



Providence Public Library
2019 | 2020
Annual Report



OUR INCREDIBLE 2-YEAR JOURNEY

2019 – Realizing Our Vision

After years of planning and preparation, we finally realized our vision of becoming a leading 21st-Century library!

2019 saw the complete transformation of our 1950s building, an exhilarating experience, often punctuated by the enthusiastic reactions of visitors as they grasped the magnitude of the changes. We were overwhelmed by the excitement and support from all those who toured the work in progress, saw first-hand the dramatic changes, and came to understand how much more PPL could do for all Rhode Islanders once our doors reopened.

We named our campaign THINK AGAIN and used the word transformation to describe our construction project – the largest public library renovation in Rhode Island state history. But as we reflect on this immense undertaking, we recognize that what we really did – what you did, as a member of our library family – was build the future of our library, both physically and operationally. We transformed what we do at PPL with our classes, programs, services, and, of course, our spaces.

With THINK AGAIN, we worked to turn our library into a true innovation hub; a vibrant destination that offers collaborative educational opportunities and hands-on participatory experiences as well as traditional library services. We became a welcoming, light-filled, easy-to-navigate, state-of-the-art learning place at the heart of our community where people could come together to learn, create, and achieve their goals.

Physically, this meant:

- **A new three-story atrium with a centerpiece grand staircase** helping to more seamlessly connect our buildings;
- **New, modern educational spaces and open technology labs** providing more high-quality programming and learning spaces for youth and adults in the heart of Providence;
- **A new teen loft and enlarged children's and early childhood rooms;**
- **A state-of-the-art 255-seat Auditorium**, completely ADA compliant;
- **Adding glass walls**, making our spaces and collections visible and accessible;
- **A new Special Collections suite** fully protecting and providing improved access to our valuable and unique holdings;
- **A large, museum-quality exhibition and gallery space;**
- **A completely upgraded facility and restored exterior**, including expanded windows and increased lighting.

We're also proud of the fact that, with help and support from many community partners, we maintained our full complement of programs and services throughout the construction process. Some highlights of the new and continuing initiatives and achievements included in this report are:

- Completion and expansion of our three-year IMLS National Leadership Grant to create and disseminate a high-impact teen workforce development program model, demonstrating the important role public libraries play in providing teen workforce education and employment.
- Introduction of the Rhode Island Tableau Users Group (RITUG), demonstrating our investment in and commitment to technology education and workforce development programming.
- Launch of the Propagating Promising Practices IMLS Leadership Grant in conjunction with nationwide partners to show that libraries are leaders in delivering critical education and workforce development interventions that are flexible, personalized, accessible, peer-led, and cost-efficient.
- Multiple new and ongoing partnerships like our Passport to Summer Learning between our Children's Library and community-based organizations to better serve young children and their families.
- A 2019 Exhibition & Program Series – Providence's Vacant Spaces – that explored how our environment illuminates the larger history of Providence and encouraged our audience to look at their surroundings in new ways and now lives permanently on www.Rhodetour.org.
- Reconstruction and expansion of our digital collections on ProvLibDigital, as well as several notable achievements in our Special Collections, including the department's historic move into a completely new, climate-controlled modernized space

Rebuilt spaces are only one part of PPL's transformation story. Looking ahead to 2020, we began – in partnership with our community – the process of updating our 2014 strategic plan and preparing for the Library's next era of service. The goal?; to solidify and enhance PPL's role as a premier learning and gathering place and as an innovative educational institution that continually adapts to meet the changing needs of the people we serve.



Welcoming visitors upon entry, our centerpiece, three-story atrium staircase offers a greatly improved experience, providing easy visibility and access to surrounding spaces from the ground to third floor and seamlessly connecting the Empire Street building with our 1900 building.





John P. [Signature]



Robert W. Edwards

2020 – Looking Beyond Our New Building

With our historic building transformation on the verge of completion, spring 2020 was to mark the long-awaited reopening and celebration of our spectacular new library. No one could have predicted that just two weeks from our ribbon cutting a world-wide pandemic would stop us in our tracks. But it did not stop us for long!

After navigating years of planning and 18 months of construction, PPL's staff would not be deterred. During our ongoing renovation, we kept a majority of our operations running while simultaneously planning for expanded programs and services in our new spaces; and then, faced with an immediate and unexpected delay in our official reopening, we quickly pivoted.

Upon closing the Library, staff members were issued laptops and set free to work from home on augmenting and creating a multitude of online and virtual offerings, including:

- Our Information Services and Education teams successfully transitioned nearly all of our classes, programs, and services to online or remote sessions, even creating new offerings. We began to see more people than ever before attending these classes and programs; even post-pandemic, it is clear that PPL's virtual services are here to stay.
- PPL's Collections team collaborated with the Rhode Island Historical Society to create the RICovidArchive.org and began encouraging all Rhode Islanders to help document their experiences during this historic moment and contribute items to a growing public archive.
- A great example of a pandemic-born, interactive, virtual project that our Programs & Exhibitions team developed during the spring as public gatherings were prohibited. ***Adaptive Practices: Six Artists Redefine Isolation and Distraction***, the project grew out of increasing expressions of anxiety, both in and beyond our own community, and out of our curiosity about how to navigate unrelenting uncertainty, fluctuating productivity, and debilitating isolation during quarantine.

Throughout the first half of the year, PPL staff, Board, and community members also developed and finalized a new strategic plan to guide the Library through 2025. It prescribes a PPL more deeply linked to online and statewide networks; a PPL that co-creates programs, opportunities, and experiences with – not just for – its community, bringing the Library's focus on collaboration to the next level; and a PPL that centers racial equity in all of its work and ensures equitable, welcoming access for all, both in-person and virtually.

While not the Grand Reopening we imagined, the Library nonetheless responded nimbly and resiliently to the challenges presented by the pandemic and reopened our ground floor lobby to the public during the summer of 2020. Staff – donning facemasks and six feet apart – greeted visitors eager to come back into the beautiful new building! We celebrated with a virtual ribbon cutting event and virtual gala in September 2020, and vowed to hold a proper reopening post-pandemic.

In the meantime, the entire library staff is hard at work implementing new and reimagined programs and services for the foreseeable future and is thankful, as always, to all those who continue to generously support their library. The story of the past two years would not have been possible without YOU.

Thank you.

2019 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

PPL Launches RITUG

PPL proudly kicked off the Rhode Island Tableau User Group (RITUG) in January with the first of planned quarterly meetings to support a growing community of Tableau (a data analytics application) users. The new initiative, sponsored by CVS Health during its first year, was an outgrowth of the Library's popular Data Navigators classes, which have continued to expand during the past two years. The first and subsequent meetings were attended by nearly 75 data analysts from Rhode Island and nearby southeastern New England companies and organizations

Teen Grant Concludes Successfully; Program Development Continues

Teen Squad – our three-year IMLS National Leadership Grant to create a high-impact teen workforce development program model – successfully demonstrated the important role public libraries play in providing teen workforce education and employment opportunities with program initiatives like My City, My Place, Rhode Coders 2.0, and Data Navigators 2.0. Results of the grant are notable, including 900+ youth served with 450+ earning academic credit or digital credentials. More than 1,000 youth completed self-assessments, more than 280 received work exposure and more than 100 received paid opportunities.

Additional accomplishments included: expanded Data Navigators 2.0 classes in partnership with Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College; ongoing work with Providence After School Alliance (PASA) on digital badging; creating 10 loanable tech kits; a partnership to create a career and higher education exploration app for teens; and a searchable database of more than 100 resources, including lesson plans, videos, presentations, budget information, and related resources. An extension for a fourth year of work was granted to give the team the opportunity to engage deeply in sustainability efforts.

Propagating Promising Practices Completes First Year

Propagating Promising Practices, a three-year Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) leadership grant-funded project undertaken by PPL in collaboration with World Ed, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles public libraries, and four advisors from diverse educational and library organizations across the nation, completed its first year. With the goal of increasing adults' skills by capturing, disseminating, and growing innovative education and workforce development practices in public libraries across the US, the project seeks to position public libraries as effective and welcoming community hubs for lifelong learning, digital inclusion, and economic empowerment, while building upon and expanding innovative programs and practices (Learning Lounges, Mobile Learning, and Learning Circles) already in place at the three partner libraries. These practices complement and reinforce one another.

numbers & notes

- RIFLI served 425 adult students from 37 countries with classes in ESL, Citizenship (24 became U.S. citizens), Digital Literacy and Transition to College. Classes were held in 18 locations statewide, including in public libraries, community centers, public schools, state One Stop Employment Centers, and work sites.
- Nearly 50% of students advanced at least two grade levels while 171 entered or retained employment and 44 entered a college or training program.
- 500+ adult technology students attended free Rhode Coders (124), Data Navigators (135), and other computer classes.

Our 3,000 square-foot, light-filled Workshop on the ground level is the new epicenter of our education and workforce development classes and programs.





numbers & notes

- PPL co-taught a Microsoft Office certificate training program with Roger Williams University staff where 30 students earned college credits upon completion. Several found employment during the program with their increased digital literacy skills.
- In addition to classes, RIFLI administers the Learning Lounge Network at four different libraries statewide and two state One Stop Employment Centers in collaboration with the RI Department of Labor & Training.
- 670 individuals visited the Learning Lounges – 62% of whom were female and 70% people of color.
- 15,000 Providence school children received passports through the continuing Passport for Summer Learning partnership.

Pivot the Hustle

PPL collaborated with Roger Williams University on Pivot the Hustle, an innovative, results-oriented program designed to help inmates garner skills for successful re-entry into the workforce and employment upon release in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. The program offers the addition of digital literacy training by the Library's Lead Technology Specialist with a focus on high-demand workforce skills such as computer basics, MS Word and Excel, and giving students the chance to earn Northstar Digital Literacy certificates. During the first year, eight incarcerated women graduated from their eight-week digital literacy program, becoming the first women's cohort in several years.

RI Tech Hub for Adult Education

Following a grant from the Rhode Island Department of Education in 2017 to initiate a pilot for the RI Tech Hub for Adult Education, PPL subsequently received a three-year grant in 2018 for the RI Tech Hub to serve as the professional development provider of technology use and integration in adult education. In its second year, we successfully served 118 adult educators from 18 different organizations. The RI Tech Hub also launched a Learning Pathways program for Rhode Island adult educators, with

“Over the past two summers, I’ve learned about work environments, how to dress for work, how to engage with coworkers, and also some of the more technical aspects of things like resume writing, interviewing for jobs, and some of the laws that exist for employees. One of the biggest things I learned about myself in the My City, My Place summer employment program is that I’m really good at public speaking.” — Marieme

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a goal to organize and segment professional learning opportunities and give educators learning resources and format options. Piloted in spring 2019, the program was designed for blended learning (online and in-person instruction). Each learning pathway leads to an industry-recognized credential, such as Google Educator certification or Microsoft Office Specialist certification.

Newspaper Digitization Grant to Preserve Rhode Island History

Through the efforts of Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed, PPL and Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) were awarded \$250,000 as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP), a partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Library of Congress, to create a national digital resource of historically significant newspapers published between 1690 and 1963 from all the states and U.S. territories available through the Library of Congress for the first time in history. This grant funding will enable PPL, in partnership with the RIHS, to publish a full inventory of the 314 Rhode Island newspaper titles that RIHS holds on master microfilm reels, digitize at least 100,000 pages, and promote the accessibility of these digital resources to the broader community.



2019 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Continued Partnership with Center for Early Learning Professionals

PPL’s Children’s Library staff continued its successful partnership with the Center for Early Learning Professionals, working with a number of the Library’s community-based partners (including Farm Fresh RI, Southside Community Land Trust and Groundwork Rhode Island) to facilitate expanded interactive programs for family care providers and center-based teachers. Through multiple presentations, PPL shared new approaches to teaching science using library resources like PPL’s 160 LARKs (Learning and Reading Kits), storytelling, and exploration of community resources.

National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) Partnership

Through a NNLM children’s outreach grant, PPL Children’s Library staff worked to improve the health of low-income children and families. Leveraging existing services and partnerships with early learning programs and providers, the team facilitated increased access to health education, literature, and NNLM resources for vulnerable children and families. Initiatives included expanding health-focused storytimes at target schools, connecting families with local health professionals and leading discussions on health topics of interest, and supporting general health literacy as part of existing library programs and new family health workshops. PPL distributed health-related children’s books

to parents, along with NNLM resources, and developed and circulated new health-related LARK and Family Learning Bags (themed learning tools containing books and activities aligned to Rhode Island Department of Education’s Early Learning and Development Standards) to childcare providers and caregivers statewide.

2019 Exhibition & Program Series — 41.8219° N, 71.4171° W

The 2019 Exhibition & Program Series examined themes of permanence and impermanence, mutability and immutability, and created intentional links between them. Although the object of each study differed, both exhibition and programs read the evolution of the urban landscape and the imprints left by human activity.

Starting with PPL’s building as a focal point and rippling outward, 41.8219° N, 71.4171° W explored how our environment illuminates the larger history of Providence and encouraged our audience to look at its surroundings in new ways. The program series looked closely at our building’s evolution over 120 years to see what it can tell us about our city. The exhibition focused on the histories of vacant places and open space throughout Providence, utilizing site-specific installations and a digital tour featuring maps, photographs, and information gleaned from PPL’s Special Collections. The exhibition can be found online at www.rhodetour.org (Providence’s Vacant Spaces).

numbers & notes

- 3,809 children were served in PPL early childhood and family learning programs.
- 704 adults took part in PPL cultural programming.
- 150 students attended classes in Special Collections throughout ongoing renovations.
- 750+ whaling logbooks were digitized.
- An online gallery for creative projects using Special Collections material launched.
- 500+ Special Collections items were added to the online catalog.
- Librarians and staff answered 12,500+ reference questions.

With the installation of glass walls and doors throughout, our open book stacks are now both completely visible and accessible and feature comfortable sitting areas.





numbers & notes

- Special Collections created and delivered “Providence LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour.”
- With Brown University, 17 Providence City Directories for Internet Archive were digitized.
- Special Collections staff created a set of Principles on Working with Community Archives; developed an archives workshop and workbook, as well as a consulting service for community practitioners.
- Nearly 4,400 new books and AV items were added to collections, particularly Spanish language and YA materials.

Our newly-created, museum quality exhibition space, the Joan Thompson Boghossian Gallery, will now allow us to feature not only PPL’s special collections, but is also capable of hosting traveling exhibitions.

2019 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Grow with Google Comes to PPL

In line with the Library’s focus on offering high-impact technology education and workforce development, as well as broad opportunities to bridge the digital divide, PPL welcomed Google with its day-long Grow with Google Economic Opportunity Initiative events in May. Several hundred attendees took part in four free workshops and all-day, one-on-one appointments with Googlers to learn about digital resources for achieving personal, professional and community outreach goals.

Small Business Workshops Continue

PPL’s long-running partnership with RI SCORE continued, with spring and fall Small Business Workshop Series. Despite construction, both series attracted capacity crowds as attendees sought entrepreneurial advice from experts.

New Book Club Launched

The Library launched a new monthly book club – The Nature of Things – for curious individuals interested in learning more about the world. The group focused its sights on nonfiction titles dealing with topics from Astrology to Zoology!

Special Collections Updates

PPL held its fifth annual Updike Prize for Student Type Design at the Metcalf Auditorium in RISD’s Chace Center. In addition to awarding our 2018 Updike Prize to Gene Hua, the evening featured a talk by type and lettering designer Victoria Rushton. A lively conversation between Victoria, our 2018 winner, and other Updike Prize candidates was moderated by industrial designer and RISD Industrial Design Department Senior Critic Matthew Bird. The Updike Prize is co-sponsored by Paperworks and the RISD Graphic Design Department.

With community partners from Brown’s John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage and Providence ¡CityArts! for Youth, PPL was a proud co-organizer of Year of the City, an unprecedented year-long exploration of the history, life and culture of Providence’s 25 neighborhoods. More than 35 different curators produced exhibitions, performances, walks, lectures, and conferences.

Our 2019 Creative Fellow, Laura Brown-Lavoie, completed eight months of research in our collections, exploring materials related to the Narragansett Bay and Providence River, Providence’s Allens Avenue, the history of fossil fuels in Rhode Island, sex workers, early European colonizers, King Philip’s War, and the city’s shifting waterfront. She created a new chapbook of poetry about Allens Avenue and planned and hosted an Earth Day ritual involving poetry and song at Collier Point Park.



“With the coding experience I’ve had at PPL taking the Rhode Coders 2.0 courses, I’m thinking of becoming a software developer; I feel I have a great head start into a career in computer science.” — Mario

2019 & 2020 AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Library of the Year Award – URI GSLIS

PPL was awarded “Library of the Year” by the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies in March. Director Valerie Karno noted PPL’s innovative library service and community connections, including programs like Teen Squad (IMLS grant-funded initiative) and partnerships with RIMOSA and others on PVD Young Makers, as well as maintaining ongoing liaisons with numerous local organizations on varied workforce development and literacy initiatives. The award recognized the Library’s continued hosting and training of library student interns entering the profession.

RIFLI Recognized

PPL’s Adult Literacy program – Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) – was recognized in the Journal of Museum Education for its collaboration with Lippitt House Museum to develop “The Immigration & Change in Rhode Island’s Golden Age,” an experiential learning program. The program benefits the literacy learning goals of adult English Language Learners (ELL) while furthering the Museum’s mission. Over a two-year span, RIFLI teachers and students piloted the materials and provided feedback. The resulting curriculum, which features in-class activities, a visit to the Museum, and follow-up activities, centers on civic engagement past and present, and will be used by the Museum with other adult education agencies statewide.

Urban Libraries Council Recognizes PPL for Library Innovation

During its 2018 Annual Forum Awards Ceremony celebrating library innovation, the Urban Libraries Council recognized PPL’s Rhode Coders and Data Navigators Technology Careers Training Programs with an Honorable Mention Award from 220 submissions in 10 categories that demonstrate the value and impact of public library service. PPL was recognized for Workforce and Economic Development.

PPL’s Teen Educator, Kate Aubin, Named Afterschool Educator of the Year

PPL’s Teen Educator Kate Aubin was named Afterschool Educator of the Year at the United Way of Rhode Island-hosted Lights On Afterschool Summit. Passionate about creating equitable learning opportunities for youth, Kate has worked with youth in many capacities over the past 10 years; as an educator (both formal and informal), an advisor, a supervisor, tutor, mentor, and advocate. At PPL she plans programs, develops curriculum, and delivers teen education that focuses on social-emotional learning and workforce development.

PPL Receives 2018 Rhode Island Foundation Best Practice Award

PPL received a Best Practice Award in Board & Staff Leadership from the Rhode Island Foundation in recognition of our work in developing a three-stage approach to meet the challenge of transforming the Library, noted as a best practice model for nonprofits.

PPL Receives 2019 Innovation in Education Award

PPL was honored with a 2019 Innovation in Education Award from Providence Business News for our Tech Career Pathway. The 2019 Innovation winners were selected for having an innovative product or process with a significant impact.

PPL Education Team Recognized

PPL Education Team members were recognized for their efforts to assist virtual learners. PPL Technology Educator Betty Tavares was honored by the Tech Collective for her work helping people advance their pursuits, while PPL’s Workforce Development Coordinator Lina Bravo was accepted to Rhode Island’s Governor’s Coaching Corps, an annual eight-month leadership program for workforce development professionals who advise unemployed and underemployed job seekers and students in Rhode Island.





numbers & notes

- Following the transition to virtual services in the spring, RIFLI served 200 learners in ESL, Citizenship, GED, and Transition-to-College classes through the summer.
- 37 individuals completed classes in Essential Excel, Rhode Coders, or Data Pathway (Data Analysis & Visualization). Another 15 learners completed Microsoft Office certification classes.
- Upon going virtual to provide in-demand career coaching services via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, along with remote technology support and instruction, PPL Learning Lounges served 221 unique individuals from June - September, including 120 repeat visitors and 1,114 total visits.

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Within a Lifetime: Immigration and the Changing City

PPL and the Pond Street Project (with writer/educator/researcher Taylor Polites) invited community members to connect Providence's history of immigration to modern life in our city through a five-part discussion series titled *Within A Lifetime: Immigration and the Changing City* held September through December 2019. Artists, scholars, and community practitioners joined this series of conversations about how today's most pressing debates around labor, housing, education, and the definition of citizenship have been shaped by our history of immigration. The series was funded in part by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

PPL, Trinity Rep Continue Context & Conversation Partnership

PPL and Trinity Repertory Company continued our partnership on Context & Conversation, cultivating participatory public conversations inspired by ideas in the works featured on Trinity Rep's stage and locating those themes in our own community. These public conversations are free and open to the public and collaboratively curated by Christina Bevilacqua, PPL's Programs & Exhibitions Director and Trinity Rep's Conversationalist-in-Residence, and Michelle Cruz, Trinity Rep's Director of Community Engagement. Each event is hosted by a different community partner whose work resonates with

the themes of the play currently on stage, and for each, we engage artists, scholars, and community practitioners. While inspired by the plays, these programs do not depend on them, so anyone in the general public, whether a theatergoer or not, can attend the conversations and find meaningful content.

YMCA of Greater Providence Donates Archives to PPL

PPL's Special Collections acquired the organizational archives of the YMCA of Greater Providence in January 2020. Founded in 1853, the Providence YMCA is the second oldest Y in the country. Known for the deep community impact of its programs and services, the YMCA of Greater Providence's history reflects the growth and community history of Providence, and Rhode Island, from the mid-19th Century onwards; its organizational archives encompass 167 years of history of social services and programs to the Rhode Island community. The donation to PPL includes more than 15 linear feet of records, including annual reports, meeting minutes, publications, ephemera and photographs. Of special interest is the vast number of photographs from the late 19th – 20th Centuries documenting a wide array of YMCA activities, including support for immigrants, summer camps for youth, adult education and training, and many social services. The collection documents industrial growth and waves of immigration, neighborhood development, the impact of World Wars, and even the beginning of Roger Williams University.

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COVID-19 Digital Archive

In April, quickly following the state’s shutdown due to COVID 19, PPL and Rhode Island Historical Society partnered to create a collaborative public archive – RICovidArchive.org. The RI COVID-19 Archive project encouraged all Rhode Islanders to document their experience during the historic moment and to contribute those stories, photographs, artwork, oral histories, social media, and memories to this public archive. The goals: to create a virtual archive that documents the ways that individuals and their communities are affected by social isolation, quarantine and illness, and mutual aid; and serve Rhode Islanders now and in the future by providing a way to connect with one another, as well as preserve the stories of this time for future researchers. Hundreds of items were archived within the first month.

Adaptive Practices: Six Artists Redefine Isolation and Distraction

PPL presented *Adaptive Practices: Six Artists Redefine Isolation and Distraction* – a series of virtual interactive presentations and events developed by the Library’s Creative Fellows in response to the widespread expressions of anxiety about living with unrelenting uncertainty, fluctuating productivity, and debilitating isolation during the pandemic. The reimagined spring cultural programming reflected and worked within the perimeters of the new reality of operating during

COVID-19, utilizing assets we already had and considering how best to share them. Among PPL’s resources is our cadre of Creative Fellows, six artists and creators who each worked on a long-term, original project within our Special Collections, generating new meanings for these collections and bringing them to new audiences. Realizing these artists and creators are not only comfortable with uncertainty, but often seek it, we asked them to share their work and practices in a way that would allow us to see and even experience how they navigate and negotiate conditions of uncertainty and unfamiliarity. Varied presentations by Laura Brown-Lavoie, Becci Davis, Kelly Eriksen, Keri King, Walker Mettling, and Micah Salkind that focus on these themes within their creative processes remain on PPL’s YouTube channel.

On-Ramp to Innovation Kick-Off

PPL’s new On-Ramp to Innovation project for small business and entrepreneurship kicked off, in partnership with the American Library Association and Google.org’s Libraries Build Business program. Through this project and partnership, with grant funding of \$145,000, the Library will be greatly enhancing current programs and services and further expanding our offerings in support of local businesses and entrepreneurs, including a new Small Business Hub webpage.

numbers & notes

- Top reasons people used the Lounge included basic computer skills (28%), academic support (22%), ESL practice (17%), and employment services (resume, job application, job search, etc. (12%).
- 77 teens took part in a variety of workforce programming, including Rhode Coders, Data Navigators and Summer Youth Employment.
- 909 children were served in PPL early childhood and family learning programs.
- 1,770 adults took part in PPL cultural programs and series.

Our new Special Collections suite, encompassing dedicated space on the third floor in close proximity to the exhibition gallery, includes a comfortable reading room for the general public and researchers alike, as well as two levels of adjacent book stack/storage featuring a humidity and temperature controlled environment.





Our new, wide-open Senator Jack Reed Info Commons features varied and comfortable areas for both research and relaxation. This vibrant, light-filled and airy room houses our expanded computer lab, microfilm area, meeting rooms, and new piano room, as well as a new laptop bar and plenty of seating, including window seats with views of the city.

numbers & notes

- Following the pandemic shutdown, PPL and AskRI.org, Rhode Island's Online Reference Center, added a range of new online resources and enhanced offerings that users could access from home, including:
 - Beanstack – offering a reading tracker for challenges, activities and more;
 - Udemy – 4,000+ on-demand course videos, providing upskilling opportunities in such areas as business, tech, and design;
 - Newsbank – giving expanded access to its America's Newspapers database;
 - Ancestry.com – a comprehensive genealogy database for researching family history;
 - Kanopy – giving free access to thousands of movies with a PPL card;
 - Foundations Directory Online – a valuable fundraising tool.

2020 Exhibition & Program Series – The King Is Dead*

Our 2020 Exhibition & Program series The King Is Dead* exploring how we understand and use the news: how it guides our daily activities, gives us current information, and does (or doesn't) relate to the facts – was to open April 1 in our new Exhibition Gallery. With the pandemic, the Exhibition & Program Series was postponed until October 1, at which point measures were taken to present it in virtual ways. Through historic voices and sources, the exhibition used print journalism to shed light on how and when people know what they know. Corresponding educational and cultural programming, including the inaugural program, Scandalous Conduct/Newport 1919; The Enigmatic *Providence Journal* Editor Who Ignited the Newport Naval Sex Scandal, offered virtually during May and June, examined how we define what is newsworthy; how new platforms are changing the way we consume and share news; and what it means to be “media literate,” among other topics.

RI LGBTQ+ Community Archive Launch

RI LGBTQ+ Community Archive at PPL, a community archives initiative to collect and provide access to the stories of LGBTQ+ people in Rhode Island, launched in the spring. The archive is focused on ensuring the preservation of materials chronicling the social,

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cultural and political history of RI LGBTQ+ people and organizations and will strive to develop collections and resources that reflect the range of the lived experiences of Rhode Island's LGBTQ+ communities. It will especially aim to reflect key perspectives on the issues and experiences of those who have been historically marginalized in mainstream LGBTQ+ movements including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, disabled, trans and gender non-binary, economically disenfranchised, and otherwise marginalized people. The archive officially kicked off during Pride Month with a virtual Voices of Queer RI: An Oral History Listening Party, where resources and tips were shared for folks interested in producing their own oral history for the archive.

Timely Offerings

PPL Information Services staff offered a variety of timely virtual programs and enhanced services and resources during the spring and summer to help library patrons unable to visit during the shutdown, including a series of Night-Light Read-ins, Game Days, a Gardening Exchange series, virtual Knitting Circles (in partnership with Trinity Rep), a Virtual Librarian service, and a DEI Summer Learning Challenge where teens and adults could download the Beanstack app and engage by reading and taking part in activity challenges to expand their knowledge, find great reads, and earn prizes.

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2020 Passport to Summer Learning Goes Virtual

Now in its seventh year, the Passport to Summer Learning program serving 15,000 Providence K - 5 school children, went virtual for 2020 with the Passport website continuing as the primary portal for participating students and families. The project’s partners – PPL and Providence Community Library (PCL), along with the Providence Public School Department (PPSD) and Mayor Elorza’s Office – adapted the multidimensional program in order to continue to provide Providence children with necessary summer reading, as well as learning and enrichment opportunities, during the pandemic. In 2020, Passport to Summer Learning Takeaway Bags with themes loosely tied to the PPSP curriculum were developed and, with help from Providence Children’s Museum and its Americorps team, 8,000 bags were assembled for curbside pickup at city libraries or mailing over the summer. Students were encouraged to log their minutes on a new summer reading platform, Beanstack, provided statewide by Rhode Island’s Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) with IMLS funding. On Beanstack, students completed challenges and earned badges for the chance to win prizes.



“I can say that the three free technology classes in coding and data analysis that I completed over the course of 30 weeks provided me invaluable skills...Following these Library classes, I began in my current job as Director of Social Programs at Progreso Latino...Because of what I learned, I felt comfortable taking on the responsibility of our agency’s communications, including the development of a new website and various social media accounts.” — Luisa Murillo

PPL’s Education Programs Transition During Pandemic

From the moment the COVID-19 pandemic shut down Rhode Island in March 2020, PPL’s Education Team set about transitioning the Library’s classes, programs and services to online and remote sessions, from adult English as a Second Language (ESL), Citizenship, GED, Learning Lounges, and teen summer employment to a full complement of free technology training series, including Data Pathway (Data Analytics & Visualization), Essential Excel, and Rhode Coders programs.

In cases where programs could not go virtual, staff adapted to keep critical learning happening, including developing training packets to bring to our Pivot the Hustle participants at the Department of Corrections, delivering laptops and hotspots to students in need, and collaborating with FabNewport to ensure maker-space learning continued with Carl Lauro Elementary School students (our PVD Young Makers even participated in 3D printing masks for first responders!) PPL educators offered in-demand virtual technology support and instruction, as well as career coaching services via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, and were instrumental in leading the state’s 22 adult education organizations in transitioning to online learning, creatively providing ESL instruction, and much more. To make programs and offerings more accessible, staff initiated a Virtual Programs Archives on the Library’s YouTube channel, where library users can go for everything from virtual storytimes to recorded cultural programs.

New Programs for PPL Teens Launched

Similar to the Data For Good program that grew out of the RITUG at PPL, the Teen Data for Good program was launched by PPL’s Teen Educator team as an engine for social good, pairing Teen Associates with data science skills with nonprofit organizations that lack staff expertise or capacity. Participating nonprofits received help with their data to make more informed decisions. PPL oversaw a group of 15 Teen Associates to analyze the organization’s data and create data visualizations to help answer their questions.

With an ALA grant, PPL launched the Great Stories Club and Racial Healing Circle in partnership with The Youth Restoration Project and Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College. The ALA Great Stories Club is a thematic reading and discussion program to engage teens facing challenges through literature-based library outreach programs. An expansion of ALA’s longstanding Great Stories Club program model, the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) series featured books that explore questions of race, equity, identity, and history, and support racial healing sessions with participating libraries, their community partners, and their teen readers. This TRHT series was called “Growing Up Brave on the Margins: Courage and Coming of Age.”



The completely new Debs Family Teen Loft, designed with input from our teen community, has been created specifically to provide area youth with a dedicated library space to gather and study.



2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

National Poetry Month Celebration

To celebrate National Poetry Month, PPL invited all to tune in on Facebook, where we posted a Poem-A-Day feature throughout April (favorite picks from PPL staff) along with the Academy of American Poets’ Poem-a-Day digital poetry series featuring previously unpublished poems.

Historic Newspaper Digitization Project Progresses

Despite the pandemic, PPL, in partnership with Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS), made significant progress on its ongoing project to publish a full inventory of the 314 Rhode Island newspaper titles RIHS holds on master microfilm reels, digitize at least 50,000 pages, and promote the accessibility of these digital resources to the community. Nearly 10,000 digitized pages were submitted to the national repository and another 34,000 pages are in process. Over the course of implementing the project we completed our renovated scanning lab, which now includes one of the only high-speed microfilm scanners in the state, and hired new staff to work on the project.

P3 Completes Second Year, Providing More Relevant Services than Ever

Despite the pandemic, the P3 (Propagating Promising Practices) project successfully achieved the two main goals for its second year: support our partner libraries, the Chicago and Los Angeles Public Library systems, in the continued implementation of their chosen intervention; and recruit six new libraries to pilot one of the workforce development practices: Learning Lounges, learning circles, and mobile learning. Chicago and Los Angeles advanced in their work with low-skilled English language learners by offering more learning opportunities through the learning circle educational model and mobile learning.

PPL worked diligently with the P3 developmental evaluator from World Ed, Boston to recruit, onboard, and train six new libraries. We recruited nationwide through networking, a national webinar that attracted 120+ participants, and a Web presence via PPL’s website. The website and application were created for in-person services, and we were excited to see the interest amidst the uncertainty of staff layoffs and library closings in the spring. The six selected libraries, representing urban and rural communities, as well as small and large library systems, came on board in June 2020 and were assisted and supported in reimagining what these practices can look like as virtual services.

Education Partnerships Flourish

In collaboration with ONE Neighborhood Builders, we provided virtual services for 45 residents in the Central Providence Health Equity Zone, including a remote Learning Lounge for central Providence residents, Individual Virtual Computer Learning, Mobile App Learning, Career Coaching, and virtual Digital Literacy classes for teens in central Providence and Olneyville.

In another project with Core Skills Partnership and Skills for RI’s Future, PPL offered in-person ESL classes at Honeywell Corporation in Smithfield, delivering specialized work-based ESL training for individuals looking to gain employment with Honeywell to produce N95 masks. The 50 hours of training upskilled individuals for on-the-job communication tasks and vocabulary building for safety and machinery operation. A total of 21 individuals completed the program and were hired full-time by Honeywell.

PPL announced a new partnership with Coursera to provide free access to online learning, including more than 3,800 courses from top universities and companies. Certificates were offered for each course completed through December, 2020. This program was launched to assist displaced, unemployed, and underemployed workers during the COVID-19 outbreak. We had 54 active learners in the platform who completed 75 certificate courses.



“I’ve been able to accomplish so much because of technology classes taken at the Library and relationships developed with PPL staff. I have learned HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Tableau, data analytics skills and a more advanced skill set in Excel. I’ve been able to strengthen these skills by teaching them to adults in the Library’s Rhode Coders and Data Navigators programs. I was also able to transition to a new role in my company. I was able to use Tableau for projects at work, which ultimately led to a new position being developed for me as a Data and Reporting Specialist. Within less than a year and a half, I went from curious about data visualization to having a job in the field!” — Taylor Jones

2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ProvLibDigital Continues to Grow

PPL’s searchable digital repository has grown to include 15 collections and nearly 24,000 historical and significant resources available free to the public for download and creative use. To date, finding aids have been added for 14 of the collections. A notable new addition includes the UPP Arts Collection, one of the Library’s most recent acquisitions, which documents the artistic, administrative, and educational activities of UPP Arts, formerly known as Urban Pond Procession.

Nicholson Whaling Collection Cataloging

PPL’s Special Collections is home to the Nicholson Whaling Collection, which contains the second-largest collection of whaling logbooks in the country. Most were digitized and posted on the Internet Archive in 2018. This year, we’ve added records for each logbook to PPL’s online catalog so that users can search for them by ship name, shipmaster’s name, whaling ground, or a number of other keywords. As cataloging is completed, scanned logbooks are added to the Library’s digital collections at provlibdigital.org.



“I am from Syria and have a Diploma in Statistics from Damascus University and a Certificate in Administrative Management from the Institute of International Research. I’ve attended both English, and Citizenship RIFLI classes. I joined the classes to improve my English; to get familiar with U.S. history in preparation for the U.S. citizenship exam; and for networking with library staff and students.

The classes were great. They were very useful to me, very informative and I enjoyed every moment. The new resume we did in class impacted my search for employment positively, and I was hired. My teachers became my friends, and...I’ve met classmates from different parts of the world including my home country.” — Fareed Al Haddad

RI Tech Hub for Adult Education Expands Services during Pandemic

The RI Tech Hub for Adult Education became a first responder in the world of technology when adult education providers were suddenly forced to close their doors in March 2020. The Tech Hub team provided immediate assistance to program leaders and teachers on how to quickly transition to remote learning and continued to share important updates with the field through shared documents, daily drop-in virtual tech support office hours, and weekly leadership meetings. The team also trained the field on the use of essential tools for delivering virtual instruction, such as Web conferencing tools, online whiteboards, and screen recordings.

Throughout the year, the Tech Hub created a new website for Rhode Island adult education and continued to grow a professional development pathway for practitioners that would guide them in learning to use technology for teaching and learning. With the need for rapid transition to remote learning during the spring, the demand for technology training and services significantly increased. As a result, the Tech Hub offered 18 major professional development events for 358 attendees.

The Tech Hub also compiled recommendations for technology policies by completing a thorough literature review of Rhode Island Department of Education state policy documents, National Reporting System (NRS) policy documentation, and other comparable distance learning state policies and evidence-based support documents and made recommendations to the state adult education administration in seven key areas: assessment, contact hours, data entry/reporting, integrated technology use, technology requirements, curricula and general document updates. They are currently writing a handbook of guidelines for distance and blended learners for adult education providers.

Mobile Beacon Grant Supports Diverse Public Education

Mobile Beacon awarded the Library a \$10,000 community grant as well as 10 laptops and 10 4G LTE hotspots with free, unlimited internet service from Mobile Beacon. PPL will utilize Mobile Beacon’s community grant to support diverse public education, workforce development, and arts and cultural programming for the community. The laptops and mobile hotspots will be used for PPL’s Data Navigators program, as part of its STEAM-based initiative for teens.





Hearst Foundations Grant Supports Digital Literacy

PPL received \$75,000 from the Hearst Foundations in support of our innovative Technology Career Pathway (TC Pathway). PPL's TC Pathway and digital literacy programming is designed to help all in our community – especially low-income, underserved populations – to build 21st-Century skills and credentials that are critical to success in postsecondary education and employment. Offered in partnership with Roger Williams University College (RWU), the Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School, and other community partners, the TC Pathway provides urban teens, adult immigrants and those with low skills, incarcerated adults, and other underserved populations with low-barrier, high-impact workforce education.

PPL Awarded Libraries Build Business Grant from ALA and Google.org

One of 13 public libraries nationwide, PPL received grant funding of \$145,000 from the American Library Association (ALA) to build capacity and expand programming to small businesses and entrepreneurs from low-income and underrepresented groups. This funding is through Libraries Build Business, an initiative of the ALA funded by Google.org as part of its Grow with Google initiative to create opportunity for all and create learning resources for libraries to support entrepreneurs in its community. Based on their learning, selected libraries will collaborate to compile a “guidebook” for all libraries to help small businesses. Among grant-enabled program enhancements and expansions, PPL created a Small Business Center on its website to serve as a resource hub and main point of access for the community. Additionally, the Library will be implementing expanded programming and services, particularly initiatives focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Verizon Grant Creates Partnership

PPL received \$100,000 from Verizon, creating a partnership and furthering PPL's role as a digital equity changemaker and leader in the state. Working with Verizon, the Library's goal is to promote greater digital equity among all Rhode Islanders through the delivery of existing and new community education initiatives, including technology-related education and workforce development opportunities statewide, and particularly in communities with greatest need. As a center for digital equity, PPL will utilize this significant funding to expand existing programs like the Learning Lounges, Digital Literacy Corps, and Technology Pathway. Additionally, the grant will allow the pioneering of new efforts, including the development of a device repair program in partnership with Verizon and local hardware repair training programs to address current gaps in the availability and accessibility of these services for underserved populations who are most affected by the digital divide.

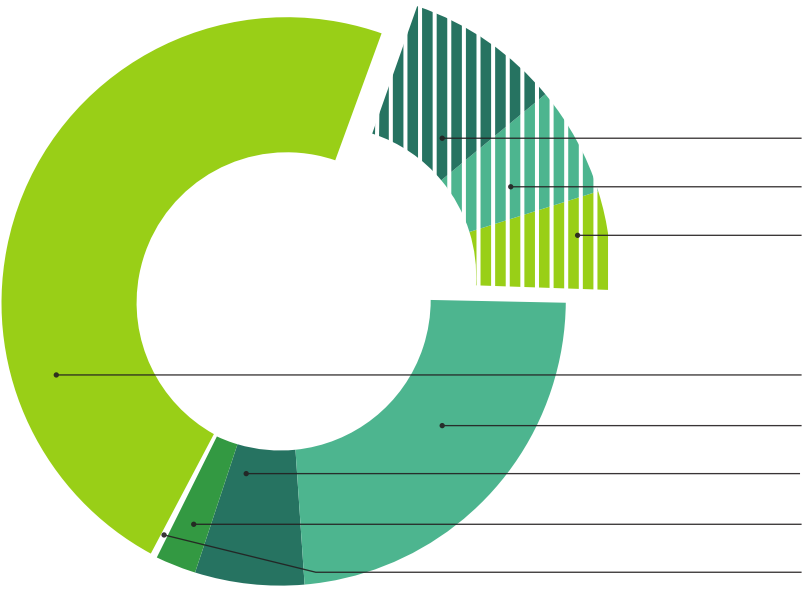


“A prolific artist and scientist from a very early age, Analiese (Ana) has enjoyed her time at PPL’s PVD Young Maker space immensely and has loved bonding with her mentors. When she first discovered she could earn a badge for learning about sewing machines, she earnestly began work on the sewing badge; learning how to thread the machine, re-thread and reload the bobbin, change needles, and use materials efficiently. Through PVD-Maker, she learned how to make decorative pillows and has made many since she began, each with their own artistic flare.

Another project she has worked on at PVD-Maker space is creating pretend robots using re-used or recyclable materials. There is no limit to her creativity for making robots, and she has amassed 50+ robots. She hopes to bring joy to people through her art and creations and she truly loves doing it.” — This story is told by Ana’s mom, Stephanie.

FY19 FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2019 – July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019
Consolidated report of the PPL and PPL Foundation – audited



REVENUE – \$5,170,587		
Public Funds		
State of Rhode Island – Grant in Aid	\$441,669	
Rhode Island Reference Resource Center	\$316,059	
City of Providence – Building Lease	\$279,411	
Private Funds		
Contribution from Endowment	\$2,469,127	
Program Grants & Donations – restricted	\$1,225,951	
Event Rental	\$317,447	
Donations – unrestricted	\$112,998	
Fees, Fines, Interest & Dividends	\$7,925	

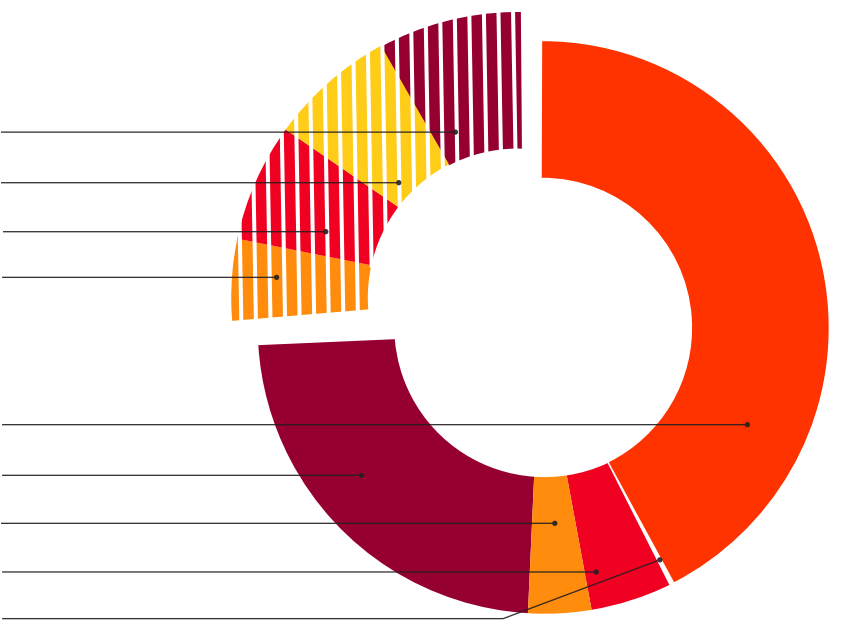
EXPENSES – \$5,488,993 / Surplus (Deficit) – (\$318,406)

Salaries	\$2,815,793
General, Administrative & Other Program Support	\$1,086,968
Benefits	\$428,918
Books, Databases & Materials	\$251,722
PPL Foundation Expenses	\$228,880
Library Equipment & Supplies	\$212,061
Facility Maintenance and Upgrades	\$186,466
Utilities	\$194,713
Life Income Funds	\$58,207
Security Services	\$25,265

FY20 FINANCIAL REPORT

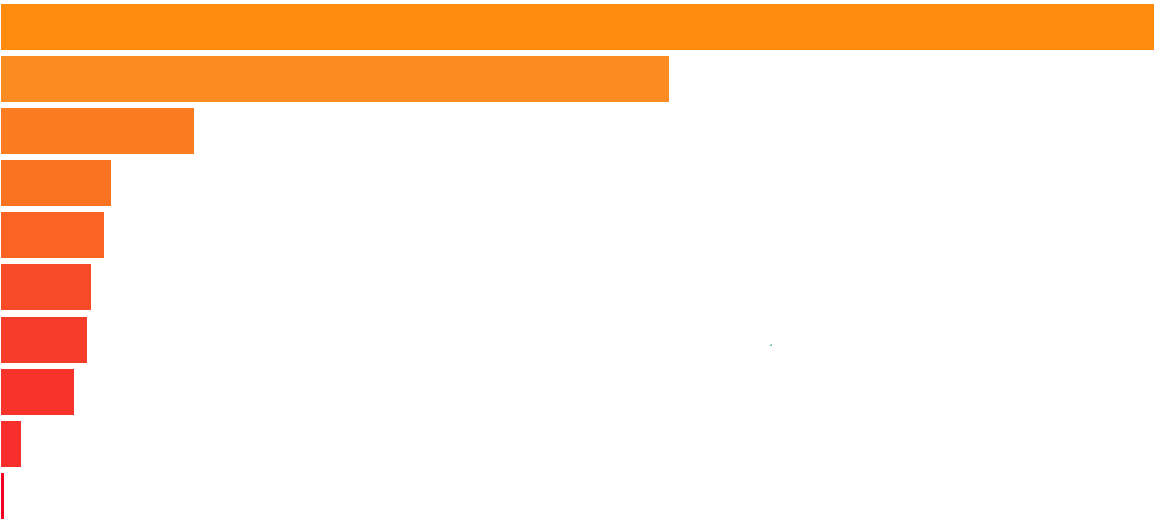
Fiscal Year 2020 – July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020
Consolidated report of the PPL and PPL Foundation – unaudited

REVENUE – \$6,249,652		
Public Funds		
PPP	\$501,562	
State of Rhode Island – Grant in Aid	\$442,413	
Rhode Island Reference Resource Center	\$409,982	
City of Providence – Building Lease	\$279,411	
Private Funds		
Contribution from Endowment	\$2,619,601	
Program Grants & Donations – restricted	\$1,478,317	
Event Rental	\$224,431	
Donations – unrestricted	\$282,535	
Fees, Fines, Interest & Dividends	\$11,399	



EXPENSES – \$6,117,164 / Surplus (Deficit) – \$132,488

Salaries	\$2,784,561
General, Administrative & Other Program Support	\$1,617,621
Benefits	\$473,875
Facility Maintenance and Upgrades	\$275,797
Books, Databases & Materials	\$257,156
PPL Foundation Expenses	\$216,789
Library Equipment & Supplies	\$225,692
Utilities	\$187,382
Life Income Funds	\$60,912
Security Services	\$17,377



2019 & 2020 DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

PPL Newly Launched Friends

PPL officially launched our first-ever PPL Friends Committee with a kick-off benefit in April 2019. The PPL Friends Committee is a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting the Library's work and mission through community ambassadorship/outreach, volunteer recruitment, signature events, and fundraising support.

PPL Holds Inaugural PPL Give Day!

We held our inaugural PPLGive Day! on June 12, 2019, a community giving day created as an opportunity for community members to both share their passion for and give back to PPL while also taking part in fun, engaging learning activities at the Library (and on social media). The day was so successful that, with the help of our PPL Friends, we surpassed our goal of \$10,000, raising \$12,163 from a total of 77 donors. With a \$10,000 match, our final total raised was \$22,163! Not only was this the most PPL has raised in a single day, but we were thrilled that more than half of the day's gifts were from first-time donors or from donors who already gave this year and increased their gifts. The day would not have been possible without the help and leadership of members of our new PPL Friends committee and dedicated PPL staff.

First-ever Virtual Gala Exceeds All Expectations; raises \$143,000

On Friday, September 25, 2020 we spread some virtual (and even a little in-person) JOY in celebration of the Library's completed renovation!

Throughout the day, ticket-holders and sponsors experienced the Library's first-ever virtual Wine Gala. They visited PPL's brand new atrium to pick up their "Gala-in-a-Box" kits featuring a 4-course meal from Russell Morin Catering & Events, a sampling of four featured wines provided by Bottles Fine Wine, and a take-home floral centerpiece created by Robin Hollow Farm. Guests had the opportunity to walk the red carpet, provided by PEAK Event Services, listen to beautiful piano music played by Rod Luther, and take a selfie at the PPL step-and-repeat before bringing their Gala kits home to enjoy later. Attendees tuned in to a fabulous "show," including an incredible opening number by Metamorphosis Dance Company and a must-see hunt for wine throughout the Library!

New Monthly Giving Program, CatalogPPL, Launched

In 2020, we launched a brand new monthly giving program -- CatalogPPL! CatalogPPL members are a group of dedicated supporters who know that every dollar makes a difference at the Library. In addition to having their own card in a vintage PPL card catalog (see what we did there?!), CatalogPPL members receive multiple unique benefits as a *thank you* for their ongoing support. Learn more about the CatalogPPL program at prov.pub/catalogPPL.

Our spacious Children's Discovery Library now offers connected but distinct spaces and activities for families and children of all ages, from early childhood to pre-teen. The room is specially designed, with age-appropriate layouts and furniture, including computers.





“I’ve always thought that libraries played a central role, not just in education but also as a place where the community can come together, a source of common ground. I think the fundamental source of opportunity is education, which is having schools and libraries that are excellent. We’re the beneficiaries of a good community library system in Rhode Island...Libraries function as integral parts of the community...I benefited from all these libraries as a child.”
 — Senator Jack Reed

PPL Awards Enlightenment Award and Announces Naming of Information Commons

Public libraries exist as fundamental community institutions, providing information and access to learning, free and open to all. This mission and its significant impact on the community is something that Rhode Island’s senior Senator Jack Reed has not only understood his entire life but has sought to secure and support throughout his career.

This is why, in recognition of and tribute to his extraordinary dedication to the betterment and growth of not only Rhode Island’s but the entire nation’s libraries, PPL was thrilled to present Rhode Island’s Senator Jack Reed with the Library’s highest honor — The Enlightenment Award — at our 2019 Savor the Story Wine Gala. Further, the Library announced that it will recognize Senator Reed’s longtime support of and advocacy for public libraries by formally naming its new Information Commons the Senator Jack Reed Information Commons.

The Reed Information Commons will be a spacious destination where library users will have increased opportunities to use state-of-the-art technology, as well as improved and expanded access to the Library’s vast information resources.

Senator Reed has proven himself a stalwart champion of both libraries and museums over the past three decades. Having taken up the mantle from his predecessor the late Senator Claiborne Pell, whose work in 1996 to establish the Museum and Library Services Act — which funds the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) — Senator Reed has continued fighting for and succeeded in updating, strengthening, and getting this act reauthorized repeatedly so that it continues to support and help libraries meet community needs. Most recently in 2018, the Senator’s bipartisan legislation authorized up to \$299 million annually through 2025 to advance the roles of libraries and museums in education, lifelong learning, preservation and workforce development.

Thanks to his hard work, PPL and other Rhode Island libraries have received important IMLS grant funding for varied initiatives, including grants through the Library Services and Technology Act to support improved online resources. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Reed has helped secure \$15.2 million in federal funding and grants for Rhode Island libraries and museums since 2010. In 2018, Rhode Island received formula and competitive grant funding totaling \$1,658,149 from IMLS.

In 2016, PPL was awarded a three-year IMLS National Leadership Grant to create a high-impact teen workforce development program model. And in 2018, PPL and partners nationwide received a competitive \$553,000 National Leadership Grant from IMLS to test and disseminate innovative library practices in adult education and workforce development.

We are extremely grateful to Senator Reed for all he has done to make a difference for PPL, our state’s and our nation’s libraries.



2019 & 2020 GIFTS AND GRANTS

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 2019 and 2020 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.

This list reflects the generous support of our donors from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020. Some gifts may include an employer's match. Multi-year pledges are listed in full in the year they are made; donors are listed by highest gift over fiscal years 2019 and 2020; annual payments are reflected in this list. We make every effort to produce accurate lists. We apologize if we have misspelled or omitted a name.

\$100,000+

Institute of Museum and
Library Services
National Endowment for
the Humanities
Rhode Island Department
of Education
Verizon Foundation

\$50,000+

American Library Association*
Carnegie Corporation of New York*
Hearst Foundation
Rhode Island Foundation*
United Way of Rhode Island*

\$25,000+

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Our new, light-filled Seminar Room features state-of-the-art technology supporting a variety of gatherings for up to 100.

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“Libraries are the ultimate matchmakers – helping patrons from all walks of life find the resources and information they need. During this unprecedented time, we need PPL’s services more than ever. PPL is tireless in finding ways to meet the needs of its patrons: from helping small businesses navigate issues stemming from COVID-19 to providing remote learning lounges, virtual digital literacy classes, and career coaching, to making sure library resources continue to be available to Rhode Island residents both in and out of their building. The bottom line is PPL supports us and they need our support too.” — Katherine Messier





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“My reason for supporting PPL and especially Adult Literacy is because as a child my first report card indicated I had trouble in reading. My adopted parents immediately took action and got me books to read and helped me. To this day, I have a firm belief in adults being able to read and help their children.

I have been a Providence resident for over 40 years and the first thing I did when I moved here is get a library card. PPL is not only a tool for learning, but offers countless hours of entertainment. I thank everyone on the staff who makes my every visit feel like I am in a warm, inviting home. — Jo DuBiel

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Transforming Into a 21st-Century Library

What goes into completely transforming a historic library building to make it a vibrant 21st-Century gathering place where all members of the community can come to explore, learn, create, and grow? How long does it take and what challenges must be met and overcome?

While our campaign materials state that PPL's construction project began in September 2018, anyone who is familiar with the Library and our journey over the past decade knows that we have been reimagining our future for years, carefully putting the building blocks into place so that when we finally embarked on our \$26 million construction project – the largest public library renovation in Rhode Island history – we would have no result other than achieving and exceeding our goals and the community's expectations.

No Looking Back...

We began to envision the possibilities in 2014 when the PPL Board of Trustees committed to a bold new blueprint for providing 21st-Century library services, not only for Providence, but for all Rhode Islanders. We imagined delivering high-engagement and high-impact programs and enabling transformational experiences for everyone. We set out on our five-year plan and made significant progress, achieving key educational and community-building goals. But, we quickly realized that achieving our goal of becoming a place of transformation and innovation meant we needed to first transform our aging physical library. We began taking steps to do just this...there was no looking back!

Imagining the possibilities was easy; setting the ball in motion called for an all-hands-on-deck, sweeping approach, involving our Board, staff, and supporters, along with our entire community. From the start and at every step as we got underway, we sought input from community partners and key constituents.

One example was an early collaboration with Roger Williams University through its Firm in Residence program and graduate students in its School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation participating in a Community Partnership Center architectural studio program led by Bob Miklos and Mary Ann Upton of PPL's architectural firm designLAB. Some of the students' design concepts were pivotal in helping us reimagine what our spaces could become and provided the inspiration and impetus for the THINK AGAIN renovation.

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*Extensive upgrades to our exterior
include window expansion to
increase visibility into and out of
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THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Meanwhile, we convened a group of library staff and community partners to begin to envision our future space needs based on the programs and services that would take place in our 21st-Century library. Additionally, we tasked a group of staff members to think about what a temporary library space would look like for operation during our construction. We began reaching out to our community partners to discuss possible use of their spaces to host some of our regular programs during a planned 12- to 18-month-long renovation.

The task list was long, but methodically our Trustees, and especially our Facilities Committee, assisted leadership in a step-by-step approach. From choosing an architect and, developing and approving our building plan, to the rigorous selection of a building contractor, the project got under way. Simultaneously, staff and trustees set a multi-pronged financial strategy into motion, with efforts to lay the groundwork for securing nearly \$9 million in critical state funding as well as working with financial consultants on an extensive process to apply for millions in New Market Tax Credits and other important financing to enable us to move ahead. With this financing and the seeds of a Capital Campaign plan underway, we concurrently conceived and began the massive undertaking of purging, an effort that took months!

Moves, moves, and more moves...

Heading into our project, our buildings were respectively 65- and 118-years-old. Our 83,000- square-foot renovation included the entire 1953 Empire Street and book stack buildings and parts of our original 1900 building not touched in our 2012 restoration. That's a lot of years and a lot of space, which made for a lot of clearing! To make way for significant demolition and reconstruction of new spaces, we set about updating our vast collections, reorganizing our storage areas, and parting ways with old furniture and other unused items. What wasn't cleared out or given away was sold at auction.

Next came construction; a floor-by-floor Rubik's cube-like matrix of moving things (and people!) around. For months, we consulted the moving map (spreadsheet), dictating a series of relocations of items and people throughout the renovation – some multiple times as different areas were worked on. Finally, a plan was devised for moving roughly 500,000 books/ materials (about 5.5 miles of shelving!) to offsite storage for several months. But not the Special Collections – another 3 miles! Those thousands of items, including our signature Nicholson Whaling and Updike Printing collections, would stay onsite and move in phases at designated times into thoroughly new quarters, specially designed to secure and preserve them. We employed a professional book-moving company for all of these historic moves.

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Historical considerations...

The architects’ renderings showcased the grandeur of our building and helped the vision for our transformed library come to life. Thus began the complex process of renovating a historic structure. While we were at liberty to make considerable changes inside – which ironically proved more a process of restoring many of the spaces back to their original or similar uses (with enhancements, of course) than turning them all into something completely different – we found that we were bound by historical considerations when it came to the exterior. Inside, we were free to eliminate small rooms, and floors and landings built in a previous renovation, as well as hang new levels and build an expansive three-story staircase to help with wayfinding. Outside, we were required to seek and receive permission from city and state historical commissions in order to make any substantive changes.

Despite restrictions, we were happily able to carry out a number of welcome improvements, including enlarging and lengthening our windows to enable better views and let in more light and even adding a brand new window to offer a never-before-seen view of our historic 1900 building from Washington and Empire Streets. And, for the first time ever, our building would also be lit from the outside!

Looking to Our Future...

Undertaking and living through a massive construction project has been simultaneously exhilarating and exhausting, both for library staff and the public. Planning and keeping the project on-course and on-budget was no small job; it necessitated daily check-ins with construction personnel, weekly meetings, and constant tracking of minute details to ensure our immediate and near-term needs were met and any infrastructure we wanted in the future was included. We’re talking about outfitting ourselves with state-of-the-art technology, including miles of electrical and ethernet cable! We’re talking about completely new furniture and finishings throughout the Library, specifically designed not only for contemporary library service, but for ultimate flexibility going forward.

From beginning to end, we had our share of the usual surprises, incidents, and changes to the plan that are inevitable when renovating a decades-old building. Keeping our patrons, partners, donors, and the public abreast of the myriad details and changes was also critical and a constant part of the project. Throughout, we welcomed visitors for tours of the project, always receiving accolades from everyone who experienced the transformation.

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Ascending the new grand staircase to the first floor, patrons are greeted with a gracious, new Info Services desk.



Our beautifully restored Martha P. Sherman Mural Room, featuring mural artwork by painter Edward Dubuque (c.1935), offers a new multi-functional space for up to 100.

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Rosalyn Sinclair's \$1,000,000 Leadership Gift Kicks Off THINK AGAIN Capital Campaign

The Library's 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, in particular, our library. Rosalyn's exemplary campaign to give back to the community has benefited people throughout our state, extending a level of health and prosperity through initiatives large and small. PPL continues to be 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 was 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.

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Martha P. Sherman Mural Room

Martha P. Sherman, Trustee Emerita, an inaugural PPL Enlightenment Award recipient, was an incredible woman who always kept PPL close to her heart. Mrs. Sherman exhibited an unwavering vision and inspiration, dedicating herself to strengthening the Library's important role in the community through a multitude of positions and campaigns throughout her decades of service to PPL. She was a longstanding member of both the PPL Lyra Brown Nickerson and Conservator Societies. Upon her passing in 2020, we were pleased to honor her unparalleled legacy of library service – a legacy which includes extremely generous personal commitment and financial support beginning in 1958 – by naming our beautifully renovated Mural Room in her honor. This room, which once served as the Library's Children's Room beginning in the 1930s, had particular significance to Mrs. Sherman, who was very passionate about services to children. The Mural Room also served as the main room of the Library's Special Collections Department until 2019, holding among its collections 30 books of significant value related to British artist/illustrator Arthur Rackham, donated by Mrs. Sherman in 2000.

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



Senator Jack Reed Information Commons

In Senator Jack Reed’s own words, “libraries play a central role, not just in education but also as a place where the community can come together, a source of common ground.” We could not agree more! Creating such a place for all Rhode Island residents is PPL’s primary goal. Through our transformative \$25 million renovation we have built a true 21st-Century library and, at the heart, a new and spacious Information Commons where library users will have increased opportunities to use cutting-edge technology, as well as improved and expanded access to our vast information resources. We were honored to recognize Senator Jack Reed’s longtime support of and advocacy for public libraries by formally naming PPL’s new Information Commons the Senator Jack Reed Information Commons. We cannot imagine a more fitting tribute to Senator Reed, who has dedicated himself throughout his career to the betterment and growth of not only our state’s but libraries nationwide.

Thank you to the Senator Jack Reed Information Commons supporters

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A new window in our Info Commons now gives a never-before-seen view of our 1900 building from Washington and Empire Streets.

The Empire building, built in 1953, was purposely extended out 20 ft beyond the original structure on Washington Street to obscure the view of the 1900 building from Washington/Empire Streets.



Our updated art-deco Donald J. Farish Auditorium on the third floor features 255 seats, is completely accessible, and outfitted with state-of-the-art light and sound systems, making it a premier destination performance venue in Providence.

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Jensen Hughes
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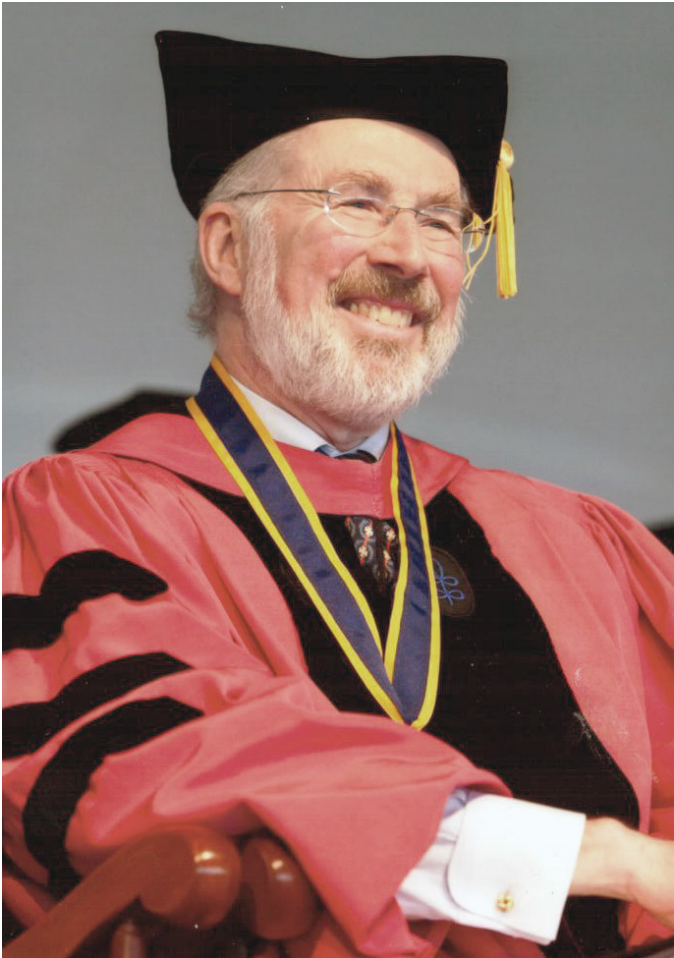
Financing

The Washington Trust Company
Chase
RI Insfatructure Bank & Greenworks
Lending CPACE Progam
Building America
Consortium America
Barbara Sokoloff and Associates

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Donald J. Farish Auditorium

PPL proudly named our newly renovated auditorium for Donald J. Farish, PhD, JD, who served as president of Roger Williams University (RWU) from June 2011 until his sudden, untimely death in July 2018. The naming honored Farish's strong commitment to the educational partnership between RWU and PPL, which dated back to 2014 when he announced RWU's leasing of the building directly across the street from PPL for the University's new and expanded urban campus – and his passionate belief in providing access to educational opportunities to those all across Rhode Island.



Thank you to the Donald J. Farish Auditorium Supporters

\$100,000+

Maia Farish*

\$10,000+

Deming and Jane Sherman
Mark Mandell and Yvette Boisclair
Jack and Sara McConnell

\$1,000-\$9,999

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Sally P. McDonald Willis
Molly and Arnold Robinson
Martha Werenfels and Frank Satterthwaite
Sally Strachan

THINK AGAIN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Additional Major Named Spaces

- The Workshop – made possible by Amica Insurance & Robert R. Faulkner
- First Floor Information Desk – in honor of Anna Lombardo
- The Terry and Suzanne Murray Welcome Desk
- Debs Family Teen Loft
- The Joan Thompson Boghossian Gallery
- Russell Morin Gallery Walk
- The Taylor Family Living Room
- Joel and Kate Stark Living Room
- Second Floor Living Room – in loving memory of Arlene M. DiMuccio
- Parsons Capital Management Classroom
- Nordson Foundation Idea Alcove
- Marilyn Reed Edwards Piano Room

Significant THINK AGAIN Project Financing and Funding

- The Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services provided \$8.8 million in state funding in support of this largest library construction project ever undertaken.
- PPL received \$4.2 million in New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) equity and \$1.6 million in C-PACE financing toward our historic building transformation based on the overall plan to create modern and flexible learning spaces and expand community learning opportunities, particularly the kinds of 21st-Century workforce development and technology training initiatives.
- Champlin Foundations contributed \$1,500,000 over three consecutive years in support of the internal and external building upgrades.
- Anonymous Gift of \$500,000.
- PPL received \$450,000 in federal funding through the National Endowment for the Humanities’ new Infrastructure and Capacity-Building Challenge grant program to preserve culturally significant works and artifacts and modernize for the future.
- Rhode Island State Council on the Arts contributed \$200,000 toward the Auditorium upgrade.
- The Providence Journal Charitable Legacy Fund contributed \$200,000 toward the building transformation.

THINK AGAIN
Project Team

City of Providence

Mayor Jorge Elorza
Department of Arts, Culture + Tourism
Department of Inspections and Standards
Department of Planning and Development
Department of Public Works
Downtown Design Review Committee
Parks Department,
Office of City Forester
Providence City Council
Providence Fire Department

State of Rhode Island

Governor Gina Raimondo
Rhode Island State Legislature
Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission
Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services
Rhode Island Budget Office

Other Thanks

William B. Meyer Book Movers
SJ Corio Auctioneers

Special Thanks

The Staff of Providence Public Library
The Board of Trustees of Providence Public Library
Partners in Philanthropy and Louise Dinsmore





MISSION

PPL inspires Rhode Islanders to be lifelong learners by engaging their curiosity and offering access to extraordinary experiences, resources and ideas.

VISION

PPL will....

- *CATALYZE the aspirations and dreams of our community*
- *RESPOND to our community by engaging them in our decision making and creating innovative approaches to respond to changes and opportunities*
- *BE AN ACCESSIBLE, WELCOMING HUB of activity, offering innovative educational offerings and cultural experiences*
- *CONNECT our community to information, knowledge, and resources...and each other*
- *PARTNER with organizations and systems across the state and be known for our collaborative culture*
- *BE A JOYOUS SPACE for our community and our staff, who are supported with opportunities for continuous learning*
- *DIVERSIFY and celebrate our engaged and committed staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees*
- *Be a FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE institution able to deliver on our mission for decades to come*

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Martha P. Sherman*
Joel S. Stark

** Martha Sherman passed away on April 1, 2020. We honor her memory and legacy.*





Providence Public Library

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