

FORBES LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN FY09 REVIEW

Forbes Library is nearing the end of its current Long Range Planning period. In 2010 the library will develop its next five year plan. The economic climate has forced the library to reduce hours, staff, and services this year. Hard choices have been made and it is anticipated that more are to come before things improve. In this difficult time, the library continues to strive to achieve excellence particularly in the areas of community outreach, public access, and collection development.

The first goal states, “All Library users will experience Forbes as welcoming, responsive, and satisfying.” Objectives under this goal included improved communications, staff training, new service initiatives, and addressing building issues. This year we have accomplished:

- A shelf labeling project was completed in the Children’s Department that improves navigation and browsing.
- A new interface for the children’s catalog was completed and ongoing patron training has been provided.
- The library’s phone system was upgraded as part of a city-wide project and now allows for transfer ability, voice-mail, and an automated message system.
- Sam’s Café opened in the library’s lobby serving coffee, tea and light fare.
- Additional scanners were purchased for the public computers
- The library circulated Kindles to several Outreach patrons with limited vision through a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services as well as three Kindles to the general public.
- The library purchased a line of Spoken Word Music Lessons for the Visually impaired which all have Braille on the spines.
- The Information Services staff have created bookmarks to promote the library’s databases.
- Some of the library’s two hour meters were replaced by four hour meters.
- The Building Envelope Restoration Project completed work on stabilization of the North and West walls, roof work, and new interior and exterior doors which included an automatic door opener. Lighting was improved in the foyer and first floor through additional spot lights.
- The library greatly increased use of “green” cleaning program.
- The library’s Archivist cross-trained Information Services staff so they are able to give tours of the Coolidge Museum when she is not available as well as cross training of select staff on use of the Hampshire Room for Local History collection.
- The library added a third circulating Kindle and second ukulele
- A Baby Playgroup was started for the library’s youngest patrons.
- The library increased purchases of Spanish/foreign language materials, specifically for young adults.

- The library launched a new Braille collection of 250 titles for children and young adults and advertised the service to area organizations.
- Library staff continued ongoing weeding and reorganizing of the circulating collections in both the children's and adult collections.
- The Children's Department increased the size of their audio book and DVD collection.
- The Arts & Music Department significantly increased DVD and Playaway collections in response to patron input.
- The library received a \$30,000 Community Block Grant to design a handicap accessible children's room entrance.
- Library staff participated in committee for a community wide reading event around the book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver.
- A new small group study room was opened for use by the community.
- The library offered programs, displays, and workshops related to finding employment, changing careers, resumes, cover letters and interviews.
- Library website was expanded in several areas including subject guides, Spanish pages, Facebook content and the Readers Advisory section.
- Several genealogy and local history programs were held including an Ancestors' Nite-In which is an after hours lockin for genealogists paying for one-on-one assistance from staff and volunteers.

The second goal states, "The needs and interests to the community will guide the development and improvement of library services." Objectives under this goal included responding to requests gathered from our community survey, focus groups, and outreach efforts. Budget constraints have limited enacting some responses, most notably additional hours. Despite this, we have made great progress in this area including:

- The library conducted targeted outreach with many community stakeholders including WGBY-PBS, Clark School, United Way, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, local merchants, Multi-Arts, Franklin Hampshire Career Center, Head Start, Seussical Literacy Project, Disney Corporation, Northampton public schools, Interfaith Cot Shelter, Service Net, Northampton Veterans' Affairs, Senior Center, Lilly Library, Casa Latina, Center for New Americans, Northampton Housing Authority, First Call for Help, Learning in Retirement, Northampton Survival Center, Hampshire Country Court, Holyoke Community College, UMASS, Dollars for Scholars, President Coolidge State Historic Site, and the Northampton Arts Council.
- A bilingual photography exhibit and poetry reading were developed based on recommendations by the Spanish Advisory Committee.
- The library displayed a collaborative art exhibit with the Northampton Arts Council on the theme of landscapes.
- Community Room and lobby display space was offered to local civic organizations and displays were mounted by Hampshire Education Collaborative, U.S. Census Bureau, Pioneer Valley History Network, First Call for Help, Shelter

- Sunday, Center for New Knowledge, Tapestry Health, Northampton Recreation Department, local authors, and Smith College “ConBust”.
- The Susan Howard Case Poetry Corner was created in memory of a writer who had given generously of her time to the library. It is intended to include the works of local poets and local presses.
 - The archivist worked with local teachers to bring primary local history and Coolidge sources into classrooms and online.
 - The library organized a team to participate in the Dollars for Scholars Local Legends and Lore Scavenger Hunt.
 - The Hosmer Gallery hosted an exhibit of art work by Northampton High School students.
 - The library worked with a local author, Susan Well, and a local publisher to produce Calvin Coolidge at Home in Northampton. Lectures were given throughout the community.

Our third goal states, “The Community’s awareness of library services and resources will be strengthened.” This became a crucial goal for the long range planning committee because much of what people suggested that the library offer were things that we already had. This year we have accomplished:

- The library launched a quarterly newsletter that is distributed around the library, on the website, and at various locations throughout the city.
- A “Focus on Forbes” television program series was started on the local cable access channel (NCTV) by a volunteer who regularly records library programs.
- All 3rd grade teachers in Northampton were invited to visit and tour with their classes.
- School groups of varying ages and community organizations were given tours of library services including The Open Door Society, Leeds Elementary School, UMASS history students.
- Children’s department brochure was distributed to local schools and pediatric medical offices.
- The library participated in the steering committee to re-launch the monthly downtown gallery walk and is included in all promotional materials citywide.

Goal IV states, “The Board of Trustees of the Forbes Library will ensure the long term financial security and address immediate financial needs of the library.” The Trustees continued an annual fund drive for calendar year 2009 with a goal to raise \$25,000 for Arts & Music. The Trustees are in the process of developing a new investment policy as a guide for themselves and account managers.

Goal V states, “The Board of Trustees of Forbes Library will update its governance structure to more effectively fulfill the mission of the library.” A set of governing bylaws was approved this year.