A Letter from the Chair of the Exeter Public Library Board of Trustees

Dear Exeter Neighbors,

October marks the beginning of Exeter Public Library's 2026 Annual Appeal. This long-standing tradition allows the Board of Trustees to reduce the Library's overall cost to taxpayers by supplementing the municipal budget with private support from generous community members like you. Even a single dollar can make a meaningful difference. According to a recent PEN America study, every dollar invested in a public library returns five dollars in services that strengthen the community. Ensuring a stronger Exeter is part of Exeter Library's mission. In 2026, the Library conducted a survey to guide our Long-Range Plan for 2027–2031. Of the 926 residents who responded, 97.3% said the Library is a good or great value to the community. Help us continue this tradition of providing great service to the Exeter community.

Exeter Public Library has long been a place where our community gathers to learn, connect, and grow. This past year, your Library provided 2,368 programs to 43,902 attendees. In the past year alone, patrons saved $1,992,847.93 by borrowing materials instead of purchasing them. Books remain our most valued service, with 86.6% of survey respondents citing them as their primary reason for visiting. Digital reading through Libby saved residents an additional $13,525.11, and Museum Passes—used by 57.2% of respondents—saved families $22,524.60, more than four times the cost of providing them. Visitors from surrounding towns also come for programs and stay to enjoy Exeter's vibrant downtown, strengthening our local economy. In 2025, 54,750 devices connected to the Library's internet—nearly three times the population of Exeter. These numbers reflect something deeper than statistics—they show how strongly Exeter values learning, creativity, and community.

Despite these successes, ongoing building and maintenance challenges, including a faulty HVAC system and an electricity bill that rose 57% this year despite no increase in usage, mean that the Library needs your help.

Today, we ask for your support. Donations to the Library play an increasingly important role. Your gift—no matter the size—directly strengthens the programs, technology, collections, and spaces that make Exeter Public Library such a cherished part of our town. You are, quite literally, helping us keep the lights on.

If the Library has made a difference in your life, or in the life of someone you love, I invite you to join us in sustaining this remarkable community resource. Together, we can ensure that Exeter Public Library continues to thrive for generations to come. At a time when isolation and anxiety affect so many, the Library stands as a vital place where our community can gather, find connection, and care for one another.

With thanks and appreciation,

Barbara Young
Chair, Exeter Public Library Board of Trustees