Friends of The Whittemore Library

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to report on another successful year for the Friends of the Whittemore Library. The organization has plenty of work ahead, but 2025-26 laid an important foundation for growth going forward.

As president of the board, one of my top priorities (beyond the day-to-day health of the organization) is to better position the Friends within the community so as to grow our roster of members and volunteers. With input and guidance from Library Director Jessica Jahnke, our membership subcommittee did some great work in this regard over the past year, including:

- The introduction of passive promotion materials at strategic places in Adult Services.
- Regular email communications via Zeffy.
- More frequent posts on Facebook, particularly in Naugatuck community groups.
- Plans to speak about the organization before certain library programs.

I am cautiously optimistic that this increased outreach will bear fruit in the form of more engaged volunteers. In fact, I've already met with a few people who want to become involved!

Going forward, the Friends will continue to seek opportunities and ideas for publicity. Our board has discussed the use of better signage, member-exclusive events, and partnering with local businesses. I look forward to sharing these plans as they take shape.

Of course, our most public-facing event of the year is our annual book sale, which took place at the library during the 2025 Naugatuck Harvest Moon Festival last September. As in years past, it was a pleasure to meet so many booklovers from the borough and beyond. Between sales and donations, we netted nearly $4,300 — all of which was added to our general account to fund initiatives at the library as needed.

I'd like to recognize Michelle and Kristin Kemp, who work year-round to ensure that the sale is a success. I'd also like to thank the board members who set up, organized, and worked shifts throughout the sale. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the volunteers from Naugatuck Public Schools and the community who helped collect, sort, and organize books, and who helped at the sale with inventory and checkout.

During the holiday season, we participated in the Festival of Trees hosted by United Way of Naugatuck & Beacon Falls. Board members Annette Whidden and Lisa Santos decorated a tree under the theme "Sweetest Christmas" and made an absolutely mouthwatering confection of a display for the charity auction.

In December, we also began highlighting a special "featured" section of books on our sales shelves in Adult Services. This idea was so well received that we have made it a monthly event to rotate through particular topics. For example, January saw a selection of inspirational and self-help books, February was romance books, March was books on the Irish experience, and so on. Sales of the books on these shelves have brought in about $600 per year over the past few years.

At the beginning of 2026, we put out a call for entries for our annual youth poetry contest. Unfortunately, we did not get enough submissions this year to hold a competition, but we nonetheless wanted to recognize the creativity of the young people who submitted. These poems were put on display in Youth Services for the public to enjoy.

In May, we hosted a book drive to build inventory for our 2026 book sale. As usual, the community was overwhelmingly generous in donating books and movies. In fact, one donor graciously gave a large number of Criterion Collection DVDs that we're assessing for value.

Board of Directors President Patrick Scalisi

We also partnered with Naugatuck Head Start to donate a new book to every student at the Early Childhood Center at Central Avenue School. Annette and I delivered the books in person to students and faculty, who were very excited to each get a copy of *Hedgehugs* by Steve Wilson and Lucy Tapper. We distributed nearly 190 books in total.

At the library, we continue to fund requests from Director Jahnke and her staff. In May, we approved funding for two large tables for Adult Services. These specially designed pieces of furniture will match the existing study stations and will be robust enough for many years of frequent use. We also committed to funding ongoing expenses at the library, like loanable museum passes and the library's subscription to *BookPage* magazine.

Our first major event for 2026-27 will be our aforementioned book

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"From the Board President" cont.

sale in September. We'll be using the online scheduler SignUpGenius to coordinate volunteers. Please email whittemorefriends@gmail.com to ensure that you are on our distribution list.

The Friends remains on strong financial footing, with no foreseeable concerns regarding our fiscal health. In fact, we were able to save a significant sum of money on our liability insurance this year by switching providers. An overview of our financials can be found to the right.

I'd like to thank my fellow board members for their contributions over the past year. Our organization could not have made the progress it has without your input, your ideas, your feedback, and — most importantly — your time. In particular, I'd like to recognize Corrina Palarino, who is stepping down from the board after several years of service. Corrina began volunteering at the library as a teen and joined the board of the Friends immediately upon turning 18. Her insights and contributions have been invaluable. Thank you, Corrina!

Each time I visit the Whittemore Library (which is often!), I am always excited to see what the staff is working on. There are many initiatives in the works. Some have already been announced (like the toy library in Youth Services), while others will be coming in the months ahead.

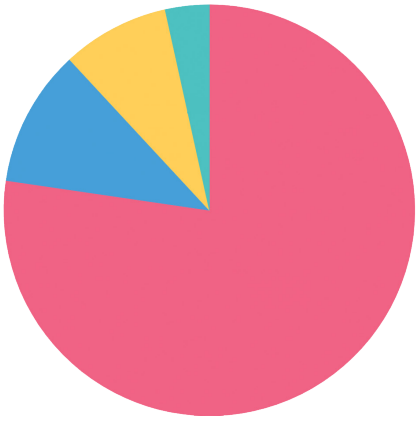
I'd like to thank Director Jahnke and the entire staff for their constant willingness to collaborate, even if it's just a quick chat about what's ahead or how we can work better together. I, along with the entire organization, look forward to finding more ways for the Friends to support and even expand the library's mission if the opportunity exists.

Best Regards,

Patrick Scalisi,
On behalf of The Board of the Friends of the Whittemore Library

FINANCIALS

Income



- Harvest Moon Book Sale: $4286.50
- Book Shelf Sales: $597.55
- Benevity Donations: $468.43
- Cash Donations: $191.55

Total Income: $5544.03

Expenses

- Library Donations: $2182.84
- Naugatuck Head Start: $900.61
- Liability Insurance: $495.00
- Poetry Contest Expenses: $336.87
- Harvest Moon Expenses: $318.77
- Misc. Expenses: $239.65
- Festival of Trees Expenses: $137.06
- CT State Annual Filing: $50.00

Total Expenses: $4,660.80

Beginning Balance, July 1, 2025: $19,627.16
Ending Balance, June 30, 2026: $20,510.39

BOARD MEMBERS 2026-2028

Bev Hudson, *member at large*
Kristin Kemp, *member at large*
Michelle Kemp, *treasurer*
Valerie Ruby-Omen, *member at large*
Lisa Santos, *member at large*
Patrick Scalisi, *president*
Stacey Strange, *member at large*
Kate Sweeney-Amidon, *member at large*
Annette Whidden, *secretary*

Founded in 1983, the Friends of the Whittemore Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose goal is to support the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library and its staff through fundraising and public outreach. The Friends is run completely by volunteers. All money raised by the organization is donated back to the library or used for the organization's operational expenses. The Friends is governed by a board of directors elected every two years. Meetings are held throughout the year and are open to the public.

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Designed by Patrick Scalisi.