

To: The Greene County Legislature
From: The Greene County Libraries Association
S. Ray, President
Re: 2013 Annual Report

We must prove to others every day that librarianship is not clerical, nor about materials, or about the building. Librarianship is about improving society. We must think about sharing more than just our licenses and loaning our books. We must share authority, responsibility, services and expertise with each other and our communities. Ultimately, we must become a truly open market of ideas.

David Lankes, University of Syracuse.

2013 Total County Funding Received: \$32,700

Each year, the Greene County Libraries Association (GCLA) receives funding from the County which directly benefits the residents of the County. In addition to County funding and local tax dollars, all libraries seek grant funding, accept donations and have fundraising events that supplement library income. GCLA is comprised of eight public libraries which fall into four different charter categories:

Athens (D. R. Evarts)	Special District
Cairo	Municipal
Catskill (including Palenville Branch)	School District
Coxsackie (Heermance Memorial)	Special District
Greenville	Municipal
Haines Falls	Association
Hunter	School District
Windham	Municipal

Greene County Libraries Association Budget: \$32,700

Greene County Resident Support: \$20,500

Funding is equally distributed among the eight public libraries in the County. County funding helps to both equalize library services within the county and to provide services to county residents who are not directly served by a chartered library.

Technical Training / Support: \$3,800

Each library offers public access computers which are used daily. As most libraries do not have an IT department, in order to keep equipment up-to-date and running properly, funding is used to compensate IT personnel, whether from the Mid-Hudson Library System or local individuals/companies.

Online Databases: \$3,000

Each library website provides links to online databases (comprehensive, organized collections of related data). The Greene County Home Access portal offers a one-stop center for the following databases (not comprehensive):

- **Testing & Education Reference Center** - Practice exams such as GED, SAT, ASVAB, US Citizenship, ASVAB (Military) and Civil Service Exams.
- **Proquest** - Newspapers & Magazines.
- **Chilton Auto Repair Guides** – Diagnostics, diagrams, step-by-step instructions from oil changes to engine overhaul.
- **Mango Languages** - An easy, effective language learning system that teaches real conversation skills for practical communication. Spanish, Italian, Gaelic, & Russian, etc.
- **Tumblebooks** - Animated, musical, talking, interactive picture books.

Downloadable / EBooks & Audio books: \$3,200

Each MHLs member Library provides access to Overdrive for their patrons. Overdrive is basically an e-book library. With a library card, patrons can download eBook & e-audio books to their Nook, Kindle, smartphone or other device. Each year the popularity of digital downloads increases.

Preparation of Annual Tax Report: \$500

As a 501C-3 organization, we comply with all applicable regulations and in order to be completely transparent with taxpayer/County funding, we use an outside accountant to review and prepare our taxes.

GCLA Outreach: \$1,100

Funding goes toward publicity for banners, posters, flyers and brochures for County wide library events and/or reserving GCLA informational tables/booths at Health, Book and Youth Fairs. GCLA is also a Hudson River Valley Heritage member which allows the uploading of images into an online digital library.

Book Page Subscription: \$600

A monthly book review publication available to public libraries. Book Page focuses on new releases and reviews are tailored for the general reader and is very popular with library patrons.

All Greene County Libraries provide:

- **Diverse collections**
All Libraries are part of the Mid-Hudson Library System (midhudson.org). As system members, we have access to the collections of all 66-member libraries within five counties - Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam & Ulster. These collections include Movies, Music, Video Games, Board Games, Leapsters, Nooks, Newspapers, Magazines, reference, Local History & New York State collections and Microfilm.

- **Early Literacy Programs**

Early Literacy, or 'storytime', programs help prepare our youngest patrons for the future. Included in these programs are arts & crafts and snack time which help children hone their fine motor skills, learn to socialize and respect others, how to share and, of course, literacy skills. Such programs also allow parents, guardians and caregivers to network with others in their community.

- **Internet & Wifi Access**

All Greene County Libraries have public access computers and wifi access for the public. For many, the local library is often the *only* place in the community that offers free, regular computer access. Email communication, social media, homework projects and job-related searches are the most common use of library public access computers.

- **Reference & Readers Advisory**

In addition to answering daily questions from our regular patrons, all Greene County Libraries frequently see visitors to the Catskill region. Many stop first at the local library to get their bearings, check email, look through the local history resources, and to ask library staff about surrounding sites.

- **Summer Reading Programs**

Every year, each Greene County Library participates in the New York State-sponsored Summer Reading Program and tailor their program to the 'theme'; the theme for 2014 is *Fizz, Boom, Read at your Library*. From June to August, the primary goal of the SRP is to encourage and challenge children, teens & adults to continue reading during the summer months when school is not in session. Participants sign-up, log their daily reading, and receive incentives & prizes throughout the summer. Each library also offers unique themed-programs as well as skilled performers to supplement their regularly scheduled programs: jugglers, face painters, nature programs, and magic shows are among the favorites each year.

- **Special Programs & Events**

The majority of Greene County Libraries offer meeting space for special programs and/or community groups. Also, library space and meeting room space is used for special events & programs such as: Photography Clubs, Support Groups, Knitting, Movie Nights, Therapy Dogs, Health Programs & Exercise - Yoga, Pilates, Qi Gong, Book Clubs . . .

- **Monthly Meetings:** The GCLA holds meetings at least six times a year often inviting special guests to attend (Staff at the Mid-Hudson Library System) Once a year, GCLA reviews and revises their annual Budget to ensure County residents are being served in the most fiscally responsible and efficient manner.

- **Amnesty:** Greene County Libraries offer Amnesty during the year. If certain pre-specified items are brought in, the library will waive patron fines. In addition to 'Food for Fines' many libraries accept School Supplies, Diapers, & Toiletries. County Libraries have found that Amnesty programs prove to bring former patrons back, patrons that may have been timid about their overdue fees. All donated items then go back into the community to benefit those in need. Amnesty is often held during National Library Week in April.

Library usage statistics

- Library visits: 260,000
- Total circulation: 290,000
- Computer Usage: 61,544
- Program attendance: 26,000
- Library cardholders: 25,000

While all libraries realize the importance of statistics, we also stress the human interest stories that go along with them; the above numbers are **just** numbers without stories to go with them:

Library Stories

- A grandmother & her four-year-old grandson recently visited a Greene County Library. While she applied for a library card, library staff kept the grandson occupied with an impromptu mini-story time and pipe-cleaner craft. After they had both chosen books and movies, the grandmother brought her pile to the counter. Her grandson's eyes got big and he said, 'We can take them home?' As they left, the boy hugged the leg of the library staff member and the grandmother thanked them for being so incredibly kind. She then confided that she'd recently been granted temporary custody of her grandson while her daughter-in-law, his mom, was incarcerated. She said the boy did not trust strangers easily and she was sincerely grateful and touched that he warmed so easily to staff.
- A gentleman with limited computer skills visited a Greene County Library for help with a hand-written resume. Library staff introduced the man to the word processing software on the computer and he was amazed that it was so similar to a typewriter - the last technology he used to 'write' a resume. Staff gave suggestions as to wording and format and offered advice on how to give the resume more zing. Staff then helped set up an email account for the gentleman and stood by while he composed and sent his first ever email to his daughter in Texas. He sincerely thanked the staff and said he felt much more comfy with computers and would definitely return.
- Library staff at a Greene County Library does monthly outreach at the local Head Start school. Since beginning the program, twenty out of the fifty children (so far!) have had their parent/guardian bring them to the library to visit library staff and to get their first ever library card.
- Parents and grandparents at one Greene County Library were chatting about the lack of pre-school programs. Staff member, Miss L., then planned and implemented a weekly story, craft and snack time-event. The program is now three-years old and draws 20-26 parents, guardians and children each week. The program is so popular that on the rare occasion that Miss L. is unable to come in, the parents volunteer to run the program that day.
- On one of her frequent visits to her local library, the shy, introverted Miss X finally asked library staff if they could recommend any good movies, specifically court-room dramas.

Staff helped help Miss X navigated the online card catalog where she learned to limit her searches to 'DVD format, legal dramas'. She left with a two-page list which she planned to practice putting on reserve from home. Miss X. now regularly gives very animated movie reviews on her return visits, which in turn greatly helps staff in their recommendations. She is now looking for Denzel Washington films.

- When Gale databases recently announced they were discontinuing the print version of Chilton's Auto Repair Guide, one Greene County Library user was heartbroken. Staff assured him that the online version was just as good, different, yes, but just as good and staff would help him learn it. He has visited every week for a month for one-on-one computer help and is now ready to go solo and try it at home. Staff assured him they are just a phone call away. He has since bought a laptop that he loves and carries with him. He has also learned how to access wifi hot spots without asking for help.
- At a recent Greene County Library's monthly movie night, a grandmother came in with her pre-teenaged grandson. She very clearly did not want to be there (movie: *The Hobbit: an Unexpected Journey*) and anticipated being bored and unhappy. Her grandson helped himself to pizza and nestled in beside her. As the movie played, the woman would spontaneously gasp or sigh or let out a 'wow'. Afterwards, she told Library staff that she loved the movie, was at the edge of her seat, and also remembered the story from when she'd read the book in her youth. She said that her grandson asked her to take him to the library movie night and she was very glad she did. She said she wouldn't be so grouchy the next time he suggested an outing. She thanked Staff for a great evening and said she's definitely be back, commenting that the atmosphere was even better than a movie theater.
- Thanks to free computer help offered at a Greene County Library, Miss N. was able to locate information on stock prices from the 1940's. She then used this information to help her mother avoid paying higher taxes this year.
- Mr. J. wanted to start a business. He thought he'd have to hire someone to teach him basic computer skills. After learning that his local Greene County Library offered free, one-on-one computer help, he called to arrange an appointment. After a few meetings with library staff, he was relieved to find it wouldn't be as difficult as he'd first thought and no longer felt intimidated. He left confident and excited to go forward with his business.
- Mr. B. loves attending movie nights at his local Greene County Library. Mr. B isn't always able to afford the price of a movie ticket at the theater and appreciates the free movies, snacks and social interaction he receives the events. He enjoys lingering afterwards and chatting about the film with people in the community.

The Greene County Libraries Association is grateful for the funding received from the Greene County Legislature. We greatly appreciate that the County recognizes the importance of public libraries within their communities, especially during difficult economic times.

Our sincere thanks,

The Athens, Cairo, Catskill, Coxsackie, Greeneville, Haines Falls, Hunter & Windham Libraries.