

Ledyard Public Library Strategic Plan 2020

Introduction

In the summer of 2019 the Library Commission established a Committee to update a strategic plan for the libraries. The committee consisted of

- Library Director, Gale Bradbury
- Assistant Librarian, Lisa Murno
- Library Commission Chair, John Bolduc
- Library Commission Vice-Chair Rebecca Nash
- President of the Friends, Harry Pearson
- Former librarian and Board of Education Chairman, Sharon Hightower

The Committee developed a vision statement and revised the mission statement which was later approved by the Library Commission. The vision describes our long-term dream for the library and its role in the community. The mission describes what we do every day and why we do it.

Vision Statement

Ledyard Library is the welcoming place in our community where all come to learn, discover, create and connect.

Mission Statement

Ledyard Library serves as a valuable resource for the community, providing friendly, knowledgeable service and free access to a diversity of ideas, information and experiences. We strive to enhance the quality of life in our community and encourage the love of reading, critical thinking and lifelong learning.

Methodology

The Strategic Plan needed to reflect what the community wanted, so getting public input was critical. This input was gathered through a combination of surveys, focus groups and interviews. A survey was created and emailed to 4,731 card holders. A link to the survey was also posted on our webpage, our Facebook page and the Ledyard Community Forum. Community focus groups were held at both branches with 15 -18 participants each and a separate focus group was held for staff. In addition, town officials were interviewed.

Results

The information gathered serve as the basis of this Strategic Plan. The library is here to serve the community and meet their needs. We heard about their desire for more hours, better collection and better facilities. We knew many in the community turned to the library for their

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technology needs and help with job searching. Meeting the needs of the community became our first goal. Limited resources require us to find new ways to provide services, and we saw collaboration as a way to achieve that. That became our second goal. We also noted that sometimes the information received from the community contradicted itself. The library was rated high for things like customer service, collection and programs yet in the comments people asked for more hours, more books and better facilities. It became clear early on that the community appreciated the library even though they were not fully aware of all that the library does. We knew marketing would need to be one of our goals. This plan reflects several objectives and action items that we hope will help us meet those goals.

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Community Needs Goal: Develop creative ways to meet community needs.

Current Status: Libraries have evolved to stay relevant and do so much more than provide books. They are community centers for lifelong learning. The library is often a starting point for residents looking for a job. Online resources help them to create a resume or prepare for a job interview and library computers are used to submit online applications. Informational programs educate the community and provide entertainment. Other programs help the community stay fit with activities that include healthy cooking or guided hikes. Students meet with their tutors, and community members use the library as a quiet place to work.

The library provides resources for the community in multiple formats in both hardcopy and digital

- Books – regular and large print
- DVDs
- Audio Books
- Music CD's
- Magazines and newspapers
- Digital E-and audio books, magazines, movies and music
- Online databases to support job searching, educational testing and career guidance, language learning, auto repair, genealogy, and craft tutorials
- Access to a host of databases available through the State Library
- Resources are shared through the LION consortium giving the community access to over 2.5 million items

Technology at the library includes

- Free high speed internet and wireless access
- Multiple computer workstations
- 3D printing
- Copy machines, scanners and printers including wireless printing from your phone or device
- Free tech help for your computer or device
- Email or text notification for holds
- Remote access to the library catalog and online resources

Programming for children and adults

- Story times, vacation programs and craft activities
- STEM activities for children and teens including Coding
- Book discussions
- Stock discussions
- Job searching
- Maker activities
- Cookbook club

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Objective # 1: Provide adequate staff to ensure good customer service

- Action items
 - Recognize and communicate the role library staff play in providing excellent service to the community
 - Advocate for adequate staffing during the budget process
 - Reward staff for continued years of service
 - Develop ways for staff to engage with each other

Objective # 2: Improve library hours

- Action items
 - Review hours open and use of library for busy times
 - Advocate for staffing to open additional hours

Objective # 3: Explore ways to improve the facility

- Action items
 - Advocate for proper funding
 - Investigate the possibility of an addition at Bill Library

Objective # 4: Address the request for a better collection

- Action items
 - Promote the availability of resources available through LION
 - Use social media to explain what a consortia is and how resources are shared
 - Provide an opportunity for the community to purchase an item they want to read, listen to, etc. using the library discount. They would have the item first and then donate it to the library for others to read.
 - Explore alternative sources of funding to increase digital holdings

Objective # 5: Provide programming that meets community interest

- Action items
 - Provide programs during the school year for school age children and teens
 - Update the program evaluation form for all programs and include a place for attendees to suggest other programs of interest

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Collaboration Goal: Collaborate with town and regional organizations

Current Status

In an effort to stretch limited funds for the library we try to collaborate with other departments and organizations whenever possible.

- We collaborate with other libraries through LION and the State sharing resources, programs and other ideas
- We collaborate with the schools providing book talks to students, promoting summer reading, and providing early literacy programs for preschoolers
- We collaborate with the Senior Center providing monthly book discussions and other programs at the center for seniors
- We collaborate with Parks and Recreation supporting town wide activities such as Children's Day and Trunk or Treat
- We collaborate with other town and civic organizations supporting their programs such as Library Friends, Historical Society, Avalonia Land Conservancy and the Ledyard Prevention Coalition
- We collaborate with community members who provide programming at the library

Objective # 1: Identify town activities the library can collaborate on to support the community

- Action items
 - Provide programming when appropriate to support an activity
 - Provide volunteers to support an event
 - Help to publicize and promote an activity
 - Participate in appropriate activities

Objective # 2: Collaborate with the schools to encourage and support literacy

- Action Items
 - Provide early literacy programs for preschoolers
 - Work with parents to educate them about the importance of reading with young children
 - Include year-round activities for children and teens that support learning
 - Participate in school functions and serve on committees when appropriate
 - Develop a volunteer program for teens

Objective # 3: Collaborate with local organizations on community activities

- Action items
 - Act as a resource for community and civic organizations
 - Help to publicize and promote the activity

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Marketing Goal: To increase community awareness of library services.

Current Status

- Contribute to the quarterly *Ledyard Events* magazine which is mailed to all residents
- Send out an email newsletter monthly to 1,135 email addresses with additional updates sent out for special programs and events
- Maintain a library webpage that is updated several times a week. The page has information on library services and resources as well as posts about upcoming activities
- A library Facebook page promotes library activities multiple times in the weeks and days before they occur. The library page has 1,264 followers. These posts are shared on the Ledyard Town Forum which has 6,724 members and in some cases the Ledyard Events page. Library events are also posted to a Twitter account and to Instagram
- A Pinterest account features information about books coming out from patron's favorite authors. Followers can select a book they are interested in, go into the library catalog and place a hold on the book through Pinterest
- Programs are publicized with press releases to the local newspapers, flyers, bookmarks and outside sign boards
- Brochures and bookmarks describe library services and resources
- Welcome packets are given to new library card holders with information about the library and other town services
- Staff members represent the library at town wide events – Children's Day, Trunk or Treat, Farmer's Market
- Sponsor a Giving Tree to collect new children's books to be given to a child through the annual toy drive
- Provide a monthly book talk at the Senior Center
- Visit the schools to do book talks and promote summer reading
- Cooperate with the schools to foster early literacy programs

Objective # 1 – Develop a library brand to use on all forms of publicity

- Action Items
 - Consider an updated logo that reflects what the library does
 - Approve a consistent tagline from the vision statement that reflects what we want to do (i.e. "Learn, discover, create and connect" or "A welcoming place")
 - Create a template for publicity

Objective # 2: Increase library's social media presence

- Action items
 - Offer a training workshop for Staff, Library Commission and Friends on how social media can be used to promote the library
 - Establish a process for social media posts
 - Create a timeline for pushing out information
 - Involve supporters to push information out by sharing or liking a post

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- Include all appropriate forms of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest

Objective # 3: Promote the library within the community

- Action items
 - Provide promotional gear to identify library representatives at town events
 - Send a welcome letter to new homeowners inviting them to the library with incentives to attract them to come in and get a library card
 - Provide information about the library for the Town Council liaison to report at each Town Council meeting
 - Make use of stories to illustrate the economies of scale that library services provide
 - Quantify the value of a library card
 - Provide a value calculation for items borrowed, resources used, etc.
 - Compare costs for library services (i.e. internet vs an individual's cost for the same service)
 - Relate the value of library services to the annual library budget

Objective # 4: Raise community awareness of library trends and issues

- Action Items
 - Develop a communication system to contact federal, state and local officials as needed
 - Include articles about new trends in library publications
 - Share information about library trends on social media

Conclusion

The community spoke and we listened. This plan reflects what we heard and will provide us with direction for the next few years. Meeting community needs, collaboration and marketing will be our focus as we move forward.

Approved - 3/2/2020