



June 10, 2025

Annual Report for the Friends of the Dartmouth Libraries

Our Mission

FODL is a **non-profit volunteer organization** dedicated to **enhancing the community's use and enjoyment of our town's Libraries**. We focus attention on Library services and needs to **encourage community support**. We help **fund Library resources** and **sponsor programs** for area residents of all ages. We **raise funds** through our annual membership drive, book sales, and generous donations from fellow library enthusiasts.

Our work is only possible through the dedication of our volunteer board of directors, whose members graciously share their time and talents to raise funds and run our programs. I thank each of them for their work. They are named at the end of my report.

We are fortunate to include the Director of Dartmouth Libraries, Dina St. Pierre, and the chair of the Board of Dartmouth Library Trustees, Joan-Marie Proulx, at our monthly meetings. The FODL board benefits from their contributions and advice about providing support to the Libraries where it is needed most.

Year in Review: Library Improvements and Programs Supported by FODL Funds

New Computers for Southworth Library—One of our proud achievements in FY2024 was offering substantial support to the purchase of new computers for Southworth's staff and patrons. In the fall of 2024, the board approved a \$15,000 contribution for purchasing eight computers for public use and six for the Circulation and Information desks. The boot-up speed improved from 25-30 minutes (yes, the machines were *that old*) to 40.88 seconds, according to our Director, Dina St. Pierre, who took great pride in timing the new ones. She reports that patrons are very pleased with the ease of use.

Museum and Park Passes – This popular program allows Library cardholders to check out passes, either hard copy or digital, for reduced or free entry. Participating organizations include the Boston Children's Museum, Heritage Museums and Gardens on Cape Cod, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the New England Aquarium, and many other interesting destinations. See the full list at the Library website. Passes are available at both Library locations. This year, 1,108 passes were borrowed, breaking last year's record of 939.

Authors Live – This program, featuring video presentations by current authors, continues to be very popular. Thirty-six events were held between June 1, 2024 and mid-May 2025, attracting 10,421 views. All events are archived and available for viewing at any time. Since July 2022, 105 events have been held with 53,633 views! Popular events since 2022 have featured David Allen, Fredrik Bachman, Geraldine Brooks, Freida McFadden and Rick Steves. The program was renewed this year for three years at a favorable rate for early adopters like the Dartmouth Libraries.

Patron Select Program – This funding allows the Library to acquire additional copies of popular book titles to meet patron demand. This year, 71 titles between the two locations were checked out 1,344 times, up from 50 titles and 654 in circulation last year.

Incentive Programs – FODL sponsored the 2024 summer reading BINGO game for teens and adults and continued to sponsor the popular Valentine's Day fun: Blind Date with a book. This year, 157 books were borrowed from the two displays.

Children's Programs

- For the summer of 2024, FODL allocated \$6,200 to support the Children's programming offered by Children's Librarian Christie Phillips at both Libraries. Attendance was 553 children. Included were:
 - A magic show with Awesome Robb
 - Bwana Iguana Reptile Show
 - A Helping Endangered Species Program
 - A scavenger hunt for pre-readers

(Again, for the summer of 2025, FODL has allotted \$6,100 to support children and tween activities.)

- Sugar pumpkin decorating at Halloween, holiday cupcake decorating contests, and Deck the Library Halls parties were all popular with our younger patrons this year. December 2024 holiday programs attracted 81 children.
- In 2025, other FODL-sponsored programs included February Vacation's Frosty Fun with 166 kids, and April vacation programs, such as the math-focused Circus Silliness and Northeast Animals in Spring, featuring live animals. April attendance was 258.

Congratulations to Christie Phillips for programming such successful events for Dartmouth kids.

Our Financial Year

For clarity, please note our fiscal year aligns with the calendar year. Our events calendar runs from July 1 (with no events in July) until June of the following year, offering at least one event each month.

In fiscal year (FY) 2024, FODL raised \$39,600 (a 30% increase over FY 2023 revenue of \$30,400), all of which was allocated to library equipment, programs, museum pass renewals, and other enriching Library programs and events, as described above.

Total expenses of \$47,600 were up 30% from FY 2023, primarily because of FODL's significant contribution to the purchase of computers for Southworth. Non-public benefit expenses (administration, postage, program promotion), at 11.9% of total expenses, were within established guidelines. Our year-end checking balance of \$20,000 and year-end CD balance of \$19,000 resulted in closing assets of \$39,000.

FODL Fundraising in FY 2024

- FODL's ever-popular semi-annual and continuing book sales, totaling \$18,300, provided nearly half of the FY 2024 income. An increase in price from \$1.50 to \$2/ adult book in the fall did not deter attendance or sales and made the cashiers' jobs much simpler!
- Memberships, at \$15/individual and \$25/family, provided level funding at \$6,900 for both FYs 2023 and 2024. Membership numbers are improving, however, with total memberships of 350 in May 2025 having grown from 329 in May of 2024.
- Donations of nearly \$13,000 in FY 2024 were more than double those of FY 2023 but included a very generous one-time donation from a single donor in support of children's programming at the Libraries. Small amounts of revenue came from CD interest and our museum field trip in June.

FODL Year in Events: June 2024- June 2025 (No events in July)

June 2024



Twenty-one FODL members joined us for our first field trip since the pandemic. First stop was the New Bedford Free Public Library art collection. Allie Copeland, curator of the spectacular collection, was knowledgeable and engaging. Next: the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum where the roses were at their peak.

June 2024 - Author and therapist Pamela Lowell shared her experiences with the Mass Audubon Osprey Nest Monitoring Project on the Westport River.

August 2024 – Author and self-described travel addict Matt Davis shared amusing tales of world travels captured in his book, *At Home in the World: Reflections of a Travel Addict*. Decades of travel have led him back most frequently to Italy and Hawaii.

September 2024



Local board-certified consulting hypnotist John Barboza captivated an audience of 40 with his talk on the practice and benefits of hypnosis, as well as its myths, fallacies, and misconceptions. He concluded the evening with demonstrations involving several volunteers from the audience.

October 2024 – Our Fall Book Sale resulted in a record: \$6,900. (That is, until we broke our own record in Spring 2025.)

November 2024



Carol Cohen donned the garb and assumed the persona of Abigail Adams when she gathered the Daughters of Liberty for a “spinning bee” in January 1774, a month after the Boston Tea Party. The women met to discuss matters of concern to the colonists (and, incidentally, to make fabric). Some members of the audience of 85 attendees played the roles of historic women patriots.

December 2024- Once again, members of the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra joined the Friends and presented a festive afternoon of holiday music at the North Branch. The trio engaged with the audience of 100, and shared their personal stories that led them to a life in music.

December 2024



Local author and screenwriter Ben Shattuck joined a FODL audience for a discussion of his new book, *The History of Sound*. He read excerpts from the book and graciously stayed to answer questions and pose for photos.

January and February 2025 – The 34th annual Molly Little Film Series was a resounding success, as writer and art historian Noah Charney led the audience through twelve Great Courses DVD episodes exploring the *Museum of Lost Art*. The museum contained “collections” in the Halls of Heists and Vandals, the Galleries of Fakes and Misfortune, and the War Wing, among others. Attendance averaged 30-50 each week. FODL donated the DVD series to the Library at its conclusion in February.

January 2025 – New Bedford Wellness Initiative educator Jonathan Felix discussed simple, evidence-based practices known to help people feel better and healthier.

February 2025



Jean Fox, South Coast Rail Director of Public Engagement, spoke to a packed house about the South Coast Rail Project, reconnecting our region with Boston for the first time since the late 1950s. The timeline she outlined proved accurate, and the trains are running!

March 2025



Dr. Kevin Gendreau entertained and educated an audience of 70 as he drew upon his own experiences and those outlined in his book, *Metabolic Health: Overcoming Barriers to Fat Loss*. His sense of humor, combined with compelling scientific evidence, gave audience members a new look at weight control.

March 2025—Desa Van Laarhoven, Executive Director and co-founder of Round the Bend Farm, spoke passionately and knowledgeably about *Living Sustainably* and offered solid suggestions about making more informed choices concerning our habits and purchases.

April 2025— Local historian and journalist Robert Barboza spoke of events leading up to the Revolutionary War and brought copies of his book, *Patriots of Old Dartmouth*, which details stories of some of the men who defended Dartmouth and surrounding towns during the Revolution.

April 2025— Our semi-annual spring book sale raised a record \$7,200, despite for the first time the disallowance of scanners by resellers on Members' Night. We also posted rules to ensure the aisles were kept clear and that buyers did not stockpile books. Thanks to the many board members and volunteers who helped with the sale, it all ran smoothly.

May 2025



FODL partnered with the Dartmouth Cultural Council to help support a concert presented by Seaglass Theater Company and the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra entitled *Music in the Library*. An audience of about 80 heard the music of Mozart, Faure, Schumann, Haydn and Ravel, as either played by the NBSO string quartet or sung by the marvelous tenor and soprano on the program.

May 2025 – The New Bedford Local Consumer Program brought a round of *Scams Jeopardy* to the North Branch! Two teams of fifteen faced off to name the scams described on the screen. Among the scandalous scams were “What is the Puppy Scam?” and “What is the IRS Scam?” Participants left with a better understanding of the dangers that lurk in the digital world.

June 2025– FODL is reprising the very popular watercolor class of 2024. Local artist and author Jane Bregoli will demonstrate *Creating Texture with Watercolor*, this year with two classes of students on June 17 or June 18.

Second Annual FODL Planting of the North Branch Flower Box



Special thanks to all who make our work possible!

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret R Hollister, president

FODL 2025-2026 Officers

Margaret R Hollister, president

Anne Heller, vice-president

Greg Clear, treasurer

Karen Quigley, secretary

FODL 2025-2026 Board of Directors

Bruen, Tina

Nichols, Elizabeth

Carey, Lorraine

Quigley, Karen

Clear, Greg

Simoes, Shannon

Considine, Alice (new director)

Torres, Julie

Heller, Anne

Van Vleck, Sarah (retiring)

Herliczek, Sandy

Walker, Blair

Hollister, Margaret

Wintrub, Marcy

Langhauser, Andrea

Zekan, Sandy