

## **Itasca Community Library** **Strategic Plan May 2014-15**

### Introduction

*Why we decided a strategic plan was important for us.*

We are experiencing change every where around us. There are ongoing changes in society, technology, economy, and politics that affect our work at the Library. With reduced budgets we are called upon to do more with fewer resources at our disposal. Patrons want to see us maintain our core services while improvising to accommodate and manage the changes around them. As a result, we often find ourselves being reactive to patron needs instead of being proactive. If we continue our old way of providing services and resources without making any adjustments to our operations we will be ineffective in the future leading to stagnation and ultimately cause the Library to become irrelevant to our community. It was this realization that led us to conclude that we needed a strategic plan. A road map to guide us on the direction we wish to take and have everyone at the Library working towards a common mission.

Once convinced we needed a plan, we decided we were going to attempt this project on our own without an outside consultant as is typically the case. Of course the process we chose was a simpler one on a smaller scale than if a consultant had been involved. But we felt the end result would be as effective. I am happy to say I feel very content with the outcome and most importantly, the process was invaluable in terms of staff participation and morale.

We now have a 1 year plan starting May 2014-15. This document is very much a no-frills working document that we will use it as a guide to plan our programs and services for the upcoming year. When necessary we will make adjustments. The master copy is the collective activities for the entire Library. However, certain activities might involve specific departments. In such cases, the separate departments know what their responsibilities are, so there is accountability on accomplishing the goals and objectives.

The most important benefit that was derived through this exercise was that every single staff member had input in the process and the opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions. As a result, there is a sense of ownership and investment. Every staff member now realizes their importance to the overall picture and where their contribution fits in to our success. In essence, we all have to work together to make our Library the best it can be and when successful feel proud to be a part of such an organization.

## Goal 1

### Create a positive patron user experience

**Objective: Ensure patrons have the skills to find and evaluate the research information they need through our online research databases**

*Activities:*

- Evaluate library sponsored databases to ensure that we are getting the best resources for our designated budget
- Continue to provide instructional classes in the use of Research Databases

**Objective: Improve accessibility of materials collection**

*Activities:*

- Weed selected areas of the Adult and Youth collection
- Streamline the process by which materials can be made available to patrons in a timely manner
- Resolve the issue with the poor newspaper delivery service
- Purchase more how-to DVDs for Adult collection

**Objective: Provide a safe, clean, and warm internal environment for patrons to enjoy**

*Activities:*

- Purchase an AED machine
- Educate staff on safe blood borne pathogens procedures
- Revise the Disaster Manual (unattended children procedure, police policies)
- Conduct regular fire and safety drills
- Provide sanitation wipes and keep keyboards clean
- Improve the Youth play area with toys and objects of interest

**Objective: Provide a clean and attractive external environment for patrons to enjoy**

*Activities:*

- Research grant opportunities to secure funding to repair the parking lot
- Beautify front entrance by purchasing 2 containers for flowers and relocate trash can
- Collaborate with other govt. agencies to come up with a plan to alleviate parking difficulties in summer
- Install a smoking receptacle for patrons to dispose of their cigarette butts and post a prominent "No Smoking" sign so as to avoid littering library property
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## **Objective: Improve functionality of website**

### *Activities:*

- Hire a web designer who can update the website to make it more user friendly where patrons are able to easily access the information they need
- Create a mobile platform of our website (Boopsie)
- Create a online survey using survey monkey for patrons to provide feedback

## **Objective: Eliminate the barriers for patrons to fully enjoy our services and resources**

### *Activities:*

- Revise policies-Circulation Policy for fee charged for replacement cards
  - Meeting Room Policy
  - Business Card Policy
- Explore the possibility of having an off-site drop box or staff/volunteer to assist patrons in their return of materials
- Provide excellent customer service by ensuring all staff is fully informed of library events and programs. Maintain regular staff and department meetings and healthy communications within and between departments is crucial
- Ensure the Circulation staff is informed and trained on all aspects of the Circulation Department
- Establish effective participatory channels for staff and the public to communicate suggestions on ways to improve patron experience at the library. (chalk board, post it wall)
- Improve in-house signage
- Improve internal efficiency by upgrading our phone system and our computer hardware for faster internet access

## **Goal 2**

### **Create a tech savvy environment for patrons and staff**

#### **Objective: Staff, both Adult and Youth librarians, should feel comfortable assisting patrons with download requests for eBooks**

### *Activities:*

- Staff should subscribe to the OverDrive blog for updates on downloadable materials
- Staff must have access to eReaders and tablets to familiarize themselves with the devices
- Regular one-on-one classes and tech drop ins are scheduled for patrons

**Objective: Exploration Stations upgraded to provide more varied games**

*Activities:*

- Research appropriate games to provide more variety and choice in the selection of games offered to the kids

**Objective: Provide access to additional services for the convenience of patrons**

*Activities:*

- Purchase an independent fax machine to be placed in the copier room
- Provide a VHS-DVD converter for patron and staff use.

**Objective: Assist patrons in gaining confidence in the use of technology**

*Activities:*

- Provide instructional classes in the use of Office software in the Youth Department.
- Continue to organize tech drop in classes for Adults

**Objective: Incorporate technology to market library services to community residents**

*Activities:*

- Continue to use social media tools like Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter to market and inform patrons of our services
- Explore an email option marketing our information to selected interested patrons

**Goal 3**

**Aspire to have the library be a focal point for civic engagement and community hub**

**Objective: Develop dynamic programming for teens shaped by input from teens**

*Activities:*

- Establish a teen advisory board
- Organize specific programs to target teen boys
- Organize STEAM programming with partnership with local schools
- Enlist the help of teens when needed for in-house programs

**Objective: Develop innovative programming that would involve intergenerational patrons, community groups, and other special interest groups**

*Activities:*

- Explore programming opportunities with Forest View Nursing Facility
- Reach out to specific businesses to explore the possibility of conducting programs with their employees either on or off site
- Oral History recordings
- Develop an online book discussion
- Establish a conversational English speaking group
- Explore the possibility of organizing community programming with Roselle & Bloomingdale libraries

**Objective: Create partnerships with local government entities, community groups, and local businesses to further the mission of the library and benefit community residents**

*Activities*

- Develop programs that would create opportunities to involve the collective participation of various community groups and entities
- Develop alliances with schools and other for profit and non-profit organizations to inform of our vision resources
- Negotiate with the school to include our library card registration with school supply
- Attend school Open House for library sign-up
- Continue to attend Chamber meetings
- Be a presence at Community events