



Blake Memorial Library Strategic Plan

Approved by the Blake Memorial Library Board of Trustees: 2/17/2015
Blake Memorial Library Five Year Strategic Plan 2014-2019

1. Introduction

The governing body of the library, the Blake Memorial Library Association, was incorporated under the laws of State of Vermont on January 11, 1902. The Association is composed of no more than 100 members of whom $\frac{3}{4}$ shall reside in the towns of Corinth and Topsham. Annually, they elect a Board of Trustees that meets regularly with the Library Director (whom they hire) to govern the affairs of the library. The library serves the residents of Corinth, Topsham, surrounding communities and beyond.

2. Vision

The Blake Memorial Library is a community resource developed by community members to promote learning and sharing. We aim to encourage the people of the Waits River Valley to read, to explore, to think critically and creatively, and to come together to share ideas and inspire each other; we strive to provide them with the tools to do so.

3. Purpose of Planning

In 2014, the prior 5 year plan expired, and a committee was charged to develop a new plan. The committee recognized that the concept of libraries has changed radically and endeavored to produce a plan that addresses the historical concept of libraries, the implications of advancing technology, and the changing needs of the community. The purpose of the strategic plan is to build a vision for the 21st century Library and what we aspire to become for the Topsham/Corinth community at large.

4. Planning Process

The Board of Trustees designated a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of Trustees, the Blake Memorial Library Director, and community volunteers.

Three community meetings were held during June and July 2014, and ideas were gathered. A survey was generated from these ideas and made available to our patrons both on paper in the library and online. The results of the survey were incorporated in the plan.

The Plan

1. What we plan to continue to uphold as core values:

- Excellent customer service
- Access to books, information, technology, and a vital and relevant collection
- Various quality programs for patrons of all ages and interests

2. What will the 21st Century Blake Memorial Library look like in 5 years?

- More space, increased comfort and utility of that space
- Increased youth and young adult services
- More open hours / increased access to library resources, programs, and services
- A place that enables learning, exploring, creating, and sharing among community members

3. What are our goals and strategies to achieve each goal over the next five years?

- Goal: Books (print and electronic)

Strategy:

- Continue to develop print collection
- Continue to promote reading and encourage literacy
 - Book discussions
 - Develop writers' groups / workshops
 - Provide space for existing writers' groups / workshops
- Expand audiobook collection (cd and downloadable)
- Improved e-book accessibility (with renewal options)

Resources: *shelf space, staffing, collection dollars, program dollars*

- Goal: Opportunities to learn

Strategy:

- Special hours / facility access for community groups
- Workshops taught by community members
- Develop parenting, education, and homeschooling resources
- Programs for children including homeschoolers
 - Recruit specific individuals to teach workshops (aim for three per year)
- Promote and provide access to more online educational opportunities
- Help the community stay current with technology trends

Resources: *staffing and physical space*

- Goal: Build and make accessible a Local History Archive (in house)

Strategy:

- Edit and catalog historical resources such as oral histories, videos, photos, and documents
- Host local history presentations
- Coordinate with groups (esp. the Corinth and Topsham Historical Societies) and individuals to discover and share resources

Resources: *staffing/limited physical space and technology (grants)*

- Goal: Opportunities for creativity

Strategy:

- Poetry/writing/art workshops for kids
- Theater/drama/puppetry/music
- After school/vacation day activities
- Makerspace (space established specifically for inspiration and creative experimentation)
 - With resources and workshops for young adults like music (guitar, drums, etc.), dance, jewelry making, etc.
 - With resources and workshops for a variety of audiences and ages

Resources: *limited staffing and space*

- Goal: Opportunities to socialize

Strategy:

- Expand reading and discussion groups
- Develop young adult programming / casual programming
- Develop conversation nook / social space
 - Explore possibilities for food and/or beverage

- Host parent and toddler group for socializing and play
- Outdoor gathering space
- Recruit young adult advisory group / network
- Connect young adults of the community with each other and with community service opportunities
- Expand casual programming

Resources: *smart scheduling*

- Goal: Opportunities to exhibit work / skills

Strategy:

- Continue regularly scheduled art and craft exhibits (2 or 3 or more a year) and receptions
- Skills exhibitions / demonstrations
- Develop space for art and craft exhibit
- Recruit / develop art / creativity committee

Resources: *space (exhibit)*

- Goal: Expand opportunities for play

Strategy:

- Outdoor play area with toys
- Toy lending library
- Create family game day
- Participate in “International Game Day”

Resources: *limited space and funding for picnic table, thrift store toys*

- Goal: Fostering economic development / employment opportunity for individuals

Strategy:

- Continue to help people with online applications
- Maintain employment resources
- Entrepreneur workshops

Resource: *limited staffing, already in place*

- Goal: Bring library resources and services to people in the community and bring people to the library

Strategy:

- Provide resources to homebound patrons
- Consider satellite book drops / little free libraries
- Partner with community organizations (WRVS etc.)

Resource: *volunteer staffing, small budget in limited supplies*

- Goal: Review policies and procedures (ongoing)

4. Infrastructure / Staffing / Resources

- Staffing – Increase personnel and/or hours in order to:
 - Provide more open hours
 - Enhance patron access to resources and programs
 - Uphold quality customer service and library management – including in the director’s absence
 - Provide specialized staff – especially in the area of youth services

- Space - More space and increased comfort and utility of that space. Potentially including:
 - Young adult space
 - Makerspace / technology space
 - Quiet / reading area
 - Non-public work / office space
 - Director's office
 - Book processing space
 - Community meeting / gathering space
 - Conversation nook
 - Outdoor space
 - Picnic table
 - Opportunities for play
 - Kitchen
 - Handicap access
 - Access to downstairs
 - Rethink shelving / consider movable / adaptable shelving
 - Spaces that enable learning, exploring, creating, and sharing among community members
- Technology
 - Stay current with developing technology trends by
 - Continuing education for staff
 - Developing regular evaluations of technology
 - Bringing in experts when necessary to help ensure our viability as a technological resource
 - Provide current technology for patrons
 - Employ appropriate technology for library operations

5. Fundraising

- Continue plant and book sales
 - Develop storage facility
 - Investigate possibilities of online sales
 - Ensure continued volunteer support
- Grants
- Capital campaign
- Liquidating Clifford building
- Increasing town contributions
- New strategies
- Planned giving

6. Next Steps

- Develop an action plan to begin implementing the strategic plan
 - Use existing Building and Grounds, Personnel, and Fundraising Committees to do that work
- Board to authorize resources as available and needed
- Implementation of needs will be prioritized based on available resources and may not all be met
- Board to re-evaluate the plan on a semi-annual basis