



MILL VALLEY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Mill Valley Library Foundation &
Friends of the Mill Valley Library
Funding Report 2024-2025**

ABOUT THE SUPPORT GROUPS

Since its inception in 1967, the Friends of the Mill Valley Library has contributed over \$2.5 million to the Library through membership dues and book sales. Revenue generated supports library programming, the collection, services, and special projects beyond what the City's budget provides and helps assure the Library's continuing excellence. The Friends is a 100% volunteer organization that hosts quarterly in-person book sales and an annual member appreciation event. It also promotes community activism in support of the Library.

Since its founding in 1983, the Mill Valley Library Foundation has built an endowment of over \$5 million through a combination of annual giving, legacy giving, and investment income, to provide support to the Library in perpetuity. Annual grants from the endowment, totaling over \$1.3 million since 2011, are used to provide critical financial support for the Library's award-winning programs, events, and other services beyond what the City's budget provides. The non-profit volunteer organization is dedicated to supporting a modern library that is an educational, cultural, and literary center for all members of our community, now and in the future.

PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS

Preliminary 2025 survey results show that patrons place a high value on the Library's collection, think that the varied program offerings are impressive and enrich their lives, and praise staff for their expertise and customer service. Compared to prior surveys conducted in 2014 and 2019, respondents represented a greater distribution across age categories, providing a more accurate picture of how the entire community uses the library as well as what they think is important in the present and future.

Staff observations of daily visitors align with higher use of the library by a broader demographic spectrum than in prior years. On any given day, the library is full of children, parents, and people of all ages working on their computers, attending programs, and checking out materials. Later in the day, tables are filled with teens studying, collaborating and socializing, while adults are attending evening programs.

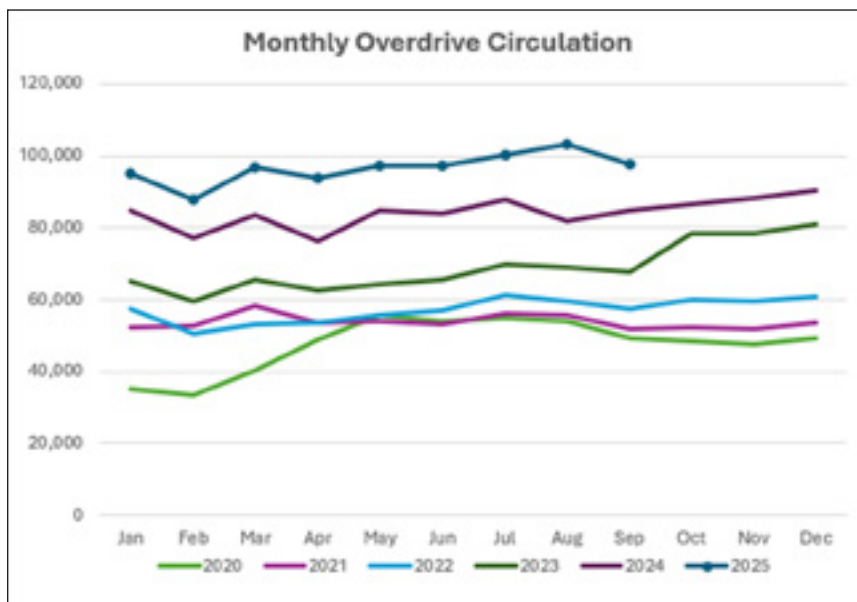
The primary reasons patrons don't use the Library or don't use it that often are difficulty of parking, limited mobility, and access to transportation. Many patrons want the Library to open longer hours on the weekends and to open earlier during the week. The report that follows demonstrates just how critical support group funding is in making the Mill Valley Public Library so vital and beloved by its patrons.

COLLECTION (DIGITAL & PHYSICAL): \$234,705

At the time of reporting, library survey results show that 72% of respondents use Libby. Additionally, the highest ranked answer to the question “What are the primary reasons you use the library in person?” was “to check out materials.” This proves the voracious readers of Mill Valley enjoy both digital and physical formats.

Thanks to generous support from the Friends of the Library, we doubled our Spanish-language children’s collection—from 300 to 600 titles. Once focused primarily on picture books, the collection now includes a robust range of early readers, early chapter books, graphic novels, and middle-grade fiction. The Friends also made it possible to add Wonderbooks—picture books with built-in audio players—and Playaways, a convenient alternative to books on CD. Both formats have been extremely popular; even with more than 75 Wonderbooks and 30 Playaways in circulation, only a few ever stay on the shelves. A survey about Library of Things was conducted. Staff will now evaluate the suggestions for new materials, taking into consideration space available to store the items; most suggestions were for larger items like leaf blowers.

The Friends and the Foundation both support databases and eContent. Databases include Kanopy, Hoopla, Consumer Reports, JSTOR, Britannica, Heritage Quest, and the OED. We recently added some new databases: A to Z World Food, A to Z Food America, and My China Roots. eBooks and eAudio circulation continues to increase, reaching over 100,000 checkouts in the month of July 2025. Looking forward: MARINet will reduce the number of holds and checkouts a patron can have in Libby. They will also commit more funding for high holds items. This should help reduce the time patrons have to wait for popular titles.



PHYSICAL COLLECTION: \$152,686

ADULT BOOKS: \$96,085

FRIENDS: \$15,714

CITY: \$72,039

ZIP BOOK GRANT: \$8,332

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: \$38,764

FRIENDS: \$1,887

CITY: \$36,877

MAGAZINES: \$9,816

FRIENDS: \$9,534

DONATION: \$282

AUDIOVISUAL (AUDIOBOOKS, DVD, CD): \$8,021

FRIENDS: \$5,752

CITY: \$2,269

DIGITAL CONTENT: \$82,019

ECONTENT (eBOOKS AND eAUDIOBOOKS): \$44,529

FRIENDS: \$18,019

FOUNDATION: \$12,164

CITY: \$9,650

STATE FUNDS: \$4,697

DATABASES: \$37,490

FRIENDS: \$21,689

FOUNDATION: \$8,475

DONATION: \$500

CITY: \$6,826

ADULT PROGRAMMING & SERVICES: \$75,161

There are few places where you can experience community like the library. We curate an atmosphere of learning, togetherness, and entertainment by offering a wide variety of programs for adults. These include the ever-popular After Hours series, events for writers and authors, creative outlets for artists and poets, and educational workshops for amateur gardeners, astronomers, and entertainers.

After Hours, our most well-attended event, included a slew of celebrities such as best-selling author Amy Tan who spoke about her new book on birdwatching; a look back on 30 years of activism with photojournalist and author Tish Lambert; the Annual Poetry World Series hosted by author Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket); and retrospectives on the natural world with ornithologist Keith Hansen and founder of the Yosemite Climbing Association Ken Yager. We also hosted three Naked Truth live storytelling events, which brought back highly lauded emcee Josh Healey and guest emcee Emmy Award-nominated actor and comedian Don Reed. After Hours is the quintessential library event because it exemplifies community-building, entertainment, and education nestled snugly in a two-hour window.

Authors and poets also had ample programming. Between events like The Nuts and Bolts of Writing Fiction with Michael Coffino and the buffet of poetry programs hosted by poet laureate Francesca Bell, those who put pen to paper to create art with words had copious opportunities to fill their plates. Emmy-nominated and NPR regular Doug Cordell taught a series of workshops on the art of storytelling while authors like Rhys Bowen and Gini Grossenbacher shared their secrets on writing and research.

In addition to workshops, writers and poets could take advantage of author talks and poetry readings to connect with published works and professional writers. Viet Thanh Nguyen packed the house talking about his new book, indigenous author Jon Hickey made his fiction debut, and mystery writer Laura Dave shared her local ties with an enthusiastic audience. Our voracious readers have their pick of book clubs, which discuss a broad variety of genre fiction and nonfiction to suit any patron's interest. Copies of these books are purchased for these clubs specifically, so every member is guaranteed access to the month's selection. These selections also serve to support the library's collection of books that circulate within the community.

Libraries serve to bridge the gap between formal education and the general public's desire for life-long learning. Our Gardening Series brings Master Gardeners to teach the public about caring for their yards, and our star parties put families in touch with local astronomers to make our universe more accessible. Actors and writers from Marin Theatre Company and The Playwrights Lab provide instruction, behind-the-scenes access to award-winning plays, and short performances for enthusiastic audiences. From supplies for workshops to speaker honoraria, these programs are only feasible through generous financial support from the Friends and Foundation.

FRIENDS: \$30,194

FOUNDATION: \$44,322

DONATION: \$645



Patrons attending an Adult Arts & Crafts program.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING: \$57,625

The Foundation supported our *Summer Reading Program* (SRP), Read S'More. This year's theme was wilderness and camping. The programs for kids included capoeira with Professor Prego Abad , wild walks with WildCare, hula hoop tricks with Hillia Hula, and Bridge Builders with the Bay Area Discovery Museum. Foundation funds were also used to support *Pop-Up Storytimes*, which alternated between Hauke Park and Boyle Park.

Funding also made possible *Full STEAM Ahead*, after-school programming for early elementary students. The programs covered a wide array of topics from illuminating constellations to 3D sculpting with local business *Girls Rock Math!* We partnered with a local nonprofit, Social Emotional Education & Development of Self, or SEEDS, to produce weekly programs. Their sessions included significant mindfulness elements (like breathing exercises and meditation) and focus on social emotional growth for both neurodivergent and neurotypical kids.



Photo of kids and Summer Reading performer, Hillia Hula.

Friends funding covered the reading logs and flyer printing costs for the SRP, as well as the printing of bookmarks for the *Annual Bookmark Contest*. This year, the Library focused on creating dynamic programs. Wilderness and outdoor inspired, this year's SRP flyers and reading logs showcased activities for kids to connect in nature and read under the stars. Read S'More offered a separate reading challenge for reluctant readers so they could be more encouraged and confident to complete the reading log. Our staff also ensured that the free books distributed to participants included diverse selections to mirror everyone's experiences.

TEEN/TWEEN PROGRAMMING: \$4,804

Foundation funding supported teen programming including the comic book class with graphic novelist Sophie Yanow, Teen Sew Smart Club, *Dungeons & Dragons, Books and Bites*, Tween LEGO Club and Tween Hangout. It also supported an active *Teen Advisory Board* of 30+ members that made recommendations to the Youth Services Librarian, and whose members volunteer and help support programs. The Foundation also funded Summer Reading Program and Teen Advisory Board swag.



Photo of Teen Advisory Board members at our camp games program, Read S'More 2025.

FOUNDATION: \$4,804

TECHNOLOGY: \$25,721

Foundation funding continued to support Tech to Go, launched in early 2021. The program makes Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots, and device chargers available for patron checkout. Usage is high. Patrons check out hotspots to gain access to reliable connectivity to seek jobs, attend telehealth appointments, and maintain communication. Demand is especially high during power outages and in the summer when patrons go camping and on vacation. Funding covered the devices' data plans as well as replacement devices and battery costs. The Foundation funded 26 *Everything Apple with Jon Hartman* classes, covering computers, devices, and services. Attendance is steady and higher than last year, averaging around 16, including many longtime students who appreciate the chance to brush up with this continuing series.

City funding also supported digital literacy classes aimed at seniors and taught by full-time staff. Topics covered included: *Staying Safe and Sane on the Internet*, *Decoding Devices*, and *Customization & Accessibility*. The Library offered seven classes with Artificial Intelligence expert Bridget Burke on the potential (and the risks) of rapid developments in AI. Bridget helped patrons make use of these new tools to improve their lives while educating them on privacy dangers and the pitfalls of overreliance.



Wi-Fi on the Plaza, which provides free Wi-Fi access from the Gravity Car to the Lytton Square median, is jointly funded by the Friends and Foundation. During the year there were nearly 51,000 page views for

the Wi-Fi portal and there were 13,964 new users (nearly double last year's count). Expenses for Wi-Fi on the Plaza included the cost for the internet service provider and annual Cisco support for the network hardware.

TECHNOLOGY: \$25,721

TECH TO GO: \$12,071

FOUNDATION: \$12,071

COMPUTER/AI CLASSES: \$5,659

FOUNDATION: \$5,659

WI-FI IN THE PLAZA: \$3,947

FRIENDS: \$1,974

FOUNDATION: \$1,974

EQUIPMENT: \$4,044

FOUNDATION: \$4,044

CIRCULATION STATISTICS 7/1/24 - 6/30/25

Chromebooks: 197
Hotspots: 618
Device Charger: 118

CREEKSIDE AUDIO/VISUAL UPGRADE: \$90,408

Friends funding supported a complete overhaul of the audiovisual system in the Creekside Room. A distributed speaker system in the ceiling increases coverage in the room, a new laser projector produces a bright and clear image, and vastly improved equipment allows for easy video and audio recording of events with more convenient controls for staff.

The A/V upgrade has improved listening for all our patrons. However, for hearing impaired patrons who need more support, we now offer assistive listening options including an induction loop for T-coil-enabled hearing aids, as well as personal FM receiver packs and headphones. The system also allows attendees to connect their devices or hearing aids to audio over Wi-Fi. Assistive listening makes library events more welcoming to the many patrons experiencing hearing loss who may have been previously discouraged from attending.

FRIENDS: \$60,000

LIBRARY BOND: \$30,408
EQUIPMENT
RESERVE FUNDS