

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY & GARDEN

The Children's Library and Story Garden at the Concord Free Public Library

Igniting Young Minds and Engendering a Love of Learning

The Concord Free Public Library Corporation acquired the adjacent Heywood-Benjamin House and property at 151 Main Street and is in the quiet phase of a campaign to fund a substantial addition that will connect the Library House to the Main Library. The project will allow us to meet growing demand by creating a new and expanded Children's Center, Program and Meeting space, the Commons for coffee, tea, and conversation, enhanced Special Collections, and the Workshop: flexible DIY space where people can create, invent, learn, and collaborate.

The Children's Library will offer an inviting world of new and familiar experiences

The new Children's Library will offer preschoolers and elementary school-aged children a magical environment to explore natural and imaginary worlds. Both event attendance and circulation are up at the Library and demand among children and their families and a multitude of local organizations leads the way. With interactive programs, child-directed play areas and cozy reading niches, this thoughtfully designed library within a library will meet a growing desire for more creative spaces and programming for young minds.

Inspired by literary classics and leading edge environmental practices, the outdoor Story Garden will stimulate the senses and enchant children and adults alike. A new performance nook, crafting workshop and family bathroom create the infrastructure necessary to support up-to-date children's programming. The project will increase the square footage dedicated to children by fifty percent.

Cohesive integration of books and activities

Working with educators and colleagues at neighboring institutions and organizations, the Children's Librarians are preparing to take immediate advantage of the upgraded facilities. Simply having the space to offer young patrons a choice of activities, offered simultaneously, will enrich the library experience for families. Depending on age and interest, family members can split up to attend a puppet show, participate in a STEM-related building project or quietly browse through the bookshelves.

- *Mirror Mirror.* Infants and toddlers will enjoy a wider range of multisensory experiences with enhanced materials, while continuing to be enthralled by familiar favorites like the mirrored boxes.
- *Pockets of Puppets.* The new performance nook will allow for lively story times and inspire interpretive puppet shows, like one based on the madcap *Angelica Sprocket's Pockets* in which audience members are invited to become puppeteers in their own right. Participatory puppet shows are a long and beloved tradition at the Library!



- *Time to Go.* New amenities, including a water fountain and craft area sink, will allow for more robust and hands-on activities. Finally, a family bathroom, located within the Children's Library, will add a level of comfort and convenience for young patrons and a sense of relief to their parents.

Where the Wild Things Are

The Story Garden design takes inspiration from Concord's own Henry David Thoreau and Mary Reynolds who, in 2002 at age 27, became the youngest person ever to win a gold medal at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show in London.

- *Wild Things.* Mary Reynolds believes that "wild places" are becoming harder to find, and children especially need wild places to encourage imagination and creativity. Her gardens rely on wild flowers, grasses, and trees instead of formal flower beds.
- *Earth Friendly Practices.* Tipping a hat to one of our original environmentalists, the surrounds will include plants from Henry David's journals and will promote sustainable gardening.
- *The Farm.* A prominent feature of the Story Garden will be raised seed beds and a shed to house child-sized gardening tools, enclosed by a white washed, criss-cross wood fence and gate.
- *Timeless Travel.* A garden signpost will direct readers to their favorite destinations, including Neverland, Hogwarts, Terabithia, Oz, the Hundred Acre Wood, Whoville, and Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy's house.
- *Puppy House.* Snoopy, Clifford, Spot, Buck, Shiloh, Walter, Big Dog and Little Dog... the essence of so many memorable dogs will be evoked as children climb in, on, and around the Puppy House.

We invite you to help make the Children's Library and Story Garden a reality

Those early years are the most formative years, and creating an environment to foster a lifelong love of learning and exploration will be a gift to generations of Concord families. It is incumbent upon us to give our children every opportunity to build solid foundations and self-esteem to carry them confidently into the world beyond the Library. We invite you to play a leadership role in making that happen.

Such leadership deserves, and will be rewarded by, appropriate recognition and we look forward to engaging you in this very exciting project.

Help make the Library the place where Concord connects, learns, and innovates

For more information about CFPL's Connecting Our Community Campaign, contact Marcy Bouley Eckel at MEckel@CFPLCorp.org.

