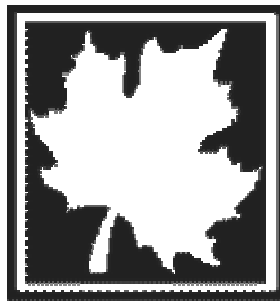


# **Maplewood Memorial Library**

**Creating Change  
Building Community**



**Strategic Plan  
2010-2012**

# **Maplewood Memorial Library Strategic Plan 2010-2012**

## **Introduction**

Maplewood Memorial Library has served the Maplewood community for over 100 years. Moving forward into the future, we recognize the need to create a Strategic Plan to focus our energies and resources. For the next three years, this Strategic Plan will help us meet our three most crucial challenges: to provide outstanding service and relevant materials to our diverse community; to develop a sustainable and adaptable organization, and to maintain, strengthen and raise awareness of our role as an invaluable resource to the Township.

To create the plan, we listened to the voices of our community as well as the wisdom and experience of the library staff. Our Strategic Planning Committee, composed of library department heads and staff across all departments, planned meetings, spearheaded communication to all involved, collected and evaluated feedback, and drafted the plan. The committee listened to the community at a forum comprised of a broad spectrum of leaders and stakeholders. A special staff meeting was held to gain perspective on services, collections, and programming. Valuable input was received from the Board of Trustees, the final decision-making body for the Library. Our consultant, Maureen Sullivan, facilitated the community forum and staff meeting and provided invaluable advice as we drafted the document.

Our library strives to be the heart of Maplewood: a welcoming place for discovery, knowledge, enjoyment of books and reading, and the exchange of ideas. During the next three years, we will provide updates on our progress, maintain transparency, and invite feedback as we move into the future.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Maplewood Memorial Library is to meet the educational, recreational and informational needs of the community. Our purpose is to enrich the quality of life of the residents of Maplewood.

The Maplewood Memorial Library:

- Strives to instill a love of reading and books for patrons of all ages.
- Provides a place for life-long learning, intellectual freedom and cultural stimulation.
- Represents, through its collections, the diverse interests and points of view of the community.
- Gives its patrons access to the global resources of the Internet.

The Maplewood Memorial Library adheres to the principles of the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statements.

## **Vision**

The Maplewood Memorial Library is the cultural and community center for the Township. It is the first place, physically and virtually, that people go to for information, recreation and lifelong learning.

## **Values**

The values that guide and preserve our place in the community are:

- Diversity in thought, collections, staffing, programs and services
- Integrity in decision-making
- Excellence in customer service for all patrons
- An environment that is welcoming and stimulating
- A courteous, well-trained staff that works together with respect, enthusiasm and optimism
- Literacy and the pursuit of knowledge
- Intellectual freedom and the freedom to read
- Respect for patron privacy

## **Strategic Initiatives**

### **I. A Center for Culture and Community**

*Position the Library as the destination for programs, events, resources and services that reflect the values and interests of our community.*

#### **Goal: Become the center for personal enrichment, access to information and connecting with others**

- Work in collaboration with other organizations and cultural institutions to develop, co-sponsor and publicize programs
- Improve library-wide coordination, planning, marketing and evaluation of programming
- Promote the library as a place for free Internet and WiFi access
- Provide and promote access to local history materials
- Take a leadership role in identifying the latest technological innovations and trends and incorporate them into library services
- Promote the availability of meeting rooms and quiet rooms for individual and community use
- Expand class use and instruction in Hilton Branch Computer Lab
- Invite authors and experts on a variety of subjects to give workshops and talks
- Expand programming to senior citizens in Memorial Hall with availability of ADA elevator

**Goal: Provide space for community information and creative expression**

- Provide display cases to the public to showcase community group information as well as personal collections and memorabilia
- Improve the organization and accessibility of pamphlets, flyers, brochures and other community information
- Provide public notice for Township and County meetings, programs and events

## **II. Customer Service**

*Make a customer-focused, enjoyable library experience our top priority.*

**Goal: Provide excellent customer service to all library users**

- Empower staff to be customer service experts through training, workshops and support opportunities
- Create an environment where the guiding principles of service are respect, empathy and a helpful attitude
- Develop consistent standards and evaluate all staff annually on customer service skills
- Encourage staff to make themselves available by walking around and inquiring if help is needed
- Provide opportunities for customer service feedback through surveys and other means
- Establish courteous and consistent telephone etiquette

**Goal: Increase accessibility and services to working patrons**

- Conduct formal and informal surveys regarding preferred hours of operation
- Survey the hours of other libraries, especially those offering access to Maplewood residents, to compare hours, services, materials, etc.
- Offer more online services, including downloadable audio and video

**Goal: Provide tools and resources to help staff do their job more effectively**

- Continue the Library's annual Staff Development Day to address changing issues, provide for team building and increased staff morale
- Develop an orientation process for new staff members
- Reinstate Task Force to discuss and resolve internal issues and improve communication across all departments
- Create a Wiki to keep staff informed daily on issues that affect their work

**Goal: Ensure easy access to and use of online services**

- Redesign website for easier access to content
- Increase visibility and awareness of online services including account transactions (i.e., renewals and interlibrary loans) and reader's services such as online book clubs and Next Reads

- Educate patrons to optimize use of all on-line services
- Be proactive in assisting patrons with access to government information and services (e-government)

**Goal: Eliminate barriers to service**

- Keep staff updated on programs and other information
- Make every effort for patrons to reduce fines through amnesty programs, read down your fine, and other initiatives.
- Strive to become a 'library without walls' by offering offsite programming to outside groups and organizations
- Regularly review and revise policies and procedures, such as cell phone use and food and beverages in the library.

### **III. Children and Teen Services**

*Offer resources, services and programs to spark a love of reading, provide a family-friendly environment and support learning.*

**Goal: Work with the community's educators to ensure academic support for all students**

- Continue regular communication with school librarians for updates on assignments and book lists
- Provide on-site services to schools such as book talks, database training, PTA and HSA presentations, etc.
- Provide resources and services to homeschoolers
- Expand shared services with schools and South Orange Public Library to share resources and plan programs
- Work with school librarians to ensure that every student has a library card
- Host an annual meeting with all district school librarians
- Make the library a stop on the Jitney tour for new teachers
- Invite classes to visit the library

**Goal: Provide children's programs and services that promote early literacy, a love of books and reading, and homework assistance**

- Redesign children's page on website for ease-of-use and clarity
- Continue to create and provide programs for young children and families to promote a love of books, music, movement, and an opportunity to foster good social skills and group enjoyment
- Expand partnerships with museums, schools, artists, etc. to enrich the library's programs and services
- Continue to offer a Summer Reading Club rich in special programs, performances, and creativity
- Highlight special collections through displays, book lists, and the website for both parents and children

- Continue to offer special services to teachers and students to support classroom projects

**Goal: Provide a welcoming environment for teens to enjoy both leisure and academic activities**

- Redesign teen page on website to be current, accessible, entertaining, and informative
- Hold regular Teen Advisory Meetings and implement teens' suggestions and feedback
- Design teen programming and services that reflect their interests and include the latest technological trends
- Strengthen relationships with other organizations serving teens: the Hub, Recreation Department, the Loft, etc.
- Help teens hone their research skills on an individual and group basis using databases and other formats
- Maintain regular contact with Middle and High Schools regarding assignments, book lists, and other academic issues
- Provide opportunities for social networking, gaming, and other trends
- Create a teen area implementing recommendations from 2007 Space Plan

**Goal: Provide a peaceful and productive library experience for all patrons during after-school hours**

- Create after-school activities to encourage appropriate use of the library
- Provide ongoing staff training to ensure fair and consistent implementation of the library's behavior policy
- Collaborate with schools, the police department and other organizations serving youth

**IV. Advocacy/Community Building**

*Increase support for the Library through advocacy and partnerships and establish close relationships with funding agencies in the Township as well as business and community groups to ensure long term support and stable financing for library services. Explore and implement fundraising and alternate sources of income.*

**Goal: Educate the public about library funding and spending to create transparency**

- Publish an annual report to the community beginning in 2010
- Using the Library's website, create visuals such as a revenue source pie chart
- Through all media sources, demonstrate value and purpose to the community to show return on investment

- Demonstrate how library services are part of the community's solution to current issues and challenges

**Goal: Expand fundraising efforts**

- Develop a Library Foundation using the Friends of the Library's non-profit status
- Aggressively pursue grant funding for programs and services
- Create a fundraising 'portal' through the Library's website and other means
- Hold a minimum of one fundraiser annually, either in-house or through other channels such as direct mail appeal
- Work with the Friends of the Library to develop memorial and tribute gift programs
- Develop a planned giving program

**Goal: Create partnerships**

- Work with service clubs and organizations to identify joint opportunities to benefit the community
- Explore relationships with museums, government agencies, libraries and other organizations beyond the Maplewood community
- Create opportunities for every staff member to be an advocate for the Library and a contact with community organizations
- Create a support group of stakeholders, in addition to the Friends and Board members, to champion the Library

**Goal: Expand library membership to 85%**

- Promote "get a library card on-line"
- Offer opportunities to issue library cards on the spot at community events
- Promote September as "Library Card Sign-up Month"
- Offer incentives for new card holders
- Work with the schools to ensure every student has a library card
- Use inserts in publications such as "Matters Magazine" to promote library membership
- Work closely with organizations such as the Newcomers Club, Community Coalition on Race and local realtors to get library information to new residents

**Goal: Initiate a more formal volunteer program**

- Designate a volunteer coordinator
- Develop a training manual for volunteers
- Publicize volunteer opportunities
- Create incentives to recruit and motivate volunteers
- Encourage library school internships

## **V. Communication**

*Maintain communication with our patrons, community and stakeholders in order to remain relevant, engaged and responsive.*

### **Goal: Increase the visibility of the Library as a vital community resource through enhanced marketing and promotion**

- Create a professional marketing plan to strengthen the library's public image and identity
- Identify specific populations in order to provide customized email updates on programs of interest
- Improve existing methods of publicizing our services, to ensure that the public is aware of our resources and programs
- Increase education in the use of databases and other library resources
- Improve outreach, especially to under-served library populations such as new immigrants, English language learners, senior citizens and twenty-somethings
- Develop outreach strategies to offer enhanced services to job-seekers, small and home-based businesses, caregivers and other specialized groups

### **Goal: Use the latest technology to communicate with our patrons**

- Create a modern, friendly, highly-navigable website, and publicize it as a portal to library services
- Increase use of email and web applications to communicate library services and programs

### **Goal: Maintain a more engaged relationship with the community by encouraging two-way communications with library users**

- Solicit feedback from patrons through physical and virtual suggestion boxes
- Use blogs, photo sharing, videos and other social media tools

## **VI. Collections**

*Provide and promote quality collections that support life-long learning, personal growth, and entertainment for our diverse community.*

### **Goal: Build the library collection to reflect the needs and wants of the community**

- Update and utilize the Collection Development Policy to ensure that our materials reflect the changing needs of the community
- Carefully evaluate circulation statistics and other factors as a basis for purchasing in order to make the best use of reduced funds
- Remain up to date on new formats for literature and information
- Encourage patron feedback about the collection

**Goal: Market collections to the community both inside and outside the library**

- Address appearance, physical locations, and accessibility of collections
- Bring large print books to seniors at Winchester Gardens on a monthly basis
- Investigate possibility of bringing selected materials to other locations outside the library to better serve the underserved/disabled/homebound, etc.
- Assist Friends in developing and promoting the collections at the local pool and train station

**Goal: Make materials available to patrons as quickly as possible**

- Streamline processing procedures across departments
- Expand collection sharing between departments
- Utilize state-wide services such as interlibrary loan to provide patrons with materials not owned by the Library

## **VII. Technology**

*Integrate technologies that improve and enhance the delivery of all aspects of library services.*

**Goal: Provide the technical infrastructure needed to support library operations.**

- Find affordable ways to increase bandwidth to support ever-increasing Internet usage
- Outfit all meeting rooms with easy to use, up to date audiovisual technology
- Provide adequate professional IT support and backup
- Maintain an appropriate replacement cycle for library servers and computers
- Assess the library's wireless network and upgrade as needed
- Maintain an updated technology plan

**Goal: Leverage technology to improve the delivery of library services.**

- Investigate options for self-check
- Explore the use of web applications for program registration, library donations, and summer reading program management
- Enrich the library website with videos and podcasts

**Goal: Provide increased opportunities for library staff to explore and master new technologies**

- Expand training opportunities in use of the Millennium system and other library software
- Train staff in current technologies
- Increase staff contributions to the library website, blogs and other social networking tools

## **VIII. Building/Facility**

*Provide an attractive and comfortable library environment.*

**Goal: Develop a comprehensive plan to maintain and upgrade library infrastructure**

- Work with the Department of Public Works to create a cleaning and maintenance schedule
- Continue to maintain a safe environment for the staff and public
- Review and update the Library's Disaster Plan on a regular basis
- Ensure ADA accessibility throughout the library including the installation of elevator at Main Library

**Goal: Optimize use of available space within library buildings**

- Create a 'café' area with vending machines
- Provide space for technology/computer lab in partnership with Youthnet
- Create more quiet areas
- Implement 2007 Space Plan at Main Library as resources become available
- Develop a Space Plan for Hilton Branch

**Goal: Promote a 'green culture' for responsible environmental practices**

- Develop guidelines for minimizing waste and maximizing use of existing resources
- Increase library-wide recycling efforts
- Participate in the Township's annual Green Day event
- Use recycled materials as often as possible for signage, displays and decorations

**Goal: Make it easier for people to find the library**

- Improve exterior signage on both buildings
- Investigate the possibility of location signs on surrounding highways and streets

## **Creating Change**

The Library's next step is to create an implementation plan for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan. The implementation plan will consist of specific tasks, tools and strategies for the following: allocating personnel and resources to reflect our initiatives, identifying and improving current practices that support the strategic plan and measuring our success over the three year span of the Strategic Plan. We look forward to sharing our progress through regular updates on our website.

## **Building Community**

The Maplewood Library connects people to ideas, information and resources that support their work, education, personal growth and enjoyment. The library will continue to create and build upon mutually beneficial relationships with community groups and organizations to help enrich the lives of our residents. During these uncertain times, we are resolved to focus our energies and resources on partnering with our government, stakeholders and residents to find solutions to the challenges that are currently facing us. The Library embraces its unique and essential role as a vibrant center where a diverse community comes together.

## **Library Board of Trustees**

President: Karen Freeman Pettis

Vice-President: Carol Buchanan

Secretary: Katherine Hilaire

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Lester Lewis-Powder, Township Committee Liaison

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Joseph Fanning, Superintendent's Alternate

Jane Kennedy, Library Director

## **Strategic Planning Committee:**

Jane Kennedy            Library Director

Betsy Wald             Branch Manager, Hilton Branch

Project Manager, Strategic Plan

Joanne Beckerich     Adult Programming/Publicity

Jane Folger             Head of Children's Department

Sandy Holtz            Technical Services /Technology Support Librarian

Suzanne Henning     Circulation, Hilton Branch

Barbara Laub          Head of Technical Services and Adult Services

Irene Langlois         Children's Librarian

Heidi Wolfley          Acquisition/Circulation, Main Library

Maureen Sullivan     Consultant