



THE
PROVIDENCE
ATHENÆUM

PRESS RELEASE

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LIBRARY BREAKS FUNDRAISING, MEMBERSHIP, AND VISITOR RECORDS

PROVIDENCE, RI- The Providence Athenæum, one of the city's oldest surviving cultural institutions, is thrilled to announce a record-breaking year for the library. Annual Fund contributions totaled \$276,018, a 13% increase over FY15-16. The library has expanded its donor base by 54% over five years, with 609 individuals contributing to this year's fundraising campaign.

The Athenæum's membership grew by 16% in FY16-17. The library added more new members over the past year than it had in the previous five years combined. Yearly visitors increased by 11% over FY15-16. More than 50,000 members, tourists, program attendees, and community members visited and used the library over the last 12 months.

"This is an exciting time to be a part of the Athenæum," said Executive Director Matt Burriesci. "When the library opened its doors in 1838, Francis Wayland remarked that the Athenæum should be 'a fountain of living water, at which the intellectual thirst of the community may be slaked.' Sometimes it may seem that the country doesn't value institutions like that - but thankfully, Providence does."

Board president R. Tripp Evans remarked, "We owe the Athenæum's success to a staff and membership who fully support its mission to safeguard the humanities, celebrate critical thinking, and foster civil discourse. Seeing these values so emphatically reinforced by recent surges in membership and financial support indicates how precious - and necessary - these principles continue to be."

Since 2015, the Athenæum has introduced several new initiatives, and it has invested heavily in its signature programming. This year, the Athenæum welcomed notable speakers, including internationally renowned and *New York Times* bestselling authors, artists, and historians, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, a United States Senator, and thought-leaders from a wide variety of subject areas.

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The Providence Athenæum is an independent, member-supported library and cultural center located on Providence's historic Benefit Street. Over its nearly 200 years of existence, the library has welcomed illustrious writers, spirited thinkers, and energetic community members through its doors to engage in reading, conversation, and debate. At its heart, the Athenæum encourages a love of reading and learning to all.