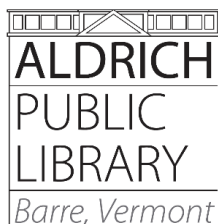


6 Washington Street
Barre, VT 05641
802-476-7550
www.aldrichpubliclibrary.org



York Branch
134 Mill Street
East Barre, VT 05641
802-476-5118

Curbside Services: M – F, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Computer and Study Sessions by appointment

December 15, 2020

Dear Friend,

I don't know of a word to define 2020, but I can definitely say "normal" is not it. With a global pandemic and reverberating economic impacts, we have strayed from normal. Through cultural, political, and socio-economic divisions we have learned "normal" wasn't working for many. I don't know what "normal" might look like in years to come, but 2020 has definitely cast off this moniker for the foreseeable future.

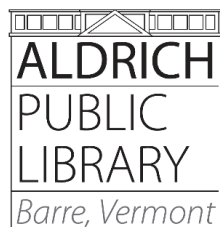
Despite all of this, the word I would use for Aldrich in 2020 is "hope".

After Governor Scott issued his "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order in March, Aldrich Staff worked hard from home to offer support and reinvent our standards to keep our community learning. As Vermonters worked remotely and stayed home, Aldrich adapted our services to provide engagement with virtual programming and curbside pickup. On the day the library closed, our team of youth services librarians started filming virtual story times for children and their families and provided a model for other librarians to follow around the state. Our librarians also connected library patrons to e-books, digital databases and learning resources to help them start new crafts and hobbies. Even as Vermonters' travel decreased due to continued safety concerns, our collections offered adventure and experience in the pages of stories for every age and interest. Through the holidays we will continue to offer books online and in person Monday through Friday between 11 am and 6 pm, as well as over-the-phone recommendations, online books browsing, and a range of programs to inspire the joy of reading.

In the face of this difficult year of isolation, our mission to promote community remains a priority. As we follow expert recommendations to quarantine books for six days before offering them to the public, we cannot safely support browsing in the stacks yet. However, we have worked daily since July to offer computer and Wi-Fi services to our patrons. Tutors meet with students, residents use computers in our library to find work and apartments, and book groups meet (socially distanced) in our reading room, as our staff continue working hard to keep our community safe. When schools closed for an extended summer break, we partnered with Hunger Free Vermont to bring meals to Barre at our front doors. Our staff helped serve meals to over 1,200 children.

In addition to these foundational services at Aldrich Public Library, we digitized and archived Barre Oral Histories on our website. These oral histories are a series of interviews recorded in the 1970s, featuring Barre residents recounting memories of Barre's past. These stories come from Italy, Sweden, Scotland and Lebanon and are filled with new beginnings, the rich history of industry and manufacturing in our community, devious tales from the era of prohibition, and much more. You can hear these recordings at <https://www.aldrichpubliclibrary.org/barre>

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Hope lives in the Aldrich Library through these stories, and we will continue to bring our community fellowship, education, and escape through our services. Libraries have historical precedence for being on the frontlines of community recovery and connection, and our history section contains the stories of those in Barre who survived floods, fires, the Great Depression, and pandemics before us. Aldrich is a standing testament to the trials of the past 100 years, and we cannot wait to welcome you freely into our building -- to write the next chapter in the history of our resilient community, and to connect with one another once again.

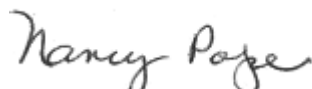
Until then, we are here for Barre in this challenging time and our work in our community would not be possible without the support from you! Thank you for donating time and financial support to keep our community library strong. Your gifts in response to our annual appeal letter make up 30% of our total fundraising support.

In order to meet operating budget needs and ensure we can offer safe and diverse library services, we need to raise \$30,000. We can do it, but we'll need your help once again. Please consider donating to the library this holiday season by returning the enclosed envelope or visiting AldrichPublicLibrary.org. Thank you for the many ways you support this library as we build a more vibrant, resilient Barre together.

With gratitude,



Loren Polk
Library Director



Nancy Pope
Board President

Board of Trustees

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Mike Smith, *Treasurer*
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