

TOWN OF BALLSTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN 2009-2012

Vision Statement

The Town of Ballston Community Library shall be a center of knowledge and life enrichment for all members of the growing community.

Mission Statement

The Town of Ballston Community Library shall develop and maintain facilities, resources, and services to meet the ongoing needs of all persons for education, personal enrichment and recreation.

Present Status

- When the new library opened in 2001, it was staffed by two (2) full-time librarians, one (1) full-time senior library clerk, seven (7) part-time clerks and five (5) student pages. As a direct result of the 2005-2008 Long Range Plan, 2 half time positions were added, an accounts clerk and a computer service program assistant. One 10 hour page position and one summer children's room assistant have also been added.
- Circulation has increased from 104,788 in 2001 to 171,743 in 2007.
- Attendance at programs has grown from 2,800 in 2001 to 7,544 in 2007. There were approximately 400 programs in 2007.
- There has been a 58% increase in items borrowed and/or loaned from other libraries between 2001 and 2003, from 5,689 to 9,727 items. By 2007 that number had increased to 17,087.
- There was an increase in the hours of operation from 42 to 54 hours per week since the opening of the new library and a subsequent decrease for 2009 to 51 hours per week due to budget constraints.

Issues and Strategies

Staffing

- The Town of Ballston Community Library continues to experience steady growth. We remain dedicated to providing the same level of friendly, quality service and personal attention our patrons have come to depend on. In response to recommendations made in the 2005-2008 long term plan, current staff was reconfigured and additional clerical and technical staff added to increase our ability to serve our patrons efficiently and effectively.
- Mandatory staff training through SALS and other educational resources is recommended to support the priority of quality customer service. However, budget constraints may impact staff improvements, particularly in adult services and coverage of the upstairs area.

Use of Facility

- The committee identified several deficiencies regarding an overall dysfunction in the practical use of the facility. These were prioritized to include the creation of the following: quiet study space for patrons, adequate and well organized storage, a noise buffer from staff work spaces and a more functional work space for the different staff operations. A comprehensive reorganization of the entire collection to create ease of use for patrons as well as staff was also recommended.

Technology

- The Town of Ballston Community Library will take full advantage of our current and ongoing relationship with the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS). We anticipate a greater use of technological tools in the near future. Computers both for patron and staff use will become more sophisticated and demand increased and up to date skills on the part of our staff.
- We will continue to provide our patrons with a sufficient level of access to information and resources needed to equalize opportunities. The transition from print to digital material is well underway as online databases supplant traditional print resources such as encyclopedias and periodicals and the Internet replaces many non-fiction printed books. This is a difficult transition for our patrons, particularly those who do not have computers, or who have computers but not network services, at home. Widespread use and dependence on technological tools has tended to widen the gap between the privileged and the economically disadvantaged. To this end we have added basic as well as more advanced computer classes to our services and a part time staffer dedicated to computer assistance. While this is not equivalent to a trained reference librarian, these services have been well received and utilized.

Funding

- The Board of Trustees will work towards establishing equitable participation in funding from municipal sources. There is a continued need to have the Town of Charlton contribute funding which is more commensurate with the services we provide for residents of that town. Funding is primarily from the Town of Ballston, which faces demands from other departments providing municipal services. While a significant percentage of our library users are residents of outlying areas, in particular Glenville and Clifton Park, those residents pay library use taxes within the MVLS and SALS user areas with the understanding that there is a reciprocal relationship with the libraries in MVLS and SALS. In 2008 active cardholders were 5975 of which 2920 are from surrounding areas.

Public Awareness

- The library's visibility must be improved by showcasing the role it can play in the lives of individuals and in the community as a whole. There is a need for identification of special library services or programs that can reach targeted groups that require special library programs or services (i.e. homebound, elderly, etc.).
- Programs will be developed which will effectively integrate the library into the fabric of the community, strengthen our presence, and serve to provide support for our continued growth and success.

Initiatives

- Explore opportunities for outreach in alternate Ballston and Charlton locations anticipating development of programs that target specific groups to include educational, cultural and entertainment events for adults, seniors, youth and teens.
- Maintain the high level profile of our children's programs and increase cooperative efforts with the BH-BL School District. Explore possibility of charging for use of community room as a source of funding, at least for maintenance and upkeep of common area. Continue to coordinate with Ballston Town Hall and School district auditoriums for larger events.
- Review current layouts/workspace to provide additional space, shelving, and 'back office' room to support increasing circulation and the volume of interlibrary loans and improve quiet environment for patrons and staff.
- Improve the visibility and usability of the library through improved signage and informational materials, and establishing a more consistent public awareness program.
- Continue to maximize services available to our patrons utilizing the resources of the Southern Adirondack/Mohawk Valley Library System
- Institute scheduled training to upgrade the skills of the library staff, taking advantage of training opportunities provided by SALS where appropriate.

Required Resources

- Depending on the success of outreach efforts, additional program funding and staff support may be required in order to meet the increased demand.
- Funds and support for incremental refurbishing of the staff and public areas to decrease noise and improve functionality.
- Explore possibility of charging for use of community room as a source of funding, at least for maintenance and upkeep of common area. Continue to coordinate with Ballston Town Hall and School district auditoriums for larger events.
- Hire a ½ time paraprofessional/library assistant to create instructional materials and work on adult outreach programming, publicity, and grant writing. This assistant would have a permanent desk location in the main room upstairs thereby increasing upstairs staffing which is currently insufficient.
- Funds and support for continuous upgrades of computer infrastructure.

Summary

In February of 2004, the Library's Board of Trustees decided to develop a strategic, long-range plan. Such blueprints for the future are required of public libraries by the State Education Department. Since construction of the new library building, use of the library has been burgeoning. It is projected that the library will have to serve a dramatically increasing population levels due to new housing construction in the Town of Ballston and adjacent towns. The trustees decided to take advantage of the increased awareness of the library by the public and generate a long-range plan to focus on the next three (3) years. This process was repeated four years later with the resulting report looking forward through 2011.

The library was again fortunate to have help in its efforts from Robert Webster, a retired management consultant and teacher of management sciences at SUNY at Albany, and a library trustee and treasurer of the Argyle Free Library in Washington County.

The Planning Committee consisted of library trustees, library staff, local government officials and representatives of influential groups, local government officials and representatives of other groups within the community, including the school district, the Business and Professional Association, and Friends of the Library. The planning process used the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) management tool to help the library identify goals and set priorities. The committee studied the US Census 2000 data for the Towns of Ballston and Charlton, Saratoga County growth projections, statistical data that reflects library performance, and the results of a March 2008 library survey. The planning process took shape during four meetings scheduled over a two-month period.

The Planning Committee found strong public support for the library and its programs and high expectations for the future. It worked to refine the library's mission statement and set goals for the near future. This document represents the Planning Committee's extended vision for the future of the library.

The members of the Community-wide Long-range Committee were:

Emily Brower,	Trustee, Chair of Planning Committee
Thomas Schottman,	Trustee, past Chair of Planning Committee
Sharon Rouis,	Trustee
Karen DeAngelo,	Library Director
Rebecca Darling,	Youth Services Librarian
S. Judith Kaplan,	Senior Library Clerk
Patti Southworth,	Town of Ballston Supervisor
Jim Briaddy,	Ballston Town Board Member
Robert Lippiello,	Charlton Town Board Member
Margaret Rizzo,	BH-BL Library Media Department, Department Head
Alison Cuyler,	BH-BL Elementary School Librarian
Jerry Rocco,	Local Resident and Library Patron
Timothy Newell,	BHBLBPA
Lee-Ann Mertzlufft,	BHBLBPA
John Irving,	Director Community Human Services
Robert Webster,	Meeting Facilitator
Patricia Pericone,	Recorder

This Long-Range Plan was approved by the Trustees of the Town of Ballston Community Library at the Trustee's Meeting of February 5, 2009.

Barbara Wilson, President
Sharon Rouis, Vice President
Sonja L. Olson, Secretary
Thomas Schottman, Treasurer
Emily Brower, Trustee
Lawrence Rogers, Trustee
Kelly A Stewart, Trustee