

# TOWN OF BALLSTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN 2005-2008

## **Vision Statement**

This library shall be a center of knowledge and life enrichment for all members of the growing community.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Town of Ballston Community Library is to develop and maintain facilities, resources, and services for individuals in the community it serves. This will include providing books and multimedia material to meet the changing 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, a total of 7.7 full time equivalent employees. Since then, two (2) part-time clerical positions were added, equaling 8.4 full time equivalent employees in 2003.
- There was a 50% increase in our circulation from 104,788 to 160,135 items between 2001 and 2003. We project this trend to continue at the annual rate of 11% over the next three years, reaching 200,000 by 2005-06.
- There has been a 90% increase in the number of new patrons registered annually since 2001. The library issued 381 new library cards in 2001, 687 in 2002, and 725 in 2003. We expect this growth to continue at an estimated rate of 500 new patrons per year over the next 3 years.
- There has been a 284% increase in the number of programs sponsored from 2001 to 2003, and a 110% increase in the number of people attending those programs from 2,800 to 5,878.
- There has been a 58% increase in items borrowed/loaned from other libraries between 2001 and 2003, from 5,689 to 9,727 items. We project this trend to continue at the annual rate of 16% over the next 3 years.
- There has been a 24% increase in the hours of operation from 42 to 52 hours per week since the opening of the new library.

## **Issues and Strategies**

### **Staffing**

- The Town of Ballston community library has seen tremendous growth in the last few years. Yet, we remain dedicated to providing the same level of friendly, quality service and personal attention our patrons have come to depend on. Because of the growing number of patrons that are served and the volume of materials being circulated, the staff has become overburdened by the routine tasks involved in operating a library.
- Additionally, the current staff is not able to provide technical assistance to patrons using the library's computers to find information and materials. This inadequacy will become more glaring each year as the library makes increasing use of advanced systems and materials. The addition of more part-time staff would ease some of the workload, but may not provide the technical knowledge and assistance that is a growing concern. We need to find alternative personnel resources and strategies to serve our patrons effectively and efficiently.

### **Technology**

- 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 skill on the part of our staff. Our current relationship with the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) will become increasingly valuable. SALS is currently in the process of selecting a new on-line library computer system to support all libraries under its umbrella. Replacing the current out of date system will require a one-time conversion to new software systems, and the retraining of all library staff and library users. SALS may be able to provide us with even more services in this area.
- 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. It is our goal to provide our patrons with a basic level of access to information and resources needed to equalize opportunities.

### **Funding**

- Funding is primarily from the Town of Ballston, which faces demands from other departments providing municipal services. There is a need to have the Town of Charlton contribute funding which is more commensurate with the services we provide for residents of that town. There is a need to explore other avenues of funding. The library could explore funding from other neighboring communities such as the Ballston Lake area of Clifton Park and especially the Town of Glenville that are being served by our library but do not contribute to our cost of operation.
- There has been an increase of 27% in the library budget between 2001 and 2003 from \$294,112 to \$373,570. After deducting revenue generated by fines, fees, and interest, the Town of Ballston supported 85% of costs and Charlton 14.5% of costs.

- Total active cardholders are 5,083 of which 2,327 are from surrounding areas. The Town of Ballston's share of cardholders has grown from 50% in 1999 to 54% in 2003. We estimate that the proportion of Town of Ballston cardholders will continue to grow slowly as the Town's population increases.

### **Public Awareness**

- To deal with the other issues that face our library we have to build the community's awareness of the library and the role it can play in the life of individuals. There is a need for identification of programs that can reach targeted groups that require special library services or programs.
- To develop programs 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.

### **Plans the library will emphasize or initiate by 2008**

- Develop programs that target specific groups within our communities via outreach efforts. These programs will include educational, cultural and entertainment events for adults, seniors, youth and teens.
- Maintain our high level profile of children's programs and increase cooperative efforts with the BH-BL School District.
- Review current layouts/workspace to provide additional space, shelving, and 'back office' room to support increasing circulation and the volume of interlibrary loans.
- Improve the visibility and usability of the library through improved signage and informational materials, updating the library's website, and establishing a more consistent public awareness program.
- As a member of the Southern Adirondack/Mohawk Valley Library System, we will continue to work to maximize services available to our patrons.
- Identify a task force to locate and solicit grants and other sources of funds.
- Initiate a program of training to upgrade the skills of the library staff and volunteers.
- Seek alternative sources of funding or resources such as the recruitment of skilled volunteers, or interns from local colleges and universities to assist in developing new programs and procedures.

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## **Resources needed to succeed**

- Administrative Assistant to support the library director in scheduling and in record keeping duties. This will allow the library director to devote increased time to program development and outreach to other organizations in the community.
- Reference librarian to assist and direct patrons in computer and other contemporary information and search techniques. This librarian will also coordinate materials selection and the weeding of materials to ensure that the building will adequately house the growing collection.
- 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.

The library was 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 November, 2002 library survey. The planning process took shape during six meetings scheduled over a three-month period.

The Planning Committee found strong public support for the library and its programs and high expectations for the future. It developed a vision statement and updated the library's mission statement. This document represents the Planning Committee's extended vision for the future of the library.

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

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Kelly Stewart, Trustee    | Board President                                    |
| Thomas Schottman          | Trustee, Chairman of Planning Committee            |
| Barbara Wilson,           | Trustee  |
| Sharon Rouis              | Trustee  |
| Anna Jane Abaray          | Library Director                                   |
| Karen DeAngelo            | Youth Librarian                                    |
| S. Judith Kaplan          | Senior Library Clerk                               |
| Paula DeVries             | Friends of the Library, Treasurer                  |
| Richard Gerlach           | BH-BL Business and Professional Association Member |
| James 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                  |
| Robert Kelley             | Local Resident, Former School District Official    |
| Robert Webster,           | Meeting Facilitator                                |
| Deborah Roberts-Delamater | Recorder   |

This Long-Range Plan was approved by the Trustees of the Town of Ballston Community Library at the Trustee's Meeting of October 27, 2004.

#### Library Trustees

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| President      | Kelly A. Stewart |
| Vice-President | Lawrence Rogers  |
| Treasurer      | Thomas Schottman |
| Secretary      | Barbara Wilson   |
| Trustee        | Sonja L. Olson   |
| Trustee        | Scott L. Porter  |
| Trustee        | Sharon Rouis     |

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