

Town of Esopus Library



Annual Report to the Community



2025

Director
Jesse
Chance



Board President
Larry
Decker



www.esopuslibrary.org
info@esopuslibrary.org

STAFF

Jesse Chance

Director

Fox North

*Programming &
Engagement Manager*

Charlotte Svetkey

Children's Programmer

Laura Salgarolo

Library Assistant

Mary Garraty

Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Deborah McMenemy

Office Clerk (Now Retired)

Barbara Wurtz

Clerk

Marilyn Genter

Clerk

Ellen Yeomans

Clerk

Stephen Thomas

Custodian



BOARD of TRUSTEES

Larry Decker

President

Martha Farrell

Vice-President

Allen Olsen

Treasurer

Donald Carragher

Trustee

Elaine Rylance

Trustee

Sharon Briden

Trustee

Laura Petit

Trustee

Cindy Capraro

Trustee

Jamila Khan

Trustee

Esopus Library Foundation

Chet Allen

Reggie Heffernan

Margaret Phelan

Marion Zimmer

Friends of the Esopus Library



Chet & Maj-Britt Allen

Joan P. Alley Book Cellar Mnager

Sharon Amorelli

Mark & Eleanor Anderson

Kathleen Atwell

Barbara F. Barton

Janet Bellusci

Nancy Beranek

Robert & Patricia Brakeman

Sharon Briden

Julie & Tom Brinkman

Kelly Buboltz

Betty Chin

Lynn Corcoran-Johnston

Meg Clark-Goldhammer

Mary DeChristopher

Frances Drakert

Allen & Francois Dunefsky

Jo Eschmann

Stephanie Ewanich

Lin & Jack Fagan

Nicole Francis

Jane Friedman

Colleen E. Gust

Reggie & Bill Heffernan

Susan L. Holland

Paul & Nancy Hyatt

Cathy Johnson

Jamila Khan

Edward & Norma Kratt

Susan Lieching

Treasurer

Franca Marchetti

Sandy & Massie Mehl

Arlene Merker

JoAnna Mignone

Kathy Milhaven

Mona Moore

Rose Mueller

Marie & Larry Omura

Margaret Phalen

Nacy Rosen

Elaine Rylance

Board/Friends Liason

Joan Saehloff

Laura Spacy

Connie Spoth

President

Nancy Stein

Marion A. Zimmer

DIRECTOR'S WORDS



Unlike the headlines, here at Esopus Library, 2025 was a year defined not by dramatic upheaval, but by steady, meaningful momentum.

At the Town of Esopus Library, we saw continued growth in how our community uses the space—not just as a place to borrow materials, but as a place to gather, learn, and connect. With over 48,000 visits this year, it is clear that the Library remains an essential and well-loved part of daily life in Esopus.

Our programming continues to reflect that shift. We offered 644 programs across all age groups, welcoming over 8,000 attendees. From early childhood storytimes to adult lectures and everything in between, the Library is increasingly a place where people come not just for information, but for experience and community. Behind the scenes, our small but dedicated staff continues to do remarkable work. With just over 6.5 full-time equivalent employees, they manage a collection of more than 27,000 physical items, facilitate tens of thousands of circulations, and ensure that every visitor feels welcome and supported. Their adaptability, creativity, and commitment are what make everything else possible.

Financially, the Library remains stable thanks in large part to the continued support of the community. The successful 2026 budget vote reflects a shared understanding of the Library's value and a collective investment in its future.

Personally, I continue to feel grateful to serve in this role. This work—connecting people with resources, ideas, and each other—matters. And in a world that often feels fragmented, the Library remains one of the few places where everyone is welcome, no purchase necessary.

Thank you for being part of that.

—Jesse Chance

Your Library Director





PRESIDENT'S NOTE

I am proud to say that it has been another great year at your public library.

The success of the community garden has caused us to expand its dimensions to accommodate the many interested local gardeners. We plan to share excess produce with the community residents in need. We are also adding a cistern that will service the garden with rainwater, making us even more sustainable than ever.

Our solar power expansion is moving forward at a fast pace and a minor repair on our thermal system continues that sustainability. We have created two native plant islands in our parking area and our grounds continue to become park-like and pollinator friendly. So, please come by and take advantage of our many services: Feed the fish in the pond while pointing out our mascot turtles, make a jigsaw puzzle swap, join a book club, and take home our calendar of month-long activities. You can also shop for books, etc. that the Friends of the Library have to offer or just come in and let our dedicated staff help you pick out a book to take home. That's what a library is for.

Larry Decker, Board President



@ Advocacy Day in Albany with Trustee Sharon Briden

WHAT WAS NEW IN 2025?



A Year of Strong Community Engagement

Library visits climbed to over 48,000, reflecting a continued trend: the Library is not just being used—it's being lived in. More residents are choosing the Library as a place to spend time, attend events, and connect.

Expanded Programming Reach

With 644 programs offered, 2025 marked one of our most active years yet. Attendance remained strong across all age groups, with particularly robust participation in children's and adult programming.

A Thriving Summer Reading Program

More than 200 participants joined Summer Reading in 2025, supported by collaborations with schools, childcare centers, and local organizations. These partnerships continue to deepen the Library's reach throughout the community.

Consistent Investment in the Collection

The Library added over 1,700 new items to the collection, ensuring that materials remain current, relevant, and responsive to patron demand.

Sustained Digital Growth

Digital borrowing remained strong, with over 17,000 e-material circulations. Patrons continue to embrace the flexibility of accessing library resources from home.

Community Support at the Ballot Box

The 2026 budget vote passed successfully, increasing funding and reaffirming community support for Library services.

Vital Statistics – 2025

Community Served

- Population: 9,548

Library Use

- Annual Visits: 48,516
- Registered Borrowers: 5,658
- Total Circulation (Physical): 41,376
- Digital Circulation: 17,421
- Interlibrary Loans Borrowed: 11,680
- Interlibrary Loans Loaned: 5,936

Programs & Attendance

- Total Programs Offered: 644
- Total Program Attendance: 7,913
- Summer Reading Participants: 213

Collection

- Total Physical Items: 27,253
- Total Print Materials: 22,166
- New Items Added in 2025: 1,726

Technology Access

- Public Computers: 11
- Public Computer Sessions: 2,500
- Annual WiFi Sessions: 6,862

Staff

- Total Staff (FTE): 6.56

Hours & Access

- Annual Hours Open: 2,236
- Weekly Hours Open: 43



BUT DO PEOPLE STILL USE THE LIBRARY?

This question gets asked surprisingly often.

The assumption usually goes something like this:

“Everything’s online now... so libraries must not really matter anymore.”

Meanwhile, at the Town of Esopus Library in 2025:

- 48,516 people came through our doors
- Nearly 60,000 items were borrowed
- Over 8,000 people attended programs
- Thousands more used our WiFi, computers, meeting room, gardens, and outdoor spaces

It turns out libraries adapted.

People don’t only come here for information anymore. They come here for:

- connection,
- access,
- community,
- education,
- creativity,
- sustainability,
- and sometimes simply because the Library is one of the few places left where everyone is welcome and nothing is expected of them in return. That still matters . . . a lot.

Financial Stewardship – 2025

The Town of Esopus Library continued to operate from a position of overall financial stability in 2025 while maintaining a strong level of public service, programming, and community investment.

- The Library finished the year having brought in \$593,936 in operating revenue. There was \$621,315 spent on operating expenditures but the 2025 budget included \$26,557 from the Library's Undesignated Fund Balance so we came in just \$822 over budget.
- \$135,000 remains in the Library's Reserve Account which is invested in an interest earning CD
- \$324,300 remains in the Library's Capital Account (This fund is comprised of a large grant from NY State as well as the Library's required matching funds for said grant and this fund will be depleted in 2026 when Solar Upgrade is complete.)

Community support remained the foundation of Library operations, with local tax appropriations fully meeting budget expectations. The Library also benefited from strong community giving, grants, and donations throughout the year. Gifts and donations substantially exceeded projections, while grant funding helped support several community and sustainability-focused initiatives.

Investing in Services & Infrastructure

The Library continued prioritizing investment in core services while carefully managing rising operational costs.

During 2025:

- Staff and employee benefits represented the Library's single greatest investment, reflecting the labor-intensive nature of public library service
- Collection spending supported both traditional and digital materials, including books, e-books, audiobooks, films, newspapers, and online content
- Programming expenditures increased alongside growing public participation
- Maintenance and grounds expenses rose as the Library continued improving outdoor spaces and addressing long-term building needs

The year also saw increased expenditures related to:

- HVAC maintenance,
- snow removal,
- telecommunications and internet services,
- insurance,
- and building upkeep.

At the same time, the Library continued making strategic investments in projects intended to reduce future costs and improve long-term sustainability, including planning related to:

- solar energy infrastructure,
- rainwater capture,
- outdoor programming space development,
- and community garden expansion.

Despite inflationary pressures and rising operational expenses affecting libraries nationwide, the Town of Esopus Library remained financially stable while continuing to expand programming, improve facilities, and strengthen community partnerships.

The Library remains committed to balancing fiscal responsibility with thoughtful investment in services, collections, sustainability efforts, and the long-term needs of the community.



Testimonials

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

LOVE YOUR LIBRARY?
WRITE A LOVE NOTE TO US HERE!
Borrowers finding this book pencil-marked,
written upon, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
are expected to report it to the librarian.

AUTHOR *Ruthy Spicorard*

TITLE

DATE DUE

*I love the
Cook-book Club at
the port Ewen Library.
Fox and Ellen are
always pleasant
and fun.
The atmosphere
is comfortable and
Relaxing.*

LOVE YOUR LIBRARY?
WRITE A LOVE NOTE TO US HERE!
Borrowers finding this book pencil-marked,
written upon, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
are expected to report it to the librarian.

AUTHOR

TITLE *History*

DATE DUE

*I love my
library because
I find so many
unexpected
treasures &
because I adore
the inter-library
program.*

LOVE YOUR LIBRARY?
WRITE A LOVE NOTE TO US HERE!
Borrowers finding this book pencil-marked,
written upon, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
are expected to report it to the librarian.

AUTHOR

TITLE *I LOVE MY LIBRARY!*

DATE DUE

*More reasons than room to
write! ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️
The people who work here are
so friendly and helpful - I especially
see Laura, Ellen and Barbara!
It's a beautiful library, the grounds
are beautiful and kept up so well
Community garden & events
Quiet - peaceful!
Book cellar! Bargain Books!
great accessibility to books, DVDs,
CD's, Books on CD's
& More!
❤️ M.D.*

LOVE YOUR LIBRARY?
WRITE A LOVE NOTE TO US HERE!
Borrowers finding this book pencil-marked,
written upon, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
are expected to report it to the librarian.

AUTHOR

TITLE

DATE DUE

Ben, Jason + India

*We love our
library!!
Especially
Story time!
❤️❤️*

WWW.ESOPUSLIBRARY.ORG



PROGRAMMING AT A GLANCE

Number of Programs

In 2025, we welcomed in a variety of new programs for our patrons, including QiGong, craft workshops, and open mics. We also expanded our offerings for teens and kids - including Lego Club and a full slate of after-hours summer teen offerings!

Adult

247



Teen

76



Children's

291



Attendance

Our total 2025 attendance hit 8,153 patrons - that's a 29.70% increase from 2024!

Adult

2605



Teen

1028



Children's

4523



At a glance . . .



Adult Attendance

9% increase



Teen Attendance

134% increase



Children's Attendance

31% increase



A NOTE FROM YOUR PROGRAMMING & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

a diversity of patrons means a diversity of programming at *your* local library!

2025 was a banner year for programming at the Library! We once again hosted a variety of workshops, from local presenters like Tara Platania, Jocelyn Krodman, Luke Sarrantonio, Alex Prizgintas, and Jessica Williams - and added a variety of cultural events to our roster! Highlights include a talk on Kate Millett's artist community by Dorsky Museum Director Anna Conlan, a Juneteenth event featuring Newbery-Award honoree Lesa Cline-Ransome, and an original musical, "One Day in Paradise," by musician They Love Them.



We expanded our teen programming through partnerships with Ulster BOCES and featured year-round Dungeons & Dragons campaigns for teens and tweens alike. We also hosted a full-year of our inclusive, all-ages "All-Out" open mic, featuring the most diverse performances the Hudson Valley has to offer - and of course, free pizza for all.



I'm so proud of everything we're building here at the Esopus Library - and can't wait to see how our community grows in 2026.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

2025 was an exciting and exceptional year for children's programming!

2025 was my first full year in my role as Children's Programmer here at the Town of Esopus Library. . It has been wonderful to meet and get to know so many children and their families and to bring programming and reading into their lives on a daily basis. Some programming highlights have been increased storytimes including a new afternoon storytime, the ever creative Lego Club, and the Young Readers Book Club which is filled with kids who just love talking about books - a dream! The end of 2025 brought the opportunity to revamp and refresh the children's room. We took down some shelving and added new seating. The room is now more open, welcoming, and usable for a wide variety of programming - or just hanging out! All are welcome! I hope to see you at the library soon.



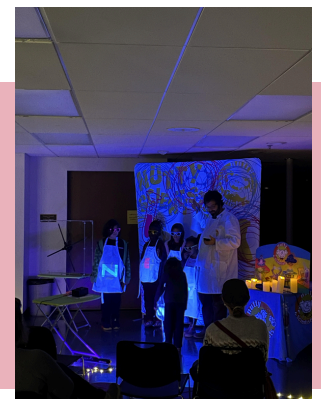
Summer Reading Kickoff with the Hudson Valley Reptile Rescue



Music & Movement with Terry Watson



Candy Sushi



Nutty Scientists



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

Solar Array Upgrade Project

One of the Library's most ambitious upcoming initiatives is the planned solar array upgrade project. In addition to reducing long-term operational costs, the project reflects the Library's broader commitment to environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship of public resources. By investing in renewable energy infrastructure, the Library hopes to strengthen its long-term financial resilience while serving as a visible example of community-scale sustainability in action.

Expanding Outdoor Community Spaces

Thanks to a generous \$7,500 grant from the Ascienzo Family Foundation received late in 2025, the Library will begin construction of a dedicated outdoor programming area in 2026. The fenced-in space will provide a welcoming setting for outdoor storytimes, educational programs, author talks, and other community events. The project reflects the Library's ongoing effort to create flexible, inviting public spaces that extend beyond the walls of the building.

Community Garden Produce Sharing Initiative

As the Library's community gardens continue to grow, we are also expanding our focus on food accessibility and mutual aid. In 2026, gardeners will be asked to donate 10% of their edible harvest for community distribution. To support this effort, the Library plans to install a roadside farmstand-style produce table where fresh vegetables and herbs will be made freely available to the public. Additional produce donations will also support the Port Ewen Community Fridge.

Rain Catchment & Sustainable Gardening

In support of both sustainability efforts and garden expansion, the Library will also install a rain catchment cistern system designed to capture rainwater from the Library roof for irrigation use in the community gardens. This project will help reduce water consumption while demonstrating practical environmental stewardship and sustainable infrastructure in action.

Continued Growth in Programming & Partnerships

The Library will continue building on the strong momentum of 2025 by expanding programming, strengthening partnerships with local organizations, and seeking new ways to connect residents with educational, cultural, and civic opportunities.

CONTACT US



Phone Number:

[\(845\)338-5580](tel:(845)338-5580)



Email Address:

info@esopuslibrary.org



Website:

www.esopuslibrary.org



Address

P.O. Box 1167
128 Canal St.
Port Ewen, NY 12466

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

