



THE WELLESLEY FREE

LIBRARY FOUNDATION

FY2023

IMPACT REPORT



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Dear Friends and Supporters,

2023 has been an exceptional year for the Wellesley Free Library Foundation. Thanks to you, we continue to provide the private funding that makes our Library a leader among public libraries. While the Town budget pays for the essentials, your donations to The Library Foundation finances unique enhancements, the extras that make our Library a star!

What I've learned in my time serving on the Board of The Library Foundation is that behind these remarkable accolades are dozens of people — staff, volunteers and so many others — who embody the commitment to excellence that keeps our Library performing at such a high level. Through our annual grant to the Library, new Children's Librarian Meghan Damiano visited every kindergarten and 5th Grade class in the Wellesley Public Schools to make sure our youngest students felt an immediate connection with the Library. The summer reading program alone had 284 registered participants who logged an impressive 1,152 hours of reading. And off-site programming continued its good work bringing crafts, stories, and snacks to the residents at Barton Road.

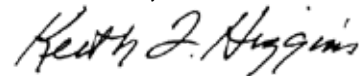
The Library's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program relies on funds from The Library Foundation to ensure the Library is a place where students of the program can learn, meet new people, and receive extra tutoring. This year, the ESOL Tutor Program had twenty-two volunteers who spent hundreds of hours with their English learners. Sixty students from countries all over the world including from all over the world including Hungary, China, Vietnam, Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Japan and Poland benefited from the program. The ESOL classes were taught by volunteer teachers who put in 826 hours this year.

Technology remains one of our Library's greatest strengths. Funding from the Foundation supported 98 in-person and digital events, technology upgrades and a Zoom license. Technology education in Jackie's Room allowed children, adults, and seniors to expand their knowledge of computers and the possibilities of the online world. Thanks to Foundation funds, many in-person and online events gave attendees a broad spectrum of digital learning.

Innovation wasn't just a theme for the Foundation this year, it was one of our primary objectives. That's why we're so pleased that our inaugural "Books in Bloom" fundraiser welcomed over 400 guests at its opening night last May. Proceeds from the event helped us fund cutting-edge resources and enhancements at the Library. Creative events such as Books in Bloom help make our Library a centerpiece in our community and provide additional funding to help our Library in the future.

As incredible as 2023 was for the Library and the Foundation, I'm even more excited for what's coming in 2024. Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We couldn't do what we do without you.

Gratefully,



Keith F. Higgins
President, Wellesley Free Library Foundation



THANK YOU, WELLESLEY!

At The Library Foundation, our mission is to provide the extras that make our Library exceptional. We tap into our community's generous donations, gifts large and small that add up to put these key improvements within reach. Each year, The Library Foundation grants an average of nearly \$250,000 to the Library for special projects and heavily used innovative resources and programs. Your generosity makes our mission possible, and we are grateful for your support.

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



“Libraries function as crucial technology hubs, not merely for free web access, but for those who need computer training and assistance. Library business centers help support entrepreneurship and retraining.”

~ Scott Turow

MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH TECHNOLOGY

In 2023, technology continued to be a priority for the Library and The Library Foundation made it a point to support enhancements to help bridge the digital divide and promote inclusivity in our increasingly interconnected world. Access to free programming and equipment in Jackie's Room is crucial for individuals who may not have the means to own personal devices or afford internet services.

With support from The Library Foundation, hundreds of patrons participated in free digital and in-person workshops including:

- Travel Photography
- Excel Spreadsheets and Python Programming
- Make Your Own Website with Wordpress
- Job seekers workshops
- Mac Basics

In **2023** The Library Foundation funds helped bring **98** in-person and digital events to Library patrons.



BRIDGING GAPS TOGETHER

The Library's English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program was designed to help students integrate into our community by learning English, meeting new people, exploring new traditions, and learning about resources that are available for them and their families. Many students who have completed the ESOL program have found jobs locally or have learned to facilitate becoming American citizens.

Support from The Library Foundation is essential to the ESOL Program and provides funding for a program coordinator as well as teacher stipends. The classes meet at the Library, on Zoom, at their homes, or at other locations around Wellesley. Students are required to live in Wellesley and come from all over the world including Hungary, China, Vietnam, Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Japan, Poland, and Iran.

The ESOL Program:

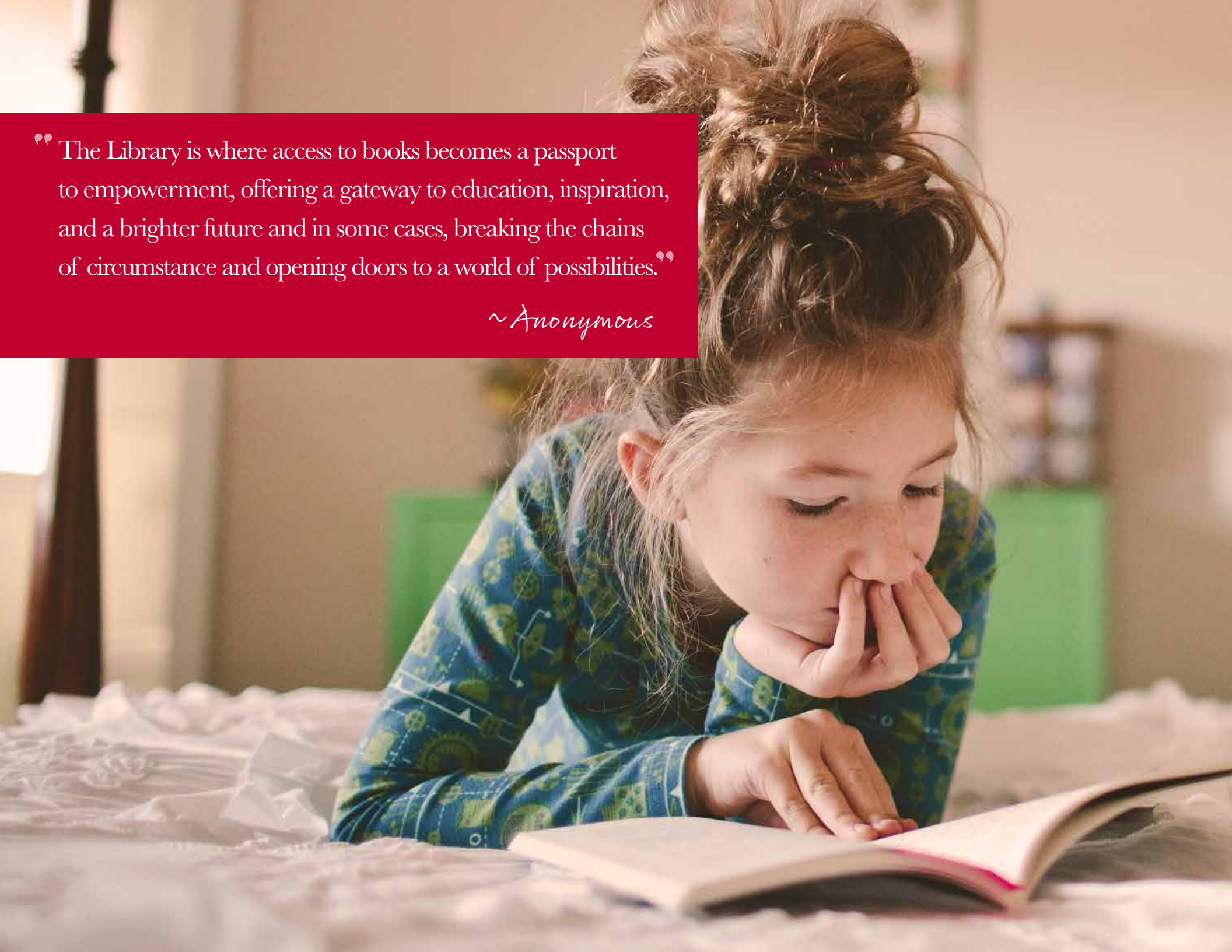
60 students from 15 countries
speaking 12 different languages.



“Ultimately, I have found that we have more similarities than differences. Through language, we not only express ourselves but also discover the unity that binds us all—a testament to the enduring power of words to bridge the gaps between borders and cultures and forge lasting connections.”

~Carolyn Cincotti, Wellesley ESOL volunteer teacher





“The Library is where access to books becomes a passport to empowerment, offering a gateway to education, inspiration, and a brighter future and in some cases, breaking the chains of circumstance and opening doors to a world of possibilities.”

~Anonymous

SUPPORTING EVERYONE IN WELLESLEY

Thanks to funding from The Library Foundation, the Library Outreach Program actively supports library services throughout the entire community, enhancing the experience for children, adults, seniors, economically disadvantaged residents and patrons with special needs.

In 2023, the Children’s Librarian visited every Kindergarten class and 5th Grade classroom in the Wellesley Public Schools to ensure that the Library is a warm and welcoming environment. Students were also introduced to Beanstack, an on-line summer reading program purchased with Foundation funds.

Support from The Library Foundation also helped launch new off-site programming to bring age-appropriate books, educational items, and snacks to the residents of Barton Road. The Library continued its commitment to sensory learning by providing a monthly “Sensory Storytime” and purchasing in-library items such as balance toys and a self-contained sandbox to support our young patrons with special needs.



Summer Reading Program:
284 participants logged
1,152 hours collectively.

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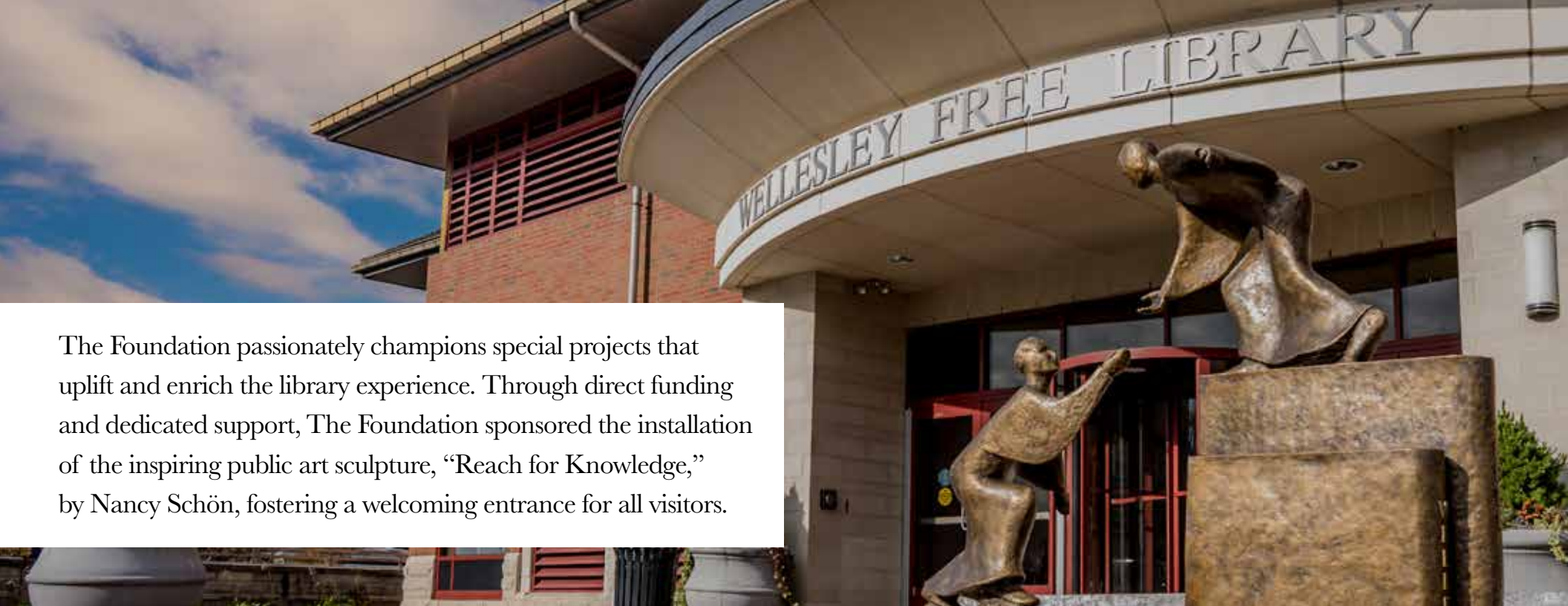
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BOOKS IN BLOOM On Friday, May 12, The Foundation's successful Books in Bloom fundraiser showcased the town's vibrant community spirit, raising essential funds to empower the Library with advanced resources, technology classes, and impactful outreach programs, ensuring free and accessible learning opportunities for every age group.



The Foundation passionately champions special projects that uplift and enrich the library experience. Through direct funding and dedicated support, The Foundation sponsored the installation of the inspiring public art sculpture, “Reach for Knowledge,” by Nancy Schön, fostering a welcoming entrance for all visitors.

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In 2023, The Library Foundation continued its support of the Fells Branch Library, which operates as a unique and intimate early learning library. With an animated commitment, The Foundation ensures the Heroes Garden flourishes, offering a dynamic space for children’s programs and promoting environmental appreciation, embracing the natural wonders of Wellesley for the town’s youngest residents.



GET INVOLVED



Your donations throughout the year provide the essential, flexible funds that allow us to support the Library where it is needed most. You are the reason we can take what you love and make it better. To donate online you can use the QR code or visit wellesleyfreelibraryfoundation.org or send a check payable to “The Wellesley Free Library Foundation” and mail to: The Wellesley Free Library Foundation, 530 Washington Street, Wellesley MA 02482.

For questions contact: Michelle Harris, Director of Development, (781) 235-1610 x1127 or michelle_harris@wellesleyfreelibraryfoundation.org.

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