

'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

BOARD MEMBERS

Sheila Corr, *President*
Duncan Leslie, *Vice President*
Meghan Huszagh, *Secretary*
Joe Zinghini, *Treasurer*
Margaret Brown
Sarah Cummings
Terry Stratton Flagg, *Emerita*
Ritu Duenwald
Betsy Higgins
John Kane
Ginny Keim
Mady Leslie
Ethan Parisen
Eric Rubury
Joanna Ruvo

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

LIBRARY STAFF

Erin Dummeyer
Library Director
George Avidon
Lisa Cederbaum
Dave Daignault
James Falotico
Lisa Goldstein
Eileen Guiney
Mary Hoskinson-Dean
Janet Ivaldi

Midge Loery
Maggie McIntire
Sandi O'Reilly
Ken Rietschel
Elaine Sanders
Ryenne Shemanskis
Cecilia Staunton
Kathryn Zimmerman
Dolly Zurzuski

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Elle Cederbaum
Julia Champagne
Samuel Fischer
Carolyn Hopstaken
Molly Lapatine
Clara Mehner
Maxwell Mehner
Liam Micola
Sara Perales-Hudson

Saanvi Savith
Yona Stadler-Sokal
Kristina Stranik
Nicole Stranik
Sadie Troy

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%

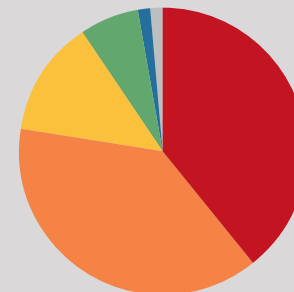


Total Circulation **92,617**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

UNAUDITED

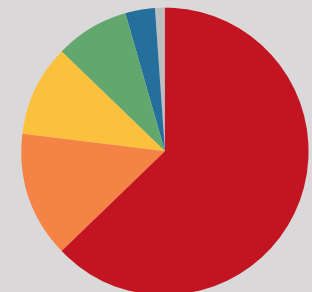
OPERATING REVENUE 2025 - 2026



Town Grant	39.3%
Fundraising/Contributions	38.2%
Bequest*	13.3%
Restricted Grants & Other Gifts	6.6%
Investment Income	1.4%
Library Services	1.2%

*one time donation/event

OPERATING EXPENSES 2025 - 2026



Personnel	62.9%
Library Materials & Programming	14.1%
Library Operations	10.4%
Utilities & Building Maintenance	8.3%
Association/Development	3.2%
Technology	1.1%

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



MARK TWAIN
Library
Books Are Just the Beginning...

MARKTWAINLIBRARY.ORG