



Friends of the Fletcher Free Library  
Annual Report FY'24  
July 2023 – June 2024

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## Friends of the Fletcher Free Library

Annual Report FY'24

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### Celebrating 150 years and Looking Forward



**The purpose of The Friends of the Fletcher Free Library** is to support the Fletcher Free Library (FFL) through advocacy, financial support, and fundraising with the goal of promoting the library as a literacy and multicultural center for the community.

The Friends raise money through the generosity of community donors and donations to the Annual Appeal, and through sales of donated books and branded merchandise at occasional sales, sales from the Stall (shelves of books across from the Main Desk), and from online sales. On occasion, the Friends also raise money through fundraisers. The Friends are recipients of most restricted and unrestricted grant monies received for the library's use, though some grant money is passed through the City of Burlington. Our gratitude to Gale Batsimm, FFL Development Manager, grantwriter, fundraiser, and communicator, never grows old. Her commitment and hard work make all we do possible.

#### **FY'24**

Giao Dang and Kathleen Laramée joined the Board in FY24. Giao is an innovator and 'outside the box' thinker who is not afraid of asking why we do things the way we do. Kathleen, a co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee brings a love of the Fletcher Free and connection to the capital campaign project. Both Kathleen and Giao are always ready to roll up their metaphorical sleeves and do what is needed to support the library.

Giao initiated a new book selling program in FY24, stocking bookshelves at August First, and collecting money for them digitally, through Venmo. This program raised over \$100- in just the first month!

We also contracted with Elena Zadoroznia Larsen to serve as bookkeeper for the Friends. Her work has been a boon to the Friends, and she is keeping the accounts well documented and in good order.

#### **A Growing Partnership with the Onion River Food Coop**

FY'24 saw tremendous growth in the relationship between the Friends and the Onion River Food Co-op (City Market). Through the work of Carol Livingston and Robin Twery, we achieved the status of Community Outreach Partner. Co-op members who volunteer at our book sale activities and even regular Friends volunteers who directly support our fundraising efforts get work 'credit hours' at City Market, which translate into discounted prices for them at the markets. As a result, it has been quite easy to get volunteers (pretty much as many as we need!) to work at book sales. In the past, signing up volunteers has been challenging. We are very grateful to City Market for this support. Further, for June the Friends were allotted the 40% slot for City Market's 'Rally for Change' program (customers can choose to 'round up' their bills to the nearest dollar), which raised over \$5000 for the Friends!

And of course, for years City Market has been a regular contributor to the library's regular "Food for Talk" program. City Market is truly a good friend of the Fletcher Free Library!

#### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On July 14, 1873, Mrs. Mary Fletcher and her daughter Miss Mary Fletcher donated \$20,000 to the City of Burlington to establish a library, half to start the collection, and half as an investment for future needs. At the time, this was the largest private donation in Burlington's history (an editorial at the time noted, the most useful and beneficial). The key word is 'donation'. The Fletchers made a substantial donation to establish the library and build their community.

Libraries like the Fletcher Free are often established and are generally operated as public/private partnerships. Cities contribute and ordinary residents contribute to making a public library the cornerstone of the community. The Fletchers conditioned their donation on a commitment from the

City to contribute to the creation of the library. Three decades later, Andrew Carnegie, who financed the original Fletcher Free Library building, did as well.

The Friends of the Fletcher Free Library exists to continue the work the Fletchers started. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who donates to the Friends. Their largesse is the life's blood of our city.

150 years merited a special birthday celebration for the Fletcher Free Library. A parade down Church Street with children's book favorites Elephant & Piggie kicked off the party. Music and magical performances as well as giant bubbles, face painting, a community art project, a historical timeline, and a 150<sup>th</sup> photo booth made for an amazing community gathering to commemorate a trusted space for lifelong learning.

### **Capital Campaign Committee**

The work of the Capital Campaign Committee began in earnest in FY'24. Recognizing the amount of focused attention required to mount a campaign, the Friends hired Shana Morrow Trombley to serve as Capital Campaign Manager for the duration of the campaign. Shana is the Friends' first employee in recent memory, and she is working to make the renovation of our beautiful and historic library a reality. The Campaign Committee started to meet regularly, to develop a communications strategy, plan events, and begin conversations with potential donors.

#### **Capital Campaign Committee**

<b>Amy Mellencamp, co-chair</b>
<b>Kathleen Laramee, co-chair</b>
<b>Betsey Krumholz, treasurer</b>
<b>Shana Morrow Trombley, Campaign Manager</b>
<b>Cate MacLachlan</b>
<b>Ryan Chartier</b>
<b>Jonathan Chapple-Sokol</b>
<b>Gale Batsimm</b>
<b>Mary Danko</b>

## **Fletcher Friends Board of Directors**

<b>Position</b>	<b>FY'24</b>
<b>President</b>	Jonathan Chapple-Sokol
<b>Vice President</b>	Carol Livingston
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mary Clare Armstrong
<b>Secretary</b>	Robin Twery
<b>Director</b>	Giao Dang
<b>Director</b>	Sara Bourne
<b>Director</b>	Kathleen Laramee
<b>Director</b>	Tina Lesem
<b>Director</b>	Amanda Hannaford
<b>Director</b>	Martie Majoros
<b>Director</b>	Mark Twery

Friends volunteers devoted over 2500 person-hours to supporting the Fletcher Free Library. We were fortunate to have substantial help from City Market member workers. They were a big part of making all our book sales so successful. We are thankful for those who worked hundreds of hours as well as those who contributed just a few.

We recognize Robin and Mark Twery for organizing so many consistently successful book sales, Martie Majoros and Carol Livingston for their work on the Stall, and Tina Lesem, Sara Bourne and Giao Dang for maintaining our online presence. Our Communications team led by Martie has kept the community informed of Friends activities.

## **Financial Support for the Library**

The Friends' Board annually allocates resources to the FFL for use at the discretion of the Library Director. This allows the library staff to plan and prioritize programming, professional development, and special project investment more effectively. The Library Director proposes an amount to the Friends' Board based on anticipated programming and departmental needs for the coming fiscal year. The level of funding allocated each year is based on the availability of funds as stated in the Friends' end of year financial statements and Treasurer's report. For FY'24, the Board allocated \$57,600, to support programs and services for youth, teens and adults, and professional development support for staff. Now essentially funded by the City, the ELOP (Early Literacy Outreach Program) allocation is much reduced, so the FY'24 allocation represents a 33% increase in other programmatic funding. The Friends also issued \$15,000 to the City of Burlington as agreed to in our Memorandum of Understanding, a \$5,000 reduction compared with FY'23.

**FY2024 Allocation Request**

	Amount Requested
Donation to City Revenue Line	\$ 15,000.00
Programming - Adult	\$ 20,000.00
Outreach (Seniors)	\$ 2,000.00
Programming - Youth	\$ 9,000.00
Programming - Teen	\$ 5,500.00
Professional Development	\$ 6,000.00
Innovation Grants	\$ 5,000.00
Museum Pass Program	\$ 0.00
Shredding Contract/\$42.50 month	\$ 500.00
Awareness Fund	\$5,000.00
ELOP Coordinator	\$ 1,000.00
Staff Support and Recognition	\$3,600
Capital Campaign Fund	\$35,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 107,600.00</b>

As shown, the Friends also committed \$35,000 to the Capital Fund, to provide money for necessary expenses, many of which are needed to help start the Capital Campaign. Some of the expenses include but are not limited to: Campaign Manager wages and payroll taxes; printing (mailings, brochures, signs, renderings, etc.); mailing and postage; consulting; trainings; advertising and social media; video production; and events/receptions.

## FY'24 Highlights

**NEW NORTH END BRANCH LIBRARY** boosted its programming in 2024 to include the Lake Champlain Memory Café in partnership with the UVM Center on Aging, Age Well, Wee Engineering, and the Vegan in Vermont Cookbook Club, and to regular offerings such as *Stories with Geoff* and *LEGO Time*. Special thanks to North Country Federal Credit Union for their support of expanded NNE programming.

**YOUTH SERVICES** offered the *2023 Summer Challenge Program (SCP)*, and outreach staff visited parks and youth summer camps throughout Burlington, supported in part by a Vermont Afterschool grant with Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront. In addition to hands-on activities, SCP distributed free books, chosen from books donated to the Friends. The Vermont Federal Credit Union sponsored 2023 SCP T-shirts. Friends' funding supported weekly youth programs and brought exciting live summer programs including Modern Times Theater, Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), Exordium's Honey Bee program, and Vermont Public's *But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids*. The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) provided a story time and book giveaway to youth to help build their home libraries. The Early Literacy Outreach Program (ELOP) continued to provide direct outreach with live story times at home-based childcares.

**THE BURLINGTON STORYWALK(R)** continued into its fourth year, thanks to sponsorship from Appletree Bay Physical Therapy, Baystate Financial, Burlington Electric Department, Burlington Telecom, Heritage Automotive Group, NBT Bank, Phoenix Books, and Pingala Café. The storybooks at this popular family destination continue to change with each season with the help of volunteer BTW StoryWalk(R) stewards.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING** launched a new summer environmental series, *the Future is In Our Hands*, sponsored by Mascoma Bank. Events included nonfiction book discussions; a film screening at the Roxy Cinema, *Blue Alchemy*; an art exhibit by Renée Greenlee; Hike like an Ecologist; and lectures by Dr. Carolyn Finney and Dr. Desiree Narango. Programs funded by the Friends during the year include two fiction book discussion groups and the popular *Food for Talk: a Cookbook Book Club*. ELL classes continued online. During April's National Poetry Month, the library provided free, stamped poetry postcards. In June 2024 the National Institute of Health's *All of Us Journey* visited the Fletcher Free Library. This traveling educational exhibit demonstrated the power of participating in health research. The library offered related programming including pop-up health clinics, Tai Chi and Zentangle classes, and lectures on genetics.

**TECHNOLOGY** classes expanded in FY24, due in part to a PLA Digital Literacy grant. New North End Branch classes included Protecting Personal Information Online, Healthcare Online, Android and iPhone Basics, and Main Library offerings included Online Safety and Security and Intro to Computers and Internet. A Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities grant, matched with Friends' support, provided new audio-visual equipment for the Pickering Room as well as soundproofing to improve patron experience.

**TWO LITERARY FESTIVALS** returned for their second year at FFL in November 2023 with support from the Friends. Author and illustrator Alison Bechdel headlined the Green Mountain Book Festival (GMBF) and was also featured on a Banned Books Panel with authors Kekla Magoon, Kate Messner and Stephen Kiernan. The GMBF included author talks, panel discussions, and readings. The Non-Fiction Comics Festival, the largest event of its kind in the country, highlighted illustrators and authors of non-fiction graphic books.

**TEEN DEPARTMENT** worked with schools to bring classes to the Library. The Teen Space also held popular regular programs like Dungeons and Dragons.

**THE INNOVATION GRANT** continues to allow staff to propose creative solutions to support staff and patrons at FFL. A public water-bottle filling station was added to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor through this funding.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** strengthens staff's knowledge and ability to serve community needs. The Friends proudly fund opportunities to enhance the skills of library employees.

## Attendance at Library Programs

Program Type	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
Adult	270	4676
Senior Outreach	136	645
Teen Outreach	27	491
Teen	92	397
Youth	337	9208
Youth Tours & Outreach	328	3885



# Financial Support for the Library

## Financials (unaudited)

### Summary Statement

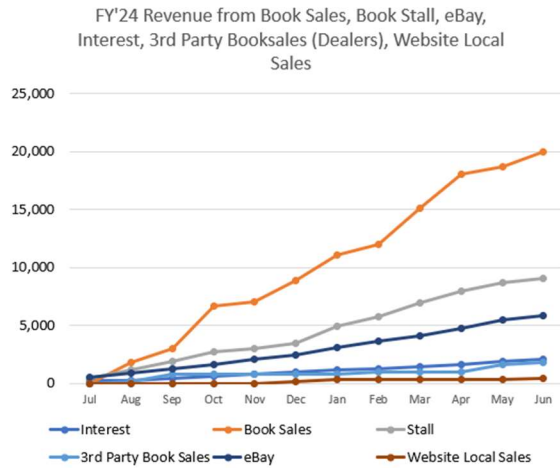
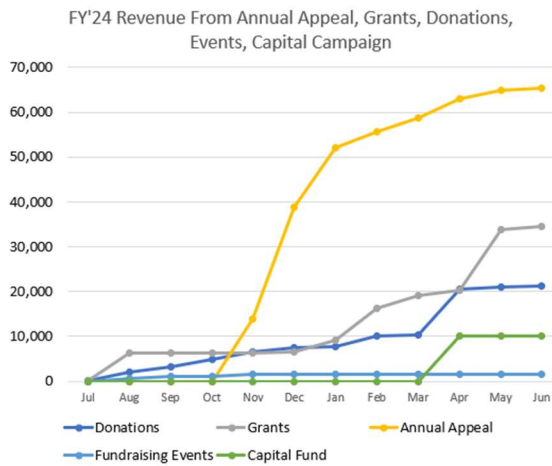
Revenue	FY'24	FY'23	Expense	FY'24	FY'23
Annual Appeal	65,449.68	57,989.65	Program Stipends/Consultants	1,910.21	3,734.52
Contributions Income	21,356.18	64,179.76	Program Supplies	26,142.57	29,784.30
Grants	34,396.00	37,893.54	Allocation to City of Burlington	15,000.00	20,000.00
BookSales	19,947.13	28,773.26	Speaker/Performer fees	38,466.57	43,633.00
OnLine Sales/eBay	5,872.90	5,036.91	Marketing	8,462.70	15,600.61
Bookstall	9,093.50	8,818.63	Equipment	21,520.01	3,877.20
Website Local Sales	380.06	262.50	Books	1,759.15	4,743.61
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Book Sales	1,774.00	3,406.00	License Fees	4,780.44	2052.39
Fundraising Events	1,500.00	2,100.00	Office Supplies	4,637.54	1,585.71
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Sales-Other	836.71	0	Accounting Fees	2,047.83	2641.20
Interest Earned	2,051.99	74.68	Insurance	1,740.96	1,505.71
			Staff Development/Training	6,197.36	9,843.84
			Catering/Staff Recognition	4619.32	3,908.25
			Postage	427.00	969.55
			Merchandise	4,233.29	2,276.23
			Travel	4,318.06	436.66
			Wage Salary	18,031.74	
			PayrollTaxes	5,382.17	
			VT Sales Tax	5,094.37	
<b>Total</b>	<b>162,658.15</b>	<b>208,534.93</b>		<b>174,771.29</b>	<b>147,928.01</b>

**Bank Account Balance** (does not include <\$2000 held in eBay, PayPal, Venmo accounts)

Date	Bank Account Holdings
7/1/2023	289,768.87
6/30/2024	265,698.34

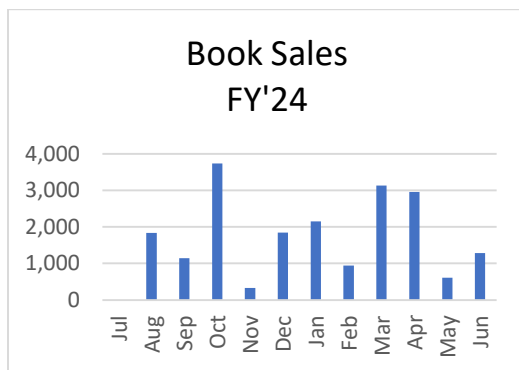
# Revenue

## Cumulative revenue by source



FY'24 again brought an outpouring of generosity from the community through general donations and Annual Appeal contributions. We are overwhelmed by the selflessness of donors who wish to remain anonymous, and those who donate *in memoriam*. We were also beneficiaries of a substantial gift from the Stempel Bequest\*, and the completion of the donation from the Hook Trust. Contributions outside the Annual Appeal can vary significantly year-to-year. Such contributions are often large one-time major donations. Beyond donations, Development Manager Gale Batsimm's grant writing yielded \$34,000 for use in a variety of Library and outreach programs. Half of Friends revenue came from monetary donations. We were once again beneficiaries of several promotions at local Hannaford Supermarkets.

Most of the rest of our revenue was made possible by the many donors who gave us many, many books, allowing the Friends to continue the tradition of raising money for the FFL through the sale of quality used books. And community turnout for in-person book sales was once again incredible. Outdoor sales again proved extremely popular, but every sale brought hundreds of browsers and buyers to the library. Booksale revenue by month/sale is shown in the following chart:

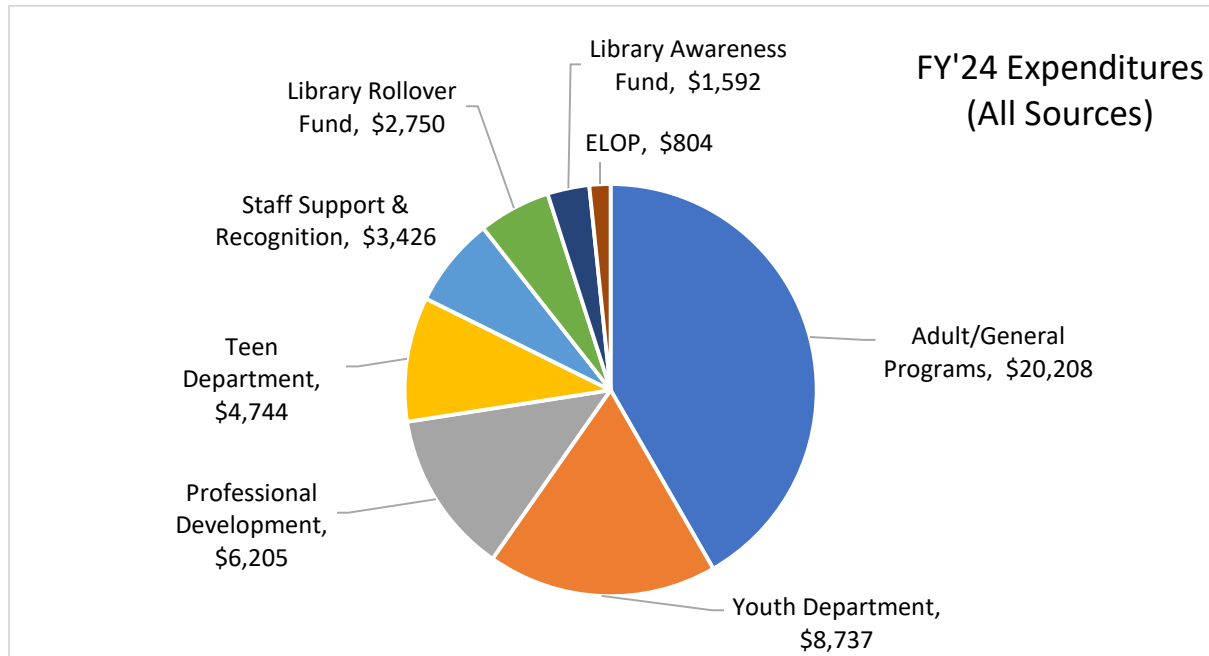


\* The Stempel Bequest, \$160,000, does not appear in the summary statement because it has spending restrictions and was placed in a separate account.

Sales at the Stall were strong and raised over \$9,000- for the library. Our fundraising in general continues to be limited not by our ability to innovate or by our commitment to the Fletcher Free Library, but by the number of volunteers working on activities besides book sales,

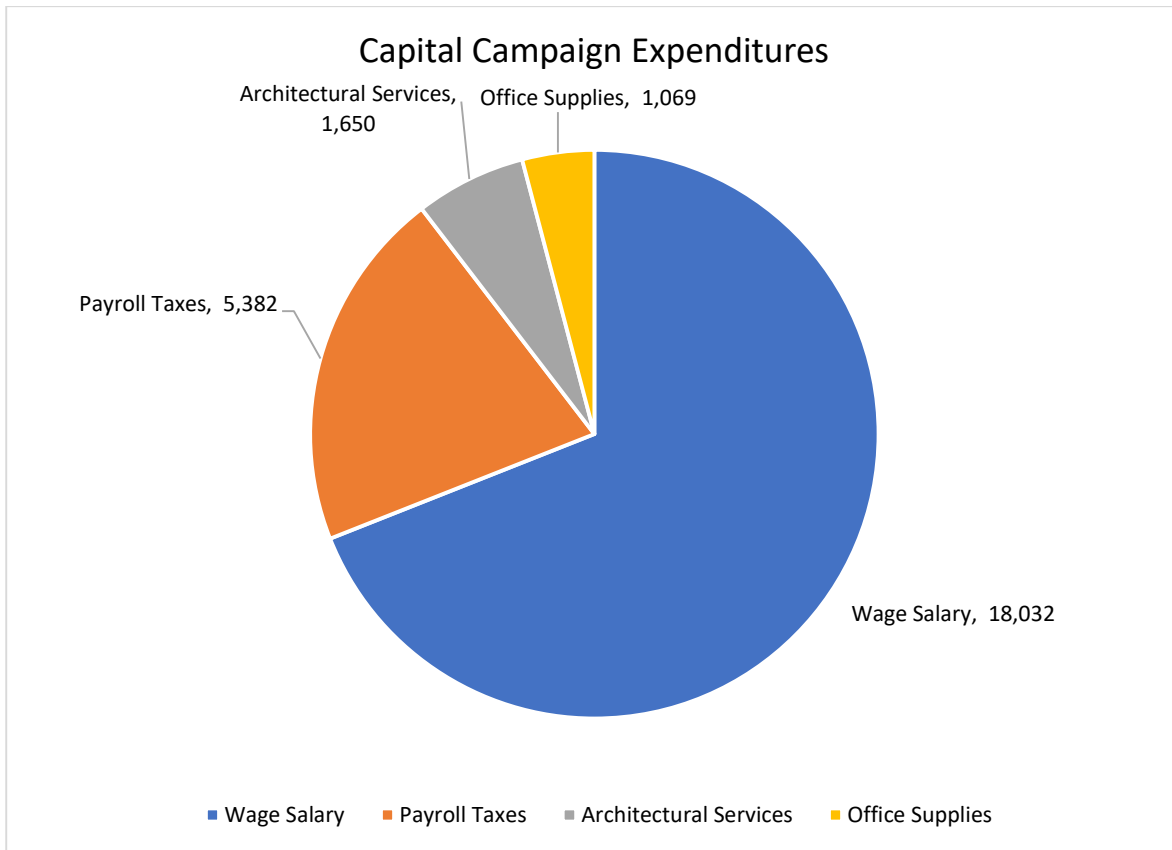
## Expenditure

### Library Support



We met our City obligation by sending \$15,000 in June. During FY24 it became clear that the amount of revenue taken in from the sale of tangible items, (i.e., books at sales, the Stall, and elsewhere), was enough to trigger a Vermont sales tax requirement. Rather than collect sales tax from folks buying books, the Friends chose to pay the tax out of revenues. The Friends also replaced two aging laptops for Friends use and bought one for the use of the Capital Campaign Manager. This resulted in a higher than usual Office Supplies line item.

## Capital Campaign



The Friends annual investment in a campaign fund made it possible to hire our Campaign Manager. Beyond the Friends direct contributions to the campaign fund, the Friends raised \$13,000 from capital campaign donors in FY24.

## Thank You

The Friends are thankful for all the folks who support the Friends and the Fletcher Free Library: the volunteers; library staff; financial and in-kind contributors; individual, corporate, and institutional sponsors; book donors and, of course, the book lovers who come to our sales. We also thank the thousands of community members who visit the library each year and who—just as the Fletcher family did in 1873—understand the crucial role libraries have in creating community.

Happy 150<sup>th</sup>!

Thank you all!