



Friends of the Fletcher Free Library
Annual Report FY'25
July 2024 – June 2025

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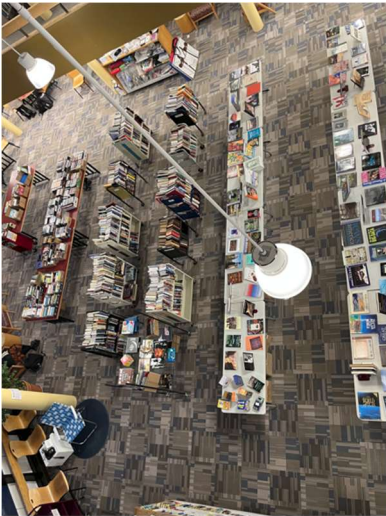
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The purpose of The Friends of the Fletcher Free Library is to support the Fletcher Free Library (FFL) through advocacy, financial support, and fundraising with the goal of promoting the Library as a literacy and multicultural center for the community.

The Friends raise money through the generosity of community donors and donations to the Annual Appeal, and through sales of donated books and branded merchandise at occasional sales, sales from the Stall (shelves of books across from the Main Desk), and from online sales. On occasion, the Friends also raise money through annual fundraisers. The Friends are recipients of most restricted and unrestricted grant monies received in support of the Library. The extent of the Friends' work could not be accomplished without Gale Batsimm, FFL Development Manager, who works tirelessly to provide support for the Fletcher Free. Thank you, Gale!

FY'25

Mary Clare Armstrong left the Treasurer role and the Board to pursue a new professional direction. Mary Clare saw the Friends move from a checkbook register and spreadsheet to a fully digital bookkeeping system while bringing a joie-de-vivre to the Friends that still glows. We are very grateful for her enthusiasm and her commitment to the Fletcher Free Library and wish her the best in her new endeavors. Tina Lesem, supported by our intrepid bookkeeper EZ Larsen, took over the role of Treasurer, overseeing Friends' finances.

We contracted with JMM Associates to perform a financial review of the Friends, a process that has helped improve our financial management through best practices. We also updated the Friends' internal financial controls, and in order to increase interest revenue, moved savings into a money market account and established a process to roll over CDs more efficiently.

Thanks to our dynamic and focused Capital Campaign Committee, Friends' fundraising to support the daily enrichment programs was not in any way sidetracked by our ambitious new capital project. And the Capital Campaign, still in its quiet phase, gained momentum in FY25, getting us all a step closer to breaking ground on an exciting new chapter for the Fletcher Free Library. We came a long way in our first 150 years, and have continued to aggressively move ahead in the time since we celebrated the Sesquicentennial last year.

The Friends added a Spring 'big sale', an extended five-day sale to parallel our regular fall sale. Part of the motivation for this was to reduce the volume of donated books stocked in the Friends' space in the basement, in preparation for the historic preservation work planned to begin late spring and extend through the end of calendar year 2025. The project is funded by the National Park Service, the City of Burlington, T-Mobile, and the Friends. Largely brick and mortar work and window frame repair in the Carnegie wing, it has significantly limited access to the basement. The Friends have put a hold on receiving donations until the work is complete, and books to stock onsite and offsite stalls, as well as our eBay inventory, were moved out of the Library to ensure access over the construction period. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the Friends spent time brainstorming novel alternative sales and fundraising opportunities.

In FY25 the offsite bookstall project, offering books at various cafés around the city, expanded to 8 cafés across the New and Old North Ends, Downtown and the South End. Beyond raising money, these outposts act as outreach and keep the Fletcher Free 'visible' across town. Also, the Friends stall at the Winter Market was very popular, with games and gifts for folks who stopped by the tent.

Board of Directors

Role	FY'25
President	Jonathan Chapple-Sokol
Vice President	Carol Livingston
Treasurer	Tina Lesem
Secretary	Robin Twery
Director	Sara Bourne
Director	Giao Dang
Director	Amanda Hannaford
Director	Kathleen Laramee
Director	Martie Majoros
Director	Mark Twery

Friends volunteers devoted over 2500 person-hours to supporting the Fletcher Free Library. This year again we're fortunate to have substantial help from City Market member-workers. They play a big part in making all of our book sales so successful. We are thankful for those who worked hundreds of hours and those who contributed just a few. We very much appreciate City Market members for providing so much volunteer support, and City Market itself for the creative way the community is served through its member-worker policy.

Robin and Mark Twery once more organized many consistently successful book sales, and revenues were again impressive. Mark's work stewarding our eBay presence again made a big difference in Friends ability to support of the Library. Thanks to Martie Majoros and Carol Livingston for their work on the Stall, and Sara Bourne and Giao Dang for their maintaining our online presence. Our Communications team led by Martie has kept the community informed of Friends activities. Giao's constant outside-the-box thinking and asking 'why?' continues to take the Friends in new and productive directions.

Capital Campaign Committee

Capital Campaign Committee

Amy Mellencamp, co-chair
Kathleen Laramee, co-chair
Betsey Krumholz, treasurer
Shana Morrow Trombley, Campaign Manager
Cate MacLachlan
Dawn Moskowitz
Ryan Charrier
Jonathan Chapple-Sokol
Gale Batsimm
Mary Danko

FY25 Capital Campaign Overview: *Building One Story at a Time*

In FY25, the Capital Campaign Committee made significant strides toward our \$35 million vision to transform Fletcher Free Library into a 21st-century hub for learning, equity, sustainability, and community engagement. Under the campaign banner *Building One Story at a Time*, we raised an impressive \$11,454,820 in gifts and pledges, laying a strong foundation for the library's future.

We are reimagining Fletcher Free Library as a place built around people and how they use it:

- The historic Carnegie building will be restored to its original grandeur, with warm, welcoming reading rooms that encourage connection and reflection.
- Flexible gathering spaces will include large group rooms for events and small meeting rooms for remote work, tutoring, or one-on-one support.
- A new technology center and makerspace will offer accessible classes, hands-on tools, and personalized support—helping patrons with everything from telehealth access to developing essential digital skills.
- A dedicated kids' space will offer a vibrant space for play, reading, and exploration, complete with its own program room for daily youth activities.
- Teens will finally have a space of their own – a dedicated area designed for privacy, creativity, and social connection.
- Sustainability will be central. We are investigating geothermal energy, solar panels, rainwater capture systems, and green building materials—all to make the library a model for environmentally responsible design and a place of environmental learning.

FY25 Highlights:

- \$11.45M raised toward the \$35M campaign goal
- Bi-weekly campaign committee meetings to drive fundraising strategy and momentum
- Expanded campaign infrastructure with the formation of an Honorary Committee and a Financial Advisory Committee
- High-visibility events featuring Robert Putnam and Barbara McQuade to raise awareness and demonstrate the library's civic and cultural leadership
- Dozens of one-on-one donor and 'ambassador' meetings to build relationships and cultivate major gifts
- Memorandum of Understanding development between the Friends of Fletcher Free Library and the City of Burlington—on track for completion in Q1 FY26
- Campaign cash flow projections and fundraising timeline established to guide financial planning through the construction phase

We are entering FY26 with strong momentum and clear goals. We remain committed to our campaign's vision: to honor Fletcher Free Library's proud history while preparing boldly for a future where all people belong, ideas flourish, and Burlington thrives.

Financial Support for the Library

The Friends' Board annually allocates resources to the FFL for investment at the discretion of the Library Director. This procedure facilitates the FFL's ability to plan and prioritize programming, professional development, and special project investment more effectively. The Library Director proposes an amount to the Friends' Board based on anticipated programming and departmental needs for the coming fiscal year. The level of funding allocated each year is based on the availability of funds as stated in the Friends' end-of-year financial statements and Treasurer's reports. For FY'25, the Board allocated \$62,100 to support programs and services for youth, teens, and adults, and professional development support for staff, nearly 8% more than FY24. We started providing support for dedicated programming at the New North End branch, The Friends also issued \$10,000 to the City of Burlington, per our Memorandum of Understanding, a \$5,000 reduction compared with FY'24.

FY2025 Allocation Request

	FY25 Request
Donation to City Revenue Line	\$10,000
Programming - Adult	\$20,000
Outreach (Seniors)	\$2,000
Programming - Youth	\$12,000
Programming - Teen	\$7,000
Professional Development	\$6,000
Innovation Grants	\$5,000
Shredding Contract/\$42.50 month	\$500
ELOP Coordinator	\$1,000
Staff Support and Recognition	\$3,600
NNE Branch	\$5,000
Capital Campaign Fund	\$45,000
TOTAL	\$117,100

As shown, the Friends raised its direct commitment to the Capital Fund to \$45,000, providing money for necessary expenses to help build the Capital Campaign. Some of the expenses include but are not limited to: funding part-time staff, printing (mailings, brochures, signs, renderings, etc.), mailing/postage, consulting (includes trainings for Capital Campaign Committee), advertising/social media, video production, and events/receptions. We anticipate that as the Campaign evolves, this direct support from the Friends operational budget will decrease in future years.

FY'25 Highlights

NEW NORTH END BRANCH LIBRARY added new programs including Singalong with Linda Bassick and new services such as the Seed Library. The 2025 Garden Workshop Series included four programs led by guest speakers to bring home gardeners through the winter and into spring planting. *Stories with Geoff* and *LEGO Time* ran throughout the year for families, and adult programs such as Vegan in Vermont Cookbook Club and Lake Champlain Memory Café (in partnership with the UVM Center on Aging and Age Well) continued. Special thanks to NorthCountry Federal Credit Union for their support of NNE programming.

YOUTH SERVICES The 2024 Summer Challenge Program (SCP) visited parks and youth summer camps throughout Burlington with two outreach summer staff, reaching 1,246 kids, 198 teens, and 289 caregivers. Youth enjoyed hands-on activities, and received 1,206 free books, prizes from our generous in-kind donors, and t-shirts (sponsored by Vermont Federal Credit Union). Friends' funding supported weekly youth programs and brought exciting live summer programs including Lyric Theatre, Very Merry Theatre, StarBase VT, and the Vermont Lake Monsters. The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) provided a story time and book giveaway to youth to build their home libraries. The Early Literacy Outreach Program (ELOP) visited home-based childcares with direct outreach. We appreciate our SCP grantors in 2025: Mascoma Bank, M&T Bank, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, and others. New funding from Agilent, VASE, and ChangeX launched our new Rigamajig building tool and STEAM programs for youth.

THE BURLINGTON STORYWALK(R) continued into its fifth year, thanks to sponsorship from Appletree Bay Physical Therapy, Baystate Financial, Burlington Electric Department, Burlington Telecom, Champlain Cable, Heritage Automotive Group, NBT Bank, Phoenix Books, and Pingala Café. The storybooks at this popular family destination continue to change with each season with the help of volunteer BTV StoryWalk(R) stewards.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING launched a new cookbook group -- Bake Club -- a spin-off from the popular Food for Talk Cookbook Club. English Language Learner and FFL Book Discussion groups continued online. In-person regular programs included North Enders Book Club, Not the End of the World Book Club, Queer Reads, Crafters Drop-In, and an Italian Conversation Group. Dyke Night Film Series began. During April's National Poetry Month, the Library provided free, stamped poetry postcards. These programs were supported by the Friends of FFL, the Vermont Humanities Council, and City Market.

TECHNOLOGY classes included Tech Thursdays, Tech Tuesdays, and Wired Wednesdays at the NNE Branch, Tech and Cell Support at both branches, and Drop-In Tech Support at the Main Library.

TWO LITERARY FESTIVALS returned for their third year at FFL in November of 2024 with support from the Friends. The Green Mountain Book Festival (GMBF) welcomed author Kenneth Cadow, sponsored by Vermont Humanities. Author and panel discussions included Grappling with Vermont's Complicated Past, Poetry Reading, Writing Horror, Romantasy, and the Craft of Memoir. The Non-Fiction Comics Festival, the largest event of its kind in the country, highlighted illustrators and authors of non-fiction graphic books.

TEEN DEPARTMENT worked with the schools to bring classes to the Library and offered a College Essay Writing Workshop. The Teen Space also held programs like Dungeons and Dragons, Minecraft Meet-Up, and Teen Drop-In Volunteering.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT strengthens staff's knowledge and ability to serve community needs. The Friends proudly fund opportunities to enhance the skills of Library employees.

Financial Support for the Library

Financials (unaudited)

Summary Statement (with notes on significant changes from FY24)

Income	FY25	FY24	Comments
Contributions Income	\$140,261	\$25,356	Includes \$83K Bequest, City Market Rally for Change revenue from June 2024, and funding for Social Worker
Capital Campaign Building Income	\$577,103	\$3,000	Capital Campaign Contributions
Grants	\$51,745	\$30,496	
Annual Appeal	\$91,288	\$65,450	Very successful Annual Appeal
Fundraising Events	\$15,370	\$1,500	Includes sponsorships and events funded by Capital Campaign
Interest Earned	\$26,617	\$2,052	Includes Capital Campaign interest and interest from CD that matured early FY25
Book Sales	\$23,339	\$19,947	Very successful book sale season
Bookstall	\$9,041	\$9,094	
Offsite Stalls	\$1,732	\$0	New Venture - book stalls in Cafés around Burlington
3rd Party Book Sales (Dealers)	\$3,141	\$1,774	
3rd Party Sales - Other	\$500	\$837	
OnLine Sales/eBay	\$5,304	\$5,873	
Website Local Sales	\$26	\$380	Sunsetted, at least temporarily

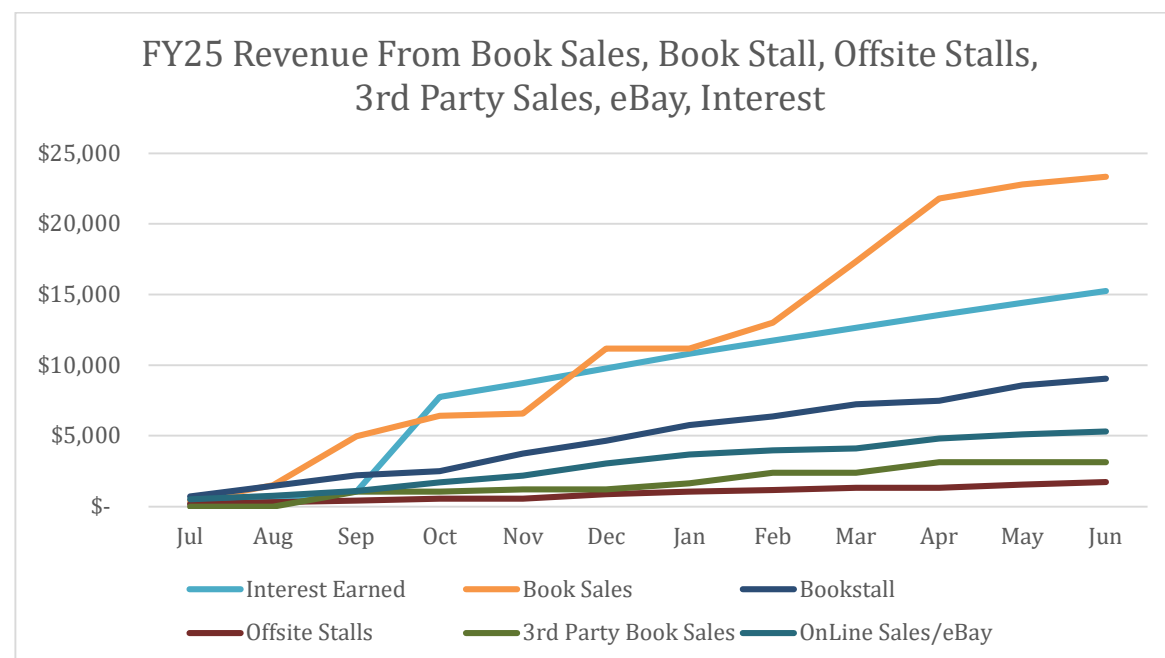
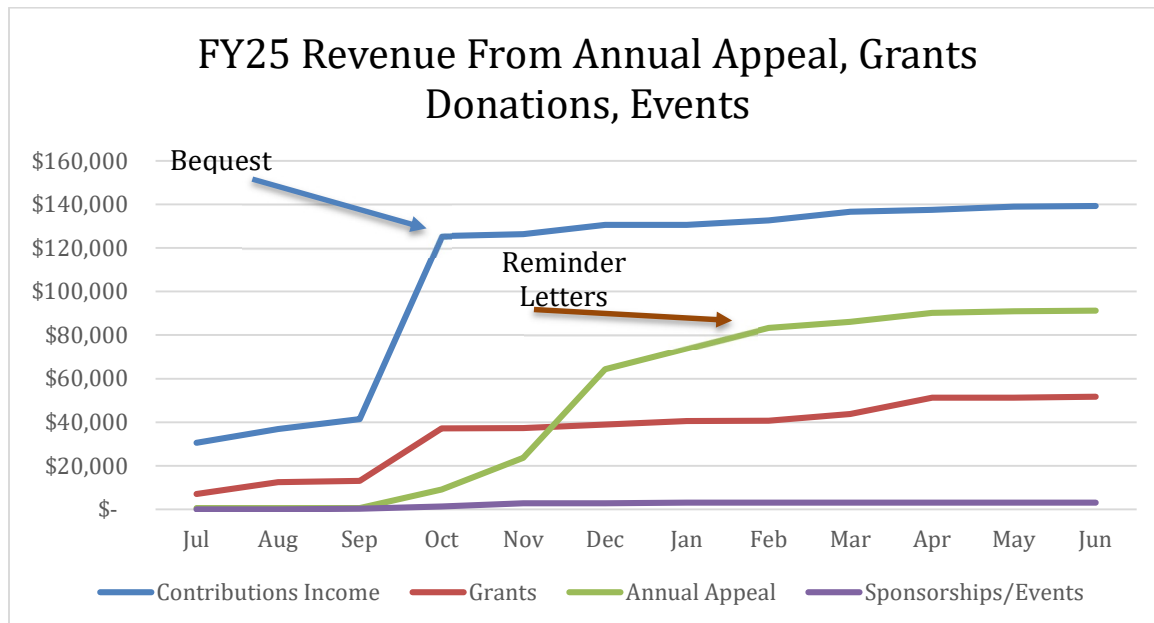
Expense	FY25	FY24	Comments
Stipends/Professional Fees	\$39,074	\$1,910	Includes grant writer for Capital Campaign EPA Application and Summer Program support
Wage Salary	\$64,639	\$22,394	Full year of Capital Campaign Manager
Payroll Taxes	\$5,514	\$1,722	"
Sales Tax	\$3,277	\$5,094	
Accounting Fees	\$8,865	\$2,048	Includes bookkeeping work and financial review fees
Insurance	\$2,069	\$1,741	
Legal Fees	\$1,500	\$0	Capital Campaign MoU work
Building Expense	\$54,724	\$14,900	New wayfinding signage and fund transfer to Capital Campaign
Office Supplies	\$2,708	\$4,638	
Marketing	\$16,047	\$8,463	Capital Campaign Case Statement, Renderings
Staff Development \ Training	\$8,701	\$6,197	
Travel	\$3,539	\$4,235	
Speaker/performer fees	\$31,769	\$36,977	
Program Supplies	\$40,311	\$25,962	
Books	\$2,397	\$1,759	
Merchandise	\$743	\$4,233	
Community Relations	\$12,144	\$15,659	Primarily the Allocation to the City of Burlington
License fees	\$3,374	\$4,780	
Postage	\$2,238	\$427	
Catering	\$6,654	\$4,674	
Equipment	\$710	\$21,520	FY24 Pickering Room AV upgrade

Balances (does not include <\$2000 held in eBay, PayPal, Venmo accounts)

BALANCES	6/30/2025	7/1/2024
Friends General	\$ 364,252	\$161,141
Capital Campaign	\$1,114,663	\$682,493

Revenue

Cumulative revenue by source (non-Capital Campaign)



Cumulative revenue Capital Campaign

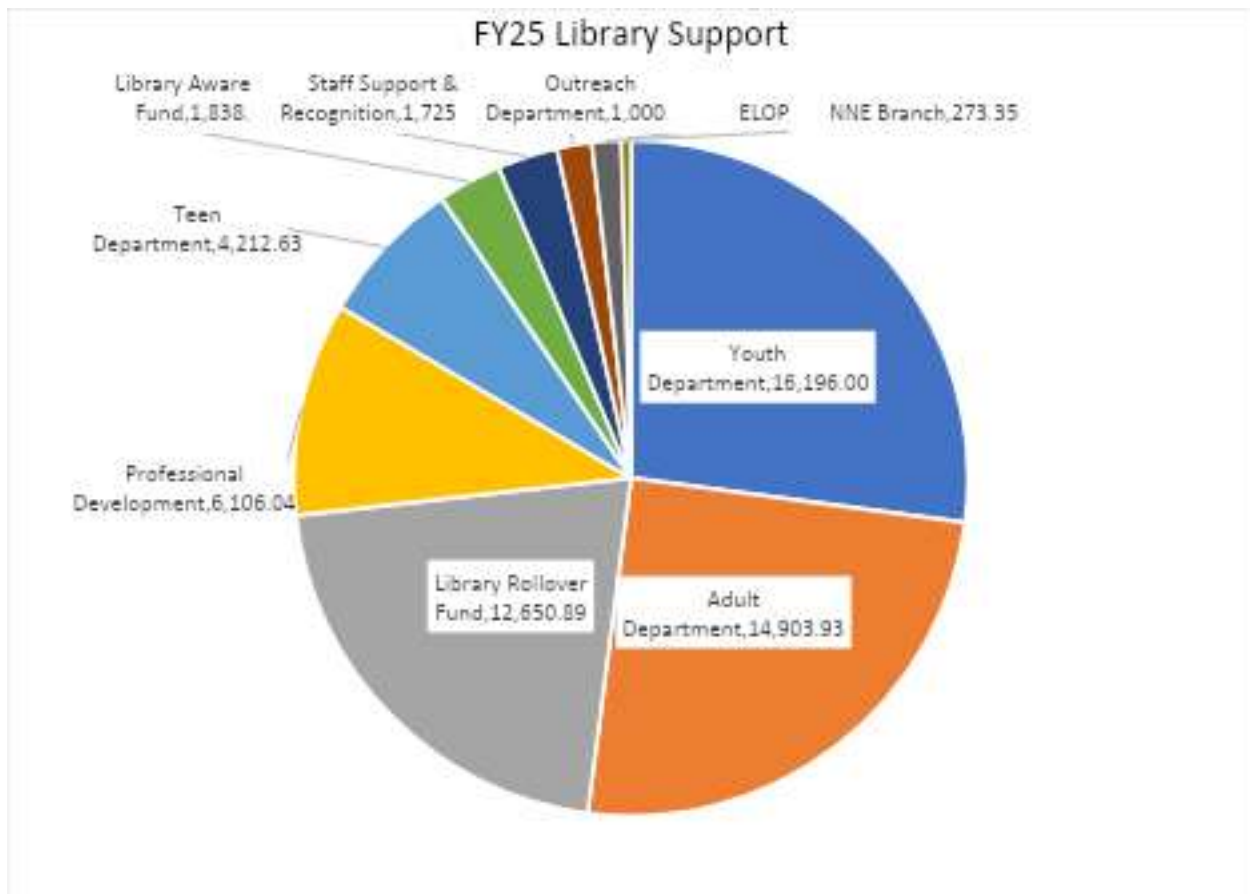


The community generously supported the Friends and the library through donations, the Annual Appeal, planned giving, and response to the first stages of the Capital Campaign. The Library was very thoughtfully remembered in a generous bequest, and public donation to the Annual Appeal exceeded past years. With the addition of a Spring sale, books sale revenues also reached a high. Beyond donations, Development Manager Gale Batsimm's grant writing yielded almost 70% more funding compared to last year, for use in a variety of Library and outreach programs

As the Capital Campaign entered the quiet phase, named and anonymous donors stepped forward to contribute to the Fletcher Free Library's future.

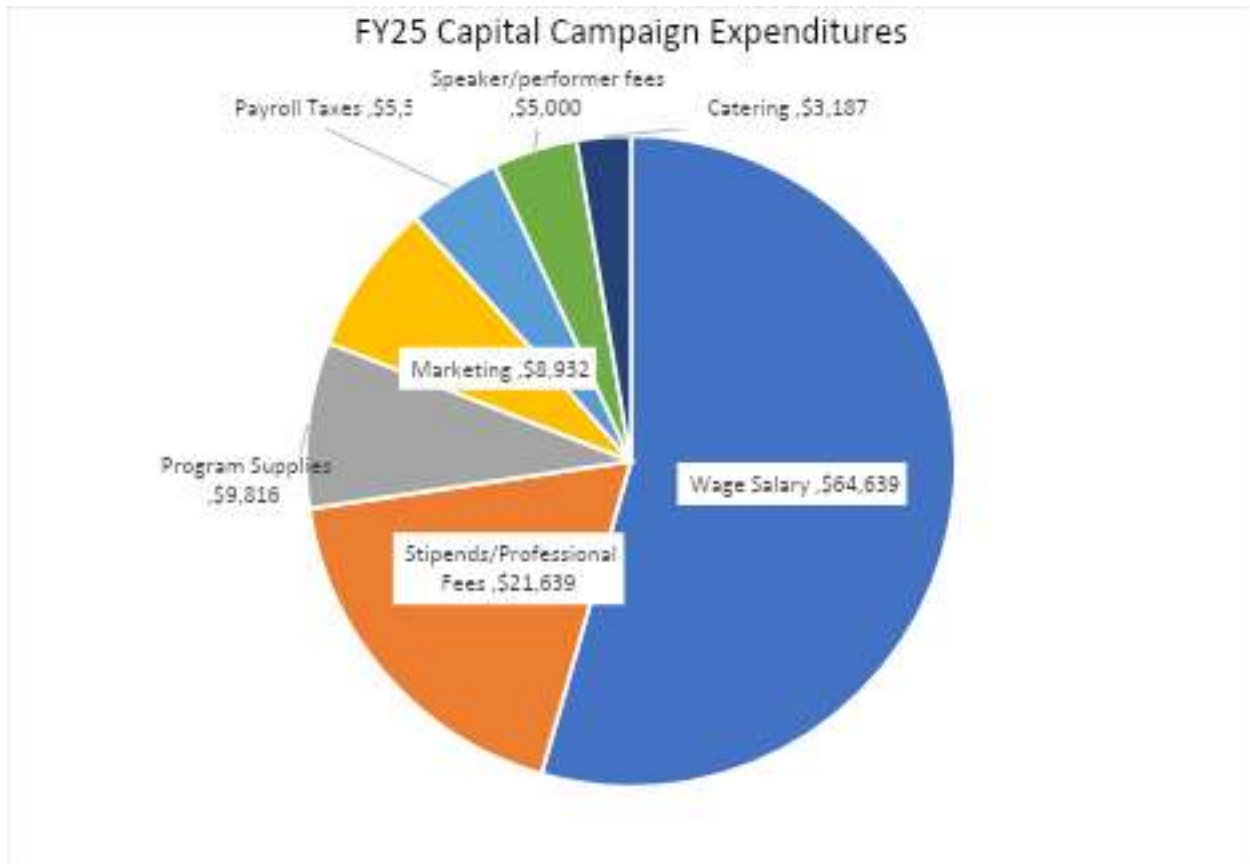
Expenditure

Library Support



We met our City obligation by sending \$10,000 in June

Capital Campaign



Thank You

The Friends are thankful for all the folks who support the Friends and the Fletcher Free Library: Friends volunteers; Library staff; financial and in-kind contributors, individual, corporate and institutional; donors of books; all who share the vision of a new library space anchoring Burlington's vibrant downtown, contributing their time and resources; and, of course, all the booklovers who come to our sales. Thank you all!