

**Altamont Free Library**  
2025 Annual Director's Report

*The 2025 Altamont Free Library Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of  
David Warner, a devoted library worker and patron*

**Mission**

Altamont Free Library, housed in the historic Altamont Train Station, serves as a hub of our community:  
Enriching lives, creating connections, fostering literacy and inquiry, and welcoming all.

**Trustees**

*President:* Rachel Lane

*Vice President:* Christine Carpenter

*Secretary:* Katherine Nelson

*Treasurer:* Tracy Mayer

*Assistant Treasurer:* Paul Scilipoti

*Trustees:* Debbie Evans, Mallory Fremgen, Raelee Grimm, Jeff Perlee & Rebecca Stumpf

**Library Staff**

*Library Director:* Joe Burke

*Library Assistants:* Lauren Boudi, Erika Peterson, Harith Saam, Meg Seinberg-Hughes

*Maintenance:* Claudia LeClair

*Bookkeeper:* Jason Cooper (*through October 2025*)

**2025 Summary**

To say that 2025 was beset with challenges would be an understatement.

Throughout the year, Altamont Free Library's Board and staff grappled with unexpected external challenges including the defunding of the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services and the collapse of Baker & Taylor, the largest library materials vender in the country. We encountered unanticipated building issues, including the malodorous death of our sewage grinder. We bid farewell to longtime Upper Hudson Library System and AFL booster Tim Burke and dealt with the unanticipated resignation of a key member of our financial oversight team.

Addressing all of these challenges required the library's leadership team to devote more time, energy and creativity than we would perhaps have wished. Each required hard thinking, hard listening, hard decisions and a lot of teamwork.

Despite all of these challenges, Altamont Free Library begins this new year financially stronger and more beloved by our community than we have ever been before. The challenges we faced and the hard work they required have made us stronger. As 2026 begins, Altamont Free Library is thriving.

Over the past year, Altamont Free Library developed new collections and services like our circulating board game collection, our seed library, and our Learn-At-Home STEM kits. We inaugurated excellent new programs like our Community Help Desk service, our Citizen Preparedness Corps trainings and an ongoing series of presentations from Altamont Physical Therapy. We spread the news of our innovative approaches to small-library problems through NYLA's Library Skills Academy and at the national Association for Rural and Small Libraries Conference in Albuquerque, NM. We joined our local and professional community members in celebrating our library and all libraries in the Village Memorial Day Parade, the Capital Region Pride Parade and the celebration of the ribbon-cutting for Altamont's new Long Path kiosk. We welcomed new friends to our circle, including our new bookkeeper Melissa Ogborne, our new Assemblymember Gabriella Romero and our new UHLS Executive Director Chris Sagaas. We deployed new tools like our new photocopier, our locally-customized new app and library catalog, and we made dramatic and long-awaited improvements to our website.

While doing all of that, we somehow also found time to have our highest circulation year ever, a full 7.5% higher than our previous record set in 2023. This remarkable increase was driven primarily by a better than 20% year over year increase in digital lending through Libby and Hoopla, but the past year also saw a 17% increase in over-the-counter children's book circulation. The 10,590 children's books we checked out was over 500 items higher than our previous record (also set in 2023). Disc circulation—CD audiobooks and DVD's—continue to diminish as a fraction of our overall circulation, but nearly every other collection area remains strong.

This past year, we have also been the beneficiaries of major investments by supporters and policymakers: In January, we received an NYS Department of Education grant for \$25,000 that will allow us to dramatically improve our children's collections over the next several years. This grant was championed by former State Senator Neil Breslin as a demonstration of his support for AFL as he completed his long career of community service. We received a subsequent donation from the Kress Family that has allowed us to develop a collection of educational STEM kits that we rolled out just a few weeks ago. Between fundraisers, charitable donations and memorial gifts, Altamont Free Library received over \$52,000 in private donations last year, a clear demonstration of community support.

So, yes, we've been busy.

In addition to all of the above, the Sustainability Committee's Long Range Planning Working Group spent a considerable amount of time and effort in 2025 on collecting community feedback about what AFL does well, what we could be doing better and how we can best serve our existing patrons and attract new ones in the years to come. To date, well over 300 individuals have responded to our various surveys and focus groups. Over the next few months, the AFL leadership team will work together to turn that feedback into a new Long Range Plan of Service for 2026 through 2029.

Though I don't want to color your own interpretations of the feedback we've collected, I think it's fair to say that the overall sentiment of our survey respondents was very clear: Altamont Free Library is highly valued and deeply trusted by our community; Our staff is our greatest strength; We function ably as an essential community hub and gathering place. As one respondent put it, "It feels like coming home."

Every member of our Board and staff should, I believe, feel a sense of real pride in our accomplishments throughout 2025. I know that I do.

In the months ahead, we will all once again be called upon to put forth additional time, energy and creativity on behalf of our library and our community. Though your work as Trustees is invisible to our patrons most of the time, I hope you know how deeply appreciated your work is.

### **Circulation, Membership, and Collection**

*Please see the attached charts for additional details.*

In 2025, Altamont Free Library lent out 24,852 physical items and 12,400 downloadable ebooks and audiobooks for a total circulation of 37,252. This was our highest annual circulation ever, driven largely by our rapidly increasing digital circulation.

Over-the-counter circulation was up by 11.6% compared to 2024, and our digital circulation increased by 20.7% over 2025. Combined digital and over-the-counter circulation was up by 11.6% compared to 2024.

Circulation of printed materials (ie. books in all age categories) represented 56% of our circulation total. Children's books matched our (probably) all-time high of 29% of our total circulation. Meanwhile, circulation of DVD's and CD audiobooks are at their lowest point ever, representing just 10% of our total circulation, down from a high of 28% in 2018.

Over the course of 2025, Altamont Free Library added 132 new library members, for a total of 1,315 cardholders, of whom 501 have an item checked out as of 1/15/2025. Over the past year, we lent items out to 882 unique borrowers.

Throughout the year, we added 770 new items to our collection, including 216 new adult books and 437 children's books, for a year-end total collection of 12,717 items. We added significant new elements to our circulating collection, including 23 board games and eight (and counting) Learn-At-Home STEM kits.

## Communications & Outreach

In 2025, we significantly expanded our social media reach significantly, with 244 new Facebook followers for a total 1,653. We've also gained 121 Instagram followers in 2023 for a total of 594. Throughout the year, we put out 194 FB/Instagram posts and a handful of additional FB-only posts, an all-time high for us. We published 52 weekly columns in the *Altamont Enterprise* and resumed publishing monthly program guides.

## Finances

Primary sources of income were: Town of Guilderland: \$72,000; Village of Altamont: \$60,000; Town of Knox, \$9,000; Fundraisers: \$31,523; Gifts & Donations: \$20,727; Grants: \$25,586; Fines & Fees: \$2,838; Program Revenue: \$2,596; State Aid: \$1,376; Interest from CD's: \$11,793.

Copies of the full budget are available at the Library.

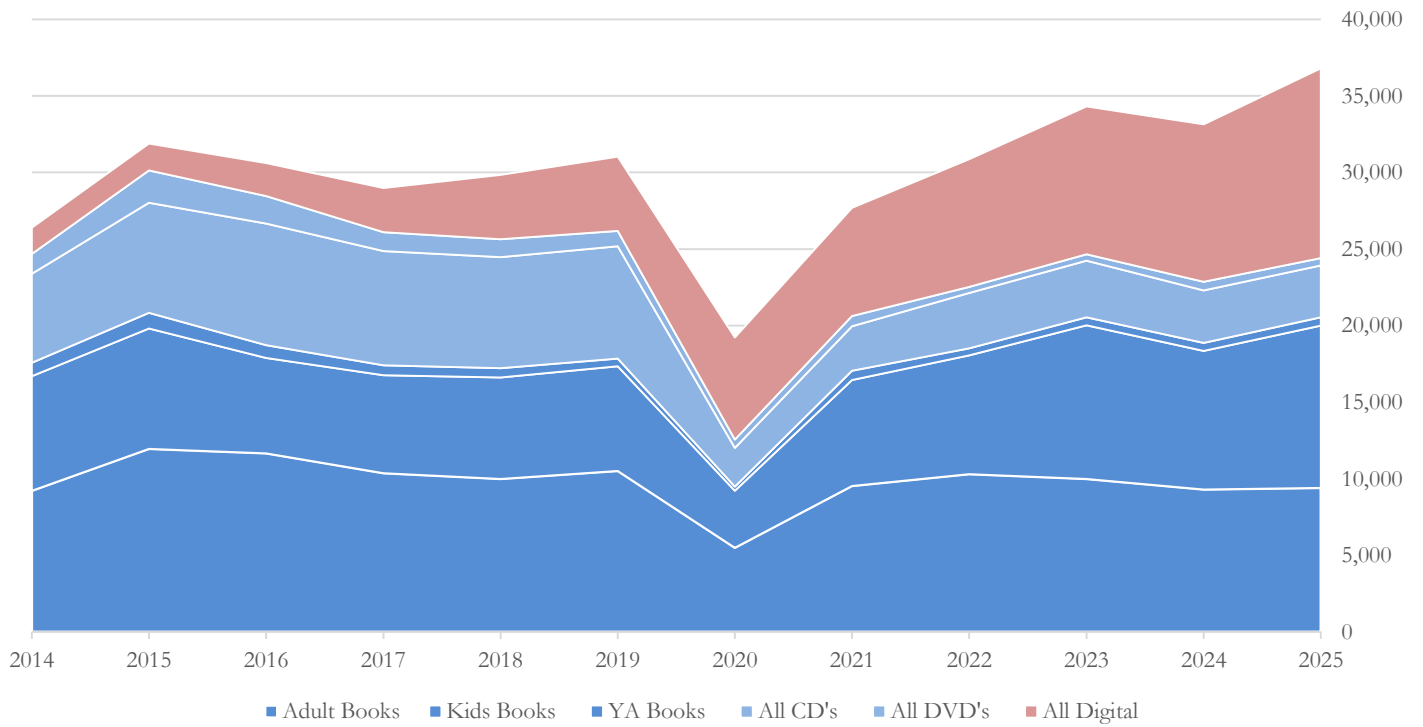
### Annual Circulation, 2023 to 2025

Category	Full Year 2025			Full Year 2024			Full Year 2023		
	Total Circ	Borrowed	Loaned	Total Circ	Borrowed	Loaned	Total Circ	Borrowed	Loaned
Adult Audio	441	367	104	528	456	115	369	276	138
Adult Fiction	6,614	3,620	1,703	6,721	3,567	1,740	6,908	3,439	1,535
Adult NF	2,803	1,970	803	2,591	1,773	752	3,086	1,984	745
Adult Video	2,572	1,282	360	2,752	1,387	365	2,961	1,279	465
Electronic	11	11	0	13	13	0	4	4	0
Kids Audio	31	19	7	43	24	8	42	17	6
Kids Fiction	9,500	1,796	1,285	8,017	1,287	1,371	8,741	1,095	1,229
Kids NF	1,089	300	235	1,017	303	315	1,297	281	227
Kids Video	824	75	31	663	114	67	754	102	27
Misc.	437	79	99	234	60	55	340	81	68
YA Audio	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	1	0
YA Fiction	475	207	239	501	274	273	472	172	236
YA NF	55	21	10	34	26	5	32	16	8
YA Video	0	0	0	2	2	0	3	3	0
<b>In House Total</b>	<b>24,852</b>	<b>9,747</b>	<b>4,876</b>	<b>23,118</b>	<b>9,288</b>	<b>5,066</b>	<b>25,011</b>	<b>8,750</b>	<b>4,684</b>
Overdrive	11,140			9,327			8,779		
Hoopla	1,260			944			870		
<b>Digital</b>	<b>12,400</b>			<b>10,271</b>			<b>9,649</b>		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>37,252</b>	<b>9,747</b>	<b>4,876</b>	<b>33,389</b>	<b>9,288</b>	<b>5,066</b>	<b>34,660</b>	<b>8,750</b>	<b>4,684</b>

### Annual Circulation by Selected Categories, 2018 to 2025

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Adult Fiction	6,615	6,721	6,908	7,201	6,483	3,799	7,256	6,819
Adult NF	2,803	2,591	3,086	3,100	3,043	1,696	3,266	3,171
Kids Fiction	9,501	8,015	8,741	6,883	6,062	3,195	5,789	5,616
Kids NF	1,089	1,017	1,297	872	860	523	1,038	1,012
YA Fiction	473	501	472	439	575	256	449	566
DVDs	3,396	3,417	3,715	3,610	2,893	2,542	7,321	7,264
CD's	472	575	413	406	675	539	1,066	1,153
Digital	12,400	10,271	9,643	8,339	7,066	6,662	4,844	4,201
<b>Total Circ</b>	<b>37,252</b>	<b>33,389</b>	<b>34,654</b>	<b>31,269</b>	<b>28,216</b>	<b>19,374</b>	<b>31,592</b>	<b>30,339</b>

### Book, Disc and Digital Annual Circulation, 2014 to 2025



### ANNUAL CIRCULATION BY COLLECTION AREA, 2016 TO 2025

