



# Providence Public Library

2018  
Annual  
Report



# Transforming Our Library

A few years ago, we began to talk about transforming our library into a leading 21st-century educational institution – a true community learning hub. As Albert Einstein once said, we cannot change our world without changing our thinking. And so we aptly named our process THINK AGAIN and invited all Rhode Islanders to think again with and about PPL. We thank everyone who has done so!

Like any good change, our library transformation has been a step-by-step process; and over the past year, we have continued to realize enormous successes, along with the many individuals and community organizations that have joined us.

Perhaps the most visible sign of transformation is this year's launch of our \$25 million construction project – the largest library renovation in Rhode Island history – after three years of planning and preparation. Our 65-year-old Empire Street wing will become a completely modern and open, user-friendly, collaborative teaching and learning place where communities can connect, experience, create and achieve.

This physical change follows ongoing educational and program innovations and robust efforts to build key relationships with community members and partners.

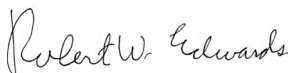
This year has brought many other signs that our transformation is real, from repeated recognition and project funding by major institutions like the Institute of Library & Museum Services (IMLS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities to exciting new partnerships with the State of Rhode Island, City of Providence, and others in our library and learning communities. We are proud of our many new and ongoing ventures, including:

- With \$553,649 in IMLS funding and a nationwide partnership, we launched a project to test and disseminate innovative adult education and workforce development library practices.
- Working with partners statewide, we continued to grow our popular Rhode Coders and Data Navigators programs for teens and adults.
- With the City, Providence Community Library (PCL) and FabNewport, we introduced PVD Young Makers, bringing maker spaces into Providence's 10 public libraries.
- Through a first-ever \$75,000 RIDE grant, we are developing the Tech Hub for Rhode Island Adult Education, a centralized professional development and training delivery system for adult educators statewide.
- With our many city- and statewide partners, we continued to expand the successful Passport to Summer Learning program.
- We presented HairBrained, our fourth annual Exhibition & Program series, exploring ways in which hair defines and reflects culture, self-identity, agency and politics.

Finally, as you will see in this report, our PPL Alum – individual learners who have turned to PPL for help in achieving their own personal transformations – continue to tell the ultimate story of our library and our role as a dynamic place for learning!



Jack Martin  
Executive Director



Robert Edwards  
Chair of the Board



← History of Bluebeard  
who slew his women.  
Leipzig At  
Baumgaertner, 1847.

## Marilyn Figueroa – Making Changes, Achieving Goals

**I came to PPL to learn about  
advancing my education and I was  
able to earn my high school diploma!**


My experience with Sherry Lehane (Training Specialist) is the most memorable and special to me. She's understanding, passionate, resourceful, helpful, inspiring, patient and a wonderful, caring teacher. She knew I was determined and committed to earning my diploma and went above and beyond to help me. I can't express how much I appreciate her!

Ms. Lehane told me the NEDP program was more intense than the GED. But that wasn't stopping me. I needed to be challenged. She was RIGHT! Long story short, I earned my diploma in less than a year. I never thought I could succeed, but with my fiancé's

support, and most of all, believing in myself, I learned it's all about changing your mindset...that was the biggest step I had to take through this process. I started thinking positively.

My life changed tremendously in just less than a year because I decided it was time I started a future for my two beautiful kids. Getting my diploma helped me land my dream job as an Administrative Assistant at Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island. I later got promoted to Project Administrator. Today, I'm proud to say that I am enrolled at the Community College of Rhode Island and I oversee a variety of exciting projects and programs at work, including Bright Start for pregnant women, Logisticare transportation program for Medicaid participants, and KidsNet for children and families. I also serve on a number of committees at work and in the community.

I continue to learn new things every day...I'm truly blessed!

A black and white portrait of Marilyn Figueroa, a Black woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a lanyard with a badge. The background of the photo is a solid light color.

***“At PPL I was able  
to accomplish my  
DREAM and my  
GOAL...to earn my  
high school diploma  
and change my life!”***

– Marilyn Figueroa





*“PPL is a forest of opportunities available to explore. I can’t reiterate it enough: PPL really changed my life.”*

— Angel

## Angel – Discovering a World of Opportunities

**I came to PPL because my friend Levi introduced me to it. We explored the floors and old areas. He also introduced me to a librarian, Bonnie Lilienthal (Head of Children’s Services), who works in the Teen Room.** She suggested that I might be interested in PPL’s Rhode Coders 2.0 program. She was right! I got in and went to the Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. Soon, I started going more often to get school work done. It helped tremendously.

Getting more involved with the Library allowed me to discover more opportunities, such as the Rhode Coders class. I was able to make new friends and step into the world of coding. There I was able to get digital badges that can go on my resume and I got a summer job with Intra City Geeks (which was because I earned the digital badges).

Bonnie is a really nice person. I owe a lot to her. She not only helped me find some books, but also introduced me to the Library’s coding classes and pretty much brought me into the world of opportunities I have now.

I really hope people don’t look at PPL as “just some library.” PPL really changed my life. In middle school I’d go home every day and be on my laptop. Now I am trying new things and doing a lot of things other people couldn’t do years ago, such as the ACN courses. Going to the Library brought me into that world.



*“I came to PPL for HTML and CSS classes and I found that being a software developer was the right path for me!”*

– Deloris Thompson

## Deloris Thompson – On a New Journey

**A year ago I was working 15 hours a week making minimum wage and trying to figure out how to fix that and now I'm working full time in a career that feels like the best dream.** I am so grateful to Don Gregory (Technology Instructor) and PPL for starting me down this fantastic new journey in my life and helping me change almost everything.

I've always loved computers beginning the summer I got to build my own computer through a Rhode Island Children's Crusade program. I never knew how I could actually get into the field. Then I heard about the Library. It has opened doors I never expected!

Don saw something in me that I never knew existed and encouraged me to

push myself. When he suggested I try Tech Force and take more classes I questioned whether I could break into a field dominated by young males. But after attending Tech Force I was able to get into Launch Academy, a very intense tech boot camp that requires over 40 hours a week from students. Don continued to encourage me along the way. Not only did I graduate earlier than expected, but I managed to do it while taking care of my family and working part time!

Now I am working as a software developer at The Mullings Group in Providence and loving where I am. I get to work with so many great people in diverse industries, developing software to help them in their businesses.

There is so much more I want to learn and I am continuing to push myself... something I know I can do now thanks to the Library and my past experiences.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- The Library participated in the first-ever **Open Doors Rhode Island Festival** offering special behind-the-scenes tours in venues throughout Providence. More than 350 visitors came to see and learn about the wonders in our Updike Room, home of the Daniel Berkeley Updike Collection on the History of Printing.
- PPL held its fourth annual **Updike Prize for Student Type Design** ceremony featuring a lecture by typeface designer Nina Stoessinger of Frere-Jones Type and on the faculty of Yale School of Art. The winner of the 2017 prize, generously sponsored by Paperworks, was Erica Carras for her type Raleigh Condensed. Joseph Allegro was runner-up with his type Meadows. The annual Updike Prize rewards undergraduate and graduate type designers whose work has been influenced by materials in the Updike Collection at PPL.

↓ **HairBrained**, PPL's fourth annual Exhibition & Program series, explored the ways in which hair defines and reflects culture, self-identity, agency, and politics. Hair is simultaneously frivolous and serious, personal and universal. It's a means to communicate complex messages to everyone we encounter.

While the exhibition focused on hairstyles around the world and throughout history via a selection of items from PPL's collections, including postcards, photographs, pochoir prints, magazines, historic children's books, advertising trade cards and more, the HairBrained series of cultural programs and educational activities offered something for all ages while exploring how and why we have grown, cut, shaved, shaped, woven, adorned, and covered our hair, from centuries ago 'till today.



*Becci Davis created a three-part performance about Black hair entitled "Private Proclamations" and performed it on the Library's Washington Street steps as part of PVDfest. She also developed an interactive art performance called "Beacon Beauty Shop" and gave an artist's talk about her research process.*

- This year, PPL served new teen audiences, provided leadership roles for teens, and began sharing our teen IMLS grant work and accomplishments with others. Through a partnership with the Providence Housing Authority, we adapted our successful summer learn and earn program **Teen Squad: My City, My Place** to provide a three-month paid learning experience for teens in Providence's Chad Brown Housing Complex. We also launched a teen teaching assistant program, utilizing former coding students to assist the instructor in the Rhode Coders 2.0 course. PPL Alum Yaen Torres and Markeem Rodrigues both served in this role. Also, PPL staff presented their teen workforce development work at the 2018 LibTech Conference, the 2018 Badge Summit, and the 2018 Joint Conference of the Librarians of Color.
- PPL partnered with Providence Housing Authority (PHA), Cox Communications, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Rhode Island Office of Innovation and the United Way on a **new initiative to provide digital literacy** and access to Providence public housing residents. Through a 10-week training course conducted in the computer lab at PHA's Manton Heights family development, residents gained basic computer and Internet skills. With United Way funds, program graduates receive a free computer, WiFi hotspot, and one year of free Internet service. After a year, residents are eligible to enroll in Cox's Connect2Compete program, which provides low-cost Internet services to families living in public housing and/or enrolled in nutritional assistance programs like SNAP.
- ↓ PPL's **Passport to Summer Learning** partnership continued its growth and success this year, adding more community organization partners, engaging with more Providence school students (grades K-5), and nearly doubling completed and returned passports of the 15,000 distributed. Passport partners, including the City of Providence, Providence Schools and Providence Community Library, also focused on collecting and analyzing important data which showed a direct correlation between weekly reading and maintenance and even reading growth at the beginning of the school year. PPL was especially thankful to Wells Fargo for a \$7,500 grant supporting the Passport.





- PPL/RIFLI were awarded a first-ever grant of \$75,000 from the Rhode Island Department of Education to develop the **Tech Hub** for Rhode Island Adult Education, a centralized delivery system for professional development and training for adult educators statewide. Training facilities were available at PPL and Technology Hub staff also utilized partner library facilities, the PDC and on-site visits to adult education programs.
- ▼ PPL held a public presentation formally celebrating the Rhode Island Collection's receipt of the **UPP Arts Archive**. Formerly known as Urban Pond Procession, UPP Arts has used public art, history and science to give community members a voice in the environmental issues that impact their well-being. Focused on Mashapaug Pond and its surrounding South Providence community for 10 years, UPP's place-based arts programming has borne witness to the histories of Mashapaug, including the respectful relationship between Indigenous People and the land and water; a diverse neighborhood displaced in the name of urban, renewal; industries providing economic opportunities but also polluting the land, air and water; and the resulting environmental impact and cleanup.
- **PPL's Children's Library** partnered with the **Center for Early Learning Professionals** to offer monthly information and demonstration sessions to more than 40 Spanish-speaking family child care providers. Participants obtained library cards, learned about the Library's 160 LARKs (Learning and Reading Kits) available for borrowing, and received demonstrations on book reading strategies that enhance children's learning, in addition to an overview of the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards related to language and literacy development. This collaboration supports statewide efforts to promote early childhood literacy as part of the Governor's Third Grade Reading Challenge and will continue with additional professional development opportunities.



- PPL continued its long-running spring and fall **Small Business Workshop Series** in collaboration with RI SCORE. This popular workshop program perennially attracts capacity crowds of prospective entrepreneurs seeking how-to advice from business experts.
- PPL continued its popular year-long Family History Workshop series ***Diggin' Your Roots*** in partnership with Rhode Island Historical Society – going back to basics and taking its show on the road with a series focused on Intro to Genealogy offered at libraries statewide and featuring a Genealogy Market place where attendees could “shop” many of Rhode Island’s historical societies, libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions and learn how to access their rich genealogical resources.
- PPL’s popular **Rhode Coders** and **Data Navigators** programs continued to expand. We had 84 adults complete Rhode Coders classes and 75 complete our Data Navigators courses, with a number going on to advanced coding programs or new careers and work in the software or data analysis fields. We also had 32 youth attend Rhode Coders 2.0 programs, some of whom earned digital badges and high school credit. Both programs were also recognized by the Urban Libraries Council with a 2018 Innovations Honorable Mention Award.
- ▼ PPL Special Collections officially opened the **AS220 Archives** (acquired in 2017) to the public for research, following a year-long archiving project funded by a national Historical Publications & Records Commission grant to process and preserve the collection. The opening was followed by an exhibition and celebratory launch party! Founded in 1985, AS220 is credited as a national model for urban revitalization and in its advocacy for the role of artists and art practice within community development and the resulting environmental impact and cleanup.



## ENGAGEMENT

- While more than **150,000** visitors this year received direct expert service from our Children's, Adult, Research and Information Services staff, Rhode Island and Special Collections librarians, or attended classes, workshops, author talks, lectures, performances, and more, we also welcomed thousands more to our library for a multitude of special events.
- Nearly **20,000** adults and youth took part in varied learning experiences throughout the year.
- Learners statewide and beyond utilized Library resources and materials more than **618,730** times, including **13,485** visits and **228,044** page views on provlibdigital.org.
- More than **18,200** people followed us through varied social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and our Special Collections blog with engagement totaling more than **433,190**.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- More than **9,765** children attended **630** early childhood programs. Our popular Cradle to Crayons programs increased to **166** with a total of **2,612** children and adults attending.

## LITERACY EDUCATION

- This year, **453** adult students representing **51** different countries of origin were served. We saw **4** percent of our students increase an educational functioning level (2 or more grade levels). Additionally, **33** became U.S. citizens, while **36** obtained jobs and **30** entered training or post-secondary education.

## GENERAL EDUCATION

- Our librarian staff helped **30,032** learners with information assistance.
- Visitors came to our website **160,657** times and viewed **350,538** pages.
- We welcomed **2,028** participants in **150** computer learning classes.
- Guests used our public use computers **34,400** times, while teen and adult learners utilized an additional **100** devices in a multitude of technology and workforce development programs

## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

- Our many volunteers, including our PPL and PPL Foundation trustees, committee members and a diverse group of dedicated individuals, contributed more than **1,326** hours this year.

## Rosalyn Sinclair Tribute

**PPL Recognizes  
Leadership Gift  
Kicking Off Library's  
THINK AGAIN  
Capital Campaign**

Our 2018 Savor the Story Wine Gala was made extra memorable with the presentation of PPL's highest honor – the Enlightenment Award – to Rosalyn Sinclair. Rosalyn has shown herself to be a true philanthropic leader in Rhode Island and a proven champion of libraries and, in particular, our library.

Rosalyn's exemplary campaign to give back to the community has benefited men, women and children throughout our state, extending a level of health and prosperity through initiatives large and small.

PPL is extremely proud to be among Rosalyn's chosen beneficiaries. Her \$1 million leadership gift to our THINK AGAIN campaign solidifies her place as one of the Library's greatest benefactors and is key to ensuring the ultimate success of our transformational renovation.

Rosalyn has been a major supporter of our library for many years, going back to our capital campaign in 1986. She has funded PPL consistently as a Conservator Society member and key supporter of programming initiatives as PPL works to enhance its impact through critical community and educational offerings.

Thank you Rosalyn!



*Our libraries have provided the path to success for generations of our citizens and for others who have come to this great country in order to give themselves and their progeny the chance to better their lives. A literate public is the key to a strong and fair society. I am so grateful for the opportunity to assist our greatest treasure – our public libraries.*

– Rosalyn Sinclair

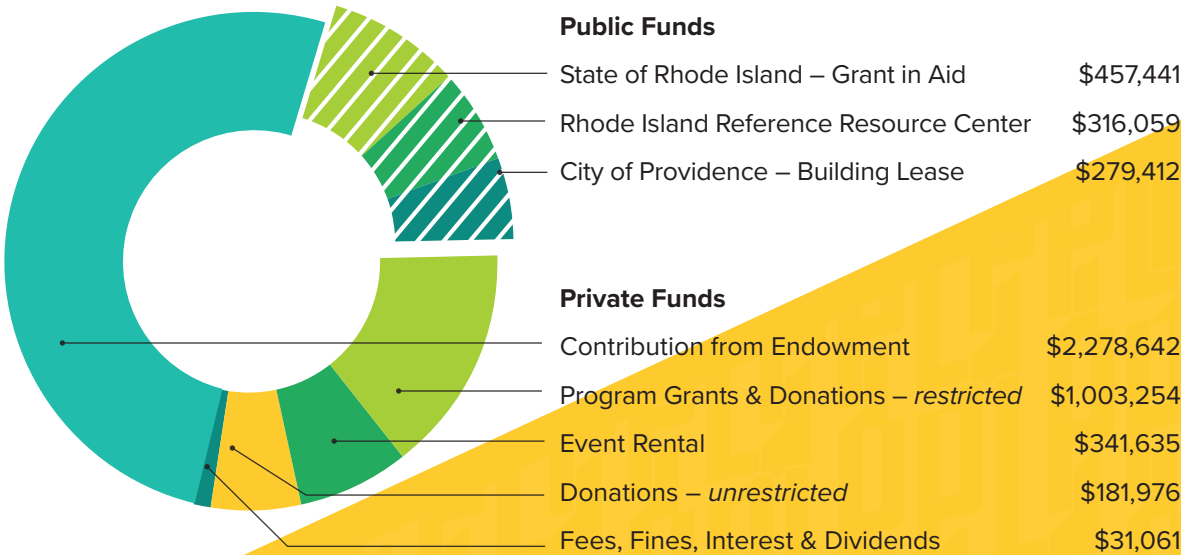


# Financial Report

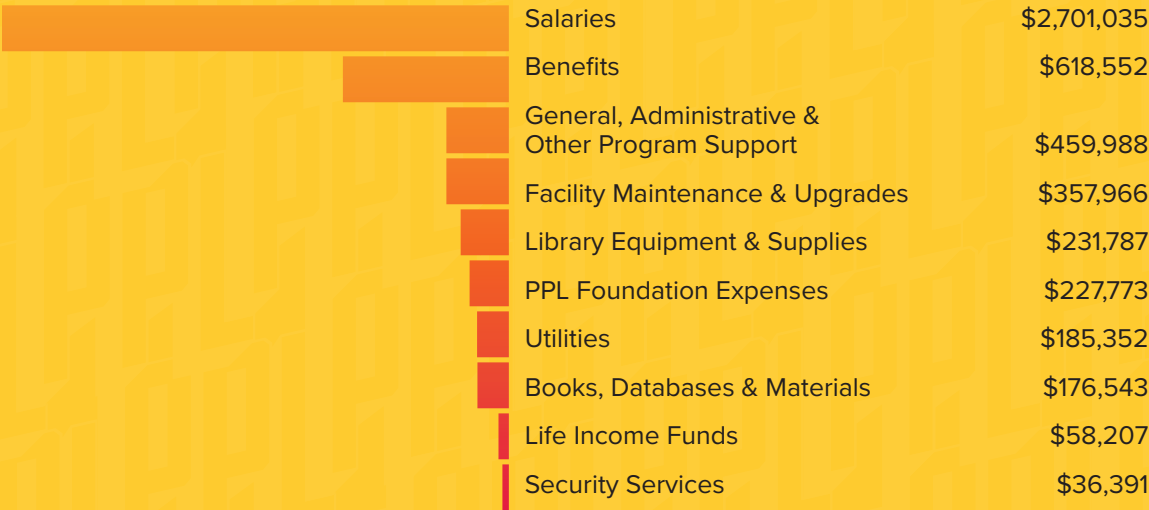
Fiscal Year 2018 – July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018  
Consolidated report of the PPL and PPL Foundation – *unaudited*

SUPPORT

## REVENUE – \$4,889,480



## EXPENSES – \$5,053,594 / Surplus (Deficit) – (\$164,115)



## PVD Young Makers

Partnering with City, PCL  
and FabNewport on  
New Citywide Project

*“Libraries are the perfect platform for launching this endeavor. They already serve as community hubs, are experienced with digital technologies and excellent at mentoring, connecting and guiding.”*

— Steve Heath,  
FabNewport Executive Director

PPL partnered with the City of Providence, FabNewport and Providence Community Library to launch the **PVD Young Makers** citywide, introducing makerspaces in all 10 Providence libraries to expand youth access to advanced digital technologies and creative design tools. Program partners include Rhode Island

Museum of Science and Art and Young Voices, PVD Young Makers seeks to bolster STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) learning by promoting creativity and positive youth development to better prepare youth for the 21st-century global workforce. The program gives youth the opportunity to learn about and work with advanced manufacturing tools that include sewing machines, VR cameras and viewers, vinyl cutters, laser cutters, DSH Robots, and 3D printers, as well as to earn badges as they become more proficient as using each tool.

## IMLS Grant

PPL Awarded \$553,649  
with Nationwide Partners

In partnership with Chicago Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, and World Education, Inc., PPL received a \$553,649 **National Leadership Grant** from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to test and disseminate

innovative adult education and workforce development library practices. The project, called Propagating Promising Practices for Literacy and Workforce Development at Libraries, will build upon and expand programs and practices already in place at the three partner libraries (Learning Lounges; Mobile Learning; and Learning Circles). The federal funding will be matched by \$678,870 in funds by partner organizations.



# Support

**Each year countless volunteers, donors and organizations collaborate with and contribute their invaluable time and talent to the Library and their community.** PPL and its Foundation recognize and thank these and

all Fiscal Year 2018 supporters whose contributions ensure that the Library can continue its mission as a vibrant and vital cultural and educational resource that engages learners, inspires thinkers and connects diverse communities. Further, we proudly herald those who donate \$1,000 or more to our Annual Fund as members of our Conservator Society. These generous private donors – individuals and family foundations – have long recognized the community's need for lifelong learning opportunities and have continually ensured PPL's ability to achieve its mission.

## \$1,000,000+

Joseph and Rosalyn Sinclair Foundation, Inc.\*§

## \$100,000+

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➔ Please remember Providence Public Library during the United Way campaign. To donate, simply write Providence Public Library in the space provided for donor option on the United Way form.

➔ Planned Giving is an integral part of ensuring Providence Public Library's excellence for generations to come. When arranging your financial or estate plan, we hope you will consider the Library.

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Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Murphy  
Mr. and Mrs. James Nagle





◀ With funding from the Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island's Core Skills Partnership and The Dean Hotel, we were able to provide eight months of ESL training for Dean Hotel staff (pictured here with teacher Margaret Pleasants are Yaneth, Mary and Marina.)

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Mr. James L. O'Brien  
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Ms. Mary V. Pina  
Mr. and Mrs. Carmine Rao  
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*PPL engages learners, inspires thinkers and connects diverse communities.*

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