

## **Annual Report from the President of the Board of Trustees**

January 2024 (for the 2023 year)

The Hyde Park Library has continued to grow and evolve. We had a full and busy year with exciting developments, and challenges along the way. The major development of 2023 was the launching of the Capital Campaign for accessibility renovations, particularly, for the installation of an elevator. We hosted a very successful Kick Off event in Sept. and were very pleased with the event which brought many people to our library to celebrate with us. The energy and enthusiasm were palpable. We have held various fund-raising events since the Kick Off, including a family celebration and an excellent supportive event hosted by the Rotary Club. We are very grateful for the overall support and involvement with the Library that the Rotary Club has demonstrated. Developing community relationships is an on-going goal of the Library and the relationship between the Library and the Rotary Club indicates that it is possible. The Chamber of Commerce also is an example of support for our library and we are grateful to them. The Hyde Park Town Board, La Catrina, Antonella's, Coppola's, the Broadway performers, and The Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home all have proven to be wonderful partners with us. We thank them all and anticipate on-going relationships.

A major foundational gift for our Capital Campaign and the goal of installing an elevator is the \$250,000 SAM grant received from Representative Didi Barrett! This was a fabulous gift! It is a grant that will allow and encourage us to install the elevator and increase the accessibility to the library for everyone. It also demonstrates how agencies can work together to benefit a community. This public gift, along with individual contributions from Hyde Park Library constituents and people who realize the importance of a library to the community, will allow Hyde Park to have a library that is accessible and welcoming to all. I have continued to seek other public moneys and I continue to hope that everyone will contribute something so that they are part of our project which will benefit the whole Town. We are doing this work through extensive volunteerism of the Board and their friends and the Friends of the Hyde Park Library organization.

During the year, we received another DLD grant for our renovation project. We also hired a grant-writer to help secure other money for the extensive improvement plans. All this fund-raising will allow us the ability to achieve our reconstruction goals without raising taxes to do so.

In addition to our focus on the elevator, other funds have been generously donated to the library. We are especially grateful for the bequest from John Golden of \$100,000. An on-going gift has been established by Micheal Fleischer and Michael Dupree for which we also are extremely grateful.

At the beginning of the year, we established a “fine free” experiment. Further data are needed in order to determine the effectiveness of going fine- free versus loss of capital for the library and increased costs from missing books. The experiment was extended for a year until March 2024.

Other policy updates and additions were the dedicated focus of the Policy Committee. Library opening schedule of hours continue to be a topic of discussion, especially Sunday opening. Public input is needed and will be sought. Juneteenth was accepted as a Library holiday.

Equalizing staff pay based on the new State minimum wage has been addressed. That has been a significant consideration for the annual budget and has been incorporated, as appropriate. The budget was passed in October. The Board wisely invested our operating money into short-term CDs this year (as other libraries also did). This yielded a significant amount of interest for the library.

The Friends of the Hyde Park Library continued to be helpful to the library with their various donations. We continue to be grateful to them.

There has been good energy and focus on the library building and grounds to preserve our historic building and to improve the working of the HVAC systems. An initiative in conjunction with the CAC of Hyde Park and NYSERDA to evaluate and update our systems for sustainability and environmental responsibility has been started. We are hoping to receive grant money for the whole project, culminating in heat pumps for more efficient and effective climate control in the main building. Thank you to Richard Mattocks for his tireless dedication to the CAC and the Town of Hyde Park.

Increased programming and public outreach continue to be essential goals. There have been several programs throughout the year and increased attendance, collaboration and development remain primary foci for the new Director.

The Board of Trustees launched a Director search after the Director resigned. We were very fortunate that Greg Callahan, our previous and retired Director, agreed to become the Interim Director for a few months while the search process was underway. Greg’s commitment to our library and his experience and expertise were of great help to us. The Board took the search very seriously and ended 2023 convinced that we would soon hire a new Director who would bring to our library professionalism and experience with management, librarianship, and construction and grant management.

The Board of Trustees lost some members during the year. In particular, we mourn the loss of David Ray our long-time Board member and friend who died during the year. We also welcomed new Board members: Danielle Hinton and Mary Williams. The volunteerism of the

Board is remarkable and appreciated by me as the President. We continue to be a hard-working and dedicated Board committed to the importance of a strong library in our community so that the whole community can benefit.

We look forward to 2024 with all the potential it holds.

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Ruggiero, PhD  
President of the Hyde Park Library Board of Trustees