

'26



MARK TWAIN
Library
• Books Are Just the Beginning...

ANNUAL REPORT



study | CONNECTIONS

We offer extended operating hours to support Joel Barlow High School's exam week.



REMARKS FROM THE PRESIDENT

“It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.”

MARK TWAIN

The Mark Twain Library’s 118th year serving the Redding community was a busy and rewarding one. Here are a few highlights from the year:

A Return Home: In August, twenty of Mark Twain’s original books from our collection returned to the Library following meticulous conservation work by the Northeast Document Conservation Center. These treasured volumes were featured in a special exhibit throughout September, allowing visitors to appreciate both their historical significance and the careful restoration done to preserve them for future generations.

Raising the Roof: This year, we replaced the flat roof over the Library’s 1970s drum addition to address leaks and an expiring warranty. The project also required the temporary removal and reinstallation of our solar panels. Thanks to careful planning, the \$140,000 project was completed on time and on budget using Library funds.

Fundraising Success: Thanks to the dedication of our committee members and volunteers, and the generosity of our supporters, the Library enjoyed a very successful fundraising year. Strong results from the Art Show and Book Fair, another successful Frog Frolic, and a robust Annual Appeal, generated vital support for the Library’s operating budget and long-term financial stability.

Celebrating Our Leader: We are especially proud of Library Director Erin Dummeyer, who served this year as President of the Connecticut Library Association while continuing to lead the Mark Twain Library and her stellar staff with distinction. Her leadership has elevated the Library’s visibility across the state and reflects the high regard she has earned among her peers in Connecticut’s library community.

Inspired by our own “Founding Father,” Mark Twain, we continue to strive to be “Redding’s destination for discovery, enrichment, and connection...where books are just the beginning.”

Thank you for being part of our Library community. Your continued support makes this work possible.

With gratitude,
Sheila Corr
President, Mark Twain Library Association

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knitting | CONNECTIONS

The Library's Tuesday knitting group is one of our most popular weekly programs.





REMARKS FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

“It is so unsatisfactory to read a noble passage and
have no one you love at hand to share the happiness with you.”

CLARA CLEMENS, *MY FATHER MARK TWAIN*

In a recent *New York Times* essay, Brian Bannon, Chief Librarian of the New York Public Library, argues that the United States is facing a genuine reading crisis, with fewer people – especially young people – reading books regularly for pleasure. He longs for a world designed around abundant and optimal reading conditions.

Mark Twain had a similar vision when he set out to build a great lending library for his neighbors in Redding. He recognized a public library’s role as a vital part of social infrastructure, just as important as the telephone system or roadways at the time. He wanted his neighbors to enjoy access to a comfortable room for sustained reading and have access to books that would make them think.

And so, Mark Twain Library remains today the town’s living room, with plenty of places to cozy up with a beloved book. On any given day, a visitor might spot a little one toddling to the circulation desk with a stack of picture books. Or an elementary school student clamoring for the next *Dory Fantasmagory*. Or adults participating in a “silent book club” which is just as it sounds: people agreeing to read silently and separately and gathering afterward to chat about their books.

I believe this is why more people are visiting Mark Twain Library than ever before: because of our extraordinary programming, convenient and friendly service, and yes - our serene and welcoming reading conditions. And so let me invite you to pay us a visit and pick out a book. Happy reading.

With immense gratitude,
Erin Dummeyer
Library Director, Mark Twain Library

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natural | CONNECTIONS

Engaged readers enjoying the sunshine
on the Library's loggia.



PROGRAMS

This year, along with the rest of the country, Mark Twain Library commemorated the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We kicked off America’s milestone birthday year with a visit from Redding’s co-historians to talk about “Redding’s Revolutionary Years” leading up to, and during, the Revolution. We hosted musicologist Gil Harel for a talk on former Redding resident and modernist composer Charles Ives. In partnership with the Redding League of Women Voters, we have created an “America250” landing page on our website with resources for independent study throughout this memorable year. Mark Twain Library is proud to celebrate our history and founding values.

BY THE NUMBERS

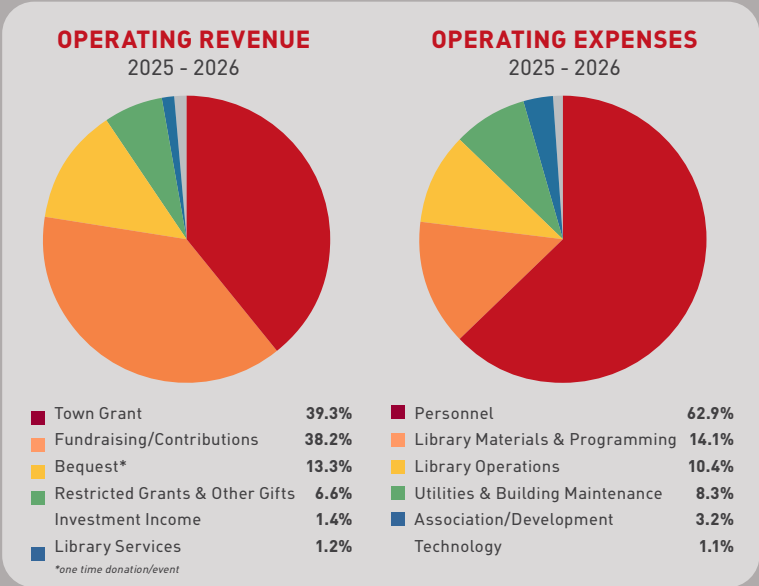
	FY 2025	FY 2026	% CHANGE
Number of Programs	684	775	+13%
Program Attendance	12,141	13,792	+14%
Library Visits	46,074	49,381	+7%
Digital Library Loans	23,340	23,485	+1%



Total Circulation **92,617**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

UNAUDITED



*one time donation/event

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Harriet Jacobs
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Ruth Ursula Kasting
Dorrance T. Kelly
Dr. James A. Kleeman

Jeanne M. Dallman Kozloff
Kenneth L. Kurz
Helen Stafford Lalley
Garner Lester
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Joseph Mazan
John McLeran
Francis & Jean Meehan
Heather Morgan
Blanche Morton
Betty Murray
Allison Napolitano
Marion Olsen
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Mr. and Mrs. David Corr	Mrs. Janice Meehan
Mrs. Connie Deans	Ms. Kate Perry
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Ms. Karen Gifford	

The Stormfield Society was founded to recognize those who, like Mark Twain, have included the Library in their will. Please contact Erin Dummeyer, Library Director, to learn more. If the Library is already in your estate plan, please let us know so we may recognize you as member of the Stormfield Society.

OUR MISSION

Honoring the spirit and legacy of our founder,
The Mark Twain Library is Redding's destination for discovery,
enrichment, and connection...where books are just the beginning.

OUR VISION

Mark Twain Library strives to be the cultural crossroads of Redding.

ADOPTED JANUARY 2025



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