

“Without  
libraries,  
what have we?

We have no past  
and no  
future.”

Ray Bradbury

HARTFORD  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY





## Messages

Geraldine P. Sullivan *President, Board of Directors*

Jenny Benedict and Matt Poland *Interim Co-Directors*

The last two years were among the most eventful in Hartford Public Library's recent history. Despite the deteriorations of the national and local economies, we have realized significant accomplishments and merely delayed some of our objectives for a short while.

The "new" Downtown Library opened in 2008 and has been much appreciated with visits reaching historic highs. With greater activity, unanticipated security challenges arose that have been resolved successfully with the help of a public task force. Service demands have increased, particularly from the newly unemployed.

Notably, the chief librarian, Louise Blalock, retired after nearly fifteen years of dedicated and tireless service to the Library and the people of Hartford. In the interim period that followed, we were fortunate to have talented management to lead the Library. The **ArtWalk**, Hartford's newest art gallery, opened to much acclaim in May. And, in June, the main floor of the Downtown Library was transformed for the Library's most successful fundraiser ever, **One Big Summer Night**.

Throughout this dynamic period, the Board demonstrated a commitment and dedication to the Library's mission that surpassed any other during my tenure as a director. The Board of Directors worked diligently to ensure the financial well-being of the Library, to oversee its management, and to make sure that its mission was realized.

During this period, we bid farewell to Jo Champlin Casey, who served with distinction as a member of the Board for many years. And we welcomed Annette Sanderson, Constance Green, Michael Gannon, and Thea Montañez, who are already proving to be invaluable stewards of the Library by embracing the important work of the Library.

Together with a committed management team and a hard-working staff, the Board keeps the Library strong, and in so doing performs a great service for the citizens of Hartford.

We're proud to know that Hartford residents value their library, and we're honored to be one of the most trusted resources in every neighborhood throughout the City.



Geraldine P. Sullivan  
*President, Board of Directors*

We are honored to have served as Interim Co-Directors of Hartford Public Library this year. In December 2008, we took on the challenge of leading an organization suffering from declining revenues and reduced public service hours. Limited hours at our branches for both adults and youth corresponded to losses of services to our community: less print and media materials in circulation, less information and readers' assistance, less public computer usage, and less program attendance.

Determined and undaunted by the challenges we faced, we set out to both preserve our institutional history and move forward with a vision of the 21st Century library that Hartford Public Library is striving to become. Successful negotiations with the City led to the restoration of branch hours for fiscal year 09-10 and the resumption of the summer lunch program, which served a staggering 8,000 meals to children and young adults. In May, a stunning new exhibition gallery named the **ArtWalk** opened at the Downtown Library, filling the glass atrium along Main Street with vibrant color, ambient light, and frequent visitors of all ages and backgrounds. The BIG READ community-wide reading program, which celebrated Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, became a regional attraction through our partnerships with Hartford Stage and neighboring libraries. And we expanded our employment resources to meet the growing demand for assistance. As we look to the fall, planning for the new long-awaited Albany Avenue Branch is actively moving forward with groundbreaking scheduled for 2010.

Sustaining our resources, professionalism, and commitment to service in difficult times, and then boldly doing more, shows the true strength of our institution and its pride in the community. We appreciate all of the accolades we have received for our work this year. However, all these accomplishments and more would not have happened without the enduring support of public and private funders, the guidance provided by our Board of Directors, and the extraordinary dedication and talent of our staff. We all share a belief in the critical importance of the work we do and the impact we have on the lives of those we serve.



Jenny Benedict  
*Interim Co-Director*



Matthew K. Poland  
*Interim Co-Director*



July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009

## HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

■ Chief Librarian Louise Blalock retires after a 14-year tenure.

■ The Grand Opening of the expanded Downtown Library completes the Library's ten-year \$42 million capital project in January 2008.

■ The Hartford History Center opens, making its rich collections of photographs, books, and materials accessible to the public for research, learning, and enjoyment.

■ The inaugural exhibition of the **ArtWalk, retro:works**, features Hartford artist Chet Kempczynski.

■ The system's 239 public computers are the number one reason that customers visit Hartford Public Library. Social networking sites, multimedia games, and video streaming are popular online content.

■ The collection has over 500,000 items with materials in multiple formats—large print, audio CD, DVD, hardback and paperback. In addition to English, books are available in seven foreign languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

■ The American Place, providing citizenship services to 3,000 people each year, is highlighted in a report by the Task Force on New Americans to President George W. Bush for helping legal immigrants adjust to American civic culture.

■ The Connecticut Center for the Book's *Letters about Literature*, an essay contest for students, has a national winner, one of six in the country.

■ The Big Read becomes a regional celebration, attracting over 38,000 participants to events at Hartford Public Library, Hartford Stage, and partnering organizations.

■ Job and career services meet the needs of increasing unemployment with dedicated computer stations, web-based guides, programs on job searching, and a collection of 2,500 print and media resources.

■ Democracy in Action programs play a key role in providing information about elections, with an average of over a hundred residents participating in each candidate forum.

■ HartfordInfo.org contains over 6,000 items, including articles, reports, data sets, and videos. Community organizations, such as NRZs (Neighborhood Revitalization Zones), access neighborhood-level demographic data for local decision-making.

■ Over 2,700 early/family literacy programs are delivered each year to 17,000 children and caregivers, preparing young children for kindergarten with reading readiness skills.

■ The Teen Leaders employment program promotes school success and teaches job readiness skills to at-risk teens. 100% of participants graduate from high school.



■ Large photographic murals of Hartford landmarks by photographer Jack McConnell are displayed in the reading rooms of the Downtown Library.

■ Solar panels are installed on the roof of the Goodwin Memorial Branch, generating renewable energy and reducing electricity costs.



July 2007 through June 2009

## LIBRARY ACTIVITY

	2008-2009	2007-2008
<b>LIBRARY USE</b>		
Registered Borrowers	80,984	81,763
<b>VISITS</b>	803,634	925,117
<b>CIRCULATION</b>		
<b>Adult</b>		
Books & Magazines	156,747	169,967
Audio/Video	198,854	216,567
<i>Sub-total Adult</i>	<b>355,601</b>	<b>386,534</b>
<b>Youth</b>		
Books & Magazines	100,990	114,458
Audio/Video	41,951	54,145
<i>Sub-total Youth</i>	<b>142,941</b>	<b>168,603</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>498,542</b>	<b>555,137</b>
<b>INFORMATION AND READERS' SERVICES</b>		
<b>Staff Assistance</b>		
Adult	305,851	314,418
Youth	151,670	206,757
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>457,521</b>	<b>521,175</b>
<b>Electronic Searches</b>		
Web & Internet	59,055,019	62,428,315
Catalog and databases	468,430	428,556
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59,523,449</b>	<b>62,856,871</b>
<b>PC Use</b>		
Adult	188,797	218,357
Youth	100,097	127,291
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>288,894</b>	<b>345,648</b>
<b>COMMUNITY MEETINGS/EVENTS</b>		
Number of Meetings	466	600
Meeting Attendance	<b>19,257</b>	<b>31,100</b>
<b>PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS</b>		
<b>Number of Programs</b>		
Adults	1,279	1,567
Youth	4,193	5,314
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,472</b>	<b>6,881</b>
<b>Program Attendance</b>		
Adults	21,523	21,725
Youth	59,097	107,443
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80,620</b>	<b>129,168</b>
<b>PUBLIC HOURS</b>		
Downtown Library	2,768	2,761
Branch System	10,687	15,971

The decrease in library activity in FY 08-09 as compared to FY 07-08 reflects the reduction in public service hours due to reduced funding. All nine branches lost Saturday hours, and six branches lost two hours each day.