



Greenwich Free Library

Strategic Plan 2017-2022

Adopted May 10, 2017

2017 Greenwich Free Library Board of Trustees

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Deb Sgambelluri - Outreach Librarian

Kelly Stone - Youth Services Coordinator

Sandy McReynolds - IVH Gill Local History Archive

Executive Summary

The Greenwich Free Library has long been committed to the notion that a good library is a work in progress; keeping current with the changing needs of our community and seeking opportunities to meet them by updating policies, developing programs, acquiring materials and improving infrastructure.

Over the past several years, guided by this understanding, we have engaged in a continuing process of improvement. We have changed policies to remove financial barriers to library use. Our print and media collections have been thoroughly overhauled and are regularly examined and updated. We have increased our pre K programming in response to the changes in Kindergarten expectations, created more workshops for school-age children and their families. We have run frequent art classes and a book group for adults and provided support to independent adult learning groups. We regularly host social service information providers and meetings of local nonprofits. A staff position was added to increase the IVH Gill Room's capacity. We have kept our computers updated and added wireless printing to our list of services. We have increased our online and social media presence and implemented an online newsletter. We have expanded our collaboration with the school and a number of other local organizations. We have continued to make changes to the building itself; improving accessibility, updating infrastructure and opening up under-utilized space.

Through these efforts we have met or advanced many of the goals of our 2012-16 strategic plan. In creating our plan for 2017-2022, we chose to recommit to early literacy education, which we see as central to our role as a public educational institution, and to improving the physical space and expanding the programming of the IVH Gill room because it is a unique resource with untapped potential. The 2012-2016 goals emphasizing timely and convenient access to resources and assistance have become basic tenets of our operations and will continue as service priorities even though they are not specifically called out in our new plan.

The 2017–2022 plan aims to bring more people into the library through changes to policies, staffing, programs and resources. At the same time, we will increase the library's presence outside our walls; breaking through accessibility barriers by going to where potential patrons are, rather than waiting for them to come to us. To achieve these goals, we have added two part time positions: an Outreach Librarian and a Youth Services Coordinator. We will raise our profile in the community by taking part in more local events and increasing our collaborating with local groups. We will provide our board, staff and volunteers with the tools and support to become active advocates for the library.

By adopting this 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees is affirming the priorities, objectives and strategies presented in this plan.

The Planning Process

Having undergone an extensive process to produce the 2012-2016 strategic plan, the decision was made to adopt the less intensive “Simply Strategic” model created by the Pioneer Library System and presented at the New York Library Association’s 2015 conference. A Strategic Plan Committee was established.

The Committee began by examining the current plan and evaluating the progress made on its goals. The Mission Statement was updated and presented it in the mission, vision, values format in order to incorporate current thinking on best practices with the Greenwich Free Library’s long-standing philosophy and commitment to serving our community.

Based on the Mission, Vision, Values statement and over the course of two months, the Committee drafted a list of key priorities and objectives along with suggested strategies for achieving those objectives. As part of that process, staff, volunteers and the public were surveyed about current and potential library services using online and paper surveys that elicited 137 total responses. The Director and Board of Trustees discussed and revised the document at two meetings. A draft of the priorities, objectives and strategies document was circulated to staff members for comment before being finalized and adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Greenwich Free Library Mission, Vision and Values

Mission:

The Greenwich Free Library strives to create a welcoming atmosphere, respecting individual rights to privacy and choice. We provide free and open access to literature, information, technology, meeting spaces, and cultural and educational experiences. We reach out and collaborate with people in the Greenwich area to enrich their lives and strengthen our community.

Vision:

The Greenwich Free Library will be more widely recognized as a center for literacy, preservation of and access to local history materials, lifelong learning, inspiration and recreation and community connection

Values:

Accessibility

Working to eliminate physical, economic, cultural, technological and social barriers.

Sustainability

Ensuring stewardship of the Library resources through environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices.

Intellectual Freedom

Guaranteeing and facilitating the free exchange of information and ideas in a democratic society, protecting intellectual freedom and respecting individuals' rights to privacy and choice.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Greenwich Free Library February 8, 2017

Greenwich Free Library Strategic Plan 2017-2022

KEY PRIORITIES:

Literacy Education

Preservation and Access to Local Historical Documents

Lifelong Learning

Community Engagement

Facility Enhancement

1. LITERACY EDUCATION

Goal: Enhance and expand programs that provide community members with more broadly defined literacy-based learning opportunities

Key Objectives

- Expand and enhance early literacy programs, keeping current with best practices.
Strategies:
 - Provide staff/instructors with professional development opportunities
 - Collaborate with local professionals /agencies
 - Develop and maintain appropriate spaces, materials and funding
 - Recruit volunteers to assist with programming

- Develop literacy programs across a broad spectrum of areas, including but not limited to: digital, financial, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math).
Strategies:
 - Provide staff/instructors with professional development opportunities
 - Participate in SALS Adult Literacy initiative
 - Develop partnerships with local businesses, organizations and individuals to provide instruction.
 - Include literacies services in Outreach programming.
 - Recruit volunteers to assist with programming

- Promote enjoyment of literature.

Strategies:

- Provide regular programming such as Author events and book clubs.
- Provide informal social media and in-person opportunities for patrons to make recommendations and actively engage in discussions of books.
- Improve ease of browsing and reading in the library.
- Improve access to and quality of online collection.
- Recruit volunteers to assist with programming.

2. PRESERVATION AND ACCESS TO LOCAL HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

Goal: Enhance access to an expanded collection of paper, photo, and digital sources and documents related to the history of the greater Greenwich community

Key Objectives

- A. Increase digital access to historical documents and photos

Strategies:

- Continue to seek out opportunities for participation in digitization projects
- Conduct classes and events to inform the public of what is available and how to use it.

- B. Enlarge space devoted to preservation and access to historical materials

Strategies:

- Include this goal in ongoing building plans
- Seek out information on best practices for storage and access

- C. Increase history-related programming and education opportunities

Strategies:

- Create a Board Committee that will coordinate with Gill Room employee/volunteers
- Develop a social media presence

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

Goal: Create innovative learning opportunities for community members of all ages

- A. Develop a system for community input to develop programming in areas of interest: arts, culture, personal growth, job skills etc.

Strategies:

- Create ongoing online and in-person portals for input
- B. Address community suggestions by continuously seeking and creating programs in the areas of interest.
- Currently identified: Computer skills including computer literacy, information literacy, social media and basic job skills.
- C. Make use of volunteers and paid presenters to host programs in their areas of expertise.
- D. Develop a system for effectively managing and providing self-directed learning materials.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Improve service of, integration into and recognition by the community

- A. Increase outreach to targeted populations.

Strategies:

- Identify populations to target
- Increase and/or restructure staffing and infrastructure for outreach
- Provide staff/instructors with professional development opportunities
- Collaborate with local businesses, organizations and individuals

- B. Increase advocacy by board and staff for the library and its programs.

Strategies:

- Develop and keep current handouts and online resources providing information about library services and resources
- Increase library board and staff participation in local public events
- Create signage and other materials for portable displays.
- Fund a more convenient and versatile outdoor sign.
- Participate in library's social media forums and campaigns.
- Research board/staff advocacy activities at other libraries and incorporate chosen ones into board/staff members' tasks.
- Make volunteer appreciation more systematic and regularly promote volunteer contributions.

- C. Increase collaboration with local businesses, organizations and individuals

Strategies:

- Increase participation in / outreach to chamber of commerce
 - Workforce skills classes or other programs/services
- Make local businesses aware of library resources (databases etc.) that can support them.
- Actively work to increase individual and corporate participation in the library, through program sponsorship, financial support etc.

5. FACILITY ENHANCEMENT

Goal: Provide a comfortable and welcoming physical environment that supports our programs and services.

- A. Develop a facilities Master Plan
- B. Maximize usability of available indoor and outdoor space
 - Strategies:
 - Reallocate space and create flexible floorplans to accommodate changing use needs.
- C. Improve energy efficiency and general environmental sustainability
 - Strategies:
 - Seek resources for conducting audits of energy use, water management, recycling etc.
 - Use audit information to make inexpensive changes to daily practices.
 - Use audit information to seek funding for more expensive improvements.
- D. Maintain the building, its furnishings and equipment to the highest standard possible.
 - Strategies:
 - Create a board Building Committee to keep current with needs and maintenance issues

Implementing the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan

It is our intention to thoroughly integrate our 2017-2022 strategic plan into the daily operations of the library. To that end, we will review the status of our progress in Key Priority areas at each board of trustees meeting and again at our annual retreat. Board members will take ownership of particular Key Objectives and work towards fulfilling them. The annual review for the Library Director will take the progress made on the Key Priorities into account. As a living working document, the 2017-2022 Strategic plan is subject to review and revision on an annual basis or as needed.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Board of Trustees for their months of work on this document and commitment to the ongoing process of shaping the Greenwich Free Library to serve our mission in the community. Thanks also to the staff, volunteers and community members whose input, both in the formal survey and informal conversations, helped shape the priorities of this strategic plan.