



FFRPL funded the *Safe to be Smart* youth trip to D.C. (July 2024) through generous support from donors, the Konar Foundation, and Reynolds Library.



Friends & Foundation *of the*
Rochester Public Library

ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



FFRPL partnered with the Library on many projects during Fiscal Year 2024-25, including the most significant Library leadership change in the last sixteen years.

We celebrated Monroe County Library System/Rochester Public Library Director Patty Uttaro's career dedicated to libraries (including her sixteen-year tenure as MCLS/RPL Director), with specialized programming that she curated and helped present; as well as a fundraising campaign in her honor that then supported six community-based projects throughout the region. Patty retired in February.

FFRPL served on the Library Director Search Committee and – along with the FFRPL staff and Board; Library administration, Board, and staff; City of Rochester; and the community-at-large – we helped welcome Emily Clasper to her new role as MCLS/RPL Library Director in January.



In FY2024-25 we presented FFRPL's Legacy programming and supported a variety of Library programs, initiatives, exhibits, services, and resources.

In addition to providing funding, programming, and marketing support for the Rochester Public Library and other libraries in Monroe County, we continued to manage restricted funds that provide significant supplemental materials support to 62 eligible libraries in Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Livingston, Orleans, and Genesee counties.

Thank you for your role in helping us make sure that the Library has the greatest possible impact on our community.

Donna Borgus, Executive Director, FFRPL; donna.borgus@libraryweb.org, 585-428-8321

Justin Stevens, FY2024-25 FFRPL Board President

Board of Directors FY2024-25 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

Justin Stevens, President; Sally Millick, Vice President; Denise Lippa, Secretary; Shiva Ramaswamy, Treasurer

Arelis Aponte, Adam Brady, Emily Clasper (MCLS/RPL Director), Hannah Espinoza, Carissa Guzski, Jim Kraus (RPL liaison), Renee Minarik, Om Popli, Marjorie Shelly (MCLS liaison), Karen Soanes, Steven Suozzi, Khalid Vrede, Bill Yust, Ichin Zinn

Staff

Donna Borgus, Executive Director; Reuben Burch, Financial Manager; Holly Hammond, Annual Campaign & Database Manager; Susan Chekow Lusignan, Director, Marketing & Program Development; Christine Weidman, Book Sales and Volunteer Coordinator

FFRPL Funded the *Safe to be Smart (StbS)* Youth Trip to D.C. (July 26 – 28, 2024)



The itinerary included the National Museum of African American History and Culture, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, White House, Frederick Douglass Statue at the Capitol building's Visitor Center, Library of Congress, Howard University, and Memorials for Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and WWII veterans.

The *StbS* trip to D.C. was funded by Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library through generous support from donors, the Konar Foundation, and Reynolds Library.

Safe to be Smart (the Library's flagship after school program) is housed at Central Library and five City branches: Wheatley, Lincoln, Sully, Maplewood, and Arnett. FFRPL is a founding sponsor of *StbS*, along with Central Library and the City of Rochester.

"The Safe to Be Smart trip to D.C. was amazing. We were able to learn more about the Holocaust, African American History, our nation's Capital, and many other things. My favorite place to visit on our tour was the National Museum of African American History and Culture ... it covered the history and many atrocities African Americans have endured from the very beginning of America to the modern day ... Visiting this museum and other museums and historic sites has changed my perspective and outlook on the world around me. I will remember this trip for the rest of my life." — **Norman Rivet**



"My favorite part was getting to see a lot of things about my culture and how the events occurred for African Americans in America from slavery to freedom. We also were able to visit the Holocaust Museum and see that Jewish people back then also struggled, by having their rights and freedom taken away. One exhibit at the Holocaust Museum that struck me and will stay with me forever was the Lights for the Children. The display featured a wall of countless lights, with each small dot of light representing a child's life. It was an experience I will carry with me for a lifetime." — **Lamarie Felton**



"The highlight of my trip was the Holocaust Museum. It taught me a lot and made me realize the hardships that many Jewish people have endured. Now, I think about their experiences daily, and I'm inspired to pursue a career that supports other minority groups like the Jewish people. ... I'm grateful I visited the African American Museum. It expanded my knowledge about my culture and provided me with more information than I already knew." — **Zamaria Harmon**

Financials

FY2024-25 Revenue

Category	Amount Received	% of Total Income
Investment Gains/Income	\$3,284,164.12	70.33%
Endowments & Bequests	\$612,733.29	13.12%
Annual Campaign	\$364,069.66	7.80%
Unrestricted Donations	\$250,723.23	5.37%
Restricted Donations/Grants	\$105,320.00	2.26%
Bookstore	\$48,550.72	1.04%
Program & Event Sales Revenue	\$2,320.00	0.05%
Other	\$2,032.86	0.04%
Grand Total	\$4,669,913.88	100.00%

FY2024-2025 Expenses

Category	Amount Spent	% of Total Expenses
**Library Support	\$1,305,385.93	63.77%
Management & General	\$542,253.63	26.49%
Investment Management Fees	\$110,520.79	5.40%
Fundraising Expenses	\$55,398.07	2.71%
Bookstore	\$32,929.31	1.61%
Other	\$453.61	0.02%
Grand Total	\$2,046,941.34	100.00%

****Library Support**

Category	Amount Spent	% of Total
Grants to Regional Libraries	\$740,853.94	56.75%
RPL Supplemental Materials & Equipment	\$371,535.77	28.46%
RPL Programs and Services	\$149,875.95	11.48%
RPL Special Projects & Exhibits	\$24,063.95	1.84%
RPL Capital Expenses	\$19,056.32	1.46%
Grand Total	\$1,305,385.93	100.00%

Legacy Programs



BSI
Fall 2024;
Spring 2025

Books Sandwiched In (Fall 2024; Spring 2025)

FFRPL's book review series has been running continuously since 1956. This Fiscal Year, 469 people attended in person and 665 have viewed the videos to date. Reviews are posted to [YouTube at 'Rochester Public Library NY.'](#)



Tuesday Topics (January 2025)

The 2025 series focused on "A Few of the Director's Favorite Things," in honor of **MCLS/RPL Director Patty Uttaro**, who then retired in February after a career dedicated to the library.

Patty launched the series with a presentation about Central Library's signature juried **Art of the Book & Paper** exhibit, a project she initiated in 2011, for RPL's 100th anniversary.

Tonia Burton, MCLS Children's Services Consultant, talked about the importance of **early literacy**, including ***Raising a Reader*** and ***Talking is Teaching***. **Jennifer Byrnes**, head of Central's Business Insight Center, talked about the Library's role in the new **county-wide digital equity initiative**. **Shalis Worthy**, Central Library's Historical Services Coordinator, presented an overview of the **Local History and Genealogy Division**.

For 2025, 63 people attended in person and 159 people have viewed the online videos.

Sokol H.S. Literary Awards (April 2025)

FFRPL has held a writing contest for Monroe County high school students since 1958. Students from public, private, charter, and Home Schools submit entries for Poetry, Prose, and Performance.

The Awards Ceremony/Reception was held in the Spring. View the **2025 Program**. Thanks to The College at Brockport, the collection of winning entries from 2015 can be **viewed and downloaded**. Cumulatively, winning entries have been viewed about 6,000 times, from 80 countries!





Impact Stories (highlights)

FFRPL supports Branch renovations and expansions

FFRPL helped support **Maplewood's temporary move** to 441 Lexington Avenue (July 2024). Learn more about [Maplewood's expansion project](#).

FFRPL provided funding towards **Lincoln Branch Library's** year-long renovation, including the updated **Toy Library** (August 2024).

FFRPL sponsored Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jonathan Eig's talk, *King: A Life*, at Penfield Public Library (October 2024)

"I am just as excited about this as I am about the Nobel Peace Center next week in Oslo, because I love libraries!" — Jonathan Eig, at Penfield

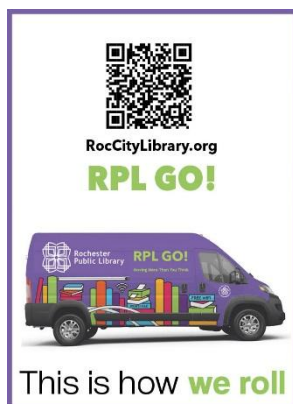
The event was presented by the Penfield Public Library and East Rochester Public Library; and sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk, FFRPL, and Friends of Penfield Public Library.



FFRPL supports RPL's new mobile library (ribbon cutting December 2024)

Along with Senator Jeremy Cooney, FFRPL co-sponsored the RIT College of Art & Design Mobile Outreach Van design project teams, who were tasked with re-imagining a modern Mobile Library concept. FFRPL also funded a set of laptops for **RPL GO!** and subsequently raised additional funds for supplemental materials/equipment. [Learn more](#)

Based at the Lyell Branch Library, **RPL GO!** offers convenient library access to hard-to-reach areas in the City of Rochester. The vehicle holds rolling carts of library materials, programming supplies, and portable technology.



FFRPL raised funds in Patty Uttaro's honor (grants awarded Spring 2025)

In lieu of retirement gifts, retiring MCLS/RPL Director Patty Uttaro asked that donations made in her honor be designated to the **Harold Hacker Fund for the Advancement of Libraries**. In partnership with the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC), FFRPL then provided grants from the Fund for an enhanced VIP Pass program (Central Library); new circulating video equipment for recording oral histories (Charlotte Branch Library); development of a tool to assess undergraduate library literacy (Lavery Library/St. John Fisher University); workshop for School Librarians and educators to teach teens critical thinking skills (Rochester School Library System); creation of themed Early Literacy and Continuing Education Kits for caregivers (Seymour Library); and purchase of Tonies and Yotos, to provide screen-free experiences for children ages 2-5 (Winton Branch Library).





FFRPL Funds *RPL Online Author Talks*

As the Founding Sponsor of [RPL's Online Author Talks](#) (presented in partnership with RPL and the Library Speakers Consortium), FFRPL helps the Library present online events with bestselling authors and thought leaders. 5,914 patrons watched 37 online talks during FY2024-25.

FFRPL supports the Aviation Station Program through Sully Branch (launched April 2025)

Students 13-17 years old participated in an intensive 8-session training course in aviation ground operations; gained insight into what flight school entails; learned from industry experts and aerospace professionals; toured the Frederick Douglass International Airport; received hands-on experience with a flight simulator and had the option to join a pilot for introductory flight lessons.



FFRPL Funds Central's imagineYOU Comic Empowerment Program

This innovative initiative enables youth to use AI technology to create personalized comic books, featuring characters whose superpowers are based upon their own unique life experiences.

The program helps youth develop core life skills, including literacy, self-expression, and technology proficiency. The first cohort of youth began the program early Spring 2025; the Comic Empowerment Awards Ceremony was held May 2025.

FFRPL supports literacy and Library advocacy programs

FFRPL supported the Library's **2024 Summer Reading programs**.

FFRPL continued its long-time support of the **Greater Rochester Youth Read (formerly Greater Rochester Teen Read)**, a project created by MCLS librarians. This year featured author Veera Hiranandani (October 2024).

FFRPL also continued our long-standing role as Fiscal Sponsor of the **Rochester Children's Book Festival** (November 2024), presented by RACWI (Rochester Area Children's Writers and Illustrators) and Lift Bridge Book Shop, and held at MCC.

FFRPL supported **Central Library's advocacy workshop** (May 2025), which included presentations by MCLS/RPL Director Emily Clasper and RPL/MCLS Manager of Library Finance Katy Hasselwander.



Gifts \$1,000+ FY2024-25

Businesses

Woods, Oviatt, Gilman, LLP
Lift Bridge Books
Fleet Feet
Marl Accelerator, LLC
Mighty Monkey Corporation
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.

Foundations/Trusts/Funds

Target Circle
Rochester Area Community Foundation
Raymond Eckert Fund
June and Warren Glaser Fund
William and Sheila Konar Foundation
Riedman Foundation
The Farash Foundation

Estates

Estate of Catherine Carlson
Estate of George Hoffman
Estate of John Pearsall
Estate of Justin Vigdor
Estate of Thomas C. Wheeler
Estate of James Boehler

Organizations

Friends of Fairport Public Library
Monroe County Library System

Individuals

Anonymous
Katherine Baynes and Joshua Stubbe
Anne Brayer
Ellen Brenner and David Boutillier
Nancy Briggs
Jerry Brooks
Susan Brown
Mary Callaway
Steve Carper and Linda Saalman
Jim Chaize
A. Blair Cummins and Julie Cummins
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Richard Hamilton and Katherine Schulze

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Marvin Hoffman
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Cecelia Horwitz and Floyd Tucker
Marjorie Humphrey
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Karen Kral and Gerald Kral
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Paul Ness and Pamela Miller Ness
Kathy Nixon and Ted Nixon
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Xiaorong Parks and Christopher Parks
Katharine Parsons
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