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Visions Video Celebrates Successful Opening, Donation of 20,000 Films - Launches Fundraiser and Expansion into former Haymarket space.

Building a collection, growing a community. Visions Video, the non-profit volunteer-run video store that has enlivened Main St., Northampton since opening in June of this year, was enjoying a successful first season with well over 3000 titles circulated and over 300 membership signups. Then, the Visions founding collective got an offer they couldn't refuse and closed out the summer with a bang: a donation of over 20,000 films from the estate of an anonymous donor – facilitated with the help of the Northampton Arts Council, Inc., and more than double the growing collection of 14,000 titles already on the shelves.

Visions Video opened on June 27 with a community celebration, bringing back the beloved tradition of video stores in Northampton after a fourteen-year absence when Pleasant St. Video closed. While Visions operates much like the video stores of the past – creating a space to gather and engage with film and community – there are a few key differences. First, it's a volunteer-run nonprofit, so the organization can focus on building the collection and growing community. Second, members pay one monthly fee: \$12 per month to access the collection (with no per-item fee or late fees) and participate in an in-house peer-to-peer review network. Visions member Ben May was enthusiastic when asked about the impact of Visions. "Visions brings back the video store vibe in a time when we need community most. Smartly organized, eclectic in selection, and curated for humans, by humans. A third space for film lovers alike!"

A month after opening, Visions was contacted by an anonymous donor who had heard about the project and was seeking a home for a collection of 20,000 films, carefully curated over decades by a single collector. The donor and Visions agreed that the collection should remain intact and be available to the broader community. Members of the collective picked up 450 archival boxes and have since been working tirelessly on organizing and cataloging the films, many of which are rare and still sealed. Dan Cashman, member of the Visions founding collective and a collector of rare physical media, says the donation "makes Visions one of the best publically available collections" today, both in terms of the breadth of the collection and the availability of rare films in a physical format. The Northampton Arts Council saw the cultural benefit that a collection of this scale could bring to the Western Mass community and facilitated the acquisition.

In addition to this large-scale donation, the Visions collection has been steadily growing with rare and popular films at about 1,000 titles per month, thanks to donations from the community. This pace of growth – about 34,000 titles in under a year – was unanticipated by the

organization. Plans for modest growth in a four-phase, multi-year process have been accelerated to jump from Phase 1 to Phase 3 in a matter of months.

Where to house a collection of this size and value to the community? Visions Video is excited to announce they've come to an agreement with the shop's landlord to work with an architect and expand into the first floor of the former Haymarket Cafe space. This means more square footage- going from 600 sq ft to 1700 sq feet- to house a collection of 30,000+ films and to continue to grow their programming: social events, screenings, classes, and space to hang out and talk about films and importantly the expansion makes Visions fully wheelchair accessible an important goal of any long-term location.

To support this mission and help the organization become truly autonomous, Visions Video is currently in the process of graduating from their non-profit fiscal sponsor Fractured Atlas and becoming an independent 501c3. They're launching their annual year-end fundraising appeal a bit early to help offset the cost of expanding their physical space, caring for their growing collection, and to supplement membership fees to provide operating capital for their first year. Tax deductible donations can be made through Fractured Atlas:
<https://fundraising.fracturedatlas.org/visions-video/campaigns/7419>



[Visions Video collective members Dan Cashman (L) and George Myers (R) in the upstairs of the former Haymarket Cafe future site of the Visions Video expansion.]









Visions Video, August 2025