

## **BENNINGTON FREE LIBRARY**

Providing free and open access to information and technology, educational and cultural resources to our community continues to be the Library's primary mission. Statistics from the past year indicate that we are succeeding.

Despite a decrease in hours, visits and circulation have increased. We have had 1,082 new patrons sign up for cards in the past year, and 92,456 individuals visited our Library. On average, 308 people, many of them Shaftsbury residents, enter the Library daily, seeking assistance, books, information, audio and video materials, access to computing facilities, to attend meetings, or simply looking for a quiet place to work.

Over the past year, patrons have checked out 88,123 items in print, video and audio formats, and borrowed 345 items from other libraries. 643 individuals were trained to use the Library's public access computers. The Library provided over 8,038 hours of free computer access to our users. Staff responded to 14,621 reference inquiries, including questions on legal, tax, health issues, and located local, state and national government information. Patrons used library computers to search and apply for jobs online, create resumes, apply for benefits, and conduct research using our comprehensive databases. Shaftsbury children and adults participate in pre-school story hours, and weekend and evening programs. Shaftsbury residents borrow materials, use our computing and reference resources, and are served through inter-library loan.

All free of charge, 13,923 people attended 202 programs. Grant funded programs such as the Caregiver's Series (Bennington County Caregiver's Coalition), early childhood literacy programs (Success by Six), community reading initiatives (VT Reads), and Teen Read Week, as well as our usual line-up of story hours, workshops and activities, provided Shaftsbury residents with timely and useful entertainment and educational opportunities. There were 422 deliveries of book boxes with literacy materials to childcare centers in Bennington and Shaftsbury. Shaftsbury residents participate in our summer reading programs and teacher/childcare provider training.

Clearly, the Library is meeting the information and technology needs of our community. It would not be possible to offer the quantity and quality of services our Library provides, however, without continued financial support from the Town of Shaftsbury. Each dollar invested by the Town offers a generous return, and is confirmation of the importance placed on well-informed citizens. Our Library has been an important element in the lives of Shaftsbury residents for many years. With your help we will continue to contribute to the vitality and culture of the community.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted

Lynne Fonteneau McCann, Library Director