



Harborfields Public Library

# Sustainable Libraries Initiative Report 2023



“Climate change is the single greatest threat to global health, a ‘code red for humanity,’ and is this generation’s grandest challenge.”

– Sustainability in Libraries: A Call to Action, American Library Association

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# About Us

Harborfields Library was founded in 1970 when the residents of the district passed a proposition that provided the certificate of establishment for a new library. Prior to that, the building was a former elementary school, known as the Broadway School.

Our library serves the Greenlawn/Centerport communities of the Harborfields Central School District with a combined service population of 19,483 residents.  
(2020 United States Census).

We currently have 65 employees in full and part time positions. Our building is 43,000 square feet and will be 100 years old in 2024.



# Organizational Commitment

## Sustainability Policy



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### **Sustainability Policy**

(Adopted 11/23/2021)

The Harborfields Public Library Board of Trustees, Administration and Staff are committed to reducing our environmental footprint and being excellent stewards of our resources at all levels of our organization.

We recognize the important role the Library plays in our community as a leader in resiliency and sustainability. Our commitment to the environment will be regularly communicated to staff, patrons and the general community, along with eco-literacy opportunities. We will continually strive to maximize the ability of current and future generations to live, work, and play in our shared natural environment.

We pledge our commitment of sustainable practices in building maintenance, purchasing, collections, programs and services to ensure economic feasibility, environmental stewardship and social justice for our community.

# Organizational Commitment

## Staff Survey and Team Formation

A staff survey was conducted and the results revealed that the staff was overwhelmingly supportive of equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and considered themselves environmentally conscious.

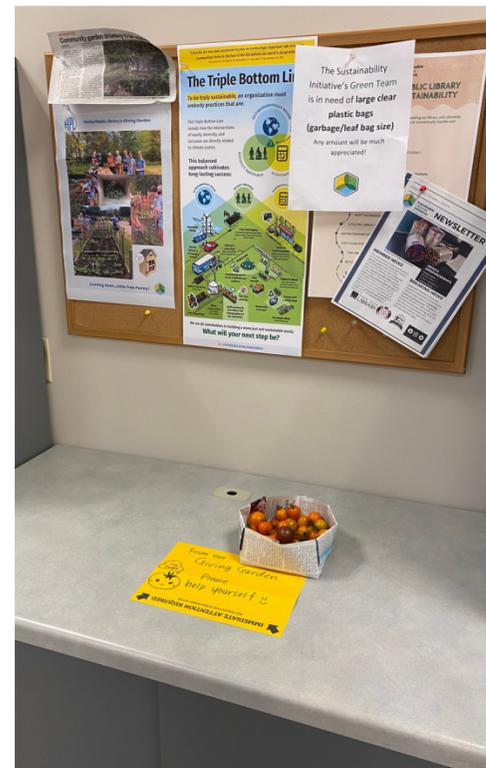
While most of the staff thought the Administration had been doing a very good job, they believed that there is more that could be accomplished together to become more environmentally sound, socially equitable and economically feasible.

The Green Team was founded in 2021 and has evolved. The current team includes staff from many of the library's departments.



# Organizational Commitment Communication and Education

- There is a display at the entrance to the Adult Reference Room promoting our monthly drives and programs that are focused on the 3 benchmarks: Environmentally Sound, Socially Equitable and Economically Feasible.
- We created a bulletin board to notify staff of projects and educational and program opportunities.
- Posters remind staff to recycle when possible.
- A quarterly e-newsletter is sent to staff that reports our sustainability progress.



# Organizational Commitment

## Communication and Education

The screenshot shows the Harborfields Public Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the library logo, today's hours (10:00am - 9:00pm), and buttons for 'Hours & Location' and 'Browsealoud'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Keywords, Title, Author, and more!' and buttons for 'Search' and 'My Account'. A secondary navigation bar contains links for 'Borrow', 'Download & Stream', 'Learn', 'Events', 'Services', 'Visit', and 'About'. The main content area features a 'Home' link and a large heading for 'Sustainability Initiative'. Underneath the heading are buttons for 'View', 'Edit', 'Delete', and 'Revisions'. The text describes the library's commitment to sustainability, mentioning a certification with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and a community of leaders. A list of accomplishments follows, including the creation of a Green Team, staff surveys, policy development, and various community events. To the right of the text is a circular diagram with three overlapping circles labeled 'Environmentally Sound', 'Socially Equitable', and 'Economically Feasible', with 'SUSTAINABILITY' in the center. Below the diagram is a note about finding the logo in the library's newsletter.

Today's Hours: 10:00am - 9:00pm [Hours & Location](#) [Browsealoud](#)

**Harborfields**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

[CATALOG](#) [WEBSITE](#)

[Borrow](#) [Download & Stream](#) [Learn](#) [Events](#) [Services](#) [Visit](#) [About](#)

[Home](#)

## Sustainability Initiative

[View](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Revisions](#)

Since September 2021 we have been working towards a Certification with the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#), which was created in response to resolutions by the New York and American Library Associations' on the importance of sustainable libraries.

The process is designed to create a community of leaders within Harborfields Public Library with tools to establish sustainable practices and demonstrate how acting sustainably can change our community for the better. There are 12 sections, each focusing on a different part of sustainability: economic feasibility, environmental stewardship and social justice for our community.

So far, this is what we have accomplished:

- Creation of a "Green Team" to help guide the process, implement a check-list of action items and encourage participation
- Completed a staff survey revealing staff interests and concerns
- Presented a Sustainability Policy to the Library Board of Trustees, which was accepted and can be viewed on our website
- Held the Great Giveaway, donated items made available for free to the community
- Developed a process for reusing and recycling discarded materials
- Expanded coordination with local groups for donation drives and events
- Conducted an e-waste event at the library and collected unwanted electronics for Arrow Recycling

Look for this logo in the Library's newsletter for programs that encourage and promote sustainable practices, demonstrating how acting sustainably can change society for the better.

The banner is titled 'GARDENING' in green. It features two event listings. The first is 'The Seed Library Opens March 1st!' followed by 'Winter Seed Sowing' on Monday, March 13, 3:00 PM. The second is 'The Magic of Composting' on Monday, March 20, 1:00 PM. Both events include a small green and yellow icon and a brief description of the activities.

### GARDENING

**The Seed Library Opens March 1st!**

#### Winter Seed Sowing

Monday, March 13, 3:00 PM

You don't have to wait for warmer weather to start your seedlings. Learn how to successfully start seeds OUTSIDE in the winter. No greenhouse needed. Winter sowing techniques outside are easier than the windowsill or with light lamps in the basement. Please register.

#### The Magic of Composting

Monday, March 20, 1:00 PM

Celebrate the first day of Spring by improving your soil while reducing kitchen waste. Composting is a residential win-win for increasing soil health and for reducing the volume of waste headed to a municipal landfill. Join a master gardener from Cornell Cooperative and learn four different types of composting methods in this workshop, including outside and indoor composting, aerobic and anaerobic techniques, worm and lasagna approaches. Please register.

We keep our patrons updated on our sustainability progress and programs through our website, newsletter and social media.

# Outdoor Spaces

## Native Plant Garden



Members of the Green Team planted native plants in a recently cleared spot on the library's grounds. Native plants don't require fertilizers, need less water, and they help to reduce air pollution and promote biodiversity. The library recently joined the Northeast Pollinator Pathway, a pesticide-free corridor of native plants that provide nutrition and habitat for pollinating insects and birds.



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# Outdoor Spaces

## Gathering places



Outdoor spaces include two picnic areas, one with a Solar Charging Station that is ADA accessible. An additional patio is a great place for Childrens Storytimes.

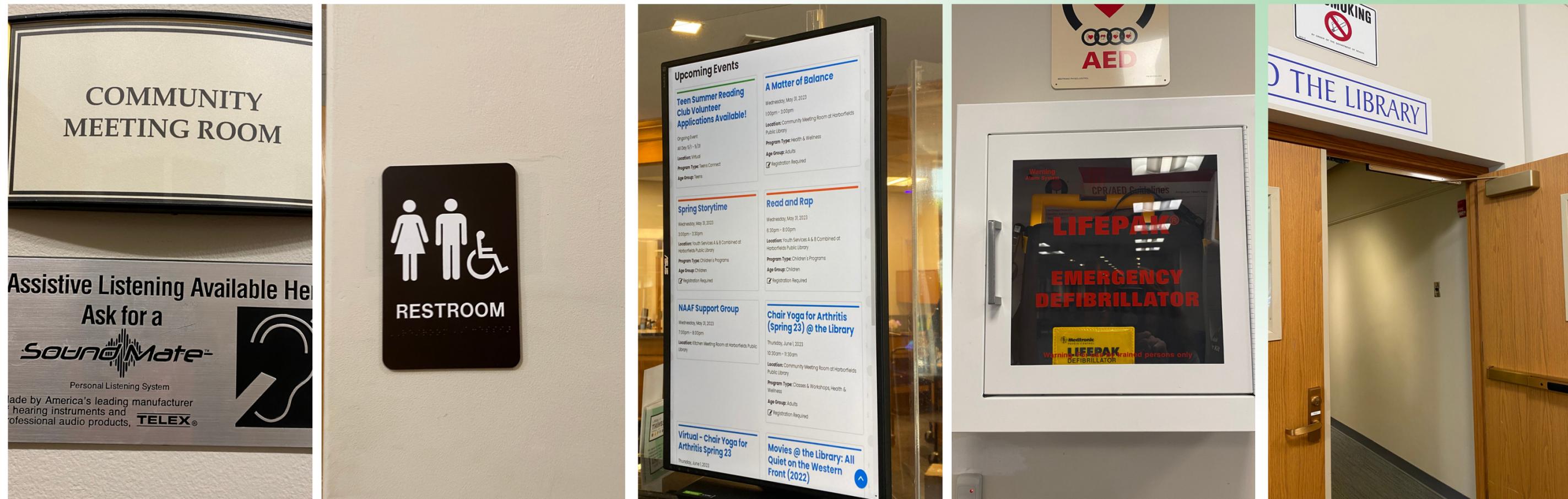
# Outdoor Spaces

## Accessibility



In the spring of 2023, the paving project of the library's circular driveway added wheelchair accessible access to the sidewalk leading to the picnic area and the accessible entrance ramp.

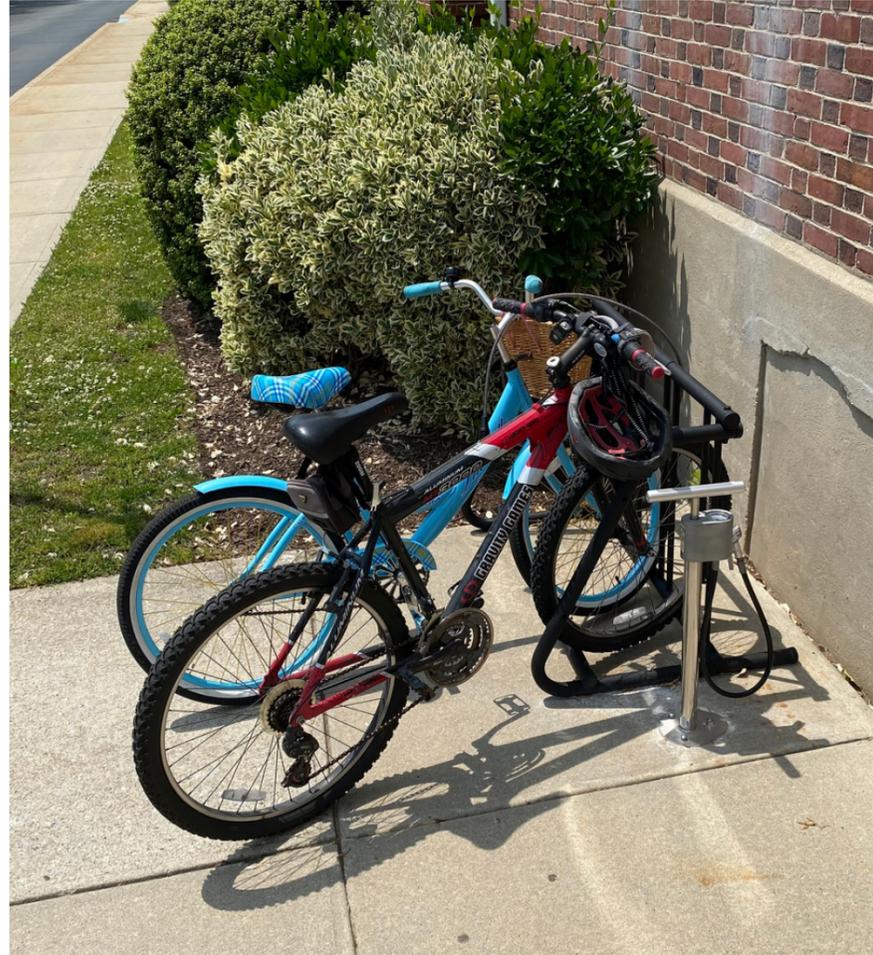
# Indoor Spaces



- Our building is ADA compliant.
- There are gender neutral bathrooms available for staff and public.
- There is clear electronic signage throughout the building eliminating the use of paper.
- Fire safe doors, that were once required to be closed, are now open to improve accessibility. Since they are tied into the fire panel, they close in case of fire.

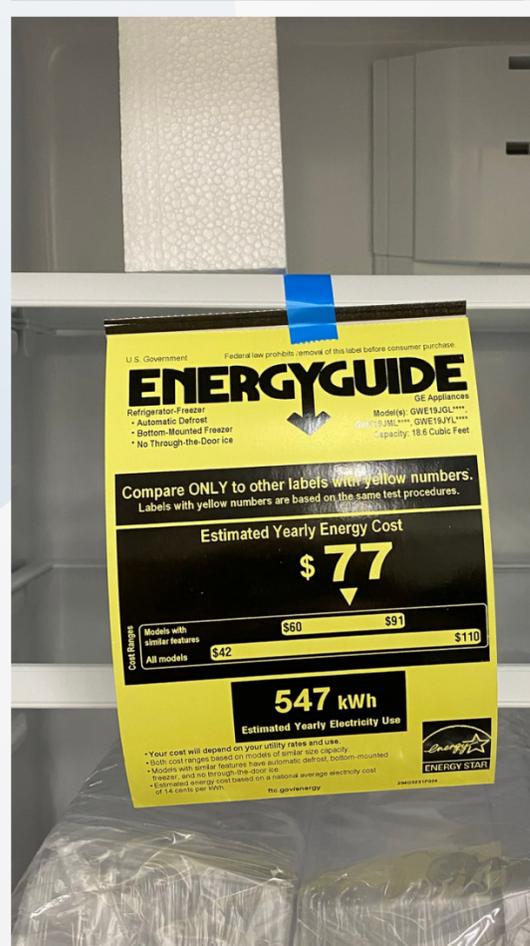
# Transportation

- Hosted our first Bike Rodeo to teach children bike safety and maintenance.
- Installed a Bike Pump for community use.
- Many staff members live locally and bike or walk to work.
- Bike racks are available for public and staff.
- The Huntington Area Rapid Transit (HART) bus will stop at the library upon request.
- Staff members carpool to meetings or attend virtually.



# Energy

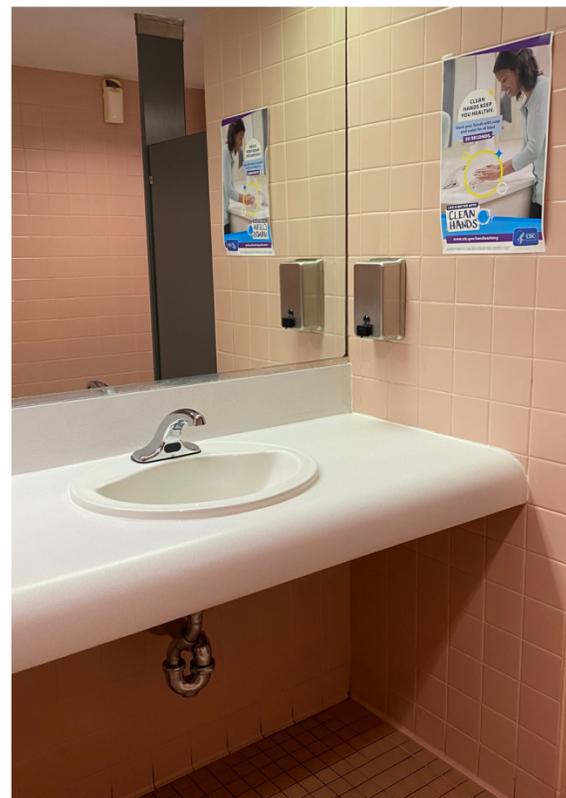
- Utilizing the NYS Construction Aid program, the library, over the course of 5 years, was able to replace all six rooftop HVAC packages (combination air-handler and condenser) with more energy efficient and environmentally friendly units.
- Replaced our gas boilers (retrofitted from the original steam) with two high-efficiency commercial condensing gas-fired boilers.
- Converted most of our lighting to LED in 2022.
- Upgraded our Kitchen Meeting Room with energy efficient appliances.
- Energy guides tell us our estimated yearly energy cost and savings.
- Maintenance uses battery operated lawn equipment, which reduces fuel costs and is good for the environment.



# Water



- Installed Bottle Filling Stations that deliver a clean, quick water bottle refill and enhance sustainability by minimizing our dependency on disposable plastic bottles.
- Installed water-efficient automatic taps with flow restrictors in public and staff bathrooms.
- Irrigation schedules are monitored and rain sensors were installed to avoid over-watering.
- A rain barrel was placed next to the Children's garden in the southwest corner of the library.
- The downspouts from the building's gutter system were reconfigured to utilize rain water to irrigate plantings.



# Materials Management

## Waste Audit

- We conducted a waste audit to determine the volume of items in the waste streams produced by our library to identify which waste reduction strategies needed attention.
- We discovered that 12 out of the 20 pounds of trash from one day could be recycled, composted or reused. The biggest culprit was paper trash.
- In 2022, the Town informed us that they had to permanently discontinue recycling initiatives with schools and libraries due to the expense and requirement of a large amount of Town resources. In May 2023, we made arrangements with our carting service to install a separate bin for cardboard and paper waste outside near our dumpster.



# Materials Management

## Recycling



In addition to the paper recycling bins throughout the building and aluminum recycling in our staff break room, we also participate in many other recycling programs.

- Friends of the Library Bookshop reuses donated books by selling them at low cost.
- E-waste recycling truck comes once a year.
- Plastic plant pot recycling happens every spring.
- Patio area has a plastic recycling bin.
- Battery recycling bin can be found in our lobby all year.
- A coat drive is run every fall and eye glasses are collected throughout the year.

# Materials Management

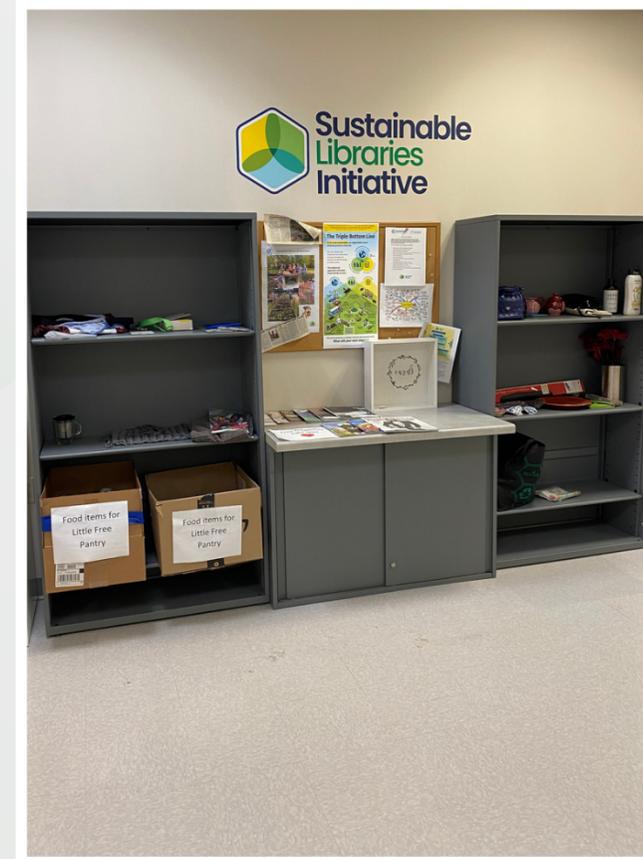
## Reusing



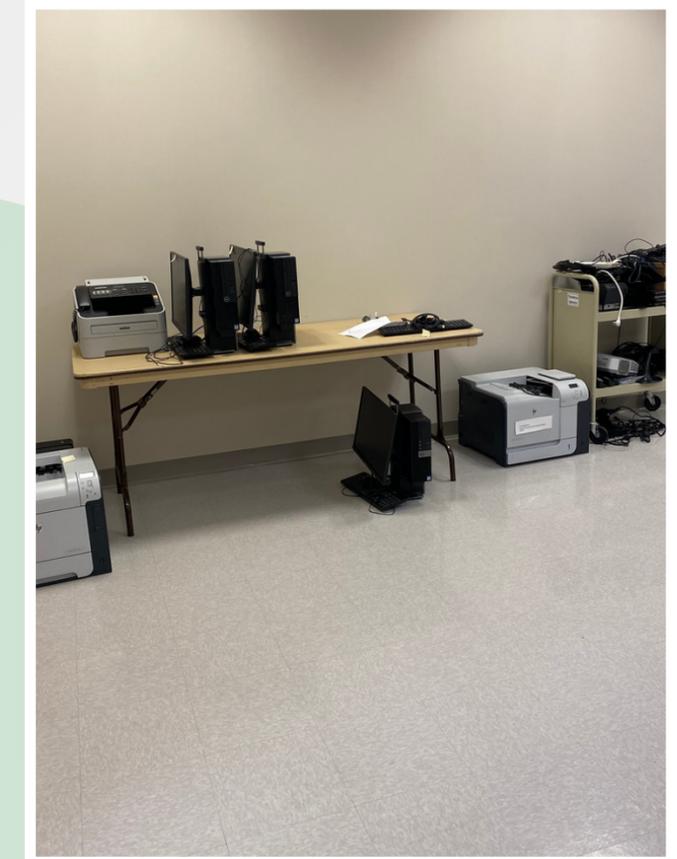
Old office furniture gets a new life in our Small Study Room.



Reusable cutlery, mugs and plates are used for meetings and events.



Re-purposed cabinets made a Sustainability Center for staff to exchange unwanted items.



The library donated 9 computers that we were no longer using to the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program of Suffolk County.

# Materials Management

## NexTrex Recycling Program

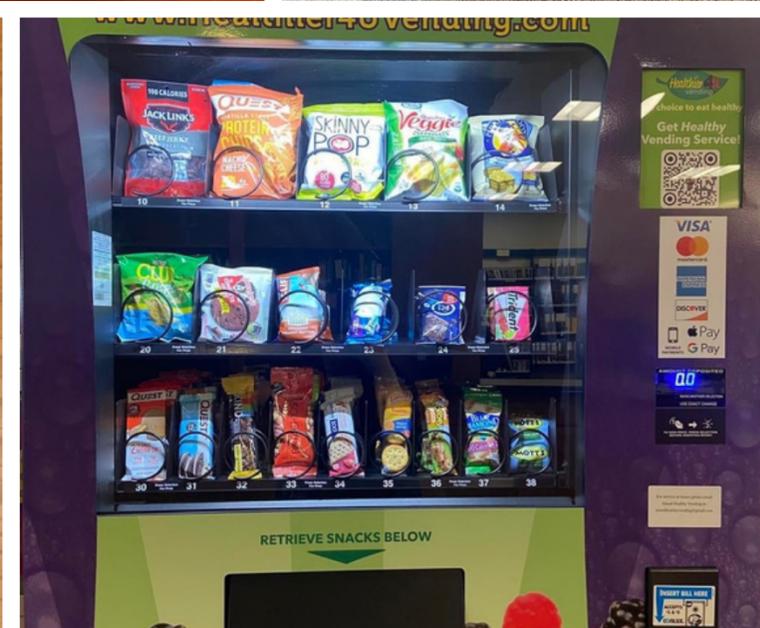


We encouraged our community members to take part in the NexTrex Recycling Program by dropping off their clean plastic film in our lobby collection bin. To date, we have collected 1,500 pounds of plastic and earned two benches, which were donated to a local beach and garden.

# Materials Management

## Green Consumption and Cleaning Products

- The staff customized their own mugs with a Mug Press and the mugs are kept in the staff break room.
- Our newsletter uses soy based ink and is printed on recycled paper.
- Fair Trade coffee and tea is purchased for staff.
- Receipt paper is sustainably sourced.
- A recently installed vending machine in the lobby is stocked with healthy snacks and beverages.
- Cleaning products are purchased in bulk and they are Green Seal certified.



# Collective Impact

## Community Garden

- Staff and Teen Volunteers maintain two garden plots at a local community garden.
- Vegetable plants are harvested and produce goes to a local food pantry.
- Staff and Teen Volunteers participated in a butterfly release.
- The garden benefits the community and serves as educational experience for those involved.



# Collective Impact

## Civic Engagements



- **Greenlawn Summer Nights** – sponsored by the Greenlawn Civic Association. The library maintains a table with information about resources and programs. We also reserve the SLED (Suffolk Libraries Empowering Discovery) bus from SCLS which is always a big hit for young gamers.
- **The Longest Table** – fundraiser event hosted by The Friends of the Library and the Greenlawn Civic Association held in the library's circle driveway. Community members sign up for a table and decorate it with a theme of their choosing.

# Social Cohesion

## The Great Give Back



The Great Giveaway, as part of Suffolk Libraries' Great Give Back Program, was held in 2021 and 2022 in the library's circle driveway. The community and library staff donated gently used and brand new, but not wanted items in the hopes that they may find a home. Leftover items were donated to a charitable organization.

# Social Cohesion

- A Little Free Library is located at the Memorial Garden.
- An Eagle Scout built and installed a Little Free Vegetable Stand. Produce from the community garden is shared.
- Together with the members from Harborfields High School Key Club, a Little Free Pantry was installed to help those in need.
- Librarians run English Conversation groups for new English learners.
- A book cart with donated books is maintained by the Green Team at a local laundromat.



**English Conversation Group**

**Come and practice speaking English!**

**Dates:** Tuesdays, beginning Sept 20

**Time:** 7:00PM-8:00PM

**Location:** Kitchen Meeting Room at Harborfields Public Library

This is an informal group for adults who do not speak English as their first language to improve their communication skills in a relaxed environment.

**Harborfields PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
31 BROADWAY, GREENLAWN, NY 11740 • 631-757-4200  
www.harborfieldslibrary.org • info@harborfieldslibrary.org



# Resilience Planning

## Repair Cafe



Volunteers with expertise in jewelry repair, knitting and sewing, bike repairs, mechanical repairs, electronics, and a jack of all trades, repaired or advised on how to repair items at our Repair Cafe in January 2023. Over seventy people attended and brought their treasured items that were spared from ending up in a landfill.

# Resilience planning

## Region Specific Programs



Greenlawn first responders recruiting at the Library's Volunteer Fair.



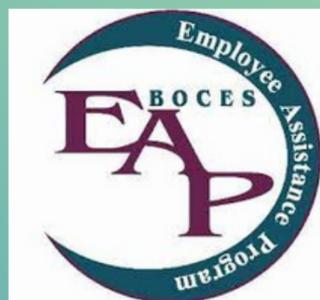
Teen volunteers take part in a Beach Clean Up at a local beach.



Winter Seedsowing- helped patrons learn how to successfully start seeds outside.



Our Seed Library allows patrons to try their hand at growing their own vegetables and flowers.



# Financial Sustainability

Full time employees are offered participation in:

- New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS)
- New York State Health Insurance Program
- Met Life Vision and Dental plans
- Equitable 403b plan
- Employee Assistance Program offering support in an effort to maximize overall wellness and help staff develop skills, attitudes, and values necessary to manage life tasks, form relationships and adapt to the demands of today's society.
- The library also provides an adequate living wage to all full-time employees and has eliminated the "almost full time" jobs with no benefits.

# Financial Sustainability

## Our Fiscal Responsibility

BUDGET TOTALS	2022-2023	PROPOSED
Amount Raised by Taxes:	\$5,089,862	\$5,133,049
Increase Amount Raised By Taxes:	\$25,360	\$43,187
% Budget Increase:	0.23%	0.76%
* % Tax Increase:	0.50%	0.85%

Note: The 2023-2024 Proposed Tax Levy Increase is in compliance with NYS General Municipal Law § 3-c(5).

The Library presents a financial operating budget for each upcoming year to the community to vote on. The budget revolves around sound economic feasibility, taking into account the impact any budget increase will have on the community. We have continually held the line on our budgets operating within the NYS tax cap.



# Future Goals

- Collaborate with the principal of Washington Drive Primary School and the first grade classes in the gathering of information on the elements that make up an interactive sensory garden.
- Add EV charging stations.
- Add solar panels to help reduce energy costs.
- Remove asphalt to create additional green space.
- Establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team to maintain an inclusive and fair work environment.
- Continue to model sustainable practices for our community.