

Dear Friends and Neighbors,



2020 was a year like no other for the Cambridge Public Library and the entire community. It was a year full of uncertainty, tragedy, and trials fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through it all, the Cambridge Public Library remained committed to serving the community in whatever capacity allowed. Thanks to the support of the Cambridge Public Library Board of Trustees, the library staff, and the entire Cambridge community we are confident that 2021 will be a year full of triumphs and hope.

Cambridge Public Library began 2020 on a high note; operating at 30 hours per week, offering multiple children's programs every week, and hosting a series of financial wellness and climate change workshops for adults. On March 16th, 2020 the library building was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For 15 long weeks patrons were limited to e-resources and virtual services only. Library staff assisted patrons over the phone and via e-mail as community members struggled to apply for unemployment services, prepare taxes, access health insurance and navigate remote schooling. While the doors were closed, our public wifi was still available from the parking lot and was accessed over 28,000 times. On June 22nd, 2020 the Cambridge Public Library began to offer Curbside Services and loan physical items once again. Despite being closed for almost 4 months the library still managed to loan nearly 14,000 physical materials to the community and roughly 3,500 e-books.

In the Fall of 2020 the Cambridge Public Library building opened for in-person services. Sadly, we were forced to return to Curbside Services when COVID-19 surged again in November and December. The inconsistency and uncertainty throughout 2020 forced the library to be flexible and innovative with all of our plans. In rural areas like ours it is even more difficult to offer virtual programs as reliable internet service is still lacking for all of our community. Instead of offering programs through on-line venues Cambridge Public Library and the Friends of Cambridge Public Library provided monthly Take and Make Kits. Each kit came with all of the art supplies necessary to complete a craft, as well as educational materials or books. Some of the crafts provided included sun catchers, Christmas ornaments, dream catchers, and even bird houses. In addition, the library now offers circulating STEM kits such as a My Body kit, a Learn to Code kit, and an Electrical Circuit kit which families can take home for educational fun with their children. Many of these programs will continue even as COVID-19 restrictions continue to loosen.

Cambridge Public Library is more determined than ever to expand our services to the community in 2021. At this time the library building is open for in-person services with 4 public computers available for use, spaced accordingly to offer social distancing. Additionally, Cambridge Public Library is now a member of the Farm-2-Library program. This program, a partnership between Comfort Food Community and Southern Adirondack Library System, strives to reduce food waste while increasing food security and accessibility in our community. Weekly deliveries of fresh produce will be made to the community fridge at the library. This program is free and open to all without restrictions. Moving forward our library will now be officially fine-free, taking one more big step toward equity and accessibility for all in our community.

Regardless of the seemingly endless struggles brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambridge Public Library is looking forward to the future. We will continue to take steps toward returning to normal services. Beginning June 1st, 2021 Cambridge Public Library will return to 30 operating hours per week. Our new hours will be as follows:

MONDAY/WEDNESDAY: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM & 5:30-8:30 PM

TUESDAY/THURSDAY: 2:00-6:00 PM

FRIDAY/SATURDAY: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

At this time the library does not have a date set for the return of in-person programs or gatherings within the library building, but we do have hope that these things will be possible in 2021! All things are possible with a little hope and the support of a great community like Cambridge.

“Libraries always remind me that there are good things in this world.” -Lauren Ward