

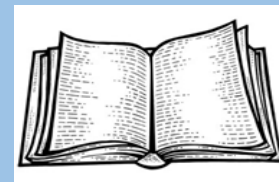
Winter 2026

THE OPEN BOOK

Vol. 1, No. 2



The Newsletter of the Friends of
the Westfield Memorial Library



Upcoming Events

January

18 – Westfield Memorial Library Martin Luther King Day of Service Volunteer Fair—WML Meeting Room 2-4 pm

27— Friends Sharing the Warmth—Local History Room 1:00 pm

February

9 - Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting—WML 9:30 am

10—Friends Sharing the Warmth—Local History Room 1:00 pm

18 - NYC Ballet at Lincoln Center *Sleeping Beauty*

20–22 - Friends of the Library Jigsaw Puzzle Sale Donation Days—WML Main Lobby, 10am - 4pm (1 pm - 4pm Sunday)

24-25—Friends of the Library Jigsaw Puzzle Sale—WML Meeting Room 10 am

24—Friends Sharing the Warmth—Local History Room 1:00 pm

March

9—Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting— WML 9:30 am

10—Friends Sharing the Warmth—Local History Room 1:00 pm

11—Metropolitan Opera: *Madame Butterfly*

24 Friends Sharing the Warmth—Local History Room 1:00 pm

2026 Friends' Membership Drive Underway!

Do you patronize the Friends Book Sale each Spring and The Children and Teen Book Sale in the Fall? Have you purchased a jigsaw puzzle at our annual sale or ongoing "Pop-Up" sale in the Library lobby? Have you visited one of the 28 museums in the Friends' Museum Pass Program? Do your children participate in the Friends-sponsored Saturday Children's Programs each winter? Have you visited the opera or a Broadway show as part of a Friends-sponsored event? Have you attended a Friends' Book Discussion or visited one of the Friends seven Little Libraries around town? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you appreciate the value the Friends add to the Westfield Memorial Library.



Hunting for bargains at the Friends' Book Sale!

To provide this added value, the Friends need the continued support of its members. The Friends Membership Drive for 2026 launched in November and is ongoing. With this year's drive, the Friends have introduced a simplified renewal process and membership structure. There are now three levels of membership: Household (\$25 and includes all family members residing at a single address), Friends Circle (\$50+ covers all family members in a single household), and Senior (\$20 covering all seniors in a single household). Prospective and renewing members can sign up at the Friends website (www.fwmlnj.org) and pay via PayPal as directed at the website. Of course, you can also send your renewal form and payment to: FWML, 550 East Broad Street, Westfield,



NJ 07090. Please make checks payable to The Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library. Acknowledgements and receipts will be distributed in late January. Members of the Friends are entitled to early admission into the Annual Spring Book Sale & Fall Children's & Teen's Book Sale, Participation in our Metropolitan Opera Series program, Invitations for curated trips to museums, Broadway plays or cultural events, a subscription to *The Open Book* the Friends quarterly newsletter, containing early notice of fun, entertaining and educational children's programming in the community and a 10% discount at the Town Book Store, 270 East Broad Street, Westfield.

The Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Public charity EIN number: 23-7351099. Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.



**THE OPEN BOOK
STAFF**

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From the Editors' Desk

As 2026 dawns, we are in the midst of our annual membership drive and ask for your continued support in the coming year. It is only through your membership dues, patronage at our book and puzzle sales, donations and volunteer efforts that we are able to provide our various programs and contributions to capital improvements to the Westfield Memorial Library. We anticipate 2026 to be another banner year for the library, with the opening of the new Maker's Space, our winter roster of Saturday morning children's programs, a new series of Hale Speaker talks, our Metropolitan Opera subscription program, our Museum Pass program encompassing 28 museums and much more. But to continue to provide these services and support improvements to the library, we need your help. Your continued membership in the Friends supports all of our efforts to make the Westfield Memorial Library the best in the state.

The Friends at LifeLong Westfield Senior Fair



LifeLong Westfield held its annual Senior Fair at St. Helen's Parish Hall on October 27th, 2025. The Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library provided information on the programs sponsored by the Friends at the library, listing of upcoming activities, as well as information concerning volunteer opportunities. There were more than 18 organizations represented with greater than 75 participants.

Jerry Skotnicki, Harriet Davidson and Michael Miller

THE OPEN BOOK



The Friend's Scholarship Program

The Friends are dedicated to supporting the Westfield Memorial Library and the services it offers to the community. We fund passes to 25 museums in the tri-state area, sponsor a book discussion club, maintain a network of seven Little Libraries throughout town, and deliver books to residents who are physical unable to visit the library. The Friends also have a Scholarship Program providing financial support for the education of future librarians.

2025 High School Award Winners

With Audrey Zavitz, Scholarship Chair

The Friends' scholarship was initially established more than ten years ago and provided as many as three scholarships per year of up to \$2500 each. The funds were for tuition for courses leading to a degree in Library Science. Applicants had to be residents of Westfield or employed in town; the funding only applied to tuition, not books, fees or other expenses; and any funds awarded were paid directly to the educational institution.

As libraries have evolved, so has the Scholarship Program. Libraries have expanded beyond being a repository for books into full-fledged information centers with resources beyond their brick and mortar facilities and we have expanded eligible fields of study to information technology, data sciences and other fields appropriate to the modern library. And while the average award is still in the range of \$2500, in recent years we have gone above that amount if the expenses are justified and we have a limited number of applicants. We generally receive only one or two applications per year and some years none at all.

We recently amended our by-laws to expand the Scholarship Program to provide other educational opportunities to improve the library. One new component promotes staff professionalism. Current staff members of the Westfield Memorial Library can request up to \$500 to attend professional conferences or for continuing education programs. Awards may only be used for registration fees for conferences and not for travel, lodging or meals and must be approved by the Library Director and in compliance with town regulations governing employees. Another new component of the Scholarship Program is an award to high school students who reside in Westfield who have a strong record of academic achievement and a history of extracurricular activities promoting literacy or volunteer service to the library or with the Friends. In 2025, three awards were presented to Westfield High School Seniors.

Books on Wheels

Our library staff and volunteer deliverers provide a wonderful service for patrons unable to go to the library. Reference librarians gather materials (books, magazines, etc.) based on personal preferences. Deliveries are made every other Friday by volunteers who bring items directly to your door and return items to the library. There are many loyal, devoted volunteers who ensure that everyone in Westfield can enjoy our amazing library resources. Any questions, please email me, Suzanne O'Rourke, at jorourke7@verizon.net

The schedule for 2026 Deliverers are:

January 16 and 30 - Jerry Skotnicki

February 13 - Mary Ellen O'Boyle

February 27 - Edith Konopka

March 13 - Eileen Silverman

March 27 - Mallary Saltzman

April 10 - Lorre Korecky

April 25 - Gale Jacob

May 8 - Harriet Davidson

May 22 - John Boyle

July 17 - Mallary Saltzman



July 31 - John Boyle

August 14 and 28 - Jerry Skotnicki

September 11 - Dona Teschner

September 25 - Mary Ellen O'Boyle

October 9 - Audrey Zavetz

October 23 - Mary Ellen O'Boyle

November 6 - Tara McGroddy

November 20 - Andrea Silkowitz

December 4 - Mary Jo McShane

December 18 - Edith Konopka

THERE ARE 2 DATES THAT NEED DELIVERERS. If you are able to make these deliveries, please contact me.

Friday, June 19 - Pick up Thursday, June 18, Deliver on Friday or Saturday. Return books on Saturday.

Friday, July 3 - Pick up Thursday, July 2, Deliver on Friday or Saturday. Return items on Saturday.

Thank you all for making this committee a vibrant, worthwhile contribution to Westfield library patrons. **THIS SCHEDULE IS POSTED ON THE FRIENDS' BULLETIN BOARD IN THE LIBRARY.**

Friends Sharing the Warmth

The Friends Sharing the Warmth knitting group meets biweekly. Recently, the members collected 37 handmade hats and a few scarves and donated them to Emily's Hats for Hope Initiative and attached labels indicating they came from Friends Sharing the Warmth.

Emily, a woman from Morristown, NJ started collecting winter hats, scarves, afghans, etc. for the homeless and working poor in the US in 2011 when she was only 17 years old. She stepped down when she moved to Europe to attend graduate school. Her mission lived on in the many, many spin-off chapters she inspired all around the country and even overseas. In 2022 Emily's family decided to relaunch the Initiative. Her mom Jill makes hats and Emily continues to make hats in Europe. This is a wonderful way to share the warmth to those in need, all started by a teenager from Morristown.

14th Annual Children's & Teens' Book Sale

In October, the Friends held their 14th Children's and Teens' Book Sale. It was a great success, surpassing all expectations. The book sale is a great way to provide almost new books to the community at unbeatable prices. Studies show that kids who are read to or read on their own for at least twenty minutes a day have better vocabulary and reading comprehension skills if they are reading books they enjoy. We were happy to be able to help parents, grandparents, caregivers and friends achieve those goals with the wide selection of books we had to offer. Though the book sale serves as a major fundraiser for the Friends, its value goes well beyond as it also serves as a "*fun*-raising" community event.

We received over 6,800 books from the community over the five donation days and sold most of them during the sale days. The remainder were donated to multiple groups including an organization assisting families dealing with domestic violence, Furniture Assist, child psychologists, Linden Elementary School #6, Rafael Hernandez School in Newark, Westfield Fun Club, which helps local refugees, Jewish Family Services in Elizabeth, the Mitzvah Circle and the Friends' Little Free Libraries located throughout Westfield.



Bring on the kids!

The sale would not have been possible without help from greater than 40 volunteers (including students from McKinley School, WHS, UCTVS, and St. Joseph's in Metuchen, coordinated by Librarian Dana Rosen-Perez), BOE, DPW, WML staff members. We thank Costco, Peterson's Wine Unlimited, Total Wine, House of Wine & Liquor, Shoprite Liquors, and Dittrick's Wine and Liquors for providing flats and boxes. We are very grateful to the more than 300 community members who came through the doors to shop. Those customers helped us raise \$5,182.75 for the Friends to support museum passes, scholarships, Saturday children's

programming, and library programs for Black History Month and Women's History Month.

It's Only 3 Months Away!!!!

Please mark your calendars!!! We need you!!! We need your books!!! Our 51st Annual Book Sale is coming in Spring 2026. Set up and Donations days will be Sunday, 4/19/26 through Tuesday, 4/28/2026. Sale days will be Wednesday, 4/29/2026 through Sunday, 5/3/2026. We will have it all - novels, cookbooks, mysteries, self-help, history, travel, animals, biography, YA, children's books, and more. The sale is a major fundraiser for the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library.

But to raise all that money, we need your help. In addition to your book donations, we need your help setting up, sorting donations, helping out during the sale and cleaning up after the sale. Last year, over 60 people generously donated their time and effort to help make the sale so successful. Do you have students that need community service hours? The sale is a great way to earn them. Do you want to help your town but don't have lots of free time? Most of our volunteer shifts are 2 hours long. If you are interested in volunteering, please email us at amyjberman7@gmail.com. We will have a signup sheet available starting in January 2026 on the FWML website.

Please mark your calendars and to make sure you don't miss out on unbeatable prices as well as a chance to help your library! Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

"I love the way that each book -- any book -- is its own journey.
You open it, and off you go."- Sharon Creech

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Get Ready for the 4th Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Sale: A “Piece” of Mind

The fourth Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Sale, sponsored by the Friends, will take place On February 24th and 25th, 2026 in the Meeting Room at the Westfield Memorial Library. Last year, over 850 puzzles were donated. These puzzles varied in size (25 to 4,000 pieces), format, complexity, and subject matter. We request that for all donations, boxes are secured by tape. For the sale, puzzles are arranged by number of pieces, with additional sections devoted to children’s puzzles and specially priced offerings. Payment can be made by cash, check, PayPal and Zettle.

All proceeds go to funding Friends sponsored programs at the Westfield Memorial Library. For volunteer information, please visit our website, fwmlnj.org.

Liven up your family game night, provide an activity during the cold winter months, or devise a new tradition for the summer down the shore. A wide array of puzzles for all ages is available, at amazing prices.

Come and join us at it the jigsaw puzzle sale, we guarantee that there will be no piece left unturned you will find the perfect fit of pieces..



DONATION DAYS

Friday	February 20	10:00 to 4:00
Saturday	February 21	10:00 to 4:00
Sunday	February 22	1:00 to 4:00

SALE DAYS

Tuesday	February 24	10:00 to 8:00
Wednesday	February 25	10:00 to 8:00

