



BEYOND BOOKS

Arlington Libraries Foundation
Winter 2020 Newsletter



You miss the library, and the librarians miss you!

Virtual or actual, the Robbins and Fox Branch libraries continue to be the heart of the Arlington community -- keeping patrons educated, connected, and entertained -- and our librarians are the lifeblood which keep them running. Behind the scenes the librarians and staff have been working to safely deliver materials and content to reach as many Arlingtonians as possible with expanded electronic services, Contactless Pickup, Grab Bags, Book Packs, hot spots, printing services, Library of Things, Discover It Yourself collection, American Girls dolls and more. Putting in state-mandated health protocols the librarians have managed to make book requests and pick-ups not only safe, but have reestablished a vital connection to the community.

Typically, visitors browse or request what they want to check out, but in this unusual time the librarians have become our trusted guides. Using information submitted from either an online form or by phone, they work to find the best materials to fit each person. This has also been an opportunity for them to see their work in a new way and get to know patrons better. Marie Cannon, Head of Circulation, says that the librarians are understanding the depth of their collections in a new way as they curate books for pickup, meet first time visitors to the library, talk with patrons who are rediscovering the beauty of the library, and reach out to those who consider it a lifeline.

“I just want to say THANK YOU for all you have been doing to help people during this time. My husband (who is VERY at risk) and I have been enjoying Acorn TV and Kanopy, and I have been downloading books through Libby.”

These services are helping to keep us sane. You guys are the BEST! 🙌

— Nina, Arlington Library Patron

Libraries are more than a place to check out books, they represent a place to connect to people, community and the world at large. At the moment, when we all need this greater connection and it is more challenging to connect to the books, resources and library community we need, our librarians and library staff ARE our connection to this vital community service. We are very grateful!



Investing in the libraries we love

Letter from the Chair

A year to remember is finally coming to a close! The past few months have presented new challenges for all of us, and through it all you continue to support the Robbins and Fox Branch Libraries and their incredible staff through your gifts to the Arlington Libraries Foundation.



Your support illustrates how valuable our library is to our community, and the circulation numbers show how successfully our libraries respond to the community. (Within MLN, Arlington currently ranks 5th in circulation, behind larger towns like Newton and Cambridge.) The librarians are utilizing your support to meet this growing demand by expanding both online resources, like Acorn TV added this spring, as well as many new physical materials, including new play-away books for the Children's library. The Foundation grant to support these additions is all community funded through your donation.

Your gift helps take our libraries from super to fabulous! And we all need a bit more fabulous this year.

Thank you again,

Karin Varnik Barrett
Chair, Arlington Libraries Foundation

Library Website Redesign

“Our website is our third branch. It's a gateway to information on using our physical and virtual resources. With hundreds of thousands of visits to our site annually, and especially this past year, it's obviously a crucial tool. We want to help users find what they need more easily, and make happy discoveries.”

— Andrea Nicolay, Library Director

The Robbins Library is seeking input from community members to improve the library's website, robbinslibrary.org. Patron experiences and feedback are central to the redesign process.

The 8-question survey takes about three minutes to complete and is available through Dec 31, 2020:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RobbinsWebsite>



The CARES Act: Special Incentives for Giving in 2020

Are you considering a charitable gift before December 31?

There are several time-limited giving strategies that may benefit you through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Now through December 31, 2020, gifts made to the Arlington Libraries Foundation can have a greater impact for both you and our libraries. In addition, the Foundation accepts gifts of stock, which is often an attractive way to give in a year of market gains.

- If you don't itemize you may reduce your taxable income by \$300 for your charitable contributions in 2020 (for both individuals and married couples filing jointly). Normally, no deduction is permitted.
- If you itemize you may deduct cash gifts up to 100% of their adjusted gross income in 2020—up from 60%. Gifts to donor-advised funds, supporting organizations and most private foundations are not eligible.
- Most required minimum distributions from retirement plans are waived for 2020. However, individuals still can make a qualified charitable distribution of up to \$100,000 from their IRAs. The direct distribution to charity would not be included in taxable income. Check with your financial advisor to see how this temporary rule will apply to you.
- If you are 70 1/2 or older, qualified charitable distributions (QCD) are still a great way to make contributions. A QCD or IRA charitable rollover allows you to make a tax-free gift of up to \$100,000 from your IRA. While the benefit of using a QCD to satisfy your required minimum distribution has been waived for 2020, a qualified charitable distribution remains a great way to make tax advantageous contributions, especially if you don't itemize your deductions.

This information is not tax or legal advice. Please consult a qualified professional advisor for tax, legal or accounting counsel when considering any planned gift.