

A Library for the 21st Century



Strategic Plan 2013-2015

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan for the years 2013-2015 will lay the foundation for a 21st century library. In 2013, our centennial year, Maplewood Memorial Library has a tremendous opportunity to look toward the future. For the past three years, we have been guided by a Strategic Plan that built on the successes of the past and strengthened our role as the intellectual and cultural heart of the community. This past plan reaffirmed our standing in the community and raised awareness of our role as an invaluable resource to the Township. During the next three years, we look forward to embracing our role as a place to connect and learn, a hub for innovation and technology, an incubator for creativity, a sustainable community resource, and a destination for community gathering that reflects the tremendous beauty, diversity, and intellect of our town.

Our Strategic Plan is the result of a yearlong study by a Planning Committee, composed of library department heads and experienced staff who care deeply about the evolving needs of our community and the future of our institution. The Plan was greatly informed by community input gathered through a broad public survey, a community forum comprised of leaders, stakeholders and library users, and focus groups for key segments of our population. At a special meeting, the Library staff, Trustees and Foundation members envisioned our ideal library, one which would attract the national recognition our township deserves.

As a growing and learning organization, we value feedback and will regularly report on our progress toward achieving our goals and initiatives. We look forward to working closely with our community partners to create a Library of the 21st century that will serve us well in the next three years and position us for the future.

---Sarah Lester, Library Director

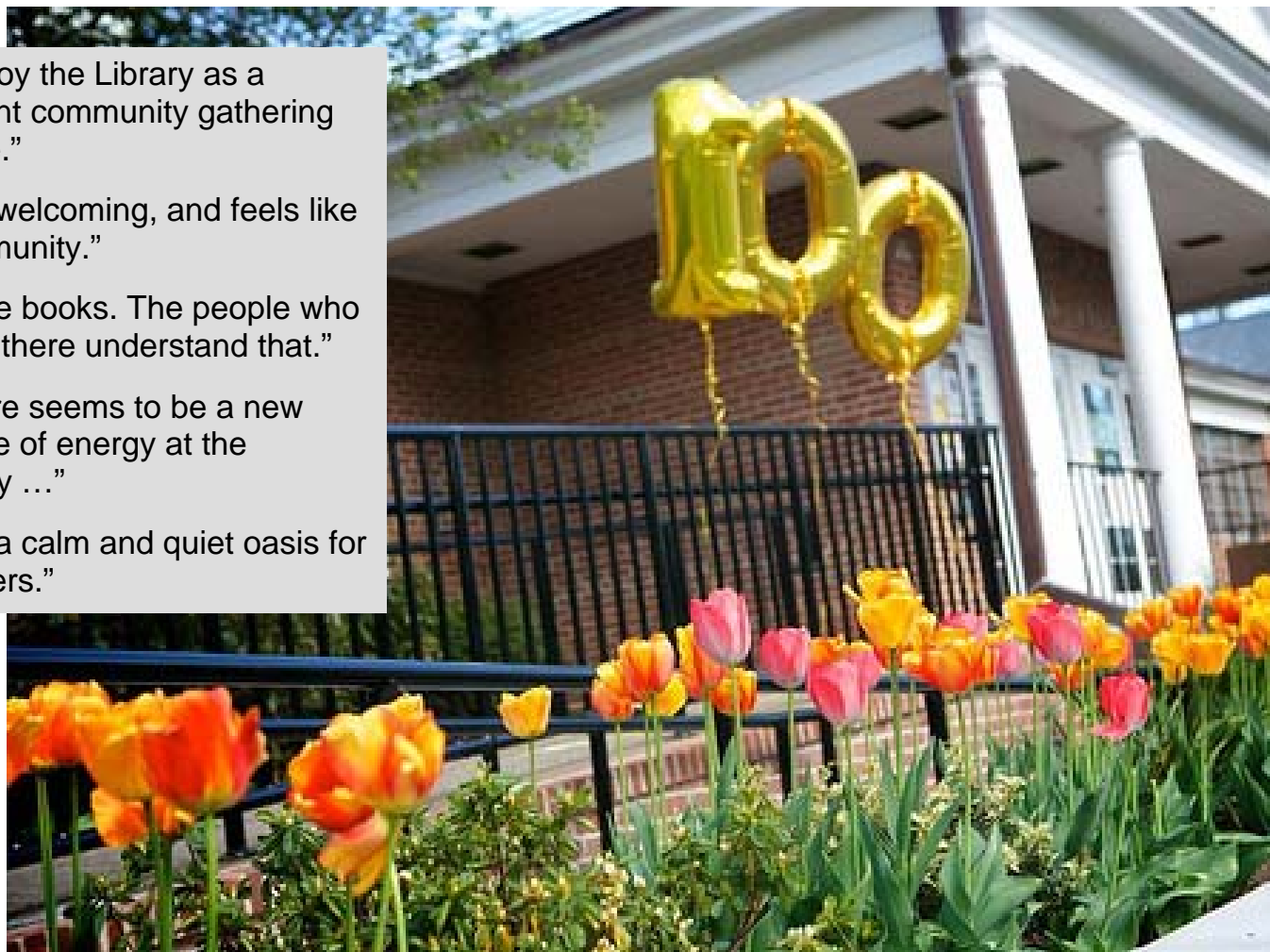
“I enjoy the Library as a vibrant community gathering place.”

“It is welcoming, and feels like community.”

“I love books. The people who work there understand that.”

“There seems to be a new sense of energy at the library ...”

“It is a calm and quiet oasis for readers.”





“The Library plays a key role in my family's life and is at the heart of what we love about Maplewood. Thank you for being such a critical, wonderful asset!!”



MISSION STATEMENT

The Maplewood Memorial Library builds community and enriches the quality of life throughout Maplewood by bringing together diverse people, information and ideas.

The Maplewood Memorial Library:

- Works to instill a love of reading and books for people of all ages.
- Serves as 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.
- Advances knowledge by offering free and equal access to digital resources.

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

VISION

Maplewood Memorial Library is the heart of the community: a place to participate, connect and discover.

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
- A welcoming and stimulating environment
- 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

1. STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY AS A CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL CENTER IN MAPLEWOOD

1.1. Reach out to all members of the community

- a. Ensure the library is welcoming and easy to use
- b. Provide services to all age groups and segments of the community
- c. Engage underserved populations in culturally appropriate ways
- d. Ensure that all members of our diverse community know they have a voice and a place in the library
- e. Develop off-site programming and services for adults, teens, and children
- f. Expand access for residents with disabilities

1.2. Enhance our role as a community information hub

- a. Act as a clearinghouse for information on Maplewood news, events and organizations
- b. Provide opportunities to bring the community together and strengthen civic engagement

1.3. Partner and collaborate with local businesses, cultural institutions and civic and community groups to capitalize on community strengths

- a. Explore opportunities to co-sponsor programs, projects and events
- b. Find innovative ways to work with the schools to support learning and achievement
- c. Strengthen ties to the business community
- d. Encourage local residents to volunteer for the library

1.4. Engage the community with programs that respond to the evolving needs and interests of all

- a. Showcase the talent, creativity and intellect of Maplewood's residents
- b. Offer an increased number of book-related programs, including book groups, author talks, literary festivals and online book groups
- c. Expand arts and cultural programming
- d. Increase programming and recreational opportunities for teens, including the Tech Zone

1.5. Preserve and share the history of Maplewood



- a. Focus on preserving the library's unique collections of historical materials
- b. Digitize the library's local history resources and make them available on the web
- c. Explore options for an improved Local History Room

“This is a community resource that has embraced its powerful role within a community, which focuses more on providing a place of learning and belonging than on a quiet, empty space full of books. “

2. SUPPORT 21ST CENTURY LEARNING THROUGH INNOVATIVE SERVICES

2.1. Foster lifelong learning

- a. Expand early literacy programs and resources to create young readers. Enable children to enter school ready to read, write, and listen
- b. Complement the school district's focus on International Baccalaureate (IB) and Common Core Curriculum
- c. Increase our offerings relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
- d. Develop programming to attract more high school students such as a Writer's Circle for Teens
- e. Expand college preparation programming for teens such as SAT prep, essay writing workshops and financial aid workshops
- f. Address adult literacy needs within the community
- g. Provide learning opportunities for all patrons in life skills, health and finance
- h. Make multicultural and multilingual materials and programming an integral part of library resources
- i. Provide support and training for job search and career transition



2.2. Increase self-directed learning opportunities

- a. Explore new spaces for instruction and content creation, such as a Digital Media Lab, Maker Space and/or Writing Lab at Main Library
- b. Offer online language learning and other instructional programs



"I have young children, and the children's library facilities are the best I've ever come across - it is a real magnet...reducing social isolation and promoting community while also promoting literacy in our children. The library is my 2 year old son's favorite building!"

"Convenient, cozy, well stocked. Friendly, helpful staff. A good place to go for quiet work, reading, quality time with kids. Everything a neighborhood library should be."

3. SIMPLIFY AND ENHANCE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

3.1. Provide library patrons with greater access to library materials and services

- a. Ensure the library collection meets the needs of our diverse community
- b. Expand access to a broader range of materials by joining a library consortium
- c. Provide easier access to popular, best selling materials in physical and digital formats
- d. Circulate new types of materials, such as video games

3.2. Connect with patrons via the latest technology

- a. Provide more convenient reminders to patrons
- b. Use a variety of communication tools to ensure that patrons and staff are fully informed about library events and programs
- c. Strengthen use of social media as a way to engage the community
- d. Offer online program registration
- e. Offer reference services via chat and text message in addition to email, phone and in-person
- f. Explore options for increased self-service

3.3. Increase access to the library buildings

- a. Expand weekend and summer hours
- b. Promote our website as a virtual 24/7 branch of the library
- c. Explore ways to transport seniors to the library

3.4. Deliver exemplary customer service

- a. Encourage and respond to patron feedback
- b. Ensure all library policies are user-friendly
- c. Develop standards and training so that every staff member provides consistent and high-quality customer service
- d. Create an environment that fosters continuous staff learning



“After 50 years in Maplewood, having one of the best libraries around is at the top of my list.”

4. ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE LIBRARY WITH STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

4.1. Increase and diversify the sources of public and private funding for the library

- a. Ensure that the library's annual operating budget is reflective of community needs and expectations
- b. Secure funding for strategic investments in new technology, space upgrades and new construction or renovations
- c. Develop sustainable funding sources, including fundraising, appeals, grants, public-private partnerships and local foundations
- d. Establish an ongoing capital campaign
- e. Identify community members and donors to support library programs and initiatives such as local history preservation
- f. Collaborate with other institutions to share resources, reduce costs and increase efficiency

4.2. Strengthen relationships that foster advocacy and support

- a. Continually build awareness of the library's vital role in the community
- b. Engage diverse stakeholders to ensure vibrant support and advocacy
- c. Facilitate teamwork between key supporters including the Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, Library Foundation and Township Committee

5. REVITALIZE OUR BUILDINGS TO CREATE INSPIRING SPACES

5.1. Create a conceptual design for the current and future needs of the library

- a. Evaluate creative options for our facilities
- b. Envision a flexible and adaptable space that will evolve with the changing needs of the community
- c. Respond to the expectations voiced in our community survey, including more collaborative work spaces, quiet spaces, digital media lab and/or maker spaces, local history room, and storytime room
- d. Explore the feasibility of new construction or renovation

5.2. Capitalize on our central settings within community parks by occupying and engaging the landscape

- a. Upgrade and maintain the existing landscaping
- b. Expand programming to outdoor spaces, such as the rain garden, gazebo, and parks
- c. Maximize our beautiful views with new windows and window treatments

5.3. Improve and maintain the library buildings

- a. Explore green options for energy efficiency and environmental sensitivity
- b. Improve cleaning and maintenance
- c. Increase visibility with improved exterior signage
- d. Update the library's disaster plan and create an emergency service continuity plan

6. INTEGRATE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE LIBRARY SERVICES

6.1. Maintain a robust technology infrastructure

- a. Upgrade the library's Wi-Fi so it can support a greater number of users
- b. Improve the library's broadband access to support faster communications and more downloadable content
- c. Secure an emergency back-up power supply

6.2. Improve technical support

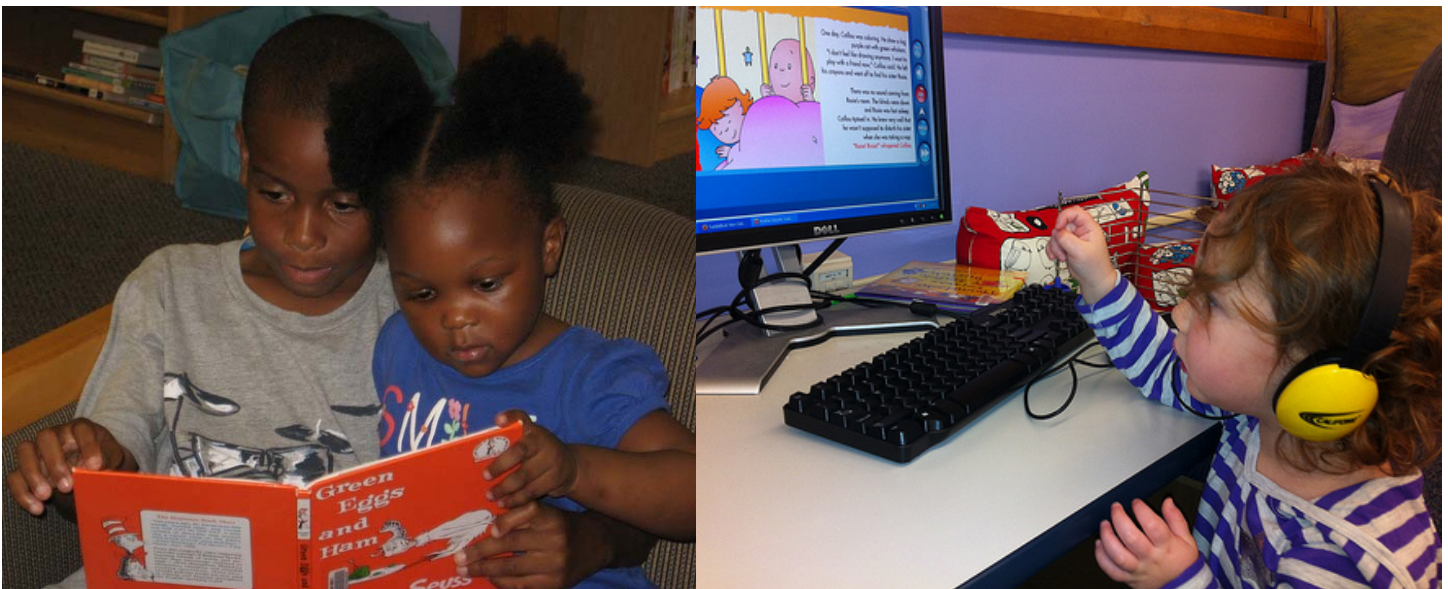
- a. Hire full-time technical support to serve both buildings
- b. Work within a library consortium to keep up with ever-changing technologies and leverage technical expertise
- c. Establish a system for tracking and resolving technical problems

6.3. Provide innovative technology for adults, teens and children

- a. Create opportunities for patrons and staff to explore and master new technologies
- b. Design spaces that foster exploration of new technologies
- c. Make new technologies available for patron use
- d. Offer more training in diverse technologies, such as digital photography and social media
- e. Provide additional computers for preschoolers, school-age children and teens
- f. Reach out to technical experts in the community for training and consultation

6.4. Improve technology training for staff

- a. Ensure that staff is familiar with the technology products and services offered by the library
- b. Train staff in new consortium policies and procedures



“I love that it is such a community place. The library is so well-used by everyone and is so welcoming to children and teens. The staff is wonderful and we enjoy seeing them when we visit. I feel very lucky that we have such a wonderful library in our town. We couldn't live without it!!”

WE LISTENED TO THE COMMUNITY

Maplewood Library reached out to current and potential patrons for input on how to better serve our diverse population. The Library did so in the following ways:

- A Community Forum, open to all, gave Maplewood citizens an opportunity to share their visions of an ideal library.
- A Teen Focus Group gave us insight into the role the library plays in their lives, which led to the creation of several new Teen programs.
- A Haitian Focus Group helped us understand the needs of this underserved population, and will help shape our outreach efforts.
- A Community Survey was conducted in the fall of 2012 and yielded 1,530 responses which helped guide us in our strategic planning process. For full access to the survey, go to www.maplewoodlibrary.org/strategic-plan/.

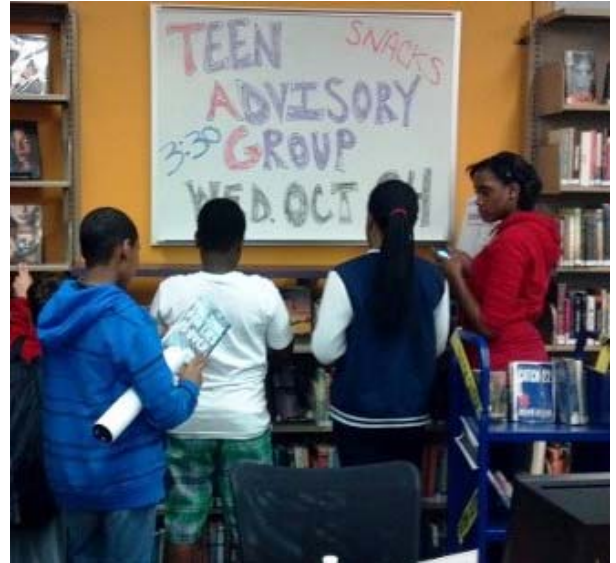
Our goals reflect the voices of our community as we strive to enhance the high level of service we provide for all Maplewood residents.

MAPLEWOOD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Katherine Hilaire, President
Carol Buchanan, Vice-President
David R. Huemer, Treasurer
Katherine McCaffrey, Secretary
Monique Bostic
Douglas S. Duncan
Carrie E. Puglisi
Mayor Victor DeLuca
Brian G. Osborne, Superintendent of Schools
Terry Woolard, Superintendent's Alternate
Sarah Lester, Library Director

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Sarah Lester	Library Director
Joanne Beckerich	Adult Programming and Publicity Coordinator
Jane Folger	Head of Children's Services
Ellen Frankoski	Circulation Assistant, Children's Room
Irene Langlois	Young Adult Librarian
Barbara Laub	Head of Technical Services and Adult Services
Ina Rimpau	Manager, Hilton Branch Library
Robyn Whalen	Information/Interlibrary Loans Coordinator



"You guys are AWESOME! I loved the library so much as a kid. Now I'm in college and I still use the library when I'm back in town on break."



"The library is the community's best asset and I have used it for the 25 years I have lived here. When my children were little it was an oasis, we used the summer reading programs, they loved it, they used it through their school years and I use it at least weekly now that I am retired."



“The library is the best exemplification of what we pay our taxes for. It is open often, dedicated to assisting the community; staff is knowledgeable and friendly. It is the definition of Maplewood.”

“As newcomers to this community, we always feel welcomed at the library. It is a peaceful place, where we can relax with our daughter, reading, crafting, relating with friends and other moms.”



“My favorite thing about the library is that it serves as a community center at all times, and provides vital services to the town. This was made abundantly clear during the days after Hurricane Sandy, when thousands of people found a warm, inviting and friendly place to work, get storm-related updates, read, and hang out. The town would have been a much gloomier place if the library had not been able to serve as a meeting place.”



All quotes are from our 2012 Community Survey.



Main Library

51 Baker Street
973-762-1622

Hilton Branch Library

1688 Springfield Avenue
973-762-1688

www.maplewoodlibrary.org