



FRIENDS

of the

BERNARDSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

One Anderson Hill Road • P.O. Box 455 • Bernardsville, NJ 07924

November 2024

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Dear Friend,

Bernardsville celebrates its 100th birthday this year, but the town's library can trace its roots back even farther! The original part of what we now call the "old library building" was constructed sometime prior to 1730. Before becoming home to Bernardsville's first library, that building was a private residence, a tavern, and even an unofficial post office – not to mention home to Bernardsville's most famous ghost, Phyllis Parker.

In 1903, thanks to the work of the Bernards Library Association (the organization that would later become the Friends of the Library) and a gift from the Mountain Colony, that historic building became the first town library. It was led by Marguerite Hubbell, Bernardsville's first librarian. After only 25 years, the library owned more than 9,500 volumes and had an annual circulation of more than 21,000.¹

Fast forward to May 1970, and the library's growth is obvious: it had space for 50,000 books, a children's room, and a community meeting room. The Library Association continued its support, fully funding all library operations until it became a municipal library in 1979.

The Bernardsville Public Library building that our community knows and relies on today was dedicated in February 2000, nearly 100 years after the original library started circulating books and over 260 years after the construction of the building that housed that first collection. In the same year, the Bernardsville Public Library recorded a larger circulation rate than any other library in the state – with an average of 26.2 books circulated annually per capita.²

In 2024, Bernardsville's centennial year, the library now houses 61,644 books in its permanent collection, with access to over 2.3 million more via the MAIN Library System. The physical collection also includes DVDs, audiobooks, and museum passes, and boasts an annual circulation of 90,414.

The original members of the Bernards Library Association in 1903 could have never imagined how the library supports the community with technology through computers, free WiFi within the library, and a variety of books, audiobooks, and periodicals available online. In 2023 alone, the library circulated 17,900 electronic items via online services such as Libby and Hoopla. The library hosted more programs than days in the year, with 511 programs that garnered more than 12,000 attendees.

¹ "Among the Blue Hills...Bernardsville...A History," Dorothea L. Thompson, History Book Committee, 1971

² "Thousands Check Out Bernardsville Library," Eleanor Barrett, Star Ledger Staff, Nov. 26, 2000

The Bernards Library Association changed its name to the Friends of the Bernardsville Library in 2007, and we have continued to support the library and the community over the years. We still work to improve the physical home of the library through capital investments. Plus, we support many programs for our community focusing on everyone from the littlest to the lifelong learner. The Friends are proud to help bring you summer reading, Makers' Week, concerts, and more.

The community's support has sustained the library since 1903, from the first donation by the Mountain Colony to your recent generous donations. We are writing today to ask for your continued support. Please consider what the library means to you, to your family, and what it has meant to Bernardsville for well over 100 years.

You may contribute by check, online payment, stock donation, or qualified charitable distribution. To send your gift, you may mail a check to the attention of Friends of the Bernardsville Library. To conveniently process your payment online visit <https://bernardsvillelibrary.org/friends/> or scan the QR code below to access the online payment portal. To donate stock, please contact **Robert Baker** at **Robert.baker@verizon.net** to obtain the "DTC" and account information to provide to your financial professional. To process a qualified charitable distribution, please contact your financial professional to understand if it makes sense for you.

We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at the library for the next 100 years!

Sincerely,



Nancy Verduin

President

Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library

You can find the Friends on social media and on the library website at www.bernardsvillelibrary.org.

 www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheBernardsvillePublicLibrary/

 @FriendsofBernardsvilleLibrary

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How your contribution helps our library:

*Adult Programming ... Book club bags ... Downloadable materials ... Local History Room ...
Museum passes ... Newsletter ... Professional development ... Senior breakfast/program ... Spanish language collection ...
Sundays @ Three Concerts ... Volunteer recognition ... Winter camp ... Youth programming ...*