

March 13, 2020

Statement from Executive Director Bill Harmer

The health and well-being of our patrons and staff is the highest priority of the Westport Library. On Thursday, we made the decision to close our doors in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Other libraries in the state also acted and now nearly all are closed.

Over the past few days, I attended meetings at Town Hall to work with local health officials on developing a plan for how the community could mitigate and contain the virus. I have talked to friends who work in hospitals and had an ongoing dialogue with the Library's Board of Directors. The Library hired a cleaning company to do a two-day deep disinfectant of the building, top to bottom.

All the evidence points to the fact that things are going to get worse before they get better. The virus is likely to spread exponentially and our infrastructure, especially doctors' offices and hospitals, are woefully unprepared to handle the onslaught that is coming.

The question for every institution, business, or school is not whether we should do something, but rather what the best course of action is.

For me, containment and mitigation are the answers. The only way to truly reduce the spread of the virus is through social distancing. We did not believe that social distancing could be achieved by keeping the Library open.

Therefore, we have decided that the Library will remain closed until further notice. Our book drops will also be closed, and we are waiving all late fees on Westport owned materials.

During the closure, we will continue to provide email support: for tech assistance visit support@westportlibrary.org; for reference questions ref@westportlibrary.org; for the children's staff kids@westportlibrary.org; and for account assistance circulation@westportlibrary.org

Please visit the Library website, www.westportlibrary.org, for updates.

Kind regards to you and your family,

Bill Harmer
Executive Director
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