A Message from Our New Conservator Society Co-chairs

As members of the PPL Board of Trustees, we greet you as the newly inducted co-chairs of the Conservator Society Committee and wish to begin with a hearty THANK YOU for joining as Conservators and supporting PPL in such a meaningful way. We also want to congratulate all of you, our Conservators, for attending virtually in robust numbers — did you know that our Conservator Society membership has more than doubled over the past year? And this is despite our not being able to gather in person. The silver lining of this awful pandemic is the limitless creativity and energy that flowed out of nonprofit cultural institutions everywhere. We all have been the beneficiaries of this virtual engagement and inspiration, and the PPL team certainly did its admirable share of engaging and inspiring not only our Conservators, but our entire community.

With the pandemic still consuming our daily lives, we are presenting Conservator Society programs that feature leading doctors and public health officials. But we will always seek programming inspiration from our vast and varied Special Collections as well as delve into the social, environmental, cultural, and economic issues of our time. After all, PPL’s stated vision is “All Rhode Islanders are engaged, informed, enriched, and thriving. Libraries across our state are viewed as essential catalysts in increasing opportunities for all.” As Conservators, you help us realize this vision that is reflected in all of our programming. But we have fun, too.

From a full-on master-chef-led cooking demo to celebrate Mardi Gras ("Laissez les bon temps rouler!" February 16, 2021), to a thoughtful discussion about racial identity ("The Vanishing Half: A Conservator Conversation with Brown University Professor Kevin Quashie," March 10, 2021), and a journey into the minds of cats and dogs with “cat whisperer” veterinarian Dr. Cathy Lund and dog trainer “extraordinaire” Angela Aurelio ("Yappy Hour: An Evening of Pet-Working!" August 11, 2021), PPL’s Conservator Society takes us down many pathways of inquiry and interests, and we strive to keep these pathways well worth traveling! And, it goes without saying, that keeping these pathways open and interesting cannot happen without your continuing support; we hope that as the holiday season approaches, you will include PPL in your giving priorities.

The Conservator Society website is regularly updated and new-member names have been added (and are also included in this newsletter). If you would like to invite friends, family, and colleagues to join our group, please let us know! Contact Alex Rempis, arempis@provlib.org or 401-575-6478.

Thank you again for all that you do. Please enjoy this newsletter and we look forward to seeing you at upcoming Conservator Society events both online and in-person. Be well in the meantime!

Adriana I. Dawson and Maia Farish
Co-chairs, PPL Conservator Society
Members, PPL Board of Trustees
PPL Alum Spotlight

Because of YOUR generosity, individuals from all walks of life have transformative experiences at PPL. We’re thrilled to share these stories of success and achievement with you to demonstrate the incredible impact you are making when you support the Library. You REALLY do make these alum stories possible!

Melanie Anaya: Valuable Lessons Learned at PPL

I was matched with Providence Public Library through the Brown University Bonner Community Program and worked with Chris Bourret until I graduated!

My favorite accomplishment was leading my own Citizenship class. Actually being in charge of my own class and having two hours to take my mind off my coursework was essential, especially once COVID hit.

From the back seat of the car, I heard a gravelly voice from the radio detailing the Civil War. My mom, in the driver’s seat, listened intently in preparation for her citizenship exam. I hung onto every word too because, at eight, it was I who taught her. Every night, after completing my homework, I rushed over to read to her about the history of the United States and quiz her on tricky questions while she cooked dinner. Before, my teaching revolved around helping her with English in the doctor’s office or official documents. Now, we were accomplishing a tangible goal together while I learned about my own country.

“I want to practice medicine the same way PPL and Chris taught me to teach with the person in the center.”

It was these moments from my childhood that formed my love for teaching. Ever since, I have yearned to make a difference in others’ lives. That’s why I was especially drawn to the Library’s Citizenship program and, as a future physician, I knew I had to teach my patients and find new methods to learn and teach. I was lucky to meet Chris, who is the best mentor, friend, and boss a girl could ever ask for.

I learned an incredible amount about teaching, but also about people, their lives, and dreams. As a current medical student, these values are very dear to me because physicians often don’t have the time to let patients speak their stories. However, I want to practice medicine the same way PPL and Chris taught me to teach — with the person in the center. I could write essays about how important this experience has been to me, but those would never be enough to show my gratitude. Though I am no longer the young girl, sitting in the back seat of a car teaching her mother English, the same desire to connect and build community through teaching fuels me.

Program Feature

PPL Helping Seniors Bridge the Digital Divide

Keeping their senior residents mentally healthy and socially connected has been a priority throughout the pandemic at NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, but bridging the digital gap for residents has been an additional adventure.

Now, thanks to funding from Rhode Island Housing’s Bridging the Digital Divide program and a partnership with PPL, the Library’s Learning & Career Coach & Workforce Development Coordinator Lina Bravo is helping the Meadow’s 88 residents — who had previously received Amazon Fire tablets through a partnership with Verizon — to gain the skills needed to utilize their tablets to their fullest potential.

“COVID-19 negatively impacted the lives of senior citizens who were ready to enjoy their retirement and free time with their loved ones after working hard and growing their families,” Lina said. “They found themselves isolated with little to no access to a digital world — which is new and scary for many of them. I’m pleased that PPL is able to help these seniors develop digital skills and fully enjoy the advantages of using technology in their lives.”

Catch Our Talk with the Docs on YouTube!

We had a wonderful event on Nov. 2 with Dr. James McDonald and Dr. Philip Chan on the state of the pandemic in Rhode Island. It was informative, thoughtfull, and reassuring in many ways. We are grateful to be led by such gifted public health practitioners — who are incredibly eloquent, accessible speakers and teachers — in our little state.

To view the video of the evening, please check it out on PPL’s YouTube: https://youtu.be/mjinkwOxyp8

Welcome New Conservators!

Welcome to Patricia Andreu and Sergio Gonzalez, Dr. Philip Chan, Tom Nicholson, Jen and Jeremy Sherer, Dr. James McDonald, and Mag Livingston Willard.

We’d love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please call Alex at 401-575-6478 or email arempis@provlib to help us stay in better touch!
PPL Conservators

Mr. Tom Ahern
Hope Alswang and Henry Joyce
Patricia Andreu and Sergio Gonzalez
Angela Ankoma
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Ashworth
Mr. Eric Rietveld and
  Mr. Nicholas Autiello
Ms. Christina Bevilacqua
Mr. Leon and Mrs. Karen Boghossian
James Brayton Hall
Tammy Brown
Ms. Kathy Bullard
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Buonanno
Ms. Joan M. Caine
Mr. Arnold B. Chace, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Chaffee
Dr. Philip Chan
Ms. Catherine Channell
Dr. Joseph A. Chazan
Ms. Lisa Churchville and
  Mr. Alex Carlin
Mr. Samuel C. Coale
Joel Cohen and Andrea Toon
Michael Costa
Dr. Laina Crowthers
Ms. Karen Davidson
Nick Debs
Ms. Elizabeth A. Debs
Ms. Lisa DeCubellis
Ms. Karen G. DelPonte
Ms. Lizzy Desibia
Mr. and Mrs. Brad Dimeo
Bob and Rena DiMuccio
Jim Doogan and Denise Ogilvie
Ms. Jo Dubiel
Eli Dunn
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Edwards, Jr.
Ryan and Sandra Ellis
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Fain
Mrs. Maia Farish
Mrs. Pam Faulkner
Dr. Roberta Feather and
  Mr. James Hackett
Ms. Janet A. Feyler
Ms. Nancy J. Fritz
David and Ellen Galkin
Mr. and Mrs. Aram G. Garabedian
Louis Goldman
Mr. Joseph R. Miller and
  Ms. Maria Goncalves
Ellen Gordon Reeves
Ms. Cheryl Greenfeld Teverow and
  Mr. Jim Krupanski
Mr. Scott Guthery and Ms. Mary Cronin
Mrs. Katharine Hazard Flynn and
  Mr. Larry Flynn
Dr. Melvin Hershkowitz
Kathleen Hittner, M.D. and Mr. Barry Hittner
Ms. Pat Igoe
Mr. Peter Heywood and Ms. Nancy Jacobs
Susan Jaffe Tane
Dr. Ashish Jha
Dr. Mark Kelley
Mr. Billy Kepner and Mr. Joe Zappala
Mr. and Mrs. David Kertzer
Ms. Sally Lapides
Ms. Kasandra Larsen
Ms. Sharon Lloyd Clark
Mr. Guy Lombard
Fran Loosen
Mr. Rodney Eric López and
  Dr. Noni Thomas López
Dr. Catherine Lund
Mr. Brian MacCracken
Mr. and Mrs. Ira C. Magaziner
Ms. Melinda Mailhot
Mr. Winn Major and
  Mrs. Susan E. Starkweather
Ms. Lianne Marshall
Mr. Jack Martin and Mr. James Murdock
Mr. Fred L. Mason, Jr. and
  Mrs. Tonia Mason
PPL Conservators

Mrs. Dorothy R. McCulloch
Ms. Hope McCulloch
Ms. Olivia B. McCullough
Dr. James McDonald
Mrs. Maureen McDonald
Ms. Amy Migdal
Jane and Linton Moulding
Ms. Ruth K. Mullen
Mr. Tom Nicholson and
Mrs. Catherine Nicholson
Ms. Jane O'Farrell and
Mr. Richard A. Sherman
Mr. and Mrs. Gerard O'Halloran
Mr. and Mrs. David Odeh
Mrs. Mary B. Olenn
Mr. and Ms. Ken Orenstein
Mr. Charles Otto and Ms. Carol Grant
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Parsons
Kinnari and Jaymin Patel
Ms. Rene Payne
Mr. Edward Levine and
Ms. Isabella Porter
Professor Kevin Quashie
Alexander Rempis and Jason Viveiros
Mr. David Rempis
Mrs. Deborah T. Rempis
Ms. Joan Ress Reeves
Ms. Dawn A. Robertson
Micah Salkind and Ted McGuire
Ms. Leni Salkind
Mrs. Jacqueline Savoie and
Dr. Dennis McCool
Larry and Barbara Schoenfeld
Mr. Clark Schoettle
Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe, Jr.
Jen and Jeremy Sherer
Tamar Sherer and Chris Cooper
Mr. Edwin F. Sherman and
Ms. Sheryl Ash
Dr. Meera Simoes
Ms. Rosalyn Sinclair
Dr. and Mrs. Arun Singh
Ms. Jillian Siqueland
Mr. Robert Sloan, Jr. and
Mrs. Catherine Sloan
Ms. Barbara Sokoloff and
Dr. Herb Rakatansky
Mrs. Mary and Mr. Alfred Speare
Mr. and Mrs. Joel N. Stark
Mr. Christopher Stevens
Mr. Zachary Stolz
Ms. Sally Strachan
Mr. Shivan and Mrs. Jyothi Subramaniam
Mr. and Mrs. Don Sweitzer
Mrs. Anne Szostak and
Mr. Michael Szostak
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Taylor
Nate and Emily Taylor
Mr. Eric Taylor and Dr. Jennifer Barredo
Maureen Taylor and Dexter Strong
William and Donna Templeton
Ms. Abigail B. Test
Ms. Dale Thompson and
Mr. Frederick Buhler
Lisa Tortolani
Dr. Paul Van Zuiden
Ellen A. Wagner
Stephen Wagner
Mag Livingston Willard
Mr. Raymond L. Willis, III and
Mrs. Sally P. McDonald Willis
Dr. Jacqueline Wilson and
Jonathan Keattch
Marilyn Woloohojjian
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin L. Zurier
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. Zurier