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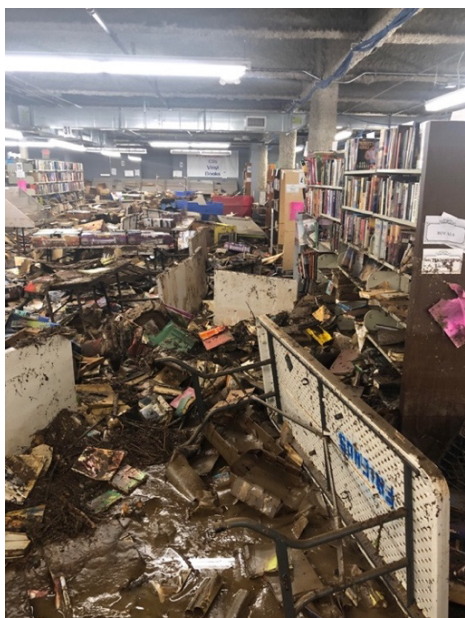
FRIENDS OF THE SOUTHBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

2025-2026 Newsletter

What a year it's been! Following our most successful book sale ever, the catastrophic floods of August 2024 totally destroyed everything in the lower level of the library basement.



Before the Flood



After the Flood

The Friends lost EVERYTHING in the flood – donated books, DVDs, CDs, vinyl, puzzles, and everything else donated by community members for the next sale, as well as tables, chairs, shelving (LOTS of shelving), and supplies. All of this was uninsured and not eligible for reimbursement, as it was donated, not purchased. The Library, Historical Society, Garden Club, and the Town itself also lost everything that had been stored. The Library's telecommunications, heating and air conditioning, fire suppression, and elevator mechanicals were damaged. The entire basement was considered hazardous and was cleared out down to the studs; even the wet carpet was removed.

On the bright side, the Library itself was spared damage. The building was undamaged, and the main and second floors are in good condition. Humidifiers and fans prevented mold damage. The Library anticipates reopening by the Fall of 2025, with a move back from their temporary quarters at The Heritage Hotel.



With no place to accept or store donated material, The Friends were in danger of losing the income that funds so many services and programs that benefit the entire community.

We were beyond pleased to accept the space in Southbury Plaza that was donated by **Gatto Development**. When the storage space there quickly filled up (such a generous community!), we were offered additional storage at **Gyre 9** at no cost to the Friends.

The generosity of these two businesses has allowed the Friends to collect and store materials until our space in the library becomes available to us again.

**The Friends of the Southbury Library
Donation Center**

**Located in Southbury Plaza
between Catalyst Gym & Paper Store**

**Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Wednesdays 5 – 7 p.m.**

**We welcome your new and gently-used
hardcover and softcover* books for all ages,
DVDs, music CDs, vinyl, audiobooks on CD,
and jigsaw puzzles.**

***no mass market paperbacks (the small ones)**

**While we don't know when our next book sale
will be, we're collecting, sorting, and storing
donations so we have an amazing selection
for you.**

Four Scholarships Awarded

The Friends of the Southbury Public Library awarded \$1,000 merit-based scholarships to each of four college-bound Southbury residents: Addison Batoon, Lila Kania, Zachary Rohwedder, and Shannon White.



Zachary Rohwedder, Lila Kania, Shannon White, and Scholarship Committee Chair Jeanne Marie Nealon

In her application essay, **Addison Batoon** wrote, “For me, the library has always been a place of enlightenment, whether through books, activities, or music,” and suggested that a vinyl record listening station would be a welcome addition to the library. **Lila Kania** suggested the addition of study pods for students, musicians, crafting, or business collaborations. **Zachary Rohwedder** noted that, while there is space specifically for children and for adults, there is no dedicated space for teens, and he would like to see areas designed for student collaborations. **Shannon White** noted that “since libraries are centers of cultural engagement and community connection, they should shift services to meet the needs and challenges of a community.” She suggests increasing the availability of information about post-secondary education opportunities.



Addison Batoon

Awarding these scholarships to Southbury residents who will continue their education past high school is an investment in the future of our community. The Board of the Friends of the Southbury Public Library believes that encouraging the further education of our children benefits all of us. The Friends are able to award scholarships with financial support from membership dues and the proceeds of the annual and ongoing book sales. Membership forms are available at the library and on the library’s website.

Librarian of the Year!



Our own Southbury Library Head Librarian Heather Aronson was named 2025 Librarian of the Year by the Connecticut Library Association! In recognition of that honor, The Friends were pleased to present Heather with a small gift and a lovely arrangement of flowers. The award recognizes Heather’s leadership in managing the library during the after-effects of the August 2024 floods. As any good manager would, Heather was quick to attribute the award to her outstanding staff! Congratulations!

What Do the Friends Do with the Money We Raise?

Your membership dues, proceeds from the book sales (annual, half-price, year-round in the lobby, and online) fund almost all of the library’s children’s programs, some of the concerts, movie licenses so the library can show films legally, and some of the digital services available to everyone in town. While the total amount of membership dues may not seem like a lot, every dollar we raise contributes to an ever-better library for our community.

For the period from July 2024 through June 2025, here are the numbers for programs funded by the Friends: 54 Adult programs attended by 2,170; 73 Teen programs (1,020), 238 Children’s programs (3,762), for a total of 632 programs attended by 12,273 people. Note that these numbers are lower than last year’s; this is due to the logistics of planning and holding programs off-site rather than in the library, which has been closed to the public since the floods of August 2024.

Look what we've done with your membership dues!!

It’s time to renew your membership, or join The Friends for the very first time. But why pay money when you get all the benefits without joining? Your membership dues, whether at the \$10 minimum level or higher, help underwrite the cost of the services The Friends provide to the entire community. Wouldn’t you like to know that you helped fund all of that?

➔To join or renew, go to <https://www.southburylibrary.org/about-us/support-the-library/friends>, or return the form sent with this newsletter.

Friends of the Southbury Public Library
Board of Directors 2024-25

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