

Long-Range Plan

South Whitley Community Public Library
2020-2024

Approved by the South Whitley Community Public Library Board of Trustees
December 12, 2019

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Introduction

South Whitley Community Public Library has been a vital part of the community since 1913. Broad local support has allowed the library to grow and evolve in order to meet the needs of the people of Cleveland and Richland townships and the towns of South Whitley and Larwill in Whitley County. The library serves more than 5,100 individuals. The following plan will guide the library's efforts to continue serving the needs of the patrons and the community.

Community Needs and Goals

South Whitley Community Public Library (SWCPL) started work on its 2020-2024 long-range plan in October 2018 and collected data, information and input throughout 2019.

At regularly scheduled monthly meetings, library staff and board members reviewed the previous long-range plan and discussed SWCPL's successes and challenges with the goals laid out in that plan. At specially designated community and stakeholders' meetings, library staff learned from local residents what they liked about the community and in what ways the community could improve.

Staff and board members also looked at library attendance, circulation and program statistics as well as community demographics and data from similar-sized libraries. Other rural and small libraries' data offered insight into trends occurring across the country.

Surveys were also distributed to gain insight from local residents as to how the library could best design programs and services to meet the community's needs, and to collect data on the varieties of activities enjoyed by patrons.

Through this collection and study of information, staff has determined three main goals for this plan and developed a mission statement.

Mission Statement

Connecting people. Inspiring ideas. Transforming lives.

Goals, Objectives and Activities

Goal 1

Library staff will be involved and visible in activities throughout SWCPL's service area

Objective

Continue the library's existing partnerships and seek out additional ones with community entities

Activities

1. Maintain current partnerships with One Community, a local nonprofit organization, the Whitko Community School Corporation, the towns of South Whitley and Larwill, the Whitley County Chamber of Commerce and develop additional partnerships with local and county organizations
2. Develop new relationships with the Whitley County Economic Development Corporation and local businesses

Objective

Take library activities to offsite locations in order to extend library visibility

Activities

1. Conduct story times in the local park, at in-home daycares, for homeschool groups or at other locations
2. Consider utilization of pop-up libraries in area Amish communities, in the town of Larwill, at Whitley County Center for Youth programs, at mobile home parks, sporting events or other school activities
3. Encourage staff, Friends of SWCPL and library board members to be library champions at community activities
4. Attend meetings and serve as volunteers with local groups, and serve on committees or boards of local entities
5. Offer library card sign-up periods at local businesses such as Fox Products, Whitley Manufacturing, Ag Plus and onsite at public, homeschool and Amish school events

Objective

Increase use of the library as a community meeting place

Activities

1. Develop more library sponsored and hosted interest groups, i.e., gardening, stamp collecting, needlework and history clubs, etc.
2. Encourage use of meeting spaces by local businesses for training purposes
3. Offer health/fitness opportunities per patron interest or request
4. Look into additional ways of assisting homeschool groups

Objective

Increase interactions among different ages and demographics, i.e. teens, new adults, caregivers' groups, new residents

Activities

1. Check into placing library welcome bags at local government offices
2. Discuss viability of moving teen programming to adult department
3. Conduct listening sessions to determine kinds of activities/events that could encourage teens and young adult population to visit and utilize the library more frequently
4. Expand current children's department activities in order to offer more variety of sensory play and parent-child and child-child educational interactions
5. Explore offering a graphic novel book club, online book club or teen book club

Objective

Increase visibility in the local Amish community

Activities

1. Deliver educational materials to Amish schools when requested or needed
2. Meet with teachers/community leaders to explore what services/programs the library can provide to this group

Goal 2

Remain a technology resource for the community

Objective

Provide access, share resources and offer help with current and future technologies

Activities

1. Continue offering weekly drop-in technology assistance
2. Provide specific technology lessons based on patron interest or demand
3. Work on providing better Internet access in all areas of the building by adding additional Wi-Fi access points
4. Invest in new and emerging digital resources

Objective

Provide educational opportunities for residents to learn and practice technology skills

Activities

1. Take advantage of our Grow with Google partnership in order to offer more focused learning workshops
2. Make local businesses aware of the availability of auditorium and meeting room spaces for training and workshops
3. Continue to offer regular opportunities for one-on-one assistance with the use of genealogy resources

Objective

Improve staff competency in technology-related skills

Activities

1. Pursue developing and adopting standards for proficiency with online resources
2. Provide one-on-one skill training opportunities with more accomplished staff as trainers
3. Seek offsite training opportunities when needed

Goal 3

Increase knowledge of library's services and materials for the entire service community

Objective

Employ a variety of tools/sources to provide information about SWCPL's services and materials

Activities

1. Update website and other marketing tools including newsletter, brochures, handouts and digital slide display while also evaluating the effectiveness of each tool
2. Offer more activities/programs that utilize individual department resources, including programs that highlight genealogy resources, children's department activities and readers' advisory guidance
3. Complete quarterly direct mailers to reach entire community
4. Utilize opportunities to learn how to create resource-targeted how-to videos through local school or Niche Academy
5. Preserve library-created local history programs and add to our digital collection
6. Showcase individual collections via appropriate technology tools
7. Hold a Friends of SWCPL membership drive in order to involve additional community members in sharing library news

Objective

Research and offer methods to provide timely reminders of upcoming library events

Activities

1. Continue building targeted email lists
2. Explore possibility of text reminders of upcoming programs
3. Share library events on other community groups' social media pages
4. Utilize community signage

Financial Resources and Sustainability

Financial Resources

Current and previous boards and administrators' prudent budgeting decisions have led to South Whitley Community Public Library's long-term financial stability. Additional savings were realized as a result of changes in personnel and staffing, and the library seeks out grant funding as needed. Although a large portion of the library's reserves are being utilized for an expansion project, the board has maintained funds for unexpected expenses and no maintenance issues have been postponed due to lack of funding.

Sustainability

SWCPL benefits from strong community support. The completion of an expansion project will allow the library the opportunity to provide more resources and spaces for resident use. Issues that could affect the library in the future include the local school corporation's declining enrollment figures and fiscal issues. Additionally, the community reflects an aging demographic and lacks growth in population, housing and business.

Professional Development

Objective

Provide opportunities for full- and part-time staff to attend trainings, webinars, and workshops.

Activities

1. Circulation staff are encouraged to take part in four webinars per year. Information is shared with staff regarding professional development online training sources. Staff are then responsible to check for webinars that align with their areas of responsibility.
2. Professional library and book review magazines are circulated to staff members each month in order to provide insights into the broader library community.
3. Regular staff meetings offer opportunities to review skills, introduce new technology, or share customer service tips.
4. All staff may attend Indiana Library Federation (ILF) regional meetings or equivalent, and other trainings as finances and library staffing allow.
5. SWCPL maintains institutional memberships to the Indiana Library Federation and the American Library Association, and full-time staff have personal memberships to ILF. Through these affiliations, a variety of opportunities for professional training and competency refreshers are available.
6. Staff are encouraged to participate in professional meetings specific to their library role such as Youth Services Conference, HALO (adult programming), Evergreen Cataloging workshops and training events offered through LSC (Libraries Serving Communities). Staff are also encouraged to utilize Indiana State Library listservs including those for Readers' Advisory, Children's Librarians, Teen/Young Adult Librarians, Small Libraries, Public Library Professionals, etc.

Collaboration

Library

SWCPL participates in the inter-library loan consortium with other Evergreen libraries. We are members of the Northeast Indiana Libraries Serving Communities (LSC) consortium and Northeast Indiana Computer Consortium for Libraries (NICCL) organizations. Collaboration with the other Whitley County public libraries is offered annually. Institutional memberships are held in the Indiana Library Federation and the American Library Association.

Community Partners

SWCPL is actively involved with the One Community (a local nonprofit) organization, local preschools, the local school corporation, the towns of South Whitley and Larwill, Whitley County Chamber of Commerce, the Salvation Army, the South Whitley Emergency Food Bank, South Whitley parks, Passages (an organization assisting developmentally challenged individuals) and PBS39 Fort Wayne. Each of these organizations gives SWCPL the opportunity to share programs and resources that meet the needs of our served area.

Facility

Building

Our building currently occupies 14,646 square feet in one location. An ongoing expansion project will add an additional 3,800 square feet to the structure. Entrance accessibility was improved via a front door remodel completed in 2017. There are designated spaces for children, young adults and adults to gather as well as two meeting rooms, a Makerspace and a genealogy department.

Future Needs

An auditorium, conference rooms and study rooms will be added with the completion of the current expansion project. Having areas where small groups can gather has been a deficiency in our service, which we were able to respond to via this building addition.

Services

Programs

Regular program committee meetings are conducted with all full-time staff. Over the first three quarters of 2019, 238 children's programs and 219 adult programs covering a wide variety of interests and topics were offered.

Future Needs

In response to community needs, more off-site programming will be implemented and programs designed for career professionals and young families will be added to our calendar.

Collections

More than 9 percent of the library's operating budget is used for materials, allowing SWCPL to maintain a large and diverse collection of materials for all ages. The collection includes print books, adult large print books, magazines and newspapers, electronic books through Overdrive and hoopla, audiobooks and onsite movie and music collections as well as streaming services through hoopla and Kanopy. Wi-Fi hotspots are also circulated. Our genealogy department includes local and Indiana history collections, and family history resources. A variety of databases are available for all to use including those on Inspire and Ancestry and Fold3. SWCPL utilizes Inter-Library Loan (ILL) and Statewide Remote Circulation Services (SRCS) to further broaden its offerings to patrons.

Future Needs

SWCPL will continue the development of an obituary database for the genealogy department.

Technology and Equipment

Access

The library offers eight public computers on the main floor, two public computers in the genealogy department and two computers in the children's department. There are four catalog stations on the main floor, including one in the children's department. Eighteen laptops and seven iPads are available for public use, and thirteen computers are used by staff. The library has Wi-Fi access and Evergreen Integrated Library System (ILS). A combined scanner/copier/fax machine serves both staff and public. Two additional copy machines and a flatbed scanner are also available. Meeting rooms are equipped with mounted computer projectors and sound systems. Both general servers have been replaced recently.

Future Needs

The purchase of additional laptops for workshop use is planned. Technology equipment for the new auditorium and conference rooms will be purchased and installed with funds provided by local grants. Our policy on equipment replacement has been to annually purchase—as needed—new units to replace those that have reached the end of their usefulness.

Communication

Communication with the public and among library staff is achieved by the use of a Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone system, an evolving website, a combined fax/scanner/copier machine that also allows for wireless printing, and voice mail and email. Flyers, newsletters, community signage, social media and newspaper articles are used to provide library information to the community.

Future Needs

As means of communication evolve and change the library will incorporate new tools, resources and opportunities.

Operations

Hours

The library is open six days per week for 50 hours.

Staffing

Currently there are 13 employees at SWCPL, six full-time and seven part-time. In order to offer staff more flexibility in their schedules, we will be hiring additional personnel by mid-2020.

Policies

Personnel and library policy documents are reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Evaluation Process

This plan will be reviewed regularly by library staff, administration and board members and updated as needed. Generally, quarterly reports are presented at both staff and board meetings, in order to reflect on progress and determine needed actions. Changes to the plan will be reported to the Indiana State Library.