

News from your Friends

Season 42, Issue 1

Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library, Inc.



Autumn News!



Friends' President— Diane Tiago

Hello, Friends! I hope you had a relaxing summer!

Speaking of summer, I would like to share the outcome of this year's summer reading program. According to information Maura Mara, Adult Services Librarian, provided us at our September meeting, the data is as follows:

Total registrations = 1,393 – up 3%

Total minutes read = 2,111,440 – up 18%

Total books read = 18,579 – up 35%



That started me thinking: when was the summer reading program started? According to an article written by Ellie Wilkie: “the first recorded summer reading program was developed in 1896. Linda Eastman, the head librarian at The Cleveland Library and an advocate of the importance of children’s literature, distributed a list of book recommendations through local schools, encouraging children to get as far down the list as they could during the summer recess. However, it was librarian Caroline Hewins who identified that children needed to interact with the books they read, not just log their progress. She developed a summer reading program in Hartford, Connecticut that added weekly discussion meetings, prizes for children who reached benchmarks, and even an oddly popular puzzle club. She pioneered the sort of interactive summer reading programs that are so pervasive today.”

Due to Beanstack, the mobile and web app platform that allows libraries to create customized challenges for patrons, motivate people to read more, and grow a community reading culture, the Summer Reading Program isn’t just for children anymore. It is for everyone: children, teens and adults. Therefore, I want to recognize the library staff for their tireless efforts to provide another first-class Summer Reading Program and say, “bravo” to those who participated. It is because of you that the Friends organization is proud to be one of the many sponsors that financially supported this almost 130-year tradition.

On Tuesday, August 5th from 5-9p.m., the Friends partnered with Chipotle Mexican Grill for a new fundraiser. Friends’ Director Jen Sweitzer placed the information on Facebook and the Town Forum while our website carried the news, too. For our first attempt, we certainly are pleased. However, we have decided to schedule this charity event on a date that will coincide with a library event. If all goes as planned, it will take place on June 9, 2026, the same date as the Summer Reading Kick-off!

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Opportunities to meet representatives of our organization will take place at “Celebrate East Longmeadow” on Saturday, September 27th at the town’s Center Field and at the “Octoberfest” on Saturday, October 18th at Brown Farm (64 Hampden Road, EL). Stop by and say “Hello.” They will be there to answer any questions that you might have regarding our organization.

Our annual membership drive will take place during the

National Friends of Libraries week, October 19th-25th. National Friends of Libraries week is a time set aside to show gratitude to all Friends organizations that help make every local public library the place that can best serve the entire community. To be clear, while many public libraries do receive some funding from the government, it is often not enough to cover the entire cost of programs and provide all the activities and resources the community could benefit from. That's where the Friends of Libraries try to fill the void. Whether it's a membership to the organization or a small donation, 80% of all funds go to support our library and 20% cover the Friends' mandatory expenses.



Attention, hockey fans! Save the date and come support the Friends as the Springfield Thunderbirds take on the Iowa Wild on Friday, March 6th at 7:05PM at the MassMutual Center. Discounted tickets: \$23. More information will be provided as the time draws near.



The popular Fall Gift Basket fundraiser will run from October 11th to November 1st. The drawing will take place on Monday, November 3rd. As always, the baskets will be on display across from the Circulation Desk and the price for chances to win are 1 ticket for \$1 and 6 tickets for \$5.

Lastly, I have been sending you information about the elimination of the Institute of Museums and Library Services in the federal government's 2026 budget and the negative impact it will have to our local library if it is enacted. What I have learned from an email prepared by Kevin Maher, deputy director for the American Library Association's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, is that thanks to everyone who has contacted our representatives, "the Congressional committees that decide the federal budget acted in support of libraries." However, ALA does not know if Congress will vote on any, or all, of the 12 funding bills that make up the federal budget before the normal deadline of October 1st. If they don't vote on these bills as they currently stand, it's likely Congress will move towards voting on a "Continuing Resolution," which is a temporary spending measure that would functionally extend the budget deadline and allow more time for negotiations before final votes.

Since ALA is unable to tell exactly what route Congress will take now to fund the government, it is critical that library supporters urge them to include library funding in whatever funding bills moving forward. If you are asking: "why should I contact my representatives in Congress again and more than one way? The answer is that the legislators get thousands of messages each day. HOWEVER, the more messages they receive on any one issue, the higher their staff puts the subject on their priority list."

We are getting down to the wire (October 1st) so please send a message to our congressmen (Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward Markey, and Representative Richard Neal) by phone or email or both and express your support to ensure that the funding for libraries makes its way to the floor and the final vote ensures library funds will remain in the FY26 budget. Thank you!

Membership renewal?

Is your membership to the Friends of the Library up-to-date? Check the card that was sent you when you did renew. If you need a form to renew, they can be found in the Friends' Book Sale Corner or across from the Circulation Desk. Also you could print out a form from our Friends' website (see this info on the last page).

Director's Dialogue

Katie McGonigle, Library Director

The Friends of East Longmeadow Public Library is integral to the success of the East Longmeadow Public Library as a vital community resource. Over the past six months, the Friends have been actively advocating on behalf of East Longmeadow Public Library, and libraries across the Commonwealth, on the importance of federal funding for libraries. With ongoing uncertainty about federal funding for libraries, for more information visit <https://libraries.state.ma.us/federal-funding-at-risk>, the Friends advocacy and outreach has been instrumental in communicating that libraries need to have access to the resources, services, and funds to best meet the needs of library patrons.

Thanks to the support of the Friends of the Library, the Town of East Longmeadow, and our membership in the CW MARS library consortium, a network of more than 160 libraries collaborating to share resources and provide access to an extensive online catalog, the East Longmeadow Public Library is able to offer the collections, programs, services, and staffing that make our library a vital resource for our community and beyond.

Membership in the CW MARS Network expands the library experience for all patrons of member libraries, allowing patrons to explore and borrow a wide variety of materials beyond what any single library could offer. For more information on the impact of the CW MARS Network and the benefits of membership, please review their Annual Report at <http://bit.ly/4mTE1Zf>.

September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month! It's the perfect time to encourage friends and family to get or renew a library card, for lifelong learning, literacy, and cultural enrichment. For more information on how to get an East Longmeadow Public Library card, please visit <https://eastlongmeadowlibrary.org/borrowing-cards/>, or to obtain a Boston Public Library eCard, visit <https://www.bpl.org/ecard/>.

We are also eagerly preparing to celebrate National Friends of Libraries Week this October. This special week, the 19th-25th, is dedicated to thanking you, our Friends, for your generosity and dedication to our Library's mission.

Thank you once again for being a vital part of our library community.

Information Services

Maura Mara, Adult Services Librarian

Our fall 2025 calendars are filled with informative and fun programs for patrons of all ages.

A new program that drew a lot of interest was a presentation on preserving, pickling, drying and canning your summer harvest. This presenter from Tri Gable Lea Farm will certainly be back to the library to share more gardening tips. We also welcomed Dale Monette back to show us images from the construction of Quabbin Reservoir compared to present day photos of the same locations.

In September, the library worked with the Town of East Longmeadow Center District Planning Committee to offer a book group discussion on the book *Walkable City* by Jeff Speck. The town's Deputy Town Manager, Rebecca Lisi, led this four part book discussion with patrons in anticipation of the author visiting East Longmeadow and speaking about a "More walkable East Longmeadow" on September 30th. The library is

supportive of this initiative as it encourages residents to explore how we can be part of a more vibrant, healthy, and connected community.

The library will be hosting a R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense), Women's Self Defense Training program in October. The four class program will be taught by Audry Staples, a certified R.A.D. instructor. The classes will be held after hours in the library community room.

We are excited to be offering a series of Chair Yoga classes with a certified yoga instructor. Patrons have asked for exercise classes and we hope to be doing more of them.

Do you read or listen to books on Libby or Hoopla? Do you need some guidance or a refresher on them? We are offering a session on Tuesday, October 21st at 6:00p.m.. Look for the registration and bring your device and questions.

Other programs to look for this fall include our Needlework Network group that meets every other Wednesday, our Adult Craft Club, ELPL Cookbook Club, an October Mysterious Massachusetts, and of course our monthly Adult Book Group.

Thanks to the Friends for the generous support for our programming.

Always feel free to stop by the Information Desk when you are in the library to talk about book recommendations or programs you would like to see at the library.

Children's Chatter

Michele Lemire, Children's Librarian

The Children's Department has smoothly transitioned from a lively summer into an equally exciting fall filled with creative and engaging programs.

From June through August, our focus was the library-wide Summer Reading Program, which opened with a spectacular kickoff attended by more than 700 people. Families enjoyed face painting, raffle prizes, and performances by Ed the Magician and Mr. Liam—an unforgettable start to summer reading!

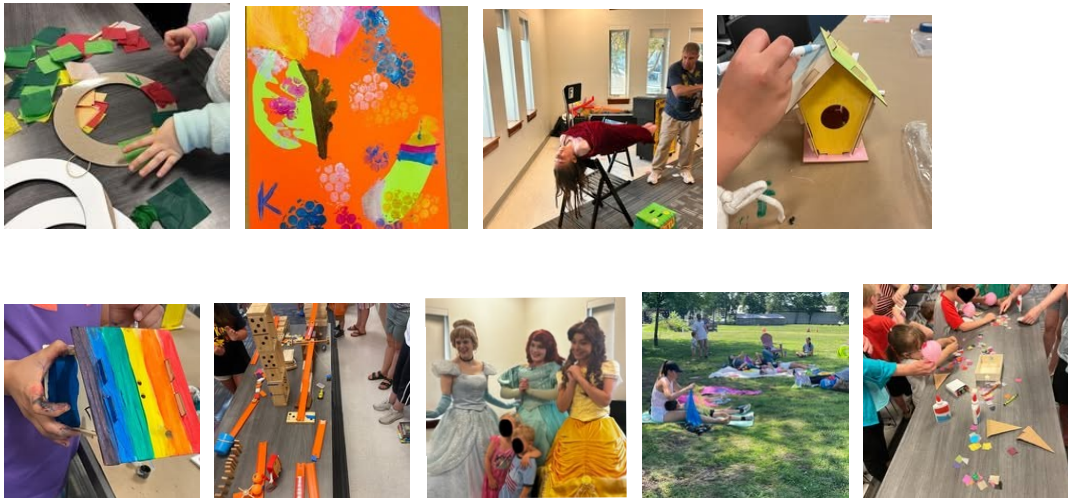
This year, 1,393 readers of all ages used Beanstack to track their progress, logging an incredible 2,118,440 minutes (34,307 hours) and completing 13,792 books. We offered weekly prizes, fun activities, and hosted 118 programs to keep readers motivated and inspired. None of this would have been possible without strong community support—from local businesses, schools, and volunteers, as well as generous contributions from the Friends of the Library, East Longmeadow Cultural Council, The Meadow Freemasons, Peoples Bank, Pathways for Parents, The Boston Bruins, MBLC, Fenway Golf, Hartford Yard Goats, Adventure Theme Park, and many local businesses including A.W. Browns, Big Y, Elements Massage, Heartsong Yoga, Joy Bowl, My Main Squeeze, Pizza Shoppe, Shelburne Falls, Tre Olive, Gilberts, The Nest, Graziano Garden, and Postos. We are especially grateful to our student volunteers (grades 6 and up) who registered participants, handed out rewards, supervised games, and kept the Children's Room buzzing with energy all summer long.

As fall unfolds, we are thrilled to launch Storytimes, Book Groups, Art Club, STEAM activities, and more for children from birth through age 12 all of which have been wonderfully received. A special highlight this season is the Friends sponsored **Rent-A-Chicken** program. The chickens arrived September 30, the eggs are set to hatch October 21, and the chicks will be adopted or picked up on November 4. Be sure to stop in and visit them!

Beyond the library walls, our department has been actively involved in community events, including Celebrate EL, Town Oktoberfest, local school visits and open houses. Families and town officials alike have expressed how much they value the library's presence at these gatherings, another opportunity made possible through the support of the Friends.

On behalf of the Children's Department, I extend heartfelt thanks to the Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library. With your help, we have already funded more than 130 programs this year alone. Your dedication ensures the continued success of Summer Reading and allows us to offer innovative, meaningful programs for families all year long.

Enjoy some photos from our Summer Program and Fall 2025 programs



Teen Department Update

Erica Petrosky, Teen Librarian

We had an exciting summer in the Teen Department! Our Summer Reading Program was a huge success, with an unbelievable 54% increase in registered teen readers. Thanks to the generosity of the Friends, we were able to offer teens an incredible selection of prizes and programs. This year's most popular prizes included a Kindle Fire, a red mini fridge, a LEGO Infinity Gauntlet set, and plenty of gift cards!

Now that the school year is in full swing, the Teen Department is bustling! We have been working closely with area schools to promote library programming and are gearing up to have a strong presence at upcoming back-to-school open houses. To keep teens engaged, we have added a variety of new passive programs to the Teen Area, including a real-life "I Spy" game in one of our windows, a giant mosaic puzzle poster, weekly rotating "Would You Rather" questions, and a "Tell Us Something Good" bulletin board for sharing positive thoughts.

Our fall program lineup is back with something for everyone! Returning favorites include the Teen Writing Group, Banned Book Club, and specialty programs like Tech Take Apart, Zombie Party, Teen Test Kitchen, and a holiday cookie swap in December. Fandom Club was such a hit last year that we have expanded it into a monthly program and extended its time slot to give fans more opportunities to share their passions. We are also

launching Drama Lab, a brand-new monthly club where teens can explore drama in a fun, low-pressure space. Each month, they will read a new play, dive into characters and dialogue, and get creative with acting games and exercises.

Teen Spot continues to be wildly popular every Friday, thanks to our partnership with the Rec Department. Last Friday, we had 49 teens attend! They have a blast playing Switch games, air hockey, table pong, Bop-It, card games like Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza, oversized Connect Four, and more. The teens also enjoy expressing themselves with face paint and nail art supplies, including polish and nail jewelry. And of course, there is food. Teens love to eat, but they also love to cook. With funds provided by the Friends, we created a mini kitchen area where they can flex their creativity while learning valuable life skills. It is stocked with mini waffle irons for waffles and grilled cheese sandwiches, plus an air fryer for making French fries. The Friends also generously funded everything mentioned above, along with supplies for our Teen Crafternoons. Recent projects included candle art and caramel apples.

We are looking forward to a full and impactful fall season with our teens. Thank you to the Friends for your ongoing support. Because of you, our teens are happy, thriving, and learning. We could not do it without you!



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FOELPL

60 Center Square, Suite 2

East Longmeadow, MA

01028

If this newsletter is not reaching the correct party as printed on the address label, please let us know. Call the library or email us at foelpl@gmail.com with the correction.

Thank you.

2025 Calendar of Events

October 11—November 1

Fall Basket Raffle

Circulation Desk area

October 19—25 National Friends of Libraries week

November 3 Raffle winners drawn

November 4 Friends Board Meeting

Community Room

6:30 p.m.

Library's website:

eastlongmeadowlibrary.org

Friends' website:

foelpl.wixsite.com/friendsellibrary

