

## TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE



*From left: Terry Rothermel, Stanly Black, Demi Ayres*

The Board of Selectmen established the Tax Relief Committee in 2011 to more appropriately carry out a program previously initiated and handled by the Selectmen. Thus the Tax Relief Fund succeeded the Selectmen's Fund that was started in 2006. The essential task of the Committee is to implement annual fundraising on behalf of households in Concord with demonstrable financial need for assistance in paying their property taxes. The contributors to this fund are caring citizens of Concord.

The Hugh Cargill Committee screens the applicants for tax relief from this fund and subsequently provides quarterly grants towards (or credits against) their property tax obligations. The tax relief grants made by the Hugh Cargill Committee have helped 40 to 50 Concord households in recent years. Most of those receiving this aid are seniors on fixed incomes or single parents wishing to stay in Concord. In 2014, grants of \$275 were made quarterly, leading to a maximum of \$1,100 per household over a year's time.

Total annual contributions to the Tax Relief Fund have averaged approximately \$60,000 over the first seven years. The number of annual donors has averaged over 200 Concord households. As last year, this year's solicitations were sent out in September so as to honor October and November fundraising by our Community Chest. And like last year, our committee sent a reminder letter in December.

Every three years, solicitations are planned to be Town-wide. In 2012, that larger mailing nearly doubled the number of contributors and produced donations equal to more than double the cost of that mailing. In this current year, donations were sought from previous contributors

and a limited number of new people. Donations for the current campaign will continue to be gratefully received through June 30, 2015.

The Tax Relief Committee met ten times over the calendar year 2014. We continue to be impressed with the heartfelt contributions of so many to this purpose. We are thankful for the caring hours of support of Ruth Laurer and Laurel Landry in the Town House.

## CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMITTEE



*From left: Matt Boger, Kitsy Rothermel, Polly Peterson, Sandy Shen, Heather Peachey, Beverly Gauthier. Not pictured: Bob Sekuler*

The mission of the Concord Free Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning and to actively promote personal enrichment by connecting community members to information, ideas, culture, unique historical resources and each other, in a tradition of service, innovation and excellence.

The Library Committee consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of:

- Providing policy guidance to the Library Director
- Recommending policy and organizational methods to the Selectmen
- Serving as liaison between the Library and the Trustees of the Library Corporation, governmental units, and private groups that relate to library services.

The Library Committee has been very busy creating new policies and updating old ones. We spent many hours studying our old documentation, researching policies in use in other libraries, and discussing the creation of these new policies:

A Patron Guideline Policy was created. Its purpose was to create guidelines so that the Concord Free Public Library can provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for all residents and visitors. The policy states that the library should be a place where each patron can come to study, read and work without interference. The policy also mentions cell phone use, damage or loss of library materials, behavior and supervision of children, and quiet study space in the Reference Room.

A Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Policy was created after months of research and discussion. CORI is provided by the State. The policy was created to promote the safety of the library patrons, especially the children, elderly, and disabled. All volunteers of the Concord Free Public Library aged 18 and over will be required to undergo a CORI check. The Library Director and Assistant Director will act as the administrators of the policy with the cooperation of the Police Department.

A Circulation Policy was approved. This policy helps the patrons understand the procedures for obtaining a library card and clarifies the loan periods, renewals, limits on materials, and late fees. This policy was created so that the Concord Free Public Library can enhance the patron experience and continue to align itself with the circulation policies of the Minuteman Library Network. The policy was also created in anticipation of a food for fines program next year.

In cooperation with the Library Corporation, the Meeting Room Policy was revised to clarify the use of the library's meeting rooms. This includes the meeting rooms at the main branch and Fowler.

The Library Committee heard from many visitors over the course of 2014. Sherry Litwack, president of the Library Corporation, provided us with updates on the 151 Main St. building. She stated that without the interrelationship between the Library Corporation and the Town that such a purchase would not have been possible. Kitty Smith spoke about the very successful Seed Lending Library that is housed in the Fowler branch. The Seed Lending Library was seen on television, written up in the *Boston Globe*, and discussed on WBUR. People around the world are now seeking her assistance with their own versions. Caroline Nie spoke to the committee about the current and planned technology achievements and initiatives that include an increase in Wi-Fi, a revamping of the library website, and an upgrade to the Minuteman Library System

catalog. John Peachey, Instructional Technology Specialist for Concord Public Schools, reported on the technology used in the elementary schools. Anne Irza-Leggat spoke to the Library Committee about the Art Gallery at the main branch. She informed us about the art jury process and invited committee members to get involved with the juries and the gallery.

Working together with the Library Director, the Assistant Director, the Staff, the Library Corporation, and the Friends, the Library Committee does all it can to support the needs of the Concord Free Public Library. The Library Committee invites any interested person or observer to attend our monthly meetings, held the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the main library.

## CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Kerry Cronin, Library Director

The Concord Free Public Library enjoyed another busy and productive year. Community engagement around future library services has been one of the most rewarding activities. Over the course of the fall we spoke with 58 residents in 12 separate focus groups regarding future library services in the areas of technology, collections, programs, and space. This feedback will be incorporated into a 5-year service plan for submission to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in early 2015. Other noteworthy accomplishments included: the expansion of service hours at the Fowler Branch Library with the earlier opening time of 9:00 a.m. on Thursdays; the launch of social media sites to publicize library services and reach new audiences; and the implementation of wireless printing and expansion of wireless broadband service at the Main Library in order to keep up with the growing demand.

200+ residents visited CFPL to see the 2013 Red Sox World Series trophy. Many families had their photographs taken with the trophy and left with armfuls of baseball related books from our thematic displays. Residents experienced very strongly the library's role as a community gathering place at this dynamic inter-generational event.

In order to remain current with materials in emerging formats, the library launched and/or expanded several digital services. Residents are now able to stream or download magazines, books, audiobooks and music with several new vendors in addition to the already popular eBook and