

## **Gafney Library 2015 Wakefield Town Report**

If 2014 was the year of generating more awareness of the Gafney, 2015 could be called the year of “action,” putting into action a plan for library expansion. Thanks to voter approval of the 2015 warrant article appropriating \$15,000 toward Gafney expenses for a fundraising consultant and architect, the Gafney Steering Committee was able to come to agreement that expanding the library in its current location and to the rear of the existing building is the way to proceed. Though expanding the existing library has always been the desire, in 2015 circumstances required that the committee look for other locations to build a new, expanded library. After working with a local real estate agent to find property in the village area and hiring a cost estimator to provide the committee with realistic figures for a new/versus expanded building, it became clear that expanding the existing library would be more cost effective. It also became apparent that expanding to the 10,000 to 12,000 square feet recommended by a library consultant would probably not be achievable in terms of a fundraising goal given that the library is a nonprofit organization not owned by a municipality. A more moderate 6,000 square foot building will be the final result. The Steering Committee has been meeting every two weeks and will continue to work on finalizing a building plan and begin fundraising efforts in 2016.

Reflected in the expanded building will be physical changes that are occurring in libraries worldwide. Attention will be focused on more seating for reading, hookups for electronic device users, space for cooperative study, a community room for programming and meetings. Makerspaces, where library users learn skills necessary for personal enrichment and employment and are very popular. Diane Cassidy, Children’s Librarian is adapting space in the youth library now for these types of activities which are so important for Wakefield and Brookfield children and young adults. A current corner makerspace allows children to participate in building crafts of all kinds using available materials and equipment. Other educational space is visible in the form of science activities and projects for individual use at various tables.

New items in the Gafney collection for circulation this year include a laptop, wordprocessor and telescope. Gafney members may access their library account through the library’s website at [www.gafneylibrary.org](http://www.gafneylibrary.org) to reserve these and other items including books, audiobooks, ebooks and movies. A check with other NH libraries reflects a downturn in the annual number of circulating items. The Gafney is down almost 5% over 2014 but compared to other NH libraries, some whose circulation is down by 34%, our stats are good. This expected downturn is due in part to library use being more than books. Libraries are now places where people come to learn to use computers, to participate in educational programs, to study for better paying jobs, and many other educational uses. Libraries are also becoming community centers, where people interact with neighbors, attend art receptions and view exhibits, attend programs. Another contributing factor to lower circulation for the Gafney is space constraint – there is limited space for new items, so all items not circulating since 2010 are being weeded from the shelves to make room. This makes it difficult for readers to find older books in-house and requires staff to process interlibrary loan requests, borrowing from other libraries. 502 items were

borrowed from other libraries in 2015. Many people do not want to wait a week or two to get their desired item and therefore walk out without making an ILL request.

In 2015 ebook and audiobook users totaled 135 at the Gafney, with a total of 1,803 eBooks, 1,200 audiobooks and new in 2015 - 147 magazines - downloaded through the NH Downloadable Book consortium of which the Gafney is a paying member (cost was \$1085 in 2015). Wakefield and Brookfield commuters appreciate the downloadable program, which they can use from home, and the many audiobooks on the shelves in the library.

Based on a built-in calculator in the Gafney's circulation software which attaches retail prices to items in the system, a total savings of \$307,518 was made on behalf of Wakefield-Brookfield residents. That is, if Wakefield and Brookfield residents had to buy the items they borrowed from the Gafney, they would have paid a combined total of \$307,518. The Gafney has 4,128 active library users.

As testament to people using libraries for educational purposes, the Gafney Literacy program was very busy in 2015 working with students to obtain a high school equivalency certification (HiSET...formerly GED), upgrade reading/writing skills, working with college students on math and report writing skills, helping folks with computer basics and more complicated software issues, providing resources for those who are job hunting...resume writing, interviewing skills, job searches and applications. Our literacy tutors pride themselves in being able to address any literacy issue presented at the door by area residents at the Greater Wakefield Resource Center where the Gafney pays rent for a weekly drop in center on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 7:00pm. We also rent the center for our HiSET testing program once a month on the third Thursday.

Exhibit Coordinator Peter Abate handed in his resignation in December after 11 years of service to the Gafney. The Friends of Wakefield Libraries gave Peter a small monthly stipend, but Peter really volunteered his talent and time and put a lot of effort into the monthly art exhibits and annual "Art at the Gafney fundraiser." He will be greatly missed for his loyalty, attention and his gift of being able to present a visually appealing exhibit each month. Efforts are now being made to find someone to coordinate the monthly exhibits.

The Friends of Wakefield Libraries (FOWL) have been active in providing the library with summer reading materials and other youth library items, daily and weekly newspapers subscriptions, tables and other items not included in the annual library budget. The FOWL is a separate nonprofit organization and therefore undertake an annual appeal in August. They also take on the annual two-day book sale in September.

The Towns of Wakefield and Brookfield contribute about 85% of the Gafney's operating expenses with the Board of Directors devising fundraisers for the remainder. The Gafney's annual appeal approached \$12,000 in 2015. The annual wreath sale took in \$1,200 and the Art at the Gafney June and July fundraiser took in \$1,700.

Gafney volunteers contributed over 2,000 hours of "people power" again in 2015. These loyal workers help staff with special projects, check items in and out and shelve checked in items. Volunteers in both

the adult and youth libraries make it possible for staff to focus on work at hand during open hours. It can be especially busy in the summer months, with more than 200 items being checked out in a day.

The Gafney Knit Wits program, headed by Library Assistant Janice King, celebrated ten years of knitting, crocheting and friendship building with a fine luncheon at the Wakefield Inn. The Knit Wits donate to the community in the form of chemo caps, helmet liners for soldiers and afghans for soldiers in Afghanistan. New members are always welcome and they meet on Mondays when the library is closed, from 10:00 to noon.

Children's Librarian Diane Cassidy reported that the 2015 summer reading program "Every Hero Has a Story" was a success with 81 children registered - 11 who were young adults registered for the Young Adult "Unmask" Program. 1,277 books and 29,045 minutes were recorded and read. 116 adults and 155 children attended the 26 programs. 29 young adults attended the 6 young adult programs. The Norman Ng Magic Performance was enjoyed by 75 people - 38 adults and 37 children. The young adult Teen Advisory Board which meets twice a month, was active in organizing a Halloween event, working with Gabe Smith on a library video and listening to program presenter/author Adi Rule talk about writing and publishing. The Friends of Wakefield Libraries is considering funding the Teen Advisory Board to enable more exciting opportunities for the group....tee shirts and more programs among other things.

The Gafney Board of Directors and staff look forward to an exciting 2016. Stay tuned!

Respectfully submitted,

Beryl Donovan, Library Director

Board of Directors: Jim Murfey-President, Dick DesRoches-Vice President, Tom Lavender-Treasurer, Kristin Whitworth-Recording Secretary, Sharon Theiling-Town Trustee and Corresponding Secretary, and Aru'vah Ferrill, Janet Gould, Catherine Mills, Barbara Wadleigh, Jackie Winckler- Directors at large, Marcia Hodsdon and Julie Kessler, Alternates and Titia Bozuwa Trustee Emeritus