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ROBBINS AND FOX LIBRARIES

Mission

The Robbins and Fox libraries, known collectively as the Library, are vital community centers that connect people with traditional and technological resources for lifelong learning, intellectual pursuits, and leisure. The Library responds to resident needs with services and activities in a welcoming setting built on a history of free and equal access to information for all.



Assistant Director Andrea Nicolay and Fox Branch Manager Laura Lintz share some great Library resources at the Arlington Farmers Market

Usage

Library	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual
Circulation of materials	665,437	671,652
eContent Circulation	8,902	16,418
Interlibrary loans processed	141,439	144,310
Reference questions answered	92,274	97,380
Children's programs	460	448
Adult and YA programs	119	143
New items ordered and processed	20,885	20,422
Visits to Robbins Library	325,550	325,915
Uses of Meeting Rooms	1,053	1,101

The Library experienced the highest circulation in its history in Fiscal Year 2013. The number of visits remained over 325,000 while many residents from home accessed the wealth and variety of resources offered online. The circulation of electronic content, including downloadable ebooks and downloadable audiobooks, almost doubled in Fiscal Year 2013. As in the previous year, residents relied on the Library for its free services as the economy continues to recover. All ages enjoyed

programs, computers for access to the Internet, and electronic databases. Job seekers utilized computers for resume writing, employment opportunities, and on-line job applications. Professional librarians at the Reference Desk, in the Children's Room, and at the Fox Branch assisted the public in meeting their information needs through the Library's book and periodical collections and with electronic resources. Although the Robbins Library continued to be closed Thursday mornings, the public enjoyed Sunday afternoon hours, one of the busiest times at the Robbins Library, made possible with private donations. Staff worked diligently to meet growing demands while maintaining the same high level of excellent service that our community has come to expect from the Library.

Accomplishments

Library administration and staff continued to implement strategic plan goals and otherwise further the mission of the Library.



Adult Services Librarian Vicky Slavin, Director of Libraries Ryan Livergood, and Adult Services Librarian Rebecca Meehan proudly show off the Library's three MLA PR Awards

- Library recorded the highest circulation in its history (671,652).
- The Library Card Sign Up Challenge in February resulted in a 183% increase in new library card registrations versus the previous February.
- Continued to offer very successful summer reading programs for all ages.
- Continued to provide a wide variety of creative children's programs with funding from the Anne Russell Fund.
- Increased the number of both teen and adult programs offered by the library, including programs to assist patrons with accessing downloadable ebooks, several book groups, author visits, and "National Novel Writing Month" programs.

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- Continued our very successful series of programs targeted to adults age 50+ by securing private sponsorship funding from a local business.
- Fox Branch Library circulation increased 16% overall from the previous fiscal year.
- The Library experienced a 12% total increase in new library card registrations versus FY 2012.
- The Robbins Library slate roof replacement project was completed, on time and on budget with limited service impact.
- Working with the Regional Energy Manager for the Town, the Robbins Library modified the lighting system by implementing light sensors and installed a high-efficiency boiler to decrease energy consumption, increase energy efficiency, and reduce costs.
- Head of Circulation Barbara Fulchino was named 2013 Outstanding Paralibrarian of the Year by the Massachusetts Library Association.
- The Library was honored with a number of Massachusetts Library Association PR Awards in 2013, including first for Best Bookmarks (Foreign Film Bookmarks), second for Best Logo (Library Card Sign Up Challenge), and third for Best News Coverage ("The Open Book" Arlington Advocate column).
- Transitioned away from tethered public PCs to public laptops distributed from the laptop lending machine, which improved the level of technology services to the public and enhanced the physical space on the first floor of the Robbins Library to better serve patrons.
- Provided a full year of Friday hours at the Fox Branch Library with funding from the Friends of Fox.
- In collaboration with the Harvard Library Innovation Lab, became just the third public library in the country to launch an Awesome

Box: when patrons interact with an amazing or useful item from the Library and return it to the Awesome Box instead of the normal drop box, that item gets recorded as Awesome via the Robbins Library blog so the community can see what others have found helpful, entertaining, or mind-blowing.

- Continued to utilize social media to promote library programs and services through email announcements, a Facebook account, blogs, Tumblr, and Twitter.
- Reviewed and updated library policies affecting the public.
- Provided books and audiovisual materials, art prints, databases, computer equipment, museum passes and programs for the Robbins and Fox Libraries with funding from the library trust funds, Friends of the Robbins Library, and Friends of the Fox Library.

Services for Adults

Adults and young adults of middle and high school age utilized the services provided by the librarians in the Adult Services Department for school, work, and personal life. The Library continued to staff the Reference Desk whenever the Library was open to the public and tried to provide two librarians whenever possible during busy hours. Sixty-four online databases were provided through municipal funding, the Friends of the Robbins Library, the Minuteman Library Network, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and the Massachusetts Library System. The databases reflected a wide variety of subject areas including biography, literature, business, careers, consumerism, downloadable audio, exam and test preparation, genealogy, health, history, language learning, local history, newspapers, politics and scholarly journals. With the public computers in almost constant use, the staff assisted patrons in the use of the Internet, electronic databases, and with computer troubleshooting. In the fall of 2013, the Robbins Library transitioned away from public computers in



Worth the Trip  Robbins Library

Limited parking due to the replacement of the Robbins Library slate roof didn't keep people away. The adult summer reading theme encouraged library patrons to walk, ride, or bus to the Library instead.

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fixed locations to laptops available from the laptop lending machine. Both the Adult Services Department and Technology Librarian assisted members of the community with this transition, which was extremely well received. Several programs were offered on topics such as using ereaders and using Windows 8.

Again the library sponsored a summer reading program for adults with a raffle for gift certificates funded by the Friends of the Robbins Library. The theme in 2013 was “Worth the Trip,” to encourage patrons to walk, ride their bike, or take the bus to the Robbins Library due to limited parking as a result of the Robbins Library slate roof replacement project over the summer.

The ever-popular Speed Read collection provided the opportunity to browse this small collection of new and popular materials for which there was a significant demand. The Library continued its efforts to assist English Language Learners by increasing that collection and offering a quarterly English Language Learners newsletter.

The “Plugged In” series of programs continued through the summer of 2013, providing active adults aged 50+ with the opportunity to remain active, enriched, and connected in the next phase of life. These programs included wellness, different housing options for life after fifty, effective utilization of LinkedIn, dating and relationship, arts and creativity, and volunteerism. The series was funded through the sponsorship of Wassertown Savings Bank.

While the decision was made to shift the eleventh annual Arlington Reads Together program to March of 2014, Arlington residents participated in a mini-Community Read in March of 2013 by celebrating “Gatsby Month.” “Gatsby Month” consisted of a variety of events including a Jazz Age talk, book discussions on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, a 1920s game night featuring bridge instruction, and a Gatsby party for all ages complete with refreshments, an AHS jazz quartet, a costume contest, and a Charleston dance lesson from a professional instructor.

Several author programs were enthusiastically received. Poets Jason Roush and Eileen Myles visited the Robbins Library in March. A program discussing the works of Flannery O’Connor was well attended in April. In the fall, author Dorie Clark visited in September to discuss her book *Reinventing You* and Nancy Kricorian visited in October to discuss her book *All the Light There Was*. The Library offered several book clubs, including Guys Book Group, Not-So-Young-Adult Book Group, Queer Book Group (QBG), Robbins Library Book Discussion Group, and Staff Picks Book Group. In November, the Robbins Library once again supported many writers in our community by turning the library into a collaborative space for writers during National Novel Writing Month, also known as “NaNoWriMo,” by hosting several “Come Write In” events. NaNoWriMo concluded

with a “Come Read In” event in early December, providing participants an opportunity to share their work.

The Robbins Library Community Room, the Fox Branch Library Community Room, and the Robbins Library Conference Room were used by over 100 local organizations for a total of 1,101 meetings. In ad-



The Friends of the Robbins Library sponsor many popular events that often take place in the Robbins Library Community Room

dition, the two study rooms were in constant demand by students and tutors and the Local History Room received heavy usage by researchers with Independent Research Cards. The Reading Room continued to be a popular space for rental by citizens for private functions when the library was closed. Many local organizations also took advantage of the Library’s exhibit space in the lobby to publicize their organizations and to present informational displays.

Services for Young Adults

Young adults in grades six through twelve continued to make use of the facility and services. The Reference Desk staff assisted students with class assignments and bibliographic instruction and offered orientations to classes from the Ottoson Middle School. Teens continued to make use of the young adult area, enjoyed the teen blog and borrowed items including books, books on CD, Playaways, and video games. The “Fast 5” reader’s advisory service for young adults started in 2012 remained popular. In addition, a new Robbins Library Teens Tumblr was introduced in 2013. Young adults participated in the programs planned by library staff and the Young Adult Advisory Committee including the Teens Only Book Group, writing workshops, movies, dystopian murder mystery night, the annual Dr. Who party, mala bead and meditation workshop, photojournalism, Bollywood dancing, an outdoor concert, a *Hunger Games* library lockdown, martial arts, teen yoga, a Grease signalong, LGBTQ drop ins, a paranormal presentation, clay mask making, and assisting with the children’s book sale. Teen tech volunteers assisted hundreds of adult patrons solve their technology issues. Teenagers participated in the perhaps the most popular

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teen summer reading program in the history of the Robbins Library, themed “Delve into Dystopia,” and had the opportunity to win raffle prizes funded by trust funds and Friends of the Robbins Library. The Library collaborated with the Gay Straight Alliance to host a GSA Halloween Party open to all teens. Multiple copies of titles on the middle and high school summer reading lists were available for students.

Services for Children

Children from infancy to fifth grade enjoyed the materials and programs offered by the Children’s Department. Materials included books, magazines, music and books on CD, Playaways, DVDs, CD-ROMs, puppets, and educational toys. Children and parents participated in 448 activities at the Library including story-times in English and Spanish languages, sing-a-longs for infants and toddlers, craft times, toddler programs, workshops, and various performances. The children’s librarians offered assistance to children, parents, and teachers in researching homework assignments and for general use of the book collection and the Internet. The public continued to request the very popular graded and subject booklists that are updated and created annually by library staff. The Library continued to prepare Quick Pick boxes with thematic picture books to assist parents who do not have time to browse the shelves.



The public and school libraries continued their cooperative efforts, although the ongoing lack of elementary school librarians continues to negatively impact this partnership. The Robbins Library maintained collaboration with the schools through letters to teachers, attendance at elementary school faculty meetings, assignment support for teachers and students, extended loan periods for teachers, Library tours, and the preparation of curriculum kits. The children’s librarians presented book talks in the schools and instruction for classes at the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries as well as preparing the summer reading list titles for the elementary schools. Staff worked with the reading specialists at the schools to support at risk readers in the summer,

presented a mini-class for early education students at Arlington High School and instructed library aides in the elementary schools on matching non-fiction materials with the new Common Core educational initiatives.

Russell Fund

The Library is very fortunate to have the Anne A. Russell Children’s Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund, which sponsors many special programs for children that could not be otherwise afforded. In 2013 these included altered book art, family game nights, craft projects, Boston Museum of Science Animal Invaders, puppet shows, Triveni School of Dance performance, Dia de los Muertos, USS Constitution Museum “A Sailor’s Life for Me” program, Thai festival of Loy Krathong, and video game design, just to name a few. Over 1,200 children and adults attended five concerts on the grounds of the Library during the summer. The Russell Fund also finances the very popular infant-toddler sing-a-longs. The fund continued to provide kindergarten packets to children to introduce them to the Library and baby bundle packets to new parents with information on library services for infants and toddlers.



Edith Fox Library and Community Center

Children and adults in East Arlington continued to enjoy branch library services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at the Fox Library. The Fox continues to be open every Friday thanks to funding from the Friends of Fox. Circulation at the Fox Branch Library was up 16% overall in Fiscal Year 2013 from Fiscal Year 2012, the second year in a row the branch has experienced a double-digit increase in circulation. Children and parents enjoyed a number of wonderful programs, including story times, sing-a-longs, craft programs, drop-in play, a Chinese New Year party, movie night, workshops on how to read to infants, and the summer reading program. Elementary and nursery schools brought classes to the Fox Branch Library for stories and instruction. All ages enjoyed the monthly book displays that highlighted the collection and exhibits from community groups and the schools.



The Friends of Fox funded new signage for the Fox Branch Library in 2013

Behind the Scenes

Library staff worked diligently to offer quality services to the community. The number of items borrowed from and loaned to other libraries continued to increase. Despite the fact that the public can request items electronically, the staff must still locate the materials and process them for loan and return. The Adult Services, Children's, Fox Branch, and Technical Services Departments selected, ordered, cataloged, and processed 20,422 new items including books, magazines, music CDs, books on CD, DVDs, video games, puppets, and educational toys.



Barbara Fulchino, Head of Circulation (pictured center), was named the 2013 Outstanding Paraprofessional of the Year by the Massachusetts Library Association

The Circulation Department checked out and returned hundreds of thousands of items to the shelves, coordinated the volunteer program, maintained the books in good order on the shelves and shifted collections, updated the periodical list, checked shelves for missing items, and continued to add duplicate barcodes to the front cover of all materials for the statewide automated delivery system. The Library collected over \$54,000 in overdue fines and lost book money in Fiscal Year 2013 that was returned to the general Town fund.

The Technical Services Department processed all new materials, updated the records in the automated catalog, maintained selector accounts, and processed books that need re-binding.

Board of Trustees

The seven-member Board of Trustees continue its commitment to administer the trust funds for the optimum benefit of the community, raise private funds to augment the municipal budget, and advocate for adequate staffing and delivery of essential Library services. Several Board members continued to serve on a Town-wide advisory committee to develop a policy for all Town trust funds. The Board approved funding in FY 2013 for materials for the adult, children's, young adult, and Fox Branch collections. These included reference and circulating books, books on CD, playaways, music CDs, non-fiction DVDs, playaways, foreign language literature, language learning, local history, and art prints. Other services funded included the summer reading programs, activities for children, Community Read, author programs, public relations, volunteer appreciation, and staff development. It also coordinated the efforts to raise private funds in conjunction with the Friends of the Library for Sunday openings from September 2013 to May 2014. Board members participated in Town Day by staffing a table providing information on Library activities and resources.

Barry Memorial Fund

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of the late Evelyn C. Barry and Mary P. Barry, the John F. Barry and Margaret O'C. Barry Memorial Fund, in honor of the donors' parents, was established in late 2011. The terms of the John F. Barry and Margaret O'C. Barry Memorial Fund dictate that the Library Board of Trustees will hold the principal of the fund in perpetuity, only net income shall be used, and no part of said income shall be used to defray, offset, or pay such items as have heretofore been customarily provided for by appropriation of tax revenues. While the Library Board of Trustees did not allocate any net income from the Barry Memorial Fund



Pictured are Heather Calvin, Frank Murphy, Kathy Fennelly, Barbara Muldoon, Joyce Radochia, Adam Delmolino, and Diane Gordon.

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in 2013, they plan on using these funds in the future to reach objectives that will be established when the Library's new strategic plan is complete in 2014.

Arlington Libraries Foundation

Private donors have funded many of the materials and services enjoyed by library visitors in Arlington since 1807. In 1835, the first continuously operating children's library in the United States was established in Arlington by a bequest of \$100 from Dr. Ebenezer Learned. The Arlington Libraries Foundation was established in 2013 to continue the long tradition of supporting the libraries of our community by raising funds. The Foundation seeks to create ways that will build a legacy for the libraries and create ongoing sources of support. These include an annual campaign to support purchases of materials for the Robbins and the Fox libraries, an annual campaign to open the libraries additional hours, creating endowed funds and named funds at the request of donors, and providing a structure for bequests.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Robbins Library, with a membership of over 500, continues to assist the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries with programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. This vital support group raises supplemental funds for materials and equipment including books and DVDs, audiobooks, music CDs, language learning audiobooks, playaways, children's materials, online databases, website maintenance, and a self-service laptop vending machine. They also sponsor the family museum pass program and provide books and small prizes for the adult, teen, and children's summer reading programs. The Friends conducted a mail solicitation of individuals and businesses to raise funds for library collections. The Friends hosted a wide variety of programs, including performances by the Delvena Theater Company, a silent movie night, and a terrarium workshop, just to name a few. The Friends collaborated with the Arlington Garden Club to once again host Books in Bloom at the Robbins Library in March, a fundraising event featuring gorgeous literary-themed floral displays, local authors, and live music.

The annual Children's/Young Adult book sale, co-sponsored by the Russell Fund, with able assistance from members of the Library's Youth Advisory Board, helped raise needed funds. As part of the Town Day celebration in September book lovers once again flocked to annual book sale. Many visitors also regularly peruse and make purchases from the ongoing book sale on the fourth floor of the Library. The Friends collaborated with the Arlington International Film Festival to host an "October Evening of Passion" fundraiser in the Robbins Library Reading Room to raise funds for both organizations. The rental DVD collection continues to draw many

users to the convenient location on the first floor. The library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends Board of Directors and part-time coordinator who plan many activities in support of the library.

The Friends of Fox continue to support the Fox Branch Library with programming and fundraising efforts. They supported the Library by funding Friday hours at the Fox, sing-a-longs, materials, and new signage. The Library is very appreciative of the efforts of the Friends of Fox Board who do so much to support the Fox Branch Library.



One of the many outstanding literary-themed floral displays at Books in Bloom 2013

Acknowledgments

Staff Resignations

After serving more than 40 years as an outstanding Senior Library Assistant in the Technical Services Department, Warren Smith retired in June. Ellen Porretta retired in August after 12 years as the Library's extraordinary bookkeeper, in addition to spending a number of years with both the School and Recreation Departments in Arlington as well. Vicky Slavin, an exceptional Adult Services Librarian, and Louise Crosby, beloved Senior Library Assistant at the Fox Branch Library also retired in 2013. All of these individuals were valuable members of the library team and will be greatly missed.

In memoriam

Page Lindsay passed away in February of 2013. She touched the lives of many in the community as the Fox Branch Librarian for most of her two decades of library service. Page was a strong advocate for the Fox Branch Library. In 2005 she was a recipient of the *New York Times* Librarian Award for her outstanding community service. Her contagious enthusiasm for books and service to the community continued in retirement as she saw to it that homebound patrons in Arlington had plenty to read.

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Donations

In FY2013 citizens, businesses, and organizations donated over \$54,000 for general purposes, materials, and opening of the Robbins Library on Sundays. The Library acknowledges with appreciation these gifts that allow for the purchase of books and audiovisual materials, which would be unaffordable through the municipal budget alone. As in previous years the programs and services of the Anne A. Russell Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund have enriched the community. The Library is also grateful to Arlington resident Richard Duffy who continued to donate the profits from the sale of his book, *Arlington Then and Now*, to the Library.

The Friends of Robbins donated over \$81,000 to the Robbins and Fox libraries for programs, membership to fifteen museums, library materials, technology, Community Read, equipment, shelving and raffle prizes for the summer reading program.

The Library is grateful to the Friends of Fox Library and the volunteers at the Little Fox Children's Clothing store for funding all day Fridays at the Fox Library and for children's programs and shelving.

Volunteers

Again this year the Library system benefited from the work of dedicated volunteers. The Library staff is grateful for the contributions made by volunteers who donated over 3,400 hours assisting with many aspects of Library operations. Beverley Brinkerhoff and the late Page Lindsay gave significant hours to operate the important homebound delivery program. Also deserving of special note is Anne Honeycutt who has facilitated the popular book discussion group for nearly twenty years. Liz Eagan, Dinesh Gupta, James Milan, Andrew Fischer, and Richard McElroy maintained the ongoing Friends of the Library book sale on the fourth floor.



Friends of the Robbins Library Board Members proudly display their library cards to promote the Library Sign Up Card Challenge.

Volunteers assisting at the Robbins Library in a variety of capacities were: Kecia Ali, Rick Beeny, Priscilla Boisvert, Juli Brazile, Jennifer Davis Kay, Catherine Farrell, Kara Gallant, Heidi Gilliam, Karen Gra-

ham, Aileen Grunder, Mike Grunder, Nancy Jenkins, Michael Kelleher, Mary Kokaras, Donald Mugnai, Dolores Schueler, Allan Schramm, Priscilla Shute, William Stein, Matt Olsen, Max Litvinof, and Judith Sullivan. The Library also acknowledges the efforts of the following students, many of whom volunteered at the Robbins Library to fulfill their community service requirements for high school: Grace and Sara Gutierrez, George Chiang, Susanna Faas-Bush, Max Hardcastle, Risa Komatsu, Augustin Lee, Owen Niles, Tomomi Yoshida, and Ziwei Wang.



The Fox Branch Library is grateful to volunteers Debbie Hayes, Joanne Burns, Joanne Piepol, Katarina Seipel, and teen volunteer Grace Hoglund for their efforts. Special recognition is given to Little Fox Shop Founder Susan Dorson and her crew of 20 volunteers who staff the Little Fox Shop at the Fox Library.

Library administration and Trustees are very grateful to the Friends of the Robbins Library Board members for all their support: Sally Naish (chair), Amy McElroy (coordinator), Andrew Fischer, Betsy Singer, James Milan, John J. Gearin, Judi Paradis, Nancy Knoff, Skye Stewart, Stephanie Miserlis, Susi Barbarossa, Timothy Wilson, and Richard McElroy.

Library administration and Trustees are also very grateful to the Friends of Fox Library Board members for all of their support: Paul Benoit, Pam DiBona, Susan Dorson, Amy Ellentuck, Jim Foster, Elizabeth Halley, Jack Hurd, Hilary Rappaport, Scott Weaver, and Shunsuke Yamaguchi.

Library administration and Trustees are also very grateful to the Arlington Libraries Foundation Board members for all of their support: Ethel Doyle (Chair), Mary Ellen Bilafer Bache (Treasurer), Maryellen Loud (Recording Secretary), Susan Murie (Corresponding Secretary), Richard A. Duffy, Leah Eggers, Kathryn Gandek-Tighe, Martha Parravano, Allen Reedy, and Laura Wiener.

The library is also appreciative to the many volunteers assisting with the Town Day and Children's book sales. Town Day book sale volunteers include Wendy Watson, Susi Barbarossa, Carole Burns, Sally Naish, Tim Wilson, Nancy Knoff, Bonnie Echmalian, Sheila

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O'Donnell, Judy Lavine, Helene Cornelius, Katharine Jones, Bonnie Echmalian, Therese Henderson, Judi Paradis, Skye Stewart, Julia Harris, Annmarie Ostrowski, Janice St. Clair, Agnes Bayer-Kiss, Susanne Blair & Colin Blair, Betsy Singer, James Milan, Jean Rosenberg, Steph Miserlis, Janice Zazinski, Tommy Barvick, Amy McElroy, Andrew Fischer, and Harmony Browning. Children's book sale volunteers include Hanna Ali, Brianna Maund, Katie Barvick, James Milan, Anne Higgins, Harmony Browning, Melanie Davis-Kay, Judi Paradis, Susi Barbarossa, Agnes Bayer-Kiss, and Amy McElroy.

Future Goals

The Library will use feedback from the FY 2014 strategic planning process as a guide for various initiatives, including:

- Improve programs and services offered to the community.
- Continue efforts to ensure that the library provides a welcoming, useful and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Increase programs for children, teens and adults that reflect their needs, interests and expectations.
- Continue to secure funding for the Plugged In series that offers programs targeted at adults age 50+.

- Conduct a study of library configuration to improve the layout of collections and services.
- Evaluate existing procedures for the selection, ordering and processing of items for the library collection to ensure efficiency.
- Expand efforts to form partnerships with community organizations.
- Continue to implement strategies including social media to market library resources and services.
- Complete the project to digitize a portion of our local history collection through the support of the Digital Commonwealth.
- Move forward with innovative, high value computer/electronic services utilizing effective technologies to improve staff productivity and customer service, including the implementation of RFID at the Fox Branch Library.
- Continue to provide support to the Robbins Library Foundation that was established in 2013 to develop and conduct a comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- Continue to work with the Friends of Fox to secure private funding to supplement the municipal budget.



The Friends of Robbins collaborated with the Arlington International Film Festival to host an "Evening of Passion at the Library" fundraiser.