

Human Services



Community Services

Bonny Wilbur, Community Services Coordinator

The Community Services Coordinator (CSC) provides information and referrals to Concord individuals and families seeking support. She assists in accessing a broad range of local, state, and federal programs related to parenting, food insecurity, finances and budgeting, disability, housing, transportation, legal assistance, and mental health. She also manages programs throughout the year in support of low-income families. Services are confidential and open to all Concord residents under the age of 60.

The CSC manages a Back-to-School Backpack Drive which provides school supplies and backpacks to students in need. Concord residents and town staff very generously donated new backpacks and supplies, and once again the McWalter Volunteer Insurance Agency made a significant donation of backpacks and school supplies. A total of 55 children received backpacks and supplies ahead of the new school year.

The CSC also manages camp scholarship programs funded by Concord's Silent Fund and the Concord-Carlisle Foundation. In 2024, just over \$14,000 was awarded in camp scholarships, allowing 20 children from low-income families to attend camp.

During the holiday season, the CSC manages a number of support programs. Beacon Santa provides one gift card per child to low-income families, as does the town's Gift Card program. As in years past, the majority of gift card donations came from the Freemasons of the Corinthian Lodge. Concord's Holiday Silent Fund provided financial support totaling approximately \$9,000 to 95 low-income households, including 120 children. And, once again,

the Concord Firefighters Relief Association held their annual Holiday Toy Drive, inviting low-income families to choose among hundreds of donated toys for their children.

The CSC works collaboratively with many local, state, and federal agencies and organizations. Locally, she partners with the Concord-Carlisle Foundation to provide financial support to residents through their When in Need fund, she collaborates on their camp scholarship program, and she provides vouchers to the Foundation's new Community Closet, located at TriCon Church, allowing low-income families to "shop" for much-needed clothing. She works with Concord's Hugh Cargill Trust Committee to help residents with overdue bills, and the Concord Cares program which helps with heating costs. Concord's Silent Fund provides camp scholarships as well as holiday support. Open Table Food Pantry combats food insecurity, Gaining Ground's Food for Families program provides fresh produce throughout the summer, and the Freemasons of Corinthian Lodge work with the CSC to provide significant financial support during the holidays in addition to year-round assistance to children through their Masonic Angel Fund. The CSC also works in close collaboration with Concord's houses of worship, as well as with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Nearby agencies working in collaboration with this office include First Connections, Minute Man Arc for Human Services, Domestic Violence Services Network, Eliot Community Services, Seven Hills Foundation, Advocates, Inc., and the Salvation Army. The CSC works closely with Household Goods, Inc., providing the referrals required for Concord families to receive furniture and household items from this organization.

At the state and federal levels, the CSC collaborates

with the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, which offers a wide range of services, including fuel assistance (LIHEAP), assistance for women, infants and children (WIC), and financial assistance for people facing eviction (RAFT). The MA Department of Transitional Assistance is another important collaborator, as food stamps (SNAP) are managed by this department, as well as economic assistance programs to families with children (TAFDC) and emergency aid to children with no family (EAEDC). The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities offers financial support to homeless families with the goal of helping them find stable housing (HomeBase). The CSC also works with the MA Rehab Commission, the MA Department of Developmental Services, National Alliance on Mental Illness, MassHire, as well as MassHealth.

The CSC continues to serve as town liaison for the Best Western homeless shelter that opened in March of 2023. The social services agency, Making Opportunity Count (MOC), provides on-site case management to the families, and the nonprofit, Horizons for Homeless Children, provides a play space for the children. At the same time, the Concord-Carlisle Foundation continues to provide significant assistance to the families.



The CSC is a member of the Concord Public Schools' Mental Health Team, the Regional Outreach Coordinators' group, the Municipal Immigration Support Network, Concord's Behavioral Health Collaborative, the Concord at Risk team, as well as the Concord-Carlisle Foundation's Strategic Planning Committee.

The CSC attended a number of trainings throughout the year, including the Public Advocacy Training Assisting Families Experiencing Homelessness, a training by Care Solace on Teens and Cyberbullying, the annual fuel assistance training for intake workers offered by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, a MassHealth Connector Enrollment Forum hosted by Congresswoman Lori Trahan, as well as a training by the Salvation Army on assistance programs available to Concord residents.

The Town of Concord Social Services Resource Guide, produced by this office, is available on the Town's website at <http://www.concordma.gov/community>.

The Community Services Coordinator's office is located at 55 Church Street. Residents are welcome to contact Bonny Wilbur, Community Services Coordinator, via email at bwilbur@concordma.gov, by phone at 978-318-3034, or in person by appointment.

Hugh Cargill Trust Committee

Elisabeth Brosens, Chair

Katharine Berger

Jill Block

Lucy Rosborough

Hester Schnipper

In 2024, the Hugh Cargill Trust Committee (HCTC) continued to implement the mission of the Trust, established over 200 years ago by Concordian Hugh Cargill. The Trust meets monthly, its purpose is to provide short-term emergency financial assistance to residents of the town. The Committee acts on behalf of the Select Board in receiving and reviewing requests for assistance and in distributing funds in accordance with the provisions of the Trust. Concord residents request aid by leaving a phone message at the Town House: 978-318-3100, ext. 2030 or by email at hctc@concordma.gov. All requests are confidential.

The HCTC is responsible for several other funds as well. These funds include Property Tax Relief to qualified citizens who apply, Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP) to cover utility bills, Concord Cares for heating fuel oil, and the Silent Fund for summer camperships and holiday gifts. A total of \$129,000 in donations was received in 2024 for all funds and a total of \$122,608 was distributed. These generous contributions are crucial to the Committee's efforts to meet the ever-increasing needs of Concord residents. The breakdown for each fund follows below:

- > Hugh Cargill Trust: Private donors gave \$51,468 to the Hugh Cargill Trust Fund in 2024. The Committee approved approximately 64 grants totaling \$26,134 from this fund, and \$5,000 was transferred to Concord Cares. Typically grants were made for the payment of rent, medical expenses, water, telephone, and car insurance.
- > CMLP Fund: The Concord Municipal Light Plant ceased donating to the CMLP Fund. Approximately 26 grants totaling \$7,899 were made in 2024, and the fund was closed.
- > Concord Cares: A total of \$700 was granted to 2 Concord citizens in need of emergency fuel assistance. Requests are granted by the Committee as well as by the Community Services Coordinator, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the Council on Aging.
- > Property Tax Relief Fund: In 2023, the Select Board designated the HCTC to incorporate the roles and responsibilities of the Tax Relief Committee, which was disbanded. The HCTC administers the fund from monies raised in response to the annual appeal. Donations to this fund totaled \$77,538 in 2024, approximately 54 residents received a reduction in their real estate

tax bill, and the total tax relief given in 2024 was \$72,150.

- Silent Fund: In 2017 the Select Board designated the HCTC to administer the Silent Fund. This fund supports summer camp tuition for Concord children as well as gifts during the winter holiday season. \$15,728 was distributed by the Silent Fund to over 100 families/households in 2024.

The Committee continues to make known its existence and its mission through local communications such as the Concord Bridge and the Adult & Continuing Education publications, the Community Services Coordinator, the Concord Housing Authority, the Council on Aging, the Recreation Department, the Community Chest, Open Table, local clergy, and other local groups.

In light of the current economic conditions, the Committee anticipates 2025 to be another difficult year for many residents. We welcome private donations to continue the mission of providing short-term, emergency assistance to Concord residents. Donations may be sent to: The Hugh Cargill Trust at the Town House, P.O. Box 535, Concord, MA 01742. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Concord Free Public Library

Emily Smith, Director of Libraries

In 2024, the Concord Free Public Library became the first “Certified Sustainable Library” in Massachusetts, through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative’s award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP). The Library joined the SLCP in 2022 as a component of the 5-year Sustainability Plan. The certification process provided guidelines for the Library to bring awareness and motivation for sustainable practices to the entire community. Publishing a quarterly sustainability newsletter and teaming up with other town departments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities with similar values has allowed the Library to offer educational opportunities to the community in partnership with local farms, high school clubs, and a variety of other departments from local government.



SLCP helped increase staff engagement across all departments and job levels. Staff reduced aerosol use, abide by all smoking laws, added more indoor plants, scheduled regular maintenance of the building HVAC system, and regularly quantified the humidity and temperature with a hygrometer to confirm that the air in the Library is supportive of a long lifecycle for all library materials. The Library also offers multiple green spaces including a children’s garden consisting of native plants, a pollinator garden (now featured in the Homegrown National Park Pollinator Pathway), and a demonstration garden for patrons to learn about sustainable lawn alternatives. The Library hosted the second biannual climate festival, Cooler Concord, with many town partners, and continued to proceed in moving toward zero-waste. Furthermore, the Library aspires to be carbon neutral by 2030, continuing on the path of emission reductions.

Circulation

Library patrons checked out a combined total of 515,223 items in 2024, an increase of 1.4% from 2023. The library introduced a new Romance Book Club with great success, including refreshments and “mocktails” for patrons to enjoy. The Staff Picks book display was stocked daily with favorite recommendations from individual staff for reading, listening and viewing. Patrons have sought out recommendations from specific staff members based on those selections. Circulation staff have enjoyed creating moments of joy and welcome through the seasonal decorations at the service desk. In keeping with the library’s commitment to sustainability, seasonal decor is reused annually.



Members of the circulation team spreading the fun on Halloween

Reference Services

The Reference Department offered research assistance, programs, technology assistance, notary services, and inter-library loan services. Librarians assisted patrons with many different types of inquiries including 3,961 reference questions, 2,926 meeting room reservations, and 1,464 technology questions. Almost 5,000 patrons attended 149 in-person and virtual programs including the annual Concord Festival of Authors, weekly

Thursday Morning Meditation with Mondiwell, theater productions, lectures, author talks, wellness programs, genealogy classes and storytelling events.

Innovation and Communication

The Library's free, all-ages makerspace the Workshop is celebrating its first full calendar year in operation! In 2024, the Workshop loaned more than 1,500 tools to the community and hosted more than 4,000 patrons at over 200 hands-on workshops and programs. The Innovation and Communication department expanded the Library's Library of Things collection to support the Town of Concord's sustainability goals, with home tools like a portable induction burner and soil and water testers, as well as Citizen Science Kits that allow residents to take real scientific measurements of their environment and submit them to environmental research and advocacy organizations across the country.

Youth Services

In 2024, the Children's Library enjoyed its busiest year yet and hosted 463 programs with 19,452 patrons in attendance. This represents a nearly 25% increase in program attendance from 2023. The highlight of the year was the introduction of the brand new Reading Dragons summer reading challenge, in which kids became Reading Dragon "trainers" who earned dragon trading cards. Dragon egg cards grew into higher level dragon cards as they read more.. Participants were able to choose from a total of 16 different dragon eggs, each with a total of 4 evolutions. In summer 2023, 550 kids participated in CFPL's summer reading challenges, and this year, a whopping 1,054 kids joined us for Reading Dragons and Rubber Ducky Club! Together, the children in our community read 30,450 days over the course of the summer. Most notably, many families reported to staff that the program helped spark a passion for reading even for children who had previously struggled to maintain interest. Children's staff look forward to offering the program again with all new dragons for summer 2025.



These are some of the most accomplished Dragon Trainers from our 2024 Reading Dragons program—pictured here with their Dragon Trainer folders!

In 2024, The Teen Lounge welcomed 999 teens (and some parents) to our programming. This number represents a 16% overall increase in attendance and an increase in the ratio of attendees per programs hosted, rising from 8.3 to 10.7. The Teen Lounge saw the continuation of the popular gaming groups which host players along the full range of ages in the teen room. Major successes of 2024 include 93 attendees of our Young Adult Author Symposium (YAAS!) author event at CCHS, 617 volunteer service hours from 45 teen volunteers, 55 participants in the teen summer reading club reading 541 books, 140 attendees at Teen Pride Fest activities, and the addition of our homework help and college prep web service Brainfuse, which has seen 830 usages for Concord patrons.

Fowler Branch Library

Beginning with a hopping Noon Year's Eve party to ring in 2024, Fowler staff celebrated community connections throughout the year. Staff introduced new book clubs, a very popular weekly yoga class, and an additional evening storytime. The Library continued a long-standing relationship with Concord Carousel, and expanded preschool outreach to include regular visits to Concord Children's Center and Concord Montessori. The Library worked with the West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee, the Pollinator Health Advisory Committee, Minuteman Arc, Art for All, Mothers Out Front, Safe Routes to School, ArtScape, the CCHS Green Team, and local businesses. Through these partnerships staff were able to offer or support West Concord events (Spring into West Concord, Discover West Concord Day, West Concord Holiday Stroll), provide meaningful services for a range of patrons (Art for All Abilities, Next Chapter Book Club), and support sustainability (Winter Seed Sows, Bike to School Days, Sustainability Studios, the Bike Festival). From a party celebrating new artwork on the fence by the pollinator garden to the opening receptions for community art shows to a poetry reading for the West Concord Poetry Phone to the third annual Diwali Gala, in 2024 Fowler Library reinforced its



Breakfast with the Authors, October 26, 2024

reputation as a place of joy and connection.

Special Collections

Special Collections staff served over 1,000 patrons and answered nearly 800 reference questions. Staff presented to the Thoreau Society's 82nd Annual Gathering, the Concord Town History & Guide Training course, the Town of Concord Library Committee, Concord Rotary Club, Concord Ladies' Tuesday Club, The Enchanted Book Club, and Kerem Shalom.

Patrons sought us out from near and far! We had in-person visitors from five New England states, as well as from New York, North Carolina, California, Nevada, Colorado, Alabama, Indiana, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Illinois, Ohio, Utah, Washington, DC, Wisconsin, and Alaska. Researchers also came to see us from Canada, Brazil, Japan, England, Israel, New Zealand, and Spain.

Special Collections curated two major exhibitions in 2024: *Illustrated—An Exhibition of Children's Art*, and *Alicia Keyes: New Pathways to Beauty*. The latter featured paintings and sketches by Concord artist Alicia Keyes and pieces on loan from the Emerson and Keyes families and the RWE Memorial Association. Special Collections also transitioned to coordinating the installation and promotion of the monthly community art exhibitions in the recently dedicated Munroe Gallery.

Special Collections hosted eleven lectures and presentations, with nearly 800 attendees, including a celebration of Joseph Coolidge Wheeler, with a screening of "The Making of Joe Wheeler: A Concord Story," produced and directed by Concord resident Susan Orleans Rieder. 2024 also featured a presentation and book signing with the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin for her newest book, [An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s](#), and the annual Joel Myerson Lecture series, which featured Margaret Fuller scholars: Brigitte Bailey, Leslie Eckel, and Megan Marshall.

Special Collections added several noteworthy acquisitions to its holdings, including Barrett and Holland Family papers. Due to the generous support of the Library Corporation and its donors, Special Collections also acquired the extensive Kent Bicknell Alcott Family Collection, including Alcott family letters, manuscripts by Louisa May Alcott, photographs, ephemera, and art pieces by May Alcott Nieriker.

Finally, Special Collections worked with the Concord Prison Outreach-led Initiative, Naming the Unnamed. This initiative tells the story of the men buried at the Concord Reformatory Prison. The Library now hosts an online exhibition gallery of these stories.. Special Collections holds material about the prison, including an extensive collection of newspapers published in 1885 and into the early 1990s, when incarcerated

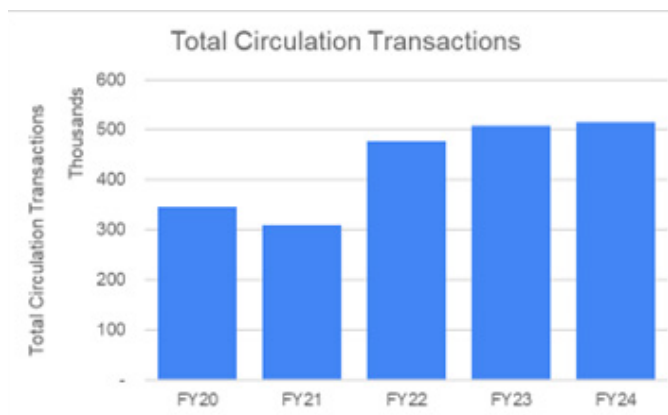


The 14 Young Adult authors who came to speak at the November 16th YAAS! author festival.

people at the Concord prison wrote, designed, and published their newspapers. 2024 concluded with the announcement that five titles in this newspaper collection are now available to view online.

Technical Services

In 2024, Tech Services ordered, cataloged and processed 8,000 new items in various formats and added them to the Library collections. Staff provided audiovisual and technical support on a daily basis for events both small and large. Staff replaced critical technology at staff stations and the public computers. Technical Services staff supported Library-wide initiatives and activities such as the Sustainability Certification process and Green Team meetings, and publication of the weekly newsletter. The Library's Book Conservator continues to restore and preserve the Library's Special Collections archival materials.



A Note of Gratitude

As the Five-Year Data Comparison chart illustrates, the Concord Free Public Library has experienced a significant increase in demand for services over the past five years. This includes a 400% surge in program attendance, a 175% rise in library visits, and a 200% growth in network transfers (items loaned and borrowed within the Library Network). Furthermore,

with 91% of Concord citizens holding library cards and a 150% increase in total collection use during this period, the Library continues to fulfill its mission: to inspire lifelong learning, promote personal enrichment, and connect the community. This achievement is directly attributable to the dedication and creativity of our hardworking Library staff; I'm deeply grateful for their contributions. I also want to thank the community for their generous and ongoing support. Finally, my sincere thanks go to our vital partners: the Concord Free Public Library Corporation, the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library, and the Library Committee, whose collaborations are essential to this fulfillment.



Five Year Data Comparison FY20 - FY24

| Key Performance Indicator | FY20 | FY21* | FY22*** | FY23*** | FY24 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|------------|
| Total Circulation Transactions | 345,461 | 309,183 | 476,774 | 508,016 | 515,223 |
| Children's Materials | 92,857 | 68,843 | 140,015 | 157,473 | 162,820 |
| Young Adult | 9,137 | 6,546 | 9,640 | 10,267 | 9,780 |
| Physical Audio Visual (DVDs, CDs) Materials | 57,248 | 26,092 | 35,392 | 36,339 | 35,249 |
| All Electronic Material (ebook & downloadable) | 82,139 | 121,484 | 70,219 | 64,114 | 70,538 |
| Network Transfers - Items Borrowed | 36,804 | 75,254 | 63,950 | 61,254 | 70,098 |
| Network Transfers - Items Loaned | 59,690 | 144,384 | 111,997 | 110,367 | 107,687 |
| Meeting & Study Room Use | 2,372 | 306 | 493 | 1,716 | 3,607 |
| Use of Non Traditional Items (Library of Things, Museum Pass) | 2,461 | 295 | 1,289 | 4,381 | 6,399 |
| Use of Library Computers | 10,400 | - | 3,016 | 5,200 | 7,176 |
| Use of Library Wireless Internet (estimate) | 233,304 | 1,000 | 8,000 | 15,000 | 20,000 |
| Use of Database and Online Learning Platforms | 92,857 | 134,786 | 109,955 | 152,601 | 157,075 |
| Registered Borrowers | 14,022 | 14,044 | 14,800 | 15,802 | 16,625 |
| Hours Main Library Open | 4,208 | 768 | 2,953 | 2,982 | 3,028 |
| Full Time Equivalent Staff | 29.67 | 27.85 | 29.28 | 31.38 | 31.38 |
| Library Attendance | 202,754 | 67,585 | 245,368 | 357,200 | 349,529 |
| Visits to Fowler Branch | 50,785 | 16,928 | 56,385 | 58,800 | 70,191 |
| Reference Questions | 11,143 | 2,560 | 4,272 | 9,683 | 38,079**** |
| Total Holdings** | 1,200,563 | 1,334,585 | 1,631,221 | 374,380 | 377,663 |
| Total Print Materials (Books, Periodicals) | 239,425 | 230,671 | 224,228 | 216,691 | 210,438 |
| Total Non Print (ebooks, downloadable audio, etc)** | 961,138 | 1,103,914 | 1,406,993 | 157,689 | 167,225 |
| Total Programs Offered | 556 | 690 | 1,879 | 1,288 | 1,562 |
| Total Program Attendance | 10,154 | 9,759 | 44,090 | 31,101 | 42,162 |
| Number of Volunteers | 222 | 87 | 194 | 392 | 204 |
| Volunteer Hours Worked | 5,470 | 350 | 5,442 | 6,048 | 6,037 |

*FY21 (July 2020-June 2021) reflects significant service reductions and closures due to COVID Pandemic (March 2020 - March 2022); Public computers not available

**In FY20-22 Holdings included entire collections for streaming services; beginning in FY23 only individually leased titles included for non print holdings

***In FY22 & FY23 the Main Library under construction; access to some collections, programs and services impacted

****FY24 Reference transaction counts improved with new tracking software and additional service desks opened after Main Library Expansion

Concord Free Public Library Committee

Laura Klein (Chair)

Lindsay Howard

Sara Pacelle

Pamela Ressler

Farhanah Sheets

James Vahey

Mary-Wren vanderWilden

Dee Clarke (Associate Member)

The Library Committee is appointed by the Select Board. Committee members serve for staggered three-year terms and can serve for up to two terms, and work with the Library Director to help maintain the Library's financial stability and well-being, provide short-term and long-range planning support, support policy development and update existing policies, as needed. The Library Committee also works to enhance patrons' experience using the Library, considers new technologies to enhance services and facilitate the work of the Library staff. The Committee promotes the Library's leadership in organizing active programming

for all ages and supports community sustainability efforts through education and organizational practice.

Director

The Library Committee continued to work closely with Library Director Emily Smith. We appreciated Emily's enthusiasm and expertise throughout 2024, particularly as the Library expanded its services and programming, and fully activated the recently renovated spaces at the Main Library.

The Workshop

The programming in the Workshop, the Library's new Makerspace, continued to thrive in 2024. Staff offered 145 programs, including 55 programs for all ages, 38 for teens and 52 for adults. A total of 2,002 patrons participated in these structured programs, while an additional 2,236 patrons participated in drop-in programs during Open Maker Hours.

Youth Services

The popularity of library programs was evident in Youth Services this year as well. Teen Librarian, Erick Gordy, was able to secure a \$2,500 grant from the Mass Cultural Council to help fund a joint project with Concord Carlisle High School. The Young Adult Author Symposium (YAAS!) on Saturday, November 16th at CCHS featured a dozen authors of literature, graphic novels, and non-fiction aimed at YA audiences. The event provided teens with access to authors for Q&A, writing workshops, and book signings. Teen services ran 97 programs in 2024 with a total attendance of 699 teens. In addition, Youth services ran almost 500 programs with a total attendance of 20,015. One of the most popular programs was this year's new Summer Reading program: Reading Dragons provided children with opportunities to earn dragon trading cards. For every 2 days that children read, they earned trading cards showing their dragon eggs hatching, evolving and growing into mature dragons with unique features. The summer months had lines of children waiting to check in with librarians at both libraries. October saw the return of the popular Adopt a Reading Pal Program. This program pairs children with special "Reading Pals," stuffed animals that they are encouraged to read with every day. This year, the program featured cats for the first time, and Children had the opportunity to experience several special programs to learn about caring for animals.

Planning for Concord 250th

As April 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution, the Library Committee and Library Director, have been meeting with Public Works, Fire and Police to understand the potential impact on the Library. The Director and Library Committee have been working with Town Officials to balance the mission of the Library to be open to the public and to showcase its collections and history and regular town services,

with concerns for the safety of the Library facilities, art and the collections. The Library Committee discussed modified service models for 2025 that will allow the Library to welcome out of town guests in the days surrounding the April 19th celebrations.

Library Hours

The Library once again was open 64 hours each week, opening on Sundays from January to mid-June, and October to December.

Library Policies

In our role as an advisory board to the Library Director, the Library Committee reviewed and approved revisions to several Library policies in 2024. Policies were updated in order to reflect current best practices and to ensure that policies evolve with the changing physical space of the Library, emerging technologies, and the needs of the Concord community. In 2024, the Committee approved updated policies including the Meeting Room, and Study Room and Social Media Policies. The Committee also discussed the process for managing incident reports, and worked with the Library Director to discontinue policies that were no longer needed or covered by other new policies. All Library policies are published on the Library's website.

Strategic Plan

The Library Committee began discussing plans to work on updating the Library's Strategic Plan. Starting in 2025, we will undertake a broader strategic planning process incorporating the use of new Library space and enhanced services, such as the Workshop makerspace. The Committee will start gathering input and feedback from the Library staff and the community on programming and services available in the new Library space that will help define the strategic plan for 2026 and beyond. The Committee is starting to define key performance indicators and other measures to track Library performance and attainment of tangible service goals. The goals will be defined during the upcoming strategic planning process to be started in 2025.

Gratitude

In the summer of 2024, Dee Clark as an Associate Member, resigned from the Library Committee. We extend our gratitude to Dee.

The Committee began to work on filling anticipated vacancies for 2025. With at least one full and two associate member positions to fill, the Library Committee has been bringing interested potential members to our fall meetings so they can experience our process and decide if the Library committee is of interest.

We are grateful to the Library Corporation for continuing to participate in our monthly meetings through a Trustee representative. This collaboration between the

Corporation and Committee ensures that the Library is best positioned to meet the needs of our community, which was especially important throughout the expansion project this year. They are welcome guests and valued partners.

We are also grateful to the community members, observers, and speakers who have attended our meetings this year to ensure that the Library continues to meet the needs of our patrons and our Town. Open meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 in the Trustees Room at the Main Library and may also be available on Zoom. We welcome and encourage interested members of the community to attend.

Concord Free Public Library Corporation

Trustees

Sherry F. Litwack, President

Pamela Gannon, Vice President

Richard D. Briggs, Jr., Treasurer

Theodore Hanselman, Clerk

Jeffrey W. Adams

John W. Boynton IV

Laurence Constable

Yumi Yasutake Suarez

Elise Woodward

The Concord Free Public Library Corporation is a Massachusetts charitable corporation created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1873 for the purpose of forming and maintaining a public library in Concord, which it undertakes to do in collaboration with the Town and the Library Committee. For more information on how the Library works, go to the Library's website: <https://concordlibrary.org/about/how-we-work>

The primary responsibility of the Library Corporation is to preserve, maintain, protect, improve, and enhance the buildings and grounds of the Main Library in Concord Center and the Fowler Branch in West Concord. The Library Corporation also preserves, protects, develops, interprets, and shares its Special Collections, which is the most comprehensive archive of primary and secondary source material related to Concord history, life, landscape, literature, people and influence from 1635 to present day. In FY 2023-2024 the Corporation spent over \$1,000,000 for maintaining and improving our buildings and grounds; purchasing new books and materials for the circulating collection; acquiring new equipment and materials for the Workshop; and supporting Special Collections, staff development, arts scholarships, and administration expenses including insurance. The majority of these funds come from our Annual Fund and income from the Library Corporation's endowment. For large projects, such as a major expansion or renovation,

funds are raised through capital campaigns supported by generous Concord citizens and institutions, and funding for smaller special projects may also be raised through direct outreach to supporters. *None of the Library Corporation's funds come from the Town's municipal property taxes, but rather supplement what the town allocates to the Library in its annual budget.*

Board Development

We were very pleased to welcome a new Trustee, Laurence Constable. His skills and interests in finance, the arts, and education will be great assets to the Library Corporation.

The William Munroe Special Collections, which are owned by the Library Corporation, continue to be a popular and important resource for people throughout the United States and around the world. Special Collections sponsored several programs and exhibitions in 2024, including the exhibitions "Illustrated – An Exhibition of Children's Art" and "Alicia Keyes: New Pathways to Beauty"; a celebration of Joseph Coolidge Wheeler with a screening of "The Making of Joe Wheeler: A Concord Story"; and the annual Joel Myerson Memorial Lecture featuring Margaret Fuller scholars: Brigitte Bailey, Leslie Eckel, and Megan Marshall. Another highlight was a presentation by Doris Kearns Goodwin on her most recent book *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s*, in which she mentions the Library's Goodwin Forum and its significance to her and her late husband, Richard Goodwin.

Notable acquisitions included materials donated from the Barrett and Holland families and the Kent Bicknell Alcott Family Collection, including letters, manuscripts by Louisa May Alcott, photographs, ephemera, and art pieces by May Alcott Neriker, which was purchased through the generous support of donors.

Munroe Art Gallery

This year the Art Gallery was re-dedicated and named for the Library's founder, William Munroe. Munroe's original vision was for the Library to include art in addition to books, as a way of bringing culture to the people of Concord. This vision has developed into the Library's renowned Special Collections, including a significant art collection. <https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/art-collection>

Sustainability

Our Sustainability Implementation Committee has been making good progress on the initiatives in the Library's **Sustainability Plan**. In 2024, the Concord Free Public Library became the first "Certified Sustainable Library" in Massachusetts, through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative's award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP). The staff has made significant contributions to sustainability practices in the

Library and public education about sustainability. The Library Corporation is continuing to work on plans to improve the sustainability of the older historic parts of the Library and researching the potential effectiveness of solar and geothermal systems. We welcome people to join our Sustainability efforts. Please contact Sofia Ghannam if you are interested. sghannam@cfplcorp.org You can view the 10-year plan and our progress on the Library website: <https://concordlibrary.org/news-events/library-news/the-library-corporations-sustainability-plan>

Williams Scholarship Fund

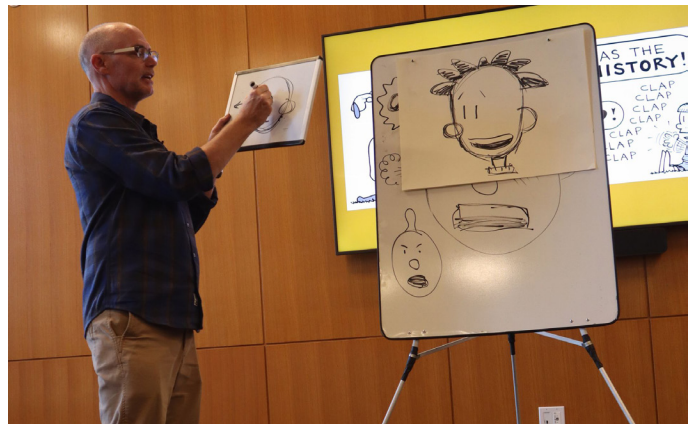
As Trustees of the Williams Scholarship Fund, made possible by a bequest from Charles H. S. Williams in the 1800s, we continue to award grants to several high school students planning to pursue studies in the arts in college. This year's recipients included scholarships for Benjamin Lyczkowski (Music) and Michelle Gu (Visual Arts); continuing scholarships for Kincaid DeBell (Visual Arts), Ruby Massengale (Visual Arts), Samara Reid (Visual Arts), Sophie Richardson (Music), and Sonia Vader (Visual Arts); and Honorable Mention to Maya McCabe (Music) and Noah Pavlov (Visual Arts).

We were able to once again host a salon to highlight and celebrate the talents of these arts scholars.

The Leslie Riedel Award for Excellence in Children's Literature

The annual Riedel Award featured author, illustrator and cartoonist, Lincoln Peirce, whose books include the popular *Big Nate* and *Max and the Midnighters* series. The program was enthusiastically attended by a full house of young people and their families.

It is gratifying to see so many people using and enjoying all of the spaces in the Library, including the new Children's Library, Teen Lounge, Workshop, Goodwin Forum, and Commons as well as the beloved historic spaces. The Library remains a thriving and vital community resource – *free and open to all.*



Friends of the Concord Free Public Library

The **Friends of the Concord Free Public Library** (Friends) is a nonprofit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to **supporting the Library and promoting its vital role in our community**. Our mission is made possible by the generosity of our



members, donors, and volunteers, as well as the many visitors who attend programs, browse our book sales, shop in our Friends Books Shops, and gather on the shared Main Library lawn for concerts and social events.



We are deeply grateful for donations of gently used books and audio/visual materials, as well as for the tireless efforts of our volunteers. Our volunteers devote countless hours year-round to sorting books, planning and staffing events, and supporting our book sales in June and December. Proceeds from these sales, which reached record-breaking totals in 2024, directly fund the Library's programs and services.

Membership and Leadership

The Friends organization includes over 750 members who enjoy exclusive benefits such as early access to the Holiday Book Sale, volunteer opportunities, and news about Library events and programs. At the annual meeting in May, members elect the Board of Directors, who oversee our efforts throughout the year. The Board members, consisting of President Matt Boger, Clerk Erin Piro, Co-Treasurers John Skelly, Stephan Bader and Faith Bader, Children's Books Sales Lead Janet Kaminstein, Poetry Lead Glenn Mitchell, Publicity Lead Betsy Levinson, Friends Book Shop Lead Laurie O'Neil, Sorter's Liaison Rick Dunn, Events Leads Hayley Maybury and Rebecca Lemaitre, and Governance Lead Crista Collins, take on various responsibilities to support programs, events, and efforts throughout the year.

"Some" Highlights from 2024

The Friends' signature events, the "world famous" **Annual Summer Book Sale** and **Holiday Book Sale**, set new fundraising records, raising over \$60,000. These sales brought together one of Concord's largest volunteer teams, spanning generations from high school students to retired octogenarians. Visitors traveled from across New England and beyond, with one book enthusiast journeying from the *other* Portland (Oregon!).



The **Friends Book Shops** located near the Children's Library in the Main Library and at the entrance to the Fowler Branch, continue to offer an excellent selection of gently used books, CDs, and DVDs. Funds raised here reached over \$3,000 to help fund many of the great programs that the Friends sponsor.

Concord Festival of Authors



The Friends once again chaired the **Concord Festival of Authors**, a cherished community tradition. Collaborating with local organizations including the Concord Book Shop, Barrow Bookstore, The Concord Museum, Barefoot Books, The Orchard House, The Thoreau Society, Walden Woods Project, Transcendentalism Council of First Parish Church, and Afternoon Tea Book Club, and others the event featured distinguished speakers. Special thanks go to reference librarian Barbara Gugliuzza for her wonderful work on the CFA!

Award recognitions included:

- > The **Ruth Ratner Miller Memorial Award for Excellence in American History** was presented to Pulitzer Prize winner Jacqueline Jones
- > The **Leslie Riedel Award for Excellence in Children's Literature** went to Lincoln Peirce, author of the *Big Nate*

series

- **The Joel Myerson Annual Lecture Series** sponsored and presented by the Concord Public Free Library Corporation explored the legacy of Margaret Fuller, featuring professors from UNH, Suffolk University, and Emerson College

Films at Fowler

Now in its 26th year, the *Films at Fowler* series showcased thought-provoking films, including Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* and modern releases like *Blackberry* and *Rise*. Film discussions, led by Randall Warniers, added depth and engagement for attendees.



Poetry and Music Programs

The Poetry at the Library Series delighted audiences with ten award-winning poets, while the Friends' Music Program featured an eclectic mix of performances, from classical and folk to children's music.

Community Outreach and Support

Beyond book sales, the **Friends distributed donated books to local organizations, including the Open Table Pantry, the family shelter at the former Best Western motel, and More than Woods**, a youth-run bookstore in Waltham supporting young adults in the foster care system.

The **Friends funded museum passes** for attractions such as the Boston Children's Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, ensuring free or reduced admission for Library patrons.

Additionally, the Friends supported professional development opportunities for Library staff.



Gratitude and Looking Ahead

Our heartfelt thanks go to the dedicated Friends Sorters, who work tirelessly to organize thousands of donated books each week. Special recognition goes to Janet Kaminstein for her leadership in organizing children's books and to Claire Green and her team for their exceptional work sorting and on book sales.

The Friends of the Concord Free Public Library welcome new members! To join or learn more, visit us as online at <http://www.cfplfriends.org>, follow us on Facebook, or email us at friends@concordlibrary.org.

Together, we can ensure that the Concord Free Public Library remains a vibrant hub of learning, creativity, and connection for all! THANK YOU in advance for your participation and support!



Minuteman Media Network



Minuteman Media Network (MMN) is the community TV station for the towns of Concord & Carlisle. MMN is an enterprise fund of the Town of Concord, under the IT Department.

The MMN enterprise is managed by Julie Manoogian, Media Manager. The staff includes Matt Beren, Production & Equipment Manager; Tory Wesnofske, Senior Producer/Education Coordinator; and Arkadiy Barshteyn, Videographer. We are located inside Concord-Carlisle High School.

Our Mission

Our mission is to film and edit town meetings, events, original shows and podcasts with full transparency to keep residents informed, educated and entertained. We lend our equipment and TV studio to residents, students and employees to create original programming. We encourage volunteers to help us film events, and we offer training on video and podcast production.

2024 Highlights

The MMN team scored First Prize at the Alliance for Community Media Awards! This annual awards show recognizes excellence in video production for community media stations. The winning video was our coverage of the Concord Free Public Library's 150th Anniversary Celebration. Our category was "Community Event - Multiple Cameras", and we're proud to say we beat larger cities like Boston and NYC!

The award-winning video features Emily Smith, Director of Libraries, a parade of Minutemen and reenactors, and crowds of Concordians enjoying the day.



MMN staff L to R: Tory Wesnofske, Julie Manoogian, Matt Beren, Arkadiy Barshteyn.

We launched multiple podcasts for the Concord250 Committee, the Town of Carlisle Administrators Report, and the Concord Prison Outreach. All podcasts were recorded in the MMN studio and uploaded to Spotify and YouTube.



Our student engagement continues to grow. CCHS student Gerald Tenenbaum launched a new talk show called "The People's Tomorrow". Filmed in the MMN studio, Gerald has interviewed NH Governor Chris Sununu and Simon Cataldo about their career in politics and advice for aspiring students. In future episodes, Gerald plans to bring more accomplished guests to the MMN studio. You can watch The People's Tomorrow on YouTube and Education Channel 22.

MMN also filmed CCHS's annual PRIZM holiday concert and our FlexBlock is getting busier with students who want to learn video production.



L to R: Matt Beren, Julie Manoogian, NH Gov. Chris Sununu, CCHS Student Gerald Tenenbaum.

In April 2024, MMN we recorded and livestreamed 3 nights of the Annual Town Meeting which included a Special Town Meeting. The CCHS gym was packed with thousands of residents who came to vote, and the crowd overflowed into the school auditorium. Our team managed a 6-camera production, covering every angle and following the action between the podium and the audience, while switching back-and-forth between the gym and the auditorium. We designed on-air graphics for 53 articles and projected the town's slide presentation and time clock onto 3 projection screens. We livestreamed on YouTube with over 3,000 views.



Julie Manoogian, Matt Beren filming Town Meeting 2024

MMN Senior Producer Tory Wesnofske teamed up with Concord resident Leo Carroll to produce a new series for MMN called "Old Concord Woodworks". Leo brings you into his Concord barn to craft homegrown treasures

using wood from Concord trees. All episodes of Old Concord Woodworks are available on YouTube and Comcast TV Public Channel 8.



Concord Resident Leo Carroll

Where to Watch Us:

Comcast Cable TV Channel 8 is MMN's Public Channel.

We broadcast original programs and town events such as the Patriots Day Parade, Tree Lighting, 250th events, exercise and cooking shows. We also curate public domain movies and programs from other public community TV stations.

Comcast Cable TV Channel 22 is MMN's Educational Channel.

We broadcast content from the schools, libraries, museums and public domain videos such as lectures, forums, graduation ceremonies and school concerts.

Comcast Cable TV Channel 9 is MMN's Government Channel.

We broadcast Concord and Carlisle Select Board meetings, Concord Carlisle Joint School Committee Meetings, Concord Finance Committee Meetings, Town Meetings and Public Hearings.

On YouTube, all our videos are available to watch on demand by searching the Minuteman Media. If you click the Subscribe button, you'll receive email notifications when new videos are posted.

On Social Media, please like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram.

Recreation Department

The Concord Recreation Department is a leader in providing activities that promote healthy lifestyles, enhance personal development, and encourage community involvement. We proudly promote community through wellness and play. As a dedicated group of professionals, we create and execute quality fun, unique, and inclusive opportunities in our facilities. Concord Recreation is part of the Human Services Division and runs on a self-sustaining revolving fund. We strive to keep pace with a growing community and interests to deliver the highest quality customer-focused programs, events, and services we can. Concord Recreation is proud to offer the community a variety of services, including The Carousel Preschool, the Beede Swim and Fitness Center, school year childcare, summer

camp, youth and adult sports, special events, permitting of Town playing field/courts, White Pond Beach operation, the outdoor pool at Emerson Park, and take the lead in operations at the Gerow Recreation Area.

Employee Updates

Concord Recreation's dedicated 200+ employees remain responsible for the continued growth and success. We are excited to share that we have three new members of our 16-person full-time team.

2024 brought changes and additions to the team! Concord Recreation hired a new Beede Swim and Fitness Center General Manager, Jenny Saccardo. Jenny is a Concord resident with a great history running aquatic and fitness centers as a YMCA Executive Director in California before moving back to Massachusetts and Concord. Welcome, Jenny!

Also in January, Concord Recreation hired Joe Durant as a full-time Recreation Supervisor. Joe oversees our youth and adult sports programs, Middle School Ski program, track program, and summer specialty camps, and helps with Special Events. Joe joins us from the Southboro Recreation Department, and we are excited to have Joe onboard. Welcome, Joe!

In February, Concord Recreation hired Leigh Jackson as the new Recreation Director. Leigh came to Concord from the Brookline Recreation Department where she served as Recreation Director and brings a wealth of knowledge and experiences within recreation and beyond. Leigh has robust outdoor recreation experience, and came to MA over 15 years ago after stints in Georgia, North Carolina, and Alaska. Welcome, Leigh!

Sam Craig joined the Concord Recreation team as a full-time Recreation Supervisor in April 2024. Sam comes to us from La Via at Gordon College as he was the Director of Adventure Camp, and Challenge Course Manager among other roles. Sam oversees camp as summer camp director and manages our professional day programs during the school year and school-year-based programming. Welcome, Sam!

Recreation Department Highlights 2024

Youth and Adult Sports

- > Concord Recreation Youth Basketball League saw an increase in participation. This year we had 324 participants and over 45 volunteers, up from 284 participants and 40 volunteers LY. We also had a new partnership with Prove Them Wrong for our basketball program. (February 2024).
- > Recreation Ski



and Snowboard program for Elementary (grades 2-5) and Middle School (grades 6-8) served 188 students participating in Nashoba Valley and Wachusett

Mountain ski trips (respectively); this is relatively flat to LY. (February 2024).



- > Adult basketball (men and women) had a total of 523 registrations throughout the course of the year, up from 400 LY.
- > Adult volleyball (co-ed) had 217 registrations, up from 198 LY.

- > Pickleball lessons had 78 registrations in 2024, down from 122 LY.

- > Indoor Pickleball at Hunt saw a consistent rate in “recreation play” registrations, down from 355 LY.



- > Our Youth basketball clinics run seasonally. In 2024, we had over 150 registrations for all clinics, Kindergarten to 8th grade, boys and girls. Registration numbers are up from 124 registrations LY.
- > We began a new youth golf instruction partnership this year with xGolf in Acton. Recreation had 17 registrations Fall of 2024. We will be running it again in the winter.
- > Our tennis program is growing. In 2024, we had 138 youth students and 48 adult students, and we sold 10 private and semi-private lessons.
- > Our vendor programs also continue to grow. In 2024, we had 190 registrations for Super Soccer Stars. They provide soccer instruction to ages 2-7yrs. We had 48 registrations for On the Mark Archery, youth and adult. We also had 122 registrations for our Skyhawks programming, including volleyball, floor hockey, and golf.

Special Events

- > Shamrock Ball continued its great success! We had over 217 families registered with us for a formal night of dancing, raffles, and fun.
- > Concord Recreation facilitated the popular FREE Summer Concert Series at West Concord’s Rideout Park. The four concerts served roughly 800

community members.

- > The annual Egg Hunt welcomed over a thousand people who collected 20,000 candy-filled eggs.



- > We ran our most successful Craft Fair this year with 23 table registrations, selling homemade crafts and goodies.
- > The 2nd annual Kite Festival saw nine families register for our Rideout Park event in the Spring.
- > Our yearly Yard Sale sold out in May with 15 tables registered to sell items.
- > The Town’s Annual Tree Lighting event was a huge hit. This is a collaborative and complex project with CPW, CPD, CFD, and CMLP. The Tree Lighting saw an estimated 7,000 attendees. Thank you to all who helped coordinate, execute, and attend!

School Programming

- > At Willard, we had 334 registrations for our before and after-school youth programs.
- > At Thoreau, we had 239 registrations for our before and after-school youth programs
- > At Alcott, we had 249 registrations for our before and after-school youth programs.
- > Consistent with LY, the February vacation hosted over 114 children. April vacation served 137 children in fun, engaging, quality activities.
- > During the school year, schools host professional days for their teachers. During that time, we show our support by offering programs, so that parents can still work. This year in April, we had 39 kids for the professional day and November hosted 41 kids in engaging activities.

Summer Camp

- > Concord Recreation’s Camp Three Rivers served 1,987 campers in 2024, up from 1,525 campers in 2023.
- > Concord Recreation takes great pride in helping students get job experience. We employ and



train dozens of teenagers working their first jobs and supporting them in the beginning of their work journey. In total, we hired a diverse and committed team of 50 camp staff. (June-August of 2024)



- > Concord Recreation also opened its doors to 29 children from the Elm Street Shelter at the Best Western Hotel. Recreation gave over \$30,000 in financial assistance/in kind.

Childcare Programming

- > Concord Recreation values the diversity of the Concord population and embraces its reflection in our Carousel Preschool program. Carousel Pre-School and Kaleidoscope **Summer** childcare programming are essential to the Recreation Revolving budget with over \$1 million in revenue, per year.



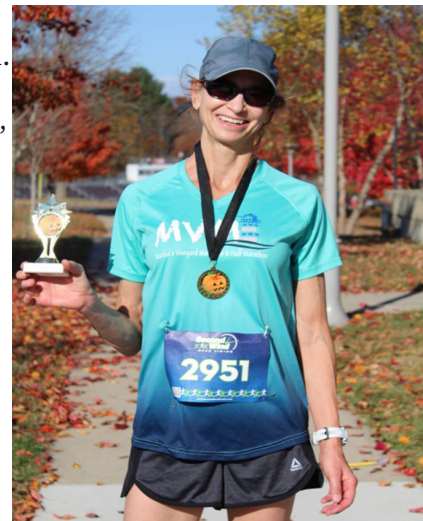
- > Kaleidoscope Kids **Summer** program supported 58 children in registrations for the half-day morning and full-day programs from June 17 - August 9, 2024.

White Pond

- > In 2024, we had zero shutdowns due to water quality. Water quality closed many beaches and swimming areas, impacting



our revenue and operation. We sold 609 memberships, with 437 residents and 172 non-residents. This is up from 585 total memberships in 2023. We also sold \$8,385 in day passes and guest passes compared to \$7,175 in 2023. Due to the high water levels of White Pond in 2024, we had a limited beach area. We expect to see that ease in FY25.



Financial Assistance

- > Concord Recreation is committed to offering financial aid to resident families in financial need. For 2024, Concord Recreation distributed \$79,303 in financial assistance for summer camp, school-year childcare, and general programming.

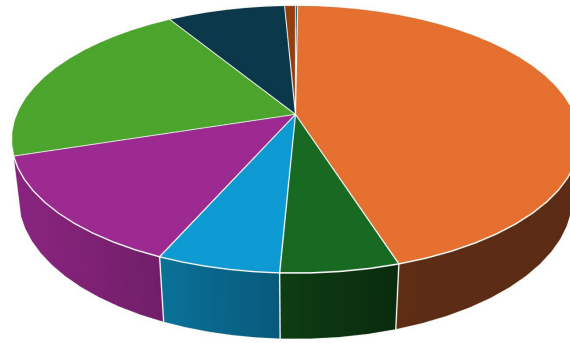
Closing Statement

Concord Recreation wants to extend a big “thank you” to the hundreds of volunteers who make our programs come to life. Without your support, we could not afford to run our sports and ski programs. Thank You!

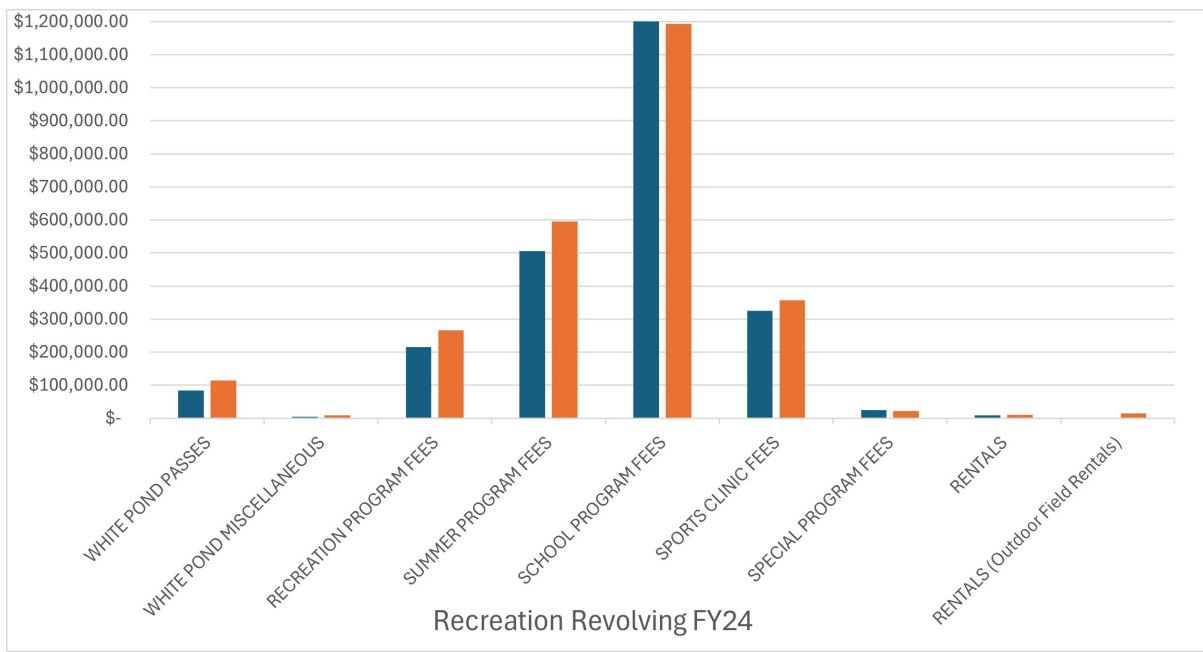
We also greatly appreciate the Recreation Commission! A big “thank you” to chairman Phil Griffiths, Pete Funkhouser, Paul Boehm, Matt Boger, and our newest member, Daniel Rodriguez. Thank you for supporting all of the Hunt Recreation programs and events and The Beede Swim and Fitness Center this year. We appreciate all you do to help make us the best we can be!



Recreation Revolving Revenue 2024

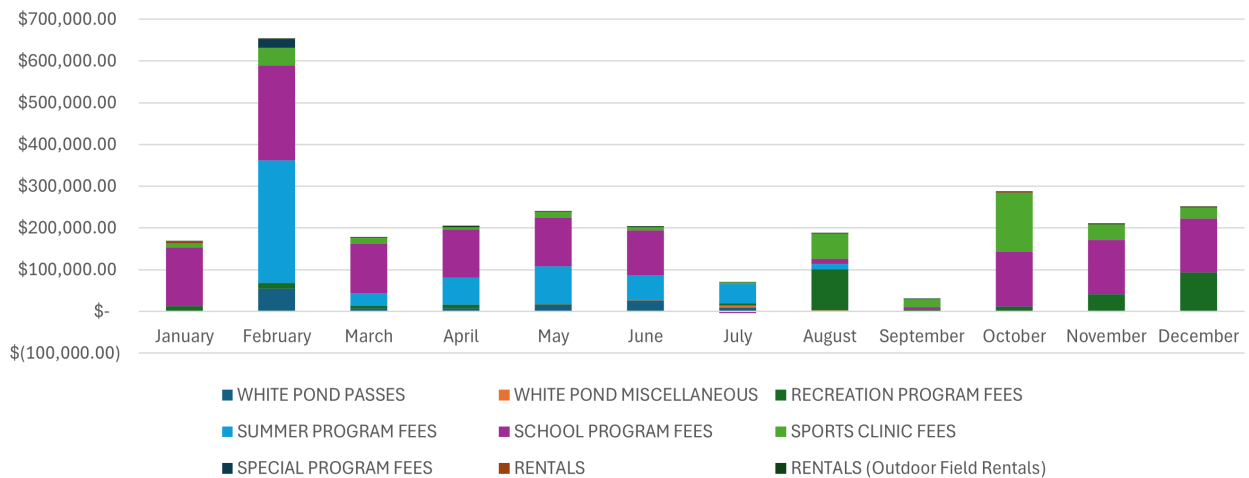


■ January ■ February ■ March ■ April ■ May ■ June
■ July ■ August ■ September ■ October ■ November ■ December



Recreation Revolving FY24

Recreation Revolving Revolving 2024



Beede Swim and Fitness Center

The Beede Swim & Fitness Center, located on the campus of Concord-Carlisle Regional High School and home to the CCHS Swim and Dive Team, is an engaging community hub for fitness and recreation. The facility boasts an 8-lane lap pool, a warm water pool, a children's pool, a diving well, and ample poolside seating for spectators. Complementing its aquatic features are two 1,600-square-foot fitness rooms—one dedicated to weight training and the other to cardiovascular exercise—along with men's and women's locker/shower rooms, family changing areas, and staff office space. Open approximately 100 hours per week year-round, the Beede Swim and Fitness Center serves an average of 334 members daily, along with class participants, guest and day pass users, rental groups, and swim teams who regularly utilize the facility. Operating as an Enterprise Fund, the Center is committed to balancing the recreational needs of the community with its financial responsibility to be self-sustaining, covering operating costs, capital improvements, and future reserves.

Membership

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center offers flexible membership plans that provide unlimited access to its state-of-the-art aquatic and fitness facilities. With annual, monthly, 3-month, and 10-visit options, members can customize their plans to fit individual or family needs. Members also enjoy exclusive benefits, including discounts of up to 40% on aquatics and fitness programs year-round. In October 2024, membership pricing increased by \$6.00 per month. Below is a comparison of the membership types between 2023 and 2024:

| Learn to Swim offerings | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Adaptive (All Ages) | 71 | 49 |
| Parent/Child (6 months-3 years) | 89 | 169 |
| Preschool (3 years -6 years) | 173 | 264 |
| Youth (6 years-13 years) | 290 | 240 |
| Adult/Teen (13 years and up) | 71 | 49 |
| Total | 691 | 768 |

Aquatics

In 2024, we proudly hosted 768 swimmers in our Learn to Swim programs and look forward to expanding and enhancing these offerings in 2025. Our goal for 2024 was to provide a well-rounded program that serves

swimmers of all ages and skill levels while maintaining a strong emphasis on the quality of instruction. Below is a breakdown of our growth from 2023, highlighting the diverse groups served by our Learn to Swim program:

| Learn to Swim offerings | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Adaptive (All Ages) | 71 | 49 |
| Parent/Child (6 months-3 years) | 89 | 169 |
| Preschool (3 years -6 years) | 173 | 264 |
| Youth (6 years-13 years) | 290 | 240 |
| Adult/Teen (13 years and up) | 71 | 49 |
| Total | 691 | 768 |

Land & Water Fitness

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center continues to provide a diverse range of land-based fitness classes, aquatic programs, and personal training sessions. Classes are held on-site and at nearby locations to accommodate members' needs. This year, personal training participation declined following the retirement of a key personal trainer. Land-based fitness class attendance also experienced a slight decrease due to space limitations.

| Session registrations | 2023 | 2024 |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| Water Fitness | 211 | 225 |
| Land Fitness | 151 | 88 |
| Personal Training | 367 | 286 |



Fitness Punch Pass

| | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Fitness Punch Pass | 79 | 243 |

Employee Updates

As noted in the Concord Recreation Annual Report, the Beede Swim and Fitness Center hired a new Beede Swim and Fitness Center General Manager, Jenny Saccardo. Jenny is a Concord resident with a great history running aquatic and fitness centers as a YMCA Executive Director in California before moving back to Massachusetts and

Concord. Welcome Jenny!

Beede Center 2024 Highlights

- > **Concord Otters Swim Team:** Transitioned to a USA Swimming-accredited club, expanding opportunities for 73 swimmers qualified for the Bronze Championships, 32 for the Silver



Championships, and 2 for the Age Group Championships.

- > **Uninterrupted Pool Availability:** Since September 2023, Beede Swim and Fitness Center has maintained zero pool closures due to staffing or preventable issues, ensuring consistent service.
- > **Community Partnerships:** Continued collaborations with rental groups, including artistic swimming, diving, and hosting Lexington High School Swim Team practices and meets.
- > **Lifeguard Training:** All Lifeguards participated in monthly in-service training, maintaining high safety standards.
- > **Programs and Events:**
 - **Beede & Books:** Partnered with Concord Free Public Library to host 8 events with 80 participants.
 - **New Year, New You Challenge:** Motivated 129 participants to work out 24 times between January and February.
 - **Beede Birthday Parties:** Relunched in November, with 6 parties booked for pool and studio celebrations.
 - **Sleepy Hollow 5K & Fun Run:** Drew 48 5K participants and 40 Fun Run participants for a community race event.
 - **Trunk or Treat:** Hosted 18 decorated cars for safe trick-or-treating.
 - **Underwater Egg Hunt:** Welcomed 75 participants for a pool-based family scavenger hunt.
 - **Pride Karaoke Pool Party:** Celebrated Pride Month with 81 attendees enjoying music, swimming, and karaoke.
- > **Health Initiatives:**
 - Partnered with Emerson Hospital to provide

free blood pressure screenings to over 50 members, promoting heart health awareness.

- Hosted the 22nd Annual Nick Ressler Blood Drive resulting in the donation of 45 units of blood.

Facilities Update

During the annual shutdown, we conducted a comprehensive deep cleaning across the entire facility to maintain a hygienic and welcoming environment. Significant repairs were made to the women's locker room, including replacing water-damaged walls to restore both the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal. Lighting in the inclusive changing rooms and women's locker room was also improved to enhance visibility and safety. Benches were installed at the front entrance, to provide additional comfort for patrons, offering convenient outdoor seating.

In the women's locker room, additional hooks were added to increase functionality and convenience for users. The Warm Water Pool and Children's Pool were drained, scrubbed, refilled, and balanced to ensure optimal water quality. The Lap Pool and Dive Well were partially drained, shocked, refilled, and balanced to improve cleanliness and usability. The pool deck's rusted column bases were repaired and painted, enhancing appearance and durability. Within inclusive changing rooms, walls were repaired and painted to maintain a fresh and inviting space. Stairway railings were also



painted to improve aesthetics and prolong structural integrity.

Five pieces of cardio equipment were replaced with new, state-of-the-art models, enhancing the fitness experience for all users. All fitness equipment underwent a thorough cleaning to maintain cleanliness and user satisfaction. Additionally, all shower curtains were replaced, and a second curtain was introduced to enhance privacy in each shower. Minor landscaping and weeding were performed to improve the building's exterior appearance. These efforts represent just a portion of the many tasks completed this year to ensure the facility remains safe, functional, and welcoming for all users.

In the parking lot, we focused on improving management and monitoring to better meet the needs of facility users. To improve traffic flow during busy morning hours, parking lot attendants were hired to deter non-members from parking in the lot, ensuring spaces remain available for those using the facility. We also introduced 20 designated student parking spots to accommodate Concord High School students and support the community. Additionally, we installed cameras in the parking lot to monitor activity, deter vandalism, and improve overall safety for all users.

Enhancing Sustainability with a UV System for the Lap Pool

This year, we recognized the necessity of installing a UV system in the Lap Pool to enhance water quality, reduce chemical usage, and support our long-term sustainability objectives. To advance this initiative, we undertook the following steps:

- > **Needs Assessment:** Conducted a comprehensive evaluation of lap pool operations, identifying the advantages of implementing a UV system to improve sanitation and operational efficiency
- > **Scope Development:** Developed a detailed project scope that outlined the technical requirements for the UV system.
- > **Invitation to Bid:** Issued a formal Invitation to Bid to attract qualified vendors and ensure a competitive procurement process.

The UV system will play a crucial role in our sustainability efforts by minimizing chemical usage, reducing environmental impact, and lowering operational costs over time. This project highlights our commitment to environmentally responsible practices and the efficient utilization of resources.

Acknowledgements and Usage Highlights

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Recreation Commission for their steadfast support of this vital community resource, which welcomed a total of 235,396 user days in the 344 open days in 2024 (2 users x 1day = 2 user days). We also want to acknowledge the



dedication of our team—75 part-time and 7 full-time staff members—whose hard work and commitment make all



this possible.

Concord Cultural Council

The Local Cultural Council (LCC), whose members are appointed by the Select Board, supports community cultural projects through funds received from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) whose mission is “to promote excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.” Using these monies, the LCC reviews and awards grants submitted by artists and arts organizations. However, 2024 saw a major change for the LCC.

The Select Board appointed a Concord Center Cultural District Task Force to determine what the best role for the Concord Center Cultural District (CCCD) would be going forward. Concord is fortunate to have two cultural districts, the CCCD and the West Concord Junction Cultural District, each of which receives grant monies from the MCC. This is a summary by chair Richard

Fahlander, chair, of the Task Force's recommendation and action:

Following the recommendation of the Concord Center Cultural District Task Force, the Select Board expanded the charge of the Local Cultural Council to include the Concord Center Cultural District. This arrangement coordinates state funding for the arts and enhances Concord's cultural landscape with the Cultural Council as a proactive driver of the arts for the benefit of artists, cultural organizations, and the town's economic vitality. Prior to issuing its recommendations, the Task Force administered the 2024 Concord Center Cultural District state grant. Funding was allocated to support a variety of creative public programs in conjunction with the "Freedom's Silhouette" art installation in Monument Square.

The LCC was given a new charge (see Town website: <https://www.concordma.gov/1074/Concord-Cultural-Council>), and renamed "Concord Cultural Council"(CCC), and we set about our new dual responsibility with determination.

The CCC advertised in the Concord Bridge, the Town Website and Facebook, and through the MCC's website. We will hold our third annual gathering in May, in an effort to continue to promote the opportunities available through the CCC. With our expanded charge we look to receive feedback from Concordians on their interests and wishes for arts in Concord going forward.

For the traditional Local Cultural Council grants granted in December 2024, the (MCC) provided Concord with \$7,400. This number is based solely upon Concord's population (The MCC distributed \$5.4 million statewide). The Town of Concord provided an additional \$2,000 for Concord grants specifically, for a total of \$9,400. With an additional \$1,162 carried forward from the previous year, the final budget was \$10,562. 46 grants were submitted requesting a total of \$36,590. The Council awarded 31 grants totaling \$9,857. The remaining \$677 will be used for the annual grantee's reception in May.

As of this writing the CCC is a Council of eight members: Edward Bernard, Andrea Foncerrada, Robert Gross (secretary), Tooey Rogers (chair), Janice Saragoni, Hilary Taylor, Anita Tekle (treasurer), and Leda Zimmerman. Economic Vitality Manager Mimi Graney is staff assistant and wonder worker. We are eager to tackle our new charge and mission in our continued effort to support and bring arts and culture to Concord, and to promote Concord's economic vitality. As Thoreau, one of Concord's many famous men and women, said, "Dreams are the touchstones of our characters." We hope to enhance Concord's dreams in 2025.

Veterans' Services



The Veterans' Services program is mandated according to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 115 and is administered under State guidelines to provide information, advice and assistance regarding benefits to veterans and their families. Every city and town in the Commonwealth are required to have a benefits program for its resident veterans and their dependents, as well as a Veterans' Services Officer. The Veterans' Services Officer must be a war-era veteran and be available to provide assistance. The veterans agent is required to attend initial training on veterans benefits and annual training conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services. The agent also must be certified every three years as a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) and within one year of hire. This certification must be maintained per Massachusetts General Laws. The Town is reimbursed by the State for 75%

of benefits paid under this mandated program. With the support of the Commonwealth's House, Senate and Executive Office, Massachusetts is now recognized as having one of the most comprehensive veterans' programs in the nation.

The Office of Veterans' Services, located at 55 Church Street (second floor), advocates and provides critical services to those who have worn the uniform and their loved ones. At the start of the civil war in 1861, the state legislature formalized assistance provided to needy veterans by establishing M.G.L. Chapter 115 benefits and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans' Services to oversee Chapter 115 distribution in a constant effort to improve benefits and keep the up to date. Current benefits extend to "natural disasters" where benefits may apply to a loss resulting from a hurricane, blizzard, tornado or the current pandemic.

Most recently, in August of 2024, The Healey-Driscoll Administration passed the Hero Act, honoring, empowering, and recognizing our service members and veterans proposing seventeen spending and policy initiatives, tax credits and statute changes organized in three buckets:

- > Benefit Expansion
- > Commitment to Inclusivity and Greater Representation
- > Modernization of Veterans Services

Some of these changes will happen automatically while others will happen via "home-rule" and need to be voted in at town meetings.

The Veterans' Service Officer will help Veterans complete their application for Chapter 115 benefits which offers a need-based program of financial and medical assistance for Veterans and their dependents. The mission of the Veterans' Services Officer has grown to encompass the full range of VA federal benefits, rehabilitation, employment and educational opportunities, military records, tax exemptions, housing and shelter assistance, annuities, funeral assistance and care and decoration of veterans' graves. Financial assistance to qualified veterans and their dependents is provided, in accordance with State and federal regulations.

Our veteran population is dropping very rapidly but from 2001 to 2025 we have tens of thousands of new veterans in the Commonwealth. This increase is due to: Women Veterans, Latino Veterans and African American Veterans. This is a very small amount returning compared to veterans that returned from WWII.

Program Implementation

The Veterans' Services Officer (VSO) responds to daily calls requesting information, advice and assistance. With so many veterans and their families facing profound challenges related to their service and the current economy due to the covid pandemic, the VSO has

become more important than ever.

The VSO often helps veterans obtain assistance from veterans' organizations as well as other local, State and federal organizations, such as Concord Community Services, Concord Council of Aging, Social Security, local food pantries and farmer markets. The VSO reviews legislation, regulations, and precedents, and studies veterans' medical records and service history to evaluate and determine validity of claims. The VSO provides assistance in the area of housing placement for veterans and their dependents, job rereferrals, medical and educational, as well as, referrals to alcohol/drug rehabilitation programs. The VSO does home visits for the purpose of filing of benefits. He assists veterans obtaining discharges and other military records. The VSO also works with funeral directors to ensure proper veterans' burials, ensures proper identification and maintenance of graves. Currently there are four individuals receiving financial assistance for qualifying Chapter 115 benefits. This number changes annually as the veteran may have moved, gained employment, change in assets or passed away.

The VSO has been networking with local civic groups, senior citizen groups and area veterans' organizations as well as families of service members currently deployed. In the past he has worked with students and presenters at Veterans' Day and Memorial Day exercises, served as a guest speaker in some high school and elementary school classes as well as for Rotary Club of Concord, the Lions Club of Concord, Concord Deaconess, and Concord Park Assisted Living.

The Town of Concord is proud of the Commonwealth for continuing its tradition of leading the nation in supporting our veterans, military members and their families. Chapter 115 benefits aids those who have supported America during some of the country's most difficult times by looking at a broad range of issues and providing resources to help them build a bright future. Chapter 115 addresses issues from job training and education to affordable housing and the uniform provision of veterans services.

For information or assistance on Veterans' Services please call 978-318-3038 or e-mail dkrug@concordma.gov. For information about services, events, and other veterans' organizations please visit Concord's web page at www.concordma.gov/clerk/veterans.

Registrar of Veteran's Graves

There were 32 interments of United States Veterans in Concord cemeteries in 2024. The names of the Veterans, their respective wars, date of burials, and place of burial are as follows:

| VETERAN'S NAME | PERIOD OF DUTY | INTERMENT DATE | CEMETERY |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| John P. Cooper | Peacetime | January 13, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Charles J. Stephanelli Jr.Korea | Korea | January 17, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| Sally Williamson | Peacetime | March 2, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Warren G. Sproul | Vietnam | March 13, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Thruston H. Hammer | World War II | April 12, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Warren Goorno | Vietnam | April 12, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Grant S. Anderson | Vietnam | April 13, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Remo G. Sodano | World War II | April 28, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Dennis P. Berk | Vietnam | May 5, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Frederick D. MacNeill Jr.K | Korea | May 13, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| David S. Baker | Vietnam | May 17, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert Runck | Peacetime | June 4, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Robert A. Flynn | Korea | June 7, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| James Walker | Korea | June 27, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Dexter Foss | World War II | July 17, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Bradford T. Joyce | World War II | July 23, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Jeffrey S. Wilburn | Vietnam | August 3, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Linda M. Hardiman | Vietnam | August 11, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Diane D. Nichols | Korea | August 24, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Donald R. Knudson | Peacetime | October 9, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Richard A. Perini | Vietnam | October 17, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| Leonard N. Palmer | Vietnam | October 19, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| Ross R. Roberts | World War II | October 20, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Evan M. Geilich | Peacetime | October 24, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Arthur S. Hansel Jr | Vietnam | October 29, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| William T. Hutchinson | Peacetime | October 30, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| Joseph C. Wheeler | World War II | November 2, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Arthur T. Alcaez | Korea | November 15, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| John P. Basile | Peacetime | November 21, 2024 | St. Bernard's |
| Philip J. Messina | World War II | November 23, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Eugene Moroz | World War II | December 21, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |
| Philip Stark | Peacetime | December 24, 2024 | Sleepy Hollow |

The Council on Aging

Daniel Petitt, Director

The mission of the Concord Council on Aging (COA) is to enhance the quality of life for Concord residents aged 60 and older by promoting their health, independence, and dignity. This mission is achieved through a variety of activities and services designed to support physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. The COA also collaborates with family members, friends, and local resources to ensure seniors remain engaged and active participants in the Concord community.

Guided by its dedicated Board, staff, and volunteers, the COA continues to expand its comprehensive programs and services to meet the evolving needs of Concord's aging population. As of 2024, Concord, Massachusetts, has an estimated total population of 18,119. According to recent data, approximately 17.51% of the population is aged 65 to 84, and 4.71% are 85 years and older. This suggests that around 22.22% of Concord's residents are 65 years and older. Additionally, 7.13% of the population falls within the 60 to 64 age group. Combining these percentages indicates that approximately 29.35% of Concord's population is aged 60 and over. Applying this percentage to the total population, it can be estimated that about 5,320 residents are 60 years of age and older.

With more than 2000 residents connecting with the Council on Aging in the past year, the following is a sample of the types of programs that engaged: 353 fitness classes were offered during the year, both in person and hybrid, including a Fall Prevention class that is extremely popular. 349 people borrowed 860 pieces of durable loan equipment. 176 educational programs were delivered. 197 seniors began participating for the first time and 486 for special events. 215 seniors used the van service and received 7724 rides. 567 seniors were assisted by Outreach/Social Services. 996 office consultations with the Social Outreach Team, 665 Blood Pressure Clinic Visits and 162 home visits conducted by the Outreach Team.

Collaborative Partnerships

The Council on Aging (COA) maintains strong working relationships with a range of town departments, including the Police and Fire Departments, Parks and Recreation and the Board of Health, as well as local medical providers, aging service access points, housing authorities, and agencies that distribute public benefits. These partnerships enable the COA to deliver comprehensive and integrated services to the community.

The Outreach, Social Services, and Wellness Team



The Outreach, Social Services, and Wellness team offers a robust and diverse range of services tailored to address the evolving needs of Concord's senior residents. Our professional staff provides support, advice, assessment, consultation, and referrals to seniors and their support network of family, friends, and neighbors while adhering to strict standards of confidentiality. This includes support groups, led by the COA Assistant Director, that meet weekly to address critical issues such as isolation, caregiving challenges, and anxiety, fostering a sense of connection and emotional well-being. During 2024, support groups were an ongoing and vital aspect of social services.

Our Geriatric Health Nurse collaborates closely with the Social Services and Outreach team to provide vital support to residents. In partnership with the Board of Health, local pharmacies, and medical providers, the COA also coordinates programs and town-wide vaccination clinics, ensuring accessible and responsive healthcare services for older adults.

Weekly health clinics and screenings, as well as educational programs resumed with a primary focus on in-person participation. Both hearing loss and vision loss support groups continued as in person and virtual, offering information and resources as needed.

Social, Recreational, and Educational Opportunities

The opportunity to interact with peers, stay intellectually active, and feel valued and needed by the community is recognized as key to emotional and physical health. A typical week provides the opportunity to sign up for informational programs, day trips, classes, movies, parties, computer and cell phone tutoring, discussion groups, art workshops, book groups, cooking classes, games, and music classes. Working with community partners, programs such as Ask a Lawyer, the SHINE program and AARP tax assistance are vital to the COA community. We continue to seek ideas from participants towards the goal of enhancing program options. A monthly newsletter is produced by staff that details the many choices of activities and services.

Transportation

Our vans provide local transportation Monday through Friday for seniors who no longer drive or who have temporary limitations. In addition to providing transportation around town to medical appointments, banks, pharmacies, grocery stores, hospitals, etc. We continue to provide transportation to the Annual Town meeting and for voting on Election Day. We typically have two vans on the road daily to meet demand.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing and supporting the Concord Council on Aging (COA), contributing over 5,803 hours of their time and dedication this year. Their invaluable efforts enable the COA to expand its

programs, activities, and services, directly enriching the lives of our senior community.

Harvey's Treasure Chest Gift Shop, run entirely by volunteers, provides proceeds that help sponsor COA events. Specialized volunteer services include the work of seamstresses, blood pressure clinic assistants, and host desk volunteers who offer critical support for daily operations. The COA Library remains both contemporary and well-maintained thanks to the dedication of a retired professional librarian, while musical volunteers bring entertainment and joy to those who visit.

Volunteers are also integral to providing transportation assistance, ensuring seniors can attend essential medical appointments. In addition, technology tutoring has been made possible through volunteer efforts, leading to the donation of 68 refurbished laptops to seniors over the past two years.

The weekly Wednesday lunch program is a success thanks to the volunteers who assist in serving a hot meal, followed by the ever-popular BINGO games enthusiastically called by a dedicated team of volunteers. Volunteers also support the COA lockbox program in partnership with the Concord Police and Fire Departments, offering a vital service for senior safety.

This year saw the successful implementation of the COA Handyman Service, where two committed volunteers completed over 100 small home improvement projects. This service empowers seniors to maintain their independence, ensuring they can continue living safely and comfortably in their own homes.

With over 170 volunteers contributing their time, skills, and dedication, the COA can offer a rich variety of programs and services that truly enhance the lives of Concord's seniors. Their hard work and commitment reflect the generosity and strength of our community.

Community Partnerships

The Council on Aging (COA) collaborates with a variety of community organizations to enhance its programming throughout the year. Partners such as the Friends of the Aging, the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, Concord schools and youth groups, the Garden Club, the National Charity League of Middlesex County, and the Concord Service

Outreach Highlights



Local Charity funds secured for urgent financial needs = \$ 40,588



Office Visits with Outreach & Wellness = 1661



Home Visits by Outreach Coordinators = 162

Squad play a vital role in the COA's continued success. We extend our deepest appreciation to these organizations and to our dedicated volunteers, whose efforts and talents are essential to providing a diverse array of programs for the community.

Outreach and Communication

To increase awareness and engagement, the COA utilizes interactive platforms such as Facebook and Minuteman Media Services. These tools serve as valuable resources for keeping the community informed and connected to the vibrant programs and services offered by the COA. As the shift from paper-first to digital-first communication continues, the COA remains committed to meeting the needs of all residents by distributing both USPS-mailed monthly newsletters and electronic versions.

The Council on Aging has adopted a new logo designed to assist seniors in identifying the Harvey Wheeler Community Center. The logo incorporates the building's image as a distinctive wayfinding element. This design was thoughtfully created by Steve Bermundo.

Financial Support

In addition to funding from the Town's General Fund, the COA is deeply grateful for the support of the following organizations:

Concord-Carlisle Community Foundation

Executive Office of Elder Affairs – Formula Grant: Allocated based on the number of seniors in the community.

This collective financial support ensures the COA can continue to provide vital services and enriching opportunities for Concord's senior residents.

Harvey Wheeler Treasure Chest Gift Shop:

We extend our sincere gratitude to the residents who generously donate quality items for resale, the patrons who support us through their purchases, and the dedicated volunteers whose efforts make it all possible. Proceeds from these efforts are used to fund a variety of COA programs.

COA Gift Account: We deeply appreciate the contributions made to the COA Gift Account. These donations enable us to offer scholarships, ensuring that seniors who might otherwise be unable to participate in events or trips can enjoy these opportunities. Your support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our community members.

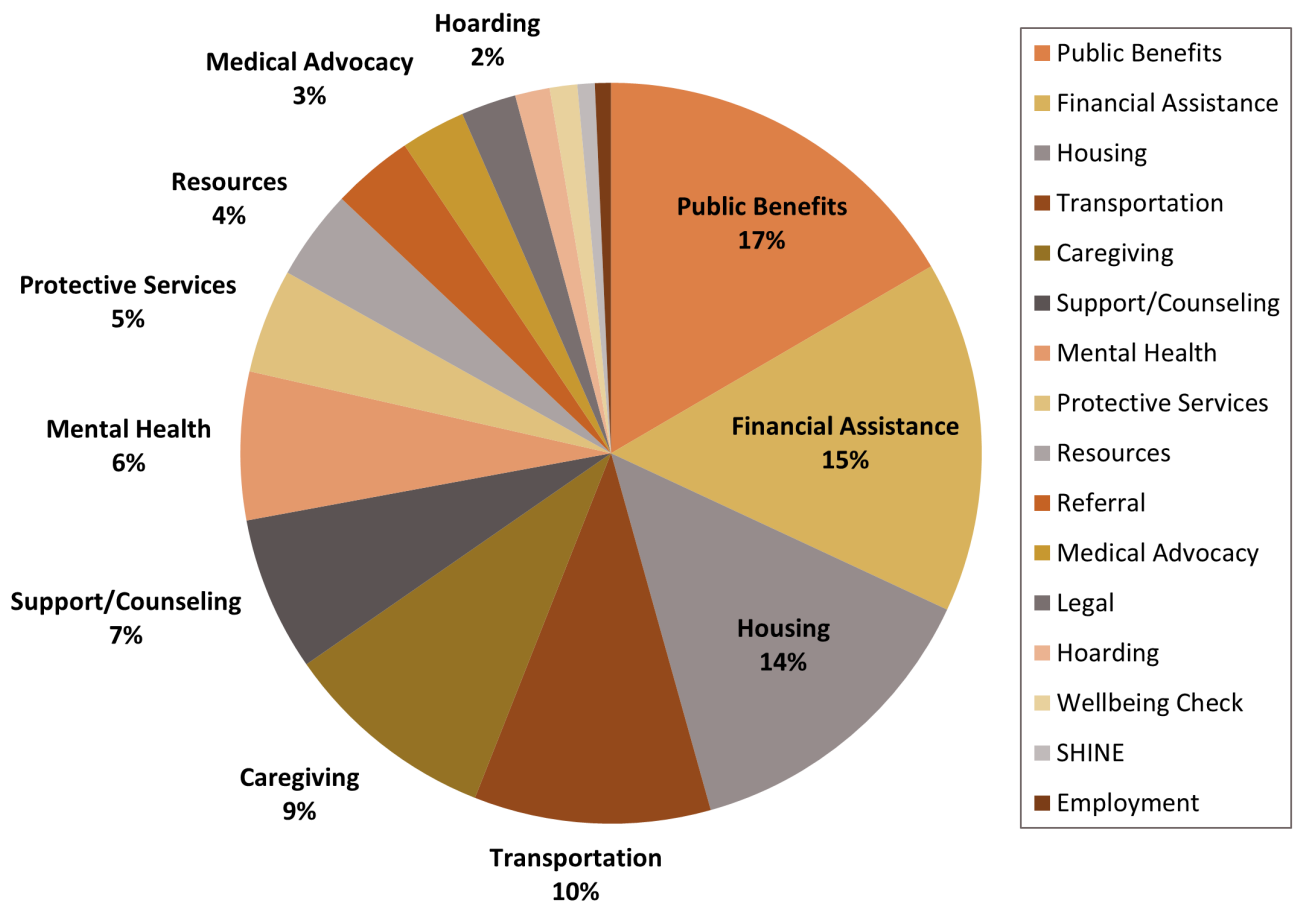
COA Staff and Board members.

The Council on Aging (COA) team is composed of highly skilled and dedicated professionals, all driven by a shared commitment to providing outstanding services and support to Concord's senior community. In

April 2024, Amanda Wootan joined as Social Outreach Coordinator, and Daniel Petitt assumed the role of Director. Nicole Saia, previously Director of Social Services, was promoted to Assistant Director, while Emily Nash and Lisa Bergemann transitioned to Senior Administrative Specialists. Additionally, Caroline Partridge began her role as Geriatric Wellness Nurse in September 2024, further enhancing the COA's capacity to support the community.

The COA Board, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Director, consists of nine full members appointed for three-year terms and two associate members appointed for one-year terms by the Town Manager. Members of the COA Board serve as liaisons to the following committees: Disability Commission, Housing, Board of Health, Concord After Sixty, Public Works, PEG Access and Minuteman Senior Services. Board members for Fiscal Year 2023 were: Christina Kendrick (Chair), Gracia de la Cruz (Secretary), Harold Carmel, Julia Gallagher, Kathryn Hanley, Teresa Stokes, Paul Levine, Susanna Bedell and Tracey Zellmann. Wendy Rovelli serves as the liaison from the Select Board and Bernice Fousek serves as the liaison from the Concord Housing Authority.

COA Outreach Assistance in 2024



Concord Nanae Network Committee

John Cratsley

Sue Curtin

Jim Terry

Lee Flight

Nancy McJennett

Jack Nevison

Holly Cratsley

Liz Cobbs

Court Booth

Mike Lawson

Junko Kargula

Miho Horikoshi

Nouna Pinto, CCHS Liaison

Following the 25th Anniversary celebration at the Town House in 2023, the Concord Nanae Network (CNN) greeted this year's delegation with renewed energy. Visitors from our Sister City of Nanae, Hokkaido, Japan, arrived in October for a 7-day visit. Boys and girls, ages 14 to 17, were joined by three adults: an English teacher, a town official, and Concord native Jack McCarthy, our current representative in Nanae's Town Office.

As is the CNN tradition, generous Concord and Carlisle families welcomed the visitors into their homes. The students visited CCHS for classes and extracurriculars, as well as Sanborn, Peabody, and the Thoreau School to give presentations about Japan. CCHS highlights were an onigiri lunch, prepared by Mme. Pinto in her classroom, and an exuberant "ikka dance" demonstration in the auditorium, with CCHS students joining in.

The adults pursued their own interests. Miyuki Hirobe toured the Town House and the DPW and witnessed our national election in progress. She and Michiru Sakuri enjoyed a trip to Plimoth/Patuxet, and separate gatherings for Halloween, a particular Japanese favorite.

Orchard House gave a private tour for everyone with a Japanese-speaking docent, and volunteer tour guides lectured about the Robbins House and the North Bridge. The week was capped by farewell dinner at Verrill Farm, featuring clam chowder, pulled pork barbecue, and apple pie.

Sunday, after the clocks "fell behind," sleepy visitors and families said goodbye. Nanae returns in the fall of 2025 and an adult trip to Japan is planned for June of 2025. We thank School Superintendent, Dr. Laurie Hunter, the School Committee, teachers and principals at CCHS, CMS, and Thoreau, as well as Select Board members and Town employees for their wholehearted support. CNN salutes the families who embrace our guests as well as our local interpreters – they are the secret to our continued success!

