks after the storm, the State Librarian visited the York Branch of the Aldrich Library, Cabot Public Library, Calef Memorial Library, Jaquith Public Library, Johnson Public Library, Kellogg-Hubbard Library, South Londonderry Library, Wilder Memorial Library, and Varnum Memorial Library.

The Department learned that incorporated public libraries in the state are not eligible for FEMA grants in the way that municipal public libraries are. Incorporated public libraries are non-profit organizations, so fall within the category of PNP Eligible Noncritical, Essential Social Services.

[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_pappg-v4-updated-links\\_policy\\_6-1-2020.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_pappg-v4-updated-links_policy_6-1-2020.pdf)

The Department met with the Vermont Community Foundation to provide information about the impacts of the storms upon public libraries and to share the list of libraries that sustained flood damage. The Vermont Community Foundation made grants of \$5,000 to impacted public libraries.

The State Librarian and Assistant State Librarian Janette Shaffer called an emergency meeting of the Vermont Public Library Foundation (VPLF) to discuss grants to impacted public libraries. Board of Libraries Chair Tom Frank attended as the Board's representative to that non-profit. VPLF provided libraries with storm damage an opportunity to apply for non-competitive grants of \$8,000 to support their recovery. Eight of the impacted public libraries requested and received grants through this program: Jaquith Public, Ainsworth Public, Craftsbury Public, Kellogg-Hubbard, Johnson Public, Pope Memorial, South Londonderry Free, and Varnum Memorial Libraries.

The two public libraries with the most damage are the Kellogg-Hubbard Library and Johnson Public Library.

Kellogg-Hubbard, a non-profit public library in Montpelier, estimates that repairs to its building will cost \$1.5M. The library has \$400K in insurance and have raised approximately \$200K through grants and community donations. The Kellogg-Hubbard Library staff have been providing curbside pickup of library materials and are providing internet access outside the building and relaunched service inside the library building on Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.kellogghubbard.org/flood>

Flood waters filled the lower level of the Johnson Public Library and then entered the public service areas. The municipal public library's collections were removed and placed in an alternate location so were largely saved from the storm waters. The building suffered extensive damage from water and mold, however, and has not yet reopened to the public. The Johnson Public Library is open its regular hours in its temporary space at the Masonic Temple in Johnson.

### **Youth Book Award Conference**

On Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, Youth Services Consultant Jonathan Clark moderated the annual Vermont youth book Awards virtual conference attended by 177 public librarians, school librarians, and teachers. The day-long conference featured three 2-hour sessions, one for each student-choice book award: Red Clover (K-4 Grade), Vermont Golden Dome (4-8 grade), and Green Mountain (9-12 grade).

Each session started with a keynote presentation from an author of a book that received the most student votes for each book award. Book award committee members then led exploration into the

2023-2024 nomination book lists for each award, highlighting innovative and fun ways to promote and engage book award participation in schools and libraries.

Vermont students are encouraged to read books from the lists and vote for their favorite in the spring of 2024. <https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/youth-services-children-and-teens/vermont-youth-book-awards>

### **Courier Grants**

The Department is in the process of issuing Courier grants to public libraries around the state in support of the statewide sharing of physical library materials through the Interlibrary Loan. This year, 113 public libraries were awarded grants of \$636.48 through a non-competitive grant process. In Fiscal Year 2023, 135 libraries participated in the Courier program, through which 142,116 physical items moved around the state to fill Interlibrary Loan requests. The Courier program saves postage costs and staff time and helps increase resource sharing among libraries in Vermont. The Department is happy to share that the University of Vermont has joined the Courier program and plans to share more information about their participation with the community when UVM's collections become visible in CLOVER.

### **Fairytale Festival**

Johnathan Clark, Consultant for Children and Teen Services, and the State Librarian travelled to Killington on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> to participate in the Sherburne Library's annual Fairytale Festival. The State Librarian served as the Queen of the Fairytale Kingdom and "knighted" more than 100 children. Jonathan Clark served as one of the official photographers of the event and in this role had opportunities to network with youth-serving librarians who had travelled from more than 20 libraries around the state to put on the event for children. Photos of the event can be found on the Fairytale Festival's Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/VTfairytalefestival/>