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INTRODUCTION

“If books and reading are dying, you can’t prove it at the Canton Public Library”

Robert Simon, Director, Canton Public Library

Upon reporting record-breaking circulation statistics for FY 2007-08

The Canton Public Library serves the Town of Canton by providing library materials, services, and programs to support the leisure-time, general information, cultural, and educational needs of its citizens. The library serves citizens through the development of varied offerings appropriate for users from birth through old age.

The library collection includes books, popular magazines and newspapers, audio books, DVDs, videotapes, compact discs, and online resources. Reference and interlibrary loan services are provided in person and via telephone and email. The library hosts special programs that entertain and inform adults, teenagers and children. Programs include story hours for children between the ages of two and five, summer reading programs for school-age children (800 participants during the summer of 2008), book discussions for all ages, visits by artisans and performers, and other special events.

The public has access to a self-service copier, an electronic typewriter, computers linked to the Internet, online information databases, Canton's online collection catalog, and the online catalogs of most other libraries in the State of Connecticut. Many resources and services can be accessed from remote locations via the library's home page, located at www.cantonpubliclibrary.org. The library provides word processing and spreadsheet software for public use. Homebound residents may enroll in the home delivery service, through which books and audiovisual materials can be delivered to those who cannot visit the library on their own.

To enhance collections, services, and programs, and to provide the best possible service to the community, Canton Public Library participates in several local, regional, and statewide collaborative organizations, including the 27-member Library Connection consortium. The library strives to provide excellent library and information services to the citizens of Canton in a friendly, cost-effective, and efficient manner.

In the spring of 2007, after seven successful years in the new location, the Canton Public Library Board of Trustees embarked on the development of a five-year plan. By all measures, the library had been doing well: circulation and attendance were up, and feedback from library users and other townspeople regarding the expanded facility and staff had been extremely positive. What

better time to initiate a survey to learn what the library was doing well and also what it might do better?

The library trustees decided to gather information from town residents using two methods: a written survey (distributed at the library and in other locations throughout the town, as well as online via the library's homepage) and focus group meetings of "stakeholders," people who represented various populations within the town.

THE LIBRARY

Statistics provided by the Connecticut State Library indicate that the Canton Public Library is one of the busiest small libraries in the state. It provides services to Canton residents and has additional patronage from neighboring communities within the Farmington Valley. In December 1999, the library moved from cramped quarters on Center Street in Collinsville to 16,209 square feet of comfortable space within the town's Community Center on Dyer Avenue (the renovated building that formerly housed Canton Elementary School.) The library is a focal point within the community.

The Fiscal Year 2008-09 budget for operations and collections is \$516,101. A talented and dedicated staff of 21 (10.93 FTE) provides exceptional customer service. Circulation for Fiscal Year 2007-08 set an all-time record high: 168,644 checkouts from a collection of approximately 79,000 cataloged items. This represents an increase of six percent over the previous year's circulation. Reference questions and patron uses of the public-access computers totaled 19,812 and 11,724 respectively. On January 1, 2009, 4,555 residents held valid library cards.

The library enjoys strong local support, including an active "Friends of the Library" organization. The Friends donate between \$10,000 and \$15,000 each year to supplement the operating budget in support of programs, special events, and collection development. The Friends raise money through their book sale, annual membership drive and the sale of bags and notecards.

THE TOWN

The library serves the Town of Canton, a growing suburban Hartford County community with a population of 9,332 according to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) town profile for 2008*. The town's

Charter provides for a Town Meeting/ Board of Selectmen/ Chief Administrative Officer form of government.

Canton has a total area of 25 square miles and the population density is 380 people per square mile. There are 3,619 households in town and 33.4% of them have children under the age of 18. The average household size is 2.49 and the average family size is 2.98. The racial makeup of the town is 8,914 White, 160 Latino, 130 Asian Pacific, 129 African American, 5 Native American, and 154 other/multi-racial.

Forty-three percent of the population over age 25 has a bachelor's or higher. The median income for a household is \$81,698 with a per capita income of \$33,151. About 1.9% of families and 2.7% of the population are below the poverty line, including 3.2% of those under age 18 and 0.5% of those 65 or over.

For the fiscal year 2008-2009 the town budget is \$34,103,110. This breaks down into a budget of \$22,021,023 for education and \$9,256,602 for the selectmen's budget. The library budget, which is a part of the selectmen's budget, constitutes 1.5% of the full town budget and 5.6% of the selectmen's budget.

* Statistics in this section, except for those in the last paragraph, are from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center's (CERC) Canton, Connecticut Town Profile for 2008 (www.cerc.com).

THE SCHOOLS

The Canton School System currently enrolls 1,770 students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12. The school district is comprised of four schools: Cherry Brook Primary School, which houses students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 3; Canton Intermediate School, which houses students in Grades 4 through 6; Canton Middle School, which houses students in Grades 7 and 8; and Canton High School, which houses students in Grades 9 through 12.

Canton students achieve at high levels and make excellent progress in all areas of the curriculum. Every school has an active Parent Teacher Organization which provides funding to enhance the curricular opportunities for students. The Athletic Booster Club, Friends of Canton Football, and Canton Parents for Music are a few of the other groups that support school programs.

Canton Middle School was recently named the *2009 Connecticut Middle School of the Year* by the Connecticut Association of Schools. This award was based upon the consistent level of high student achievement, the quality of the teaching staff, parent involvement, and overall opportunities provided for middle school students.

Kevin Case, Superintendent of Schools, was an active participant in the stakeholders' meetings organized by the Library Board of Trustees. The Canton Public Library works with all Canton schools and school libraries to support curriculum offered to the students.

THE SURVEY

The survey was conducted from October through December 2007. It was distributed at the Library front desk, in the Friends of the Library newsletter and in the town newsletter mailed to all Canton residents. The survey was also available online through a link posted on the library website. There were 242 responses.

The great majority of respondents were from Canton, but a few individuals from Avon, Simsbury, Bristol and Farmington also participated. Ninety-two percent had Canton Public Library cards. Two percent did not have English as their first language. About 77% of the respondents were female, and 23% were male. Sixty-two percent were between the ages of 26 and 65, with 12% 25 and under, and 26% over 65.

The first questions in the survey had freeform answers. Summaries of the answers to the first two are included below. There is not enough room in this report to print the full results of the survey, or the many comments, although every response and comment was considered in developing this plan.

What do you like best about the Canton Public Library?

The overwhelming majority said they liked the staff and the atmosphere. They described the staff as professional, competent, helpful, and knowledgeable; the atmosphere was called quiet, friendly, community-oriented, and small town but modern.

Other comments on this question fell into the following categories:

Collection: New books, quick reads, quick turn around on holds

Facility: Comfortable, clean, seating area, study areas, parking

Children's Services: Book selection, programs, story times

Computers: Webpage, Internet, catalog, services online, emailed overdue notices

Programs: Book discussions, food programs, art exhibits, museum passes

The library's magazines and periodicals were also mentioned

If you could improve one thing at the Canton Public Library, what would it be?

Here the answers were more evenly distributed among several suggestions. The suggestion most often mentioned was longer hours. There were requests for more weekend hours, uniform hours throughout the year, earlier opening hours, later closing hours, and openings on holidays.

Other answers fell into the following categories:

Collection: More math, science, up-to-date nonfiction, popular fiction, bigger budget

DVDs/movies: Foreign, new children's, better cataloging, more with better reviews

Books on tape and CD: Unabridged, classics, young adult

Music CDs: Classical, better cataloging

Computers: More, longer time allowed, more YouTube, Adult Only

Children's Services: Younger story time, better toys, outdoor playscape, bigger play area

Staff: More staff, better pay, "clone a few"

Facility: Better design, sidewalks, doors, temperature too cold, lighting, not quiet, need quiet reading nooks

Teens: Magazines for teens, more teen computers, better teen section

Other: Color copier; electronic newsletter, café

THE STAKEHOLDERS

The Library Board of Trustees invited people identified as Canton "Stakeholders" to attend two meetings at the Library. The group included fourteen people representing many segments of the community (schools, police, parents with young children, elderly, business, arts, among others). The meetings were ably conducted by Christine Bradley, Director of the Connecticut Library Consortium. At the first meeting participants discussed their vision for Canton as a whole. The second meeting focused on specific ways the library could help the town reach that vision and on specific things the library could do to provide better service to the public.

The library trustees owe a big debt of gratitude to those who participated and contributed their thoughts and opinions so generously: Kevin Case, the late Jerry Coutu, Kathy Corkum, Ann Gagnon, Mary Hess, Lowell Humphrey, Ann Kearney, Stan Krzanowski, David Leff, Salin Low, Kent McCoy, Kristen Oswald, Tom Sevigny, and Mary Tomolonius.

"QUICK HITS"

Some suggestions from the public were either newly-completed, already in progress, or could be quickly met. These "Quick Hits" include the following:

- Lighting in New Book Area has been improved
- Time for computer use has been extended from 30 to 60 minutes
- New library cards are available with key card option and list the library's phone number, website address, and other information
- A self-checkout machine has been installed
- An additional database (*Learning Express Library*) has been added and others are being considered
- The Local History Room cataloging has begun
- A color printer for public use has been installed at the Reference Desk

THE PLAN

The Library Board, working with the Library Director, has compiled the information gathered from the stakeholder meetings and the survey replies into eleven categories. In the section that follows, one to two pages are dedicated to each category. The category begins with a statement of the current status; followed by a general summary of the study results; the objective; and finally a number of specific, measurable goals. These are listed in approximate order of importance to the Board, although in many cases several or all goals are felt to be of equal importance.

The final section of this report contains a grid listing the goals and target dates for completion. Of course, a plan such as this is always a work in progress, and goals may be adjusted, removed or added in the course of the next several years, but it is the Board's sincere intention to achieve these goals.

GOALS

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Canton Public Library is open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday (Labor Day to June 30) from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday (November 1 to March 31) from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Many survey respondents and focus group attendees expressed the wish to see the library open on Saturdays and Sundays all year long, as well as open later on the weekday evenings.

OBJECTIVE

The library's hours of operation will reflect community needs.

GOALS:

1. Analyze attendance figures by installing "people counters" at each of the three entries/exits to elicit a more efficient count of visits, a statistic that can be used to evaluate and adjust scheduled hours of service.
2. Request funding to open half-days on Saturdays during the summer and, receiving such funding, open on Saturdays between July 1 and Labor Day from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
3. If interest warrants, request funding to open full days on Saturdays during the summer and, receiving such funding, open on Saturdays between July 1 and Labor Day from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
4. Request funding to extend the Sunday openings by three months and, receiving such funding, open on Sundays between October 1 and May 31 from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

THE COLLECTION

In the autumn of 2008, the Canton Public Library offered a collection of approximately 79,000 cataloged items. The collection includes books for adults, teenagers, and children; magazines; newspapers; books on audiocassette and compact disc; DVDs; videotapes; musical compact discs; and downloadable audiobooks (owned jointly with other libraries in a Library Connection network cooperative). A small but growing number of electronic information databases (largely, though not exclusively, those available through the Connecticut State Library's *www.iconn.org* program) are offered.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees cited the need to purchase bestsellers and other popular books in larger quantities to reduce long waits. Also, weaknesses in the nonfiction book collection were pointed out by topic. The large print book collection was described as limited. In addition, by nearly everyone's estimation, the audiobook, DVD, and compact disc collections were judged to be far too small to meet patron demand. The need to maintain and expand the Teen Space collection was noted. Finally, library trustees and staff recognize the need to catalog and process the Local History Room collection in order to foster meaningful use.

OBJECTIVE

An attractive, up-to-date, useful collection of books, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources will be maintained through continuous evaluation of new and existing products. Periodic review and revision of the *Materials Selection Policy* also will assist in this effort. The collection must respond to and grow according to community needs.

GOALS:

1. Meet the demand for popular materials by purchasing one copy of books and audiovisual items for every five requests/reserves.
2. Accelerate purchasing that will develop broader and stronger offerings in the following areas:
 - 2.1 Nonfiction books for adults in the subjects of photography, personal finance, investments, health, medicine, nutrition, and fitness
 - 2.2 Large print books
 - 2.3 Compact discs (including classical)
 - 2.4 DVDs (including instructional/educational, children's, and foreign)
 - 2.5 Audiobooks (unabridged for all ages, including classics and nonfiction)
3. Designate funds within the materials budget to purchase teen items, and accelerate purchases of teen materials, especially magazines.
4. Catalog and physically process the resources of the Local History Room to enable greater use by the public.

SERVICES

The Canton Public Library offers a variety of services that allow patrons to benefit from the institution's resources and offerings more fully. Among these services are reference assistance, reader's advisory guidance, interlibrary loan, reserves, a "quick reads" collection, and electronic notifications regarding overdue materials.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees suggested a few additional services they felt would be helpful: carrier baskets (similar to those offered by supermarkets) for patrons to place their selections in while "shopping" in the library, and dedicated areas for spotlighting new audiovisual purchases. They also requested a home page link for renewals that was easier to find and more user-friendly.

OBJECTIVE

The library will offer services that assist patrons to use the library profitably and comfortably, to acquire information, to utilize equipment, and to avail themselves of the opportunity to read.

GOALS:

1. Establish shelves to spotlight the latest acquisitions of audiobooks, compact discs, and DVDs.
2. Purchase carrier baskets imprinted with the library's name and logo for patrons to use in the building while making selections of items to borrow.
3. Make the homepage link for renewing materials easier to find and more user-friendly.

PROGRAMS

The Canton Public Library offers hundreds of programs each year to inform and/or entertain adults and children. These programs vary widely in nature. By autumn 2008, five separate story time sessions were being offered each week throughout most of the year for children ages two to five. For children in preschool through elementary school, programming efforts are most intense and include story times, summer reading clubs, visits by performers (singers, magicians, jugglers, mime artists, storytellers, puppeteers, etc.), craft workshops, and other events. For adults, programming is somewhat less plentiful but has been of an educational or/and cultural nature, such as classes on time management, personal organization, organic gardening, obtaining a passport, and bonsai, as well as poetry readings and musical performances by instrumentalists and/or singers. Also for adult readers, the library offers two book discussion series (Monday evenings, Saturday mornings) that meet monthly from September to June. The library sponsors art displays, each one typically lasting 60 days and spread throughout the facility, as well as displays of collectibles and other noteworthy items in a locked display case.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees requested even more programming for children. Also, they called for more adult programs, citing the need for film series and other classes on specific topics. Programming that reaches out to teens is virtually non-existent at the present time, and age-appropriate programs targeted at this audience (including a revival of the now-defunct Teen Advisory Group) are seen as priorities by trustees, staff, and patrons.

OBJECTIVE

In order to extend its influence beyond the collection and to attract new users, the library will offer programs, lectures, discussion groups, film series, craft workshops, art exhibits, and displays for citizens of all ages in order to inform and entertain.

GOALS:

1. Survey adults, teens, and children to solicit suggestions on topics for programs, exhibits, and displays.
2. Seek out Canton residents with special talents or hobbies who can present programs and/or lend artwork and collectibles for display.
3. Offer at least one multi-session film series for adult patrons each year.
4. In addition to regular monthly book discussion clubs, offer one other significant program to inform and/or entertain adult patrons during eight months of the year.
5. Revive regular meetings of the Teen Advisory Group.
6. Offer at least four programs per year to inform and/or entertain teens.
7. Offer at least ten non-storytime programs to inform and/or entertain children of preschool age through grade eight throughout the year.

TECHNOLOGY

The Canton Public Library belongs to the 27-member Library Connection Incorporated (LCI), a Windsor-based network that aids its libraries in acquiring technology in order to streamline business operations like circulation, patron registration, and technical services. LCI also provides its members with a shared, automated resource catalog. Five computers are located in the Adult Department on which patrons can access the Internet and information databases for which the library maintains subscriptions. In the Children's Room, four more computers are available for the same purpose. The Children's Room also offers two public-access computers on which young patrons may play games. There are four printers in the Adult Department and one in the Children's Room on which patrons can make printouts for a nominal fee. In the line of commercial information databases, the library traditionally has relied on the collection of databases maintained by the Connecticut State Library, although, in the summer of 2008 it initiated a one-year subscription to *Learning Express Library*.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees urged the library to be vigilant in upgrading computers and printers on a regular basis in order to keep pace with advances in technology. Also requested were classes on how to use the public-access technology and electronic resources, and a library blog.

OBJECTIVE

The library will endeavor to update and expand its offerings of patron-access computers and related equipment on a regular basis. It will continue to provide the opportunity for patrons to learn to use computers and other technology to facilitate their access to information. Staff will remain aware of issues and make recommendations regarding emerging technology.

GOALS:

1. Offer at least four well-publicized, staff-taught catalog and/or reference resource instruction classes to the public each year.
2. Replace/upgrade a minimum of five pieces of technology equipment annually on a rotating basis.
3. Establish additional public-access computer workstations, as follows: two for adults, two for teens, two for children, and two for staff.
4. Install a color printer for patron use in the Children's Room.
5. Create a library blog.

STAFF

The Canton Public Library currently employs a staff of 21. This includes five full-time workers (35 hours per week) and 16 part-time workers (ranging in hours from 4 to 21 per week). Most part-time staff work small numbers of hours and have other jobs and outside activities, so it is often hard for them to cover for colleagues who are away due to vacations or sickness. Thin scheduling makes it difficult for staff members to get together for meetings or training, or to get away to attend professional classes and workshops. There is no office assistant to help the Library Director with the many clerical tasks of management such as payroll, purchasing, bookkeeping, and correspondence.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Many survey respondents and focus group attendees spoke of the need to upgrade library services to teens, but presently the library does not employ a Teen Services Librarian, as many other libraries do.

OBJECTIVE

A properly-sized staff composed of individuals trained in their jobs, competent to carry out their duties, and dedicated to excellence in customer service is essential for quality library service. The library staff needs to be configured so that all essential functions are assigned appropriately and all identifiable populations are served. Education, proper support equipment, professional resources, and appropriate work space are necessary for staff members to do their jobs well.

GOALS:

1. Study circulation, reference, interlibrary loan, program attendance, patron visits, and other statistics to evaluate the need for additional staffing.
2. Request funding and, receiving such funding, add a Teen Services Librarian position to the staff.
3. Request funding and, receiving such funding, add an Administrative Assistant position to the staff.
4. Require each full-time staff member to attend at least one continuing education class, workshop, or conference that is relevant to her/his job each year.
5. Hold at least one all-day in-service training session for all staff each year.

FACILITIES

The Canton Public Library occupies the building built in 1948 to serve as Canton Elementary School. The structure was renovated in 1999 to become the town's Public Library, Parks and Recreation Department office, Senior Center, and community meeting site. The library occupies 16,209 square feet (approximately one-half) of this new "Canton Public Library and Community Center." Its facility offers a central circulation area, an Adult Department, a Teen Section, and a Children's Room. Additional features include individual staff offices, a staff workroom, a staff lounge, a children's story hour/craft room, and a program room for library and Friends activities. The facility is attractive but, after nearly nine years of occupancy, many areas of the stacks are full to capacity and require constant weeding to make space for new acquisitions. Moreover, space is limited in which to place additional seating, study tables, and other furniture and equipment. Parking is adequate at this time.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees spoke of the need for better signage, improved lighting, a more prominent bulletin board for library and community notices, individual study tables placed in private areas to supplement the current multi-seat study tables, and new or repaired upholstered furniture, especially in the Children's Room. Particular stress was placed on the inadequate Teen Section. Despite efforts to make it more attractive (e.g., a mural), it is far too small and uninviting to attract much teen use.

OBJECTIVE

The library will be a well-maintained, attractive, comfortable, and inviting facility. It will offer quiet areas for reading and study, as well as space in which people may gather and interact. Ample parking is a key to supporting and increasing patron visits.

GOALS:

1. Improve the Teen Space: see if more space can be added from nearby areas, furniture can be improved, and other upgrades made to attract teen users.
2. Research the adequacy of lighting in the Adult Department, especially in the stacks. Request funding and upgrade as appropriate.
3. Replace outdated signage and install additional, new signage throughout building to make the library easier for users to navigate on their own.
4. Upgrade the upholstered furniture in the Children's Room; repair, reupholster, or replace, as appropriate.

5. Research installing single-person study desks or carrels in distant corners to offer additional quiet and private study areas.
6. Hang a large, wall-mounted bulletin board in the lobby or near the Circulation Desk on which to post the monthly calendar, library notices, and announcements of interest to the Canton community.
7. Establish at least one "in-and-out-in-ten-minutes" parking space.
8. Research installing a picnic table on the library grounds.

PUBLICITY

The Canton Public Library employs a 20-hour-per-week library assistant who divides her time between working at the public service desks and writing publicity. She creates publicity pieces spotlighting library services and news, adult and children's programs, art displays, exhibits of collectibles in the display case, and Friends of the Library activities, which then appear in *Canton Life* and the *Tri-Town Post*. She also submits her publicity to the *Hartford Courant*. Publicity about library news and notes also appears on the library homepage. Flyers describing what the library has and does frequently are posted in the library, placed at the public services desks, and sometimes sent home with every student in the primary and intermediate schools.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey respondents and focus group attendees expressed frustration at often not knowing what was going on in the library. They suggested additional, alternative methods for getting the library story out into the community and ways to use traditional outlets more effectively.

OBJECTIVE

The library will use various forms of communication, both traditional and unique, to inform residents of its resources, services, and programs and to encourage use of the library by the entire community.

GOALS:

1. Review the library homepage regularly. Re-design, re-create, add new features, and remove old features as appropriate. List library holidays and other closed days prominently.
2. Place a calendar of library activities on the homepage for convenient referral by patrons who need information about adult, teen, and children's programs. Place links on the calendar to other local websites (e.g., the Parks and Recreation Department, Senior Center, Town Hall, and the school system) so that residents have access to a *de facto* town activities calendar via the library homepage.
3. Develop, print, and distribute a borrower brochure explaining library hours, contact information, loan periods, services, programs, and other information.
4. Publicize library notices and news on the local community-access cable TV station.
5. Investigate establishing an email distribution list for disseminating library news.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

With very few exceptions in the survey responses and stakeholder group meetings, the Canton Public Library rated high marks for excellence in customer service. Time and again, patrons praised library staff members for their friendliness, welcoming attitudes, courtesy, knowledge, and willingness to help.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

While a tiny number of surveys noted one or two employees who could be more service-oriented, the staff as a whole was almost universally praised as “top-notch” and “the best”. A few survey respondents and focus group attendees recommended establishing a suggestion box system as a good method for the staff to determine what the public is thinking.

OBJECTIVE

Courteously-served and satisfied customers are the desired result of all library activities. Service to the public should be welcoming, courteous, efficient, effective, and responsive to the needs of the patrons. This last characteristic requires two-way communication.

GOALS:

1. Establish a system for patrons to express their opinions and suggestions regarding library services through library-produced forms placed in a convenient location.
2. Establish a spot in the library where patron suggestions and staff replies can be posted for public inspection.

OUTREACH TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The Canton Public Library reaches out to many of the town's special populations and institutions. A home-delivery-of-library-materials system exists. The Library Director and Children's Librarian are in contact with school officials, school library media specialists, and the staffs of local preschools and daycare centers. The Children's Librarian visits school classrooms and receives school classes at the library for lessons in usage. The library staff contacts local teachers to determine upcoming assignments. Teachers are offered extended loan periods when borrowing library materials for classroom use. There are occasional joint activities with the Senior Center. The library regularly contributes information to the Senior Center's *Canton Senior Scribe* newsletter, as well as to the Board of Selectmen's newsletter. Institutional library cards are available for the staffs of local institutions to use in the pursuit of their work duties.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

The administrator of the Canton Chamber of Commerce was a member of the focus group and expressed a wish for closer ties between her organization and the library. She spoke of Chamber donations to help build a broader, deeper business collection, and the Library Director mentioned ideas from other communities as possible cooperative ventures between Canton's business community and library. The Superintendent of Schools actively supported closer collaboration between the schools and the public library.

FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD, DIRECTOR, AND STAFF

Many current outreach efforts do not follow a regularly-scheduled, recurring plan, and many are poorly advertised. The home delivery system is seldom promoted and sparsely used -- staff believes that it needs to be examined, re-designed, and then publicized more aggressively to attract more users. Meetings with school, preschool, and daycare personnel are irregular, as are programs with the Senior Center. Few local institutions use the institutional library card program. The library trustees and staff have ideas for making outreach a higher priority and placing outreach activities on a recurring schedule.

OBJECTIVE

The library will reach out to special populations in Canton, as well as to social and educational institutions serving town residents. Partnerships with groups and organizations will broaden the library's influence within the community.

GOALS:

1. Redesign and promote the delivery of library materials program for Canton shut-ins.
2. Organize at least three group meetings of Canton's public and school librarians per year.
3. Communicate with directors of Canton day care centers and preschools to discuss upcoming events, assignments, requests, and needs.
4. Cooperate with the Director of Senior Services to produce one or two joint programs annually that address the special needs and/or concerns of senior citizens.
5. Redesign and promote the institutional library card program for Canton institutions.
6. Meet with Canton Historical Society officials at least once each year to be sure that the library and historical society understand each other's collection holdings and display each other's publicity brochures.
7. Publicize to seniors at least twice each year the services of the Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
8. Communicate with the local Chamber of Commerce to investigate the feasibility of joint projects such as donations to improve the library's business reference collection and audiovisual equipment for loan to the Canton business community.
9. Publicize business resources, services, and programs offered by the local library and by other libraries and organizations.
10. Offer the Library Program Room as a meeting place for start-up and new business owners to come together and discuss common problems, concerns, and issues.

ADVOCACY/FUNDING/SUPPORT

The Canton Public Library Board of Trustees consists of nine residents appointed by the Board of Selectmen for two terms of four years each. Members may serve a maximum of two terms. The Library Board meets in regular session on the second Wednesday of each month, at which time the trustees receive reports from the Library Director concerning finances, statistics, projects, and news. The Library Director also discusses with the Board issues that affect the library on the local, state, and national level, and he/she recommends policies and budget requests which the trustees then discuss and vote on. Special meetings are held as needed. The library is a municipal department and its operating budget is funded through an appropriation from the Town of Canton, the budget for which is set at town meeting (or, occasionally, by public vote) every spring for the ensuing July-to-June fiscal year. Supplementing the library's operating budget is the "Gift Fund", a separate account made up of gifts from the Friends of the Canton Public Library, two small grants from the State of Connecticut, and donations from the public (usually in the form of memorials). Overdue fines, payments from borrowers to replace lost and/or damaged library materials, and revenue from the public copier and printers are turned over to the Town of Canton's General Fund.

FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD, DIRECTOR, AND STAFF

Public advocacy in favor of the library's goals, finances, staff, and facilities is part of the Board's duties and needs to be emphasized.

OBJECTIVE

The library trustees, acting collectively, individually, and in partnership with the Friends of the Canton Public Library, will act as advocates in the community to obtain local funding sufficient to permit the library to accomplish its goals and objectives.

GOALS:

1. Approve annual budget requests that reflect the objectives and goals of the library and the growing need for information resources.
2. Review all library policies every three years on a rotating basis. Revise, repeal, or add to as appropriate.
3. Contact members of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to provide updated information on library use and needs.
4. Encourage community support to fund long-range plan goals and special initiatives.

5. Create and publish a library "wish list" that patrons can refer to when making donations.
6. Discuss with town officials and attempt to revise current practice: payments received from patrons to pay for lost and/or damaged library materials should be returned to the library so that those items can be replaced using those payments, instead of the library's replacing them out of its operating budget.
7. Recommend, as scheduled improvements are planned, that the Board of Selectmen use environmentally responsible upgrades to the library/community center building, including but not limited roof, windows and insulation.

CONCLUSION

This document is intended to be a working document that will be used to develop, plan and deliver library services. The Library Board will review the plan annually and will publish a status report at the end of each of the five years covered.

The Library Board of Trustees wishes to thank the many residents who voluntarily shared their ideas and ratings in our survey; the stakeholders who generously spent two mornings sharing their constructive ideas with us; Director Christine Bradley from the Connecticut Library Consortium, who capably led our two stakeholders' meetings; and Kathy Cockcroft, Library Director when we began this project, who combed records and files and inspired us further. And especially, the Board appreciates the work of the Library Staff, including Director Robert Simon, who contributed numerous suggestions and opinions and offered invaluable assistance in the creation of this plan.

The Library Board of Trustees:

Lee Foley, Chair

Patricia McGarry, Vice Chair

Kathleen Woolam, Secretary

Karen Koch Berger

Marjorie Clarke

Kelly Conway

Bonita Hansen

Carol York (term expired June, 2008)

Robert Simon, Library Director

Time Line

GOALS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Hours of Operation Page 9					
1. Install "People Counters"					
2. Open 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays during the summer					
3. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays during the summer					
4. Open Sunday afternoons from October to May					
Collection Page 10					
1. Buy one copy of books and AV items for each five requests/reserves					
2. Increase depth of collection in the following areas:					
2.1 Adult nonfiction: photography, finance, health					
2.2 Large print books					
2.3 Compact discs					
2.4 DVDs					
2.5 Audiobooks					
3. Designate budget funds for teen materials/purchase more teen items					
4. Catalog the Local History Room					
Services Page 11					
1. Establish display area for new audiobooks, CDs, and DVDs					
2. Purchase carrier baskets					
3. Improve homepage instructions for renewing materials					
Programs Page 12					
1. Survey patrons for program topics					
2. Find Canton residents to present programs and lend art/collectibles					
3. Offer yearly film series					
4. Offer one major adult program during eight months of each year					
5. Revive the Teen Advisory Group					
6. Offer four teen programs each year					
7. Offer ten non-story time programs each year for children from preschool to grade eight					
Technology Page 13					
1. Offer four computer classes for the public each year					
2. Replace/upgrade a minimum of five pieces of technology equipment annually on a rotating basis					
3. Add eight computer stations: two for adults, two for teens, two for children, two for staff					
4. Add a color printer for patron use in the Children's Room					
5. Create a library blog					

GOALS (PAGE 2)		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Staff Page 14						
1.	Evaluate need for additional staffing					
2.	Create a Teen Services Librarian position					
3.	Create an Administrative Assistant position					
4.	Have all full-time staff attend one continuing-education class each year					
5.	Hold one in-service training day per year					
Facilities Page 15-16						
1.	Improve Teen Space					
2.	Study and improve lighting in the Adult Department					
3.	Update signage					
4.	Repair or replace worn furniture in the Children's Room					
5.	Research installing one-person study desks or carrels for quiet study					
6.	Install a bulletin board in lobby					
7.	Establish a ten-minute parking space					
8.	Consider installing a picnic table on library grounds					
Publicity Page 17						
1.	Re-design homepage					
2.	Add calendar to homepage					
3.	Create borrower brochure					
4.	Use community-access cable TV for publicity					
5.	Investigate establishing a library news email distribution list					
Customer Service Page 18						
1.	Establish suggestion box					
2.	Establish location for posting staff replies					
Outreach Page 19-20						
1.	Redesign program that delivers library materials to shut-ins					
2.	Plan three group meetings with school librarians each year					
3.	Communicate with town's day care centers and preschools					
4.	Plan joint programs with the Senior Services Department					
5.	Promote institutional library card program					
6.	Meet with Canton Historical Society once each year					
7.	Publicize to seniors the State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped					
8.	Communicate with Chamber of Commerce					
9.	Publicize business resources offered by libraries					
10.	Offer the Library Program Room for new business owners to meet					

GOALS (PAGE 3)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Advocacy/Funding/Support Page 21-22					
1. Approve budget requests					
2. Review library policies every three years on a rotating basis					
3. Communicate with Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance					
4. Encourage community support					
5. Create library "wish list" for donors					
6. Begin receiving payments to replace lost/damaged materials					
7. Recommend environmentally sound practices for all building changes					