

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

## Bergenfield Public Library



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Bergenfield Public Library



# ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The Bergenfield Public Library provides educational opportunities, resources, and services that enable residents of all ages to maximize their true potential and unlock the best in Bergenfield.



@bergenfieldlibrary



@BergenfieldLib



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Continuous effort—not strength or intelligence—is the key to unlocking our potential.

**Winston Churchill**



As we reflect on the past year, it's with great pride that we share the exciting strides our library has made in expanding its services and enhancing its facilities. This year has been a pivotal one, marked by significant new services and forward-thinking projects that will shape the future of our library.

Among the most notable achievements, we proudly launched our Social Work Intern Program through affiliations with Fairleigh Dickinson University and Rutgers University Schools of Social Work. This partnership allows us to better support our community by providing resources and assistance to those in need. Over the course of 2024, Masters in Social Work (MSW) graduate student interns met with 160 individuals at the Library and provided assistance related to homelessness prevention, the U.S. naturalization process, questions related to NJ Family Care, Medicare and SNAP benefits, filing for unemployment and searching for jobs.

In addition, we began preparing for renovations that will transform our physical space to meet the evolving needs of our patrons. These renovations are subsidized by the Community Digital Connect Grant administered by the New Jersey State Library. The purpose of this grant is to “enable the construction or improvement of buildings designed to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring located in communities with critical need for the project.”

Much of 2024 was spent on the behind the scenes preparation for this project, including administering multiple focus groups, surveys and informational workshops to obtain feedback from residents about the ways in which our renovations could serve them better. In 2025, the Library will undergo renovations to enlarge the Young Adult Room as well as make other building improvements. These renovations will ultimately create a more welcoming, accessible, and dynamic environment for all ages, ensuring that our library remains a vital community hub for learning, connection, and growth.

As always, the Library Board of Trustees and staff remain thankful to the individuals and organizations who contribute their time, energy, and resources to making our library a place of possibility for everyone. Your support helps ensure that we remain a welcoming space where all are encouraged to learn, grow, and connect. Some of these groups include:

- Borough of Bergenfield and the governing body for its continued financial assistance
- Bergenfield Elks Lodge #1477 and Bergenfield Lions Club for their donations
- Friends of Bergenfield Library for their dedicated fundraising and advocacy efforts

Libraries have always been places of access, opportunity, and inclusion. We recognize that our community is made up of people from many backgrounds, with different interests, abilities, and life experiences. We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that everyone has access to the knowledge, tools, and connections they need to thrive.

*Allison Ballo*

Allison Ballo  
Library Director

# STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIVITY

➔ *HOW'D WE DO IN 2024?*

## MISSION

The Bergenfield Public Library provides opportunities, resources and services that empower residents of all ages to maximize their true potential and unlock the best in Bergenfield.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### ***GOAL ONE: LEAD THE COMMUNITY AS THE PRIMARY CULTURAL AND CIVIC CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING***

- Hosted a diverse slate of multicultural programs, including “And Still I Rise” performance (celebrating Black History month), 3D Origami workshop (celebrating AAPI Heritage month), Latin dance classes (celebrating Hispanic Heritage month) and a Diwali festival.
- 170 children and 112 adults participated in this year’s Summer Reading program and read a combined total of 2,450 books
- Added virtual author program through Library Speakers Consortium to slate of adult programs. Past author lectures include Liane Moriarty, Frieda McFadden and Christopher Paolini. This subscription is generously subsidized by the Friends of the Bergenfield Library.
- Added the Guggenheim Museum to the Museum Pass program. This pass allows free admission for 5 adults and up to 5 children under the age of 18.
- Expanded the Library of Things collection to include a sewing machine, portable power station and musical instruments
- ESL tutors + students spent 4,510 hours together on 310 one on one classes, group conversation classes and US Citizenship classes

### ***GOAL TWO: FOSTER A COMFORTABLE AND FRIENDLY SPACE***

- Thanks to Library Assistant Maria B., the Library was able to receive free supplies donated by Paramus Building Supply to build 2 picnic tables. The Bergenfield Elks Lodge #1477 and members of their Antlers program generously assisted with building these tables.
- Power washed the building’s exterior
- The Library’s Programming, Code of Conduct and Library Card policies were updated to better reflect current patron usage.





### ***GOAL THREE: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION***

- Acted as the host site for the following Borough groups and departments:
  - DPW trainings
  - Stigma Free committee meetings
  - Veterans Advisory committee meetings
- Collaboration with Bergenfield School District
  - Hosted in person class visits from Jefferson and Lincoln elementary schools and Sweet Peas Learning Center.
  - Youth Services staff visited Bergenfield Head Start, Lightbridge Academy and a Star is Rising daycares and Hoover School's summer school program.
  - Hosted weekly program for the Bergenfield SACC summer camp
  - Participated in the Bergenfield School District's new teacher orientation
- Community Partnerships – the Library partnered with the following groups:
  - Bergenfield Garden Club to host a planting program celebrating Earth Day
  - Borough DPW on a community shredding event
  - Bergenfield Stigma Free committee to host a Drag Queen bingo program for adults as part of Pride month.
  - Spanish American Cultural Association of Bergenfield and the Dominican Cultural Association of NJ to host a multicultural festival during Hispanic Heritage month
  - Worked with the Filipino School of NY/NJ to provide pre-recorded "Kuwentuhang Pilipino Story Time" videos to be posted on the Library's Facebook page. The videos are posted on the 2nd Saturday of each month
  - Hosted staff from Congressman Josh Gottheimer's office as part of their mobile outreach office





## ***GOAL FOUR: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT***

- Executed direct mail “Welcome to Bergenfield” informational postcard campaign to new homeowners
- Library staff participated in the Bergenfield School District’s MLK Day of Service and the Borough’s Memorial Day Parade, Family Fun Day, Summer Concerts at Cooper’s Pond, Trunk or Treat and Holiday at the Park events.



## ***GOAL FIVE: INCREASE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE, FISCAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY***

- Continued participation in the Bergen County Cooperative Pricing System for reduced rates on electricity and natural gas
- Administrative staff transitioned bookkeeping software to Quickbooks Online
- Launched Junior Library Council, a volunteer program for Bergenfield students to earn community service hours and learn how to be productive members of the community. Council members collected food donations to benefit St. John's the Evangelist Church, assisted with library programs and created non-denominational holiday cards for distribution to senior citizens at Sunshine Adult Day Care Center.
- Became an affiliate with Fairleigh Dickinson University and Rutgers University Social Work graduate programs.
- The Library's passport program conducted 434 appointments and generated \$26,000 in revenue.



# 2024 BY THE NUMBERS

➔ *A YEAR IN REVIEW*

## ADULT & YOUTH SERVICES

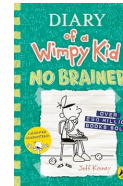
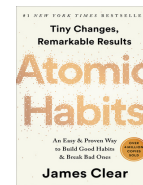
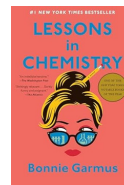
- Staff answered **45,734** reference questions
- **5,897** people attended **286** library programs
- ESL tutors + students spent **4,510 hours** together on one on one classes, group conversation classes and US Citizenship classes
- **170 children and 112 adults** participated in this year's Summer Reading program and read a combined total of **2,450** books

## TECHNOLOGY

- **8,675** Computer Sessions (**42%** increase over 2023)
- **92,770** Wireless Sessions
- **24,485** eBook and eAudio items borrowed (**14%** increase over 2023)
- **1966** movies downloaded off of Kanopy
- **10%** increase in social media following

## COLLECTIONS

- **9,072** Bergenfield residents have a library card
- **213,131 items** were checked out (increase of **5%** over 2023)
- **121,994** library visits (increase of **8%** over 2023)
- **49,708 items** loaned to other BCCLS libraries
- Most Popular Checkouts:



## SERVICES

- **605** notary appointments
- **434** passport appointments (**50%** increase over 2023)
- **124** meeting room rentals by local community groups

Average value of materials borrowed on a BFLD card:

**\$732**

# MEET THE NEW STAFF

The Library welcomed several staff members to the team in 2024. Here's a guide to some of the new faces you'll see around the building; stop by and say hi!

## ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT



**Nicole C. (she/her)**

*Adult Services Library Associate*

Working primarily in the reference department, Nicole has a passion for community building, technology, and public service. She is currently an MLIS student at the University of Alabama. Nicole aims to expand her skills and interests within the Bergenfield Public Library. In her free time, Nicole enjoys discovering new songs, crafting, and occasionally gaming.



**Christina M. (she/her)**

*Passport Agent*

Christina is one of our Passport Agents in the Adult Services Department. She recently graduated with her bachelors in Psychology and enjoys traveling, reading and working out.



**Kristen Y. (she/her)**

*Adult Services Library Associate*

Starting in spring of 2025, Kristen is working towards her MLIS to become a full-time librarian. Not only does Kristen work at Bergenfield Public Library, but it's actually the third library she works part-time at. Lover of the arts and cooking, she spends most of her free time creating things. Her love of learning languages fuels her dream of traveling and seeing the world.



# MEET THE NEW STAFF

## YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT



**Denise L. (she/her/ella)**  
*Head of Youth Services*

Denise is the new Supervising Librarian in our Youth Services department. Her free time is filled with international travel, reading historical fiction, cooking, day tripping, thrifting and acquiring cookie jars for her collection.



**Dulcie B. (she/her)**  
*Youth Services Librarian*

Dulcie is greatly enjoying her role as a Children's Librarian here in Bergenfield and engaging with the community. In her free time, Dulcie loves watching movies, traveling, crafting, and eating ice cream.



**Maureen H. (she/her)**  
*Youth Services Librarian*

Maureen is a graduate of the San Jose State University School of Information and also serves as a Youth Services librarian at the Hasbrouck Heights Library. She lives in Wood-Ridge with her family and enjoys cooking, reading romance novels and spending time at the beach when she's not at a library. She looks forward to helping out in the Children's Room and getting to know the staff and patrons in Bergenfield.

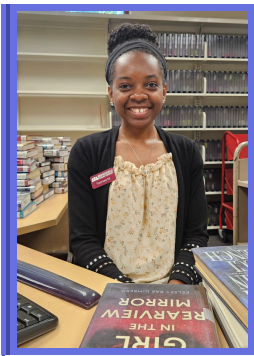
# MEET THE NEW STAFF

## CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT



**Eric H. (he/him)**  
*Library Associate*

Eric is finishing his Master of Information degree at Rutgers University this spring. He has nearly twenty years' experience in public, private, and academic libraries. He also works in the Reference Department at the Johnson Public Library in Hackensack. Outside of work he loves hiking with his dog and taking warm baths while reading.



**Tajanee M. (she/her)**  
*Library Assistant*

Tajanee is a library assistant currently working in the Circulation Department. In her spare time outside the library, she likes to sing.



**Edward Z. (he/him)**  
*Library Assistant*

Edward is a library assistant currently working in the Circulation Department. When he's not in the library, he likes creating board games.



# MORE SNAPSHOTS FROM 2024

