

FY 2025  
Impact Report



THE WELLESLEY FREE  
LIBRARY  
FOUNDATION

## Dear Friends,

Each year, I am inspired by the power of our Library and by the generosity of those who make its impact possible. Your support through The Library Foundation ensures that our Library continues to enrich lives, foster lifelong learning, and serve as a welcoming space for all.

Over the course of this past fiscal year, your gifts touched every part of Library life. Outreach programs reached hundreds of residents, from kindergarten and fifth-grade classroom visits to sensory-friendly story times and off-site crafts at Barton Road. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program thrived, serving 66 students from 15 countries through 16 weekly classes and 14 dedicated tutors, helping new neighbors build confidence, find jobs, and truly become part of our community.

Your generosity also advanced technology education in Jackie's Room, funding new laptops, software, and more than 120 digital learning events. And this year, the Foundation proudly funded a Bloomberg Terminal — bringing world-class financial research tools to Wellesley residents, students, and professionals for the very first time.

We also celebrated the continued vibrancy of our Branch Libraries, the beauty of the Heroes Garden at Fells, and progress toward the terrace renovation at the Main Branch, soon to become another inviting outdoor space for all to enjoy. A special highlight of the year was Books in Bloom this past May, which brought together our community in a joyful celebration of literature, creativity, and philanthropy — a wonderful reminder of how deeply Wellesley values its Library.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're excited to build on this momentum — expanding programs, enhancing spaces, and ensuring that the Wellesley Free Library remains a cornerstone of learning and connection for generations to come.

Warm regards,



Keith F. Higgins  
President, The Wellesley  
Free Library Foundation

**Thank you for being a vital part of our Library community. Together, we will continue to cultivate a love of learning and grow a welcoming space for all.**

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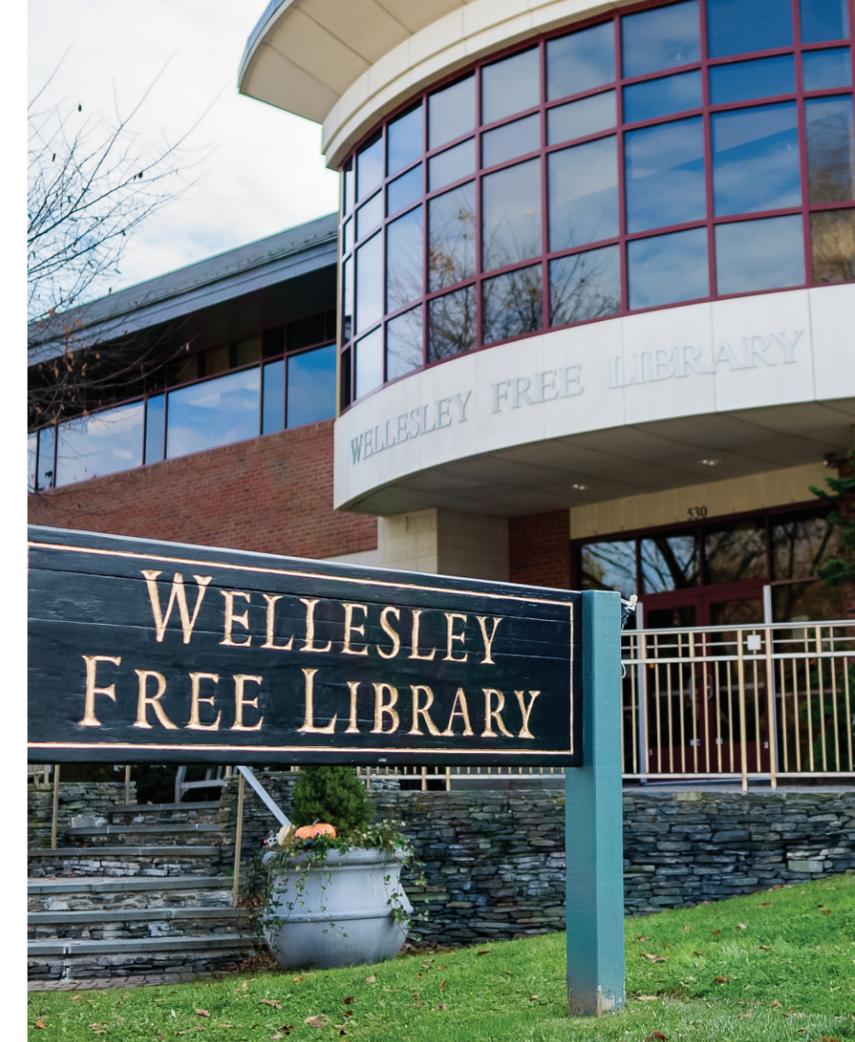
The Wellesley Free Library thrives thanks to the generosity of those who believe in its power to inform, connect, and inspire. The Library Foundation enhances that experience by funding resources and initiatives beyond the Library's operating budget. Through philanthropic support, we provide nearly \$250,000 each year for innovative programs and high-impact projects that serve patrons of all ages. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and continued investment.

**Together, we take what you love and make it better.**



When you donate to the Wellesley Free Library Foundation, you make a big impact. So many individuals, families, and children in our community rely on your generous support. With your help, The Library Foundation can fulfill our mission of enriching your library experience creating a dynamic space where learning and exploration thrive. Your charitable gift will create positive change in our community, and we thank you for your support.

For questions contact: Michelle Harris, Director of Development, (781) 235-1610 x1127 or [michelle\\_harris@wellesleyfreelibraryfoundation.org](mailto:michelle_harris@wellesleyfreelibraryfoundation.org).





## Building Digital Skills for Today's World

Technology education continued to expand and evolve in FY25, offering patrons practical skills and hands-on learning opportunities. Offerings ranged from introductions to Google Maps, Python coding, Canva, and ChatGPT to sessions on gardening apps, advanced mobile device features, and digital photography. The Library also participated in the regional 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group—consistently achieving one of the highest attendance rates—and partnered with career coach Deborah Hope to host professional digital headshots.

With strong demand for in-person learning and new tools on the horizon, Jackie's Room is a hub for hands-on technology education and lifelong learning.

Demand for in-person learning in Jackie's Room continued to grow, complemented by hybrid options for remote participation. Open Lab sessions remained highly popular, with nearly 50 sessions held and appointment slots consistently filled. Planning is underway to expand Jackie's Room hours, add docent support, and introduce new tools for digitizing older media, ensuring continued access to emerging technologies.



## Eliminating Barriers Within the Community

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program continued to support adult learners as they built English proficiency, confidence, and connections in Wellesley. Led by a dedicated Program Coordinator and supported by teachers and volunteer tutors, the program served approximately 66 students from 15 countries speaking 12 languages, including 18 new students and six refugees from Ukraine. Participants engaged in a mix of in-person and Zoom classes, conversation groups, and one-to-one tutoring designed to meet learners at varying levels and life stages.



Volunteer support remained a cornerstone of the program, with 14 tutors contributing more than 1,300 hours of individualized instruction and 10 teachers leading 16 classes across multiple locations. Students advanced through tailored coursework and conversation-based learning, with many eventually giving back as volunteers themselves. Enrichment activities—including field trips throughout Wellesley and Greater Boston, civic- and culture-focused classes, and partnerships with Wellesley Public Schools—further supported integration, workforce readiness, and civic participation. Together, these efforts helped participants feel more at home while strengthening the fabric of the town as a whole.

ESOL connects language learning with real-world experience, helping adults navigate daily life, work, and civic participation with confidence.





## Bright Futures Begin at the Library

Outreach extended Library services beyond its walls, supporting children, families, individuals with special needs, and economically disadvantaged residents through partnerships and targeted programming. Strong collaboration with Wellesley Public Schools allowed librarians to visit every kindergarten classroom in the fall and every fifth-grade classroom in the spring, introducing students to Library resources at key academic transition points. Outreach funds from the Wellesley Free Library Foundation supported engaging materials and take-home items for students.

**From kindergarten classrooms to community centers, Outreach connects children and families to Library resources at every stage of learning.**



Children's and inclusive programming continued to grow, highlighted by a highly successful Summer Reading Program that engaged 482 participants through a popular "read and bead" model. The Library also offered Sensory Library Time in partnership with the Federation for Children with Special Needs and continued collaboration with iCanFly to provide welcoming, play-based experiences for children of all abilities. Off-site programs such as First Friday Crafts at the Barton Road Community Center brought hands-on STEAM activities to children ages 6-16, reinforcing the Library's role as an accessible learning resource throughout the community.



**From the Heroes Garden to the new east-side terrace, Library spaces continue to invite reflection, creativity, and connection—indoors and out.**

## Branches

The Wellesley Free Library's branch libraries continue to enhance Library services while operating costs are increasingly supported through the town's annual budget. The Wellesley Free Library Foundation now focuses its support on targeted facility and infrastructure needs, including ongoing maintenance of the Heroes Garden at the Fells Branch. Named by an anonymous donor to honor Wellesley's first responders, the garden remains a special outdoor space that encourages exploration, imagination, and connection with nature.



At the Main Library, the WFLF supported the renovation of the east-side terrace (pictured left), transforming an underutilized area into a welcoming and accessible outdoor space scheduled for completion in May 2026. The terrace will be complemented by a butterfly sculpture by internationally acclaimed artist Nancy Schön, funded by the Foundation and designed to invite reflection, creativity, and connection. Together, these enhancements will create a shared space to be enjoyed by patrons of all ages for years to come.



## BOOKS IN BLOOM

In 2025, the Foundation hosted Books in Bloom, a much-loved spring fundraiser that welcomed nearly 400 attendees in support of the Library. The event featured stunning floral displays inspired by books and literature, created by local designers and displayed throughout the Library. Following the event, the arrangements remained on view for the entire weekend, allowing all Library patrons to enjoy them free of charge. Books in Bloom raised important funds to support the enhancements that enrich Library services—from collections and technology to outreach and special initiatives—while offering a joyful, inclusive celebration that continues to grow in both attendance and impact.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT COMMITTEE

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If you have a **Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)**, recommending a gift to the Wellesley Free Library Foundation is an easy way to make a lasting impact!



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