

The Greene County Public Library Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012

The Greene County Public Library system is the community's connection to reading, lifelong learning, and personal and professional enrichment for people of all ages.

Introduction. The Greene County Public Library (GCPL) is an Ohio County District Library established for the benefit of the citizens of Greene County pursuant to Ohio Revised Code § 3375.19. We are honored to provide library services to the residents of Greene County.

This Strategic Plan defines the key areas that GCPL will focus on between 2009 and 2012. It was developed from community input through a county-wide survey taken in 2008, the ideas from a community focus group, suggestions from individual patrons, and input from GCPL staff at all levels. GCPL's planning approach was adapted from the *Public Library Association Service Responses 2007* by Wayne Piper of the Ohio Library Council.

Our mission.

- The Greene County Public Library system is the community's connection to reading, lifelong learning, and personal and professional enrichment for people of all ages.

Our values.

In support of our mission, we are committed to:

- maintaining an open, unbiased environment;
- upholding the public's right of access to information;
- providing individualized assistance;
- providing professional expertise;
- providing current technologies;
- providing equal access to facilities;
- providing quality services; and
- provide materials and information in a variety of formats.

The Planning Process.

The goals of a strategic plan are to outline the key areas that a public library will focus on to meet the changing needs of its community, and to share that information with all public library stakeholders – the patrons, the Board of Trustees, and the Staff. The selection of some goals does not mean that other aspects of GCPL’s work are less important: the selection of a goal simply acknowledges that GCPL will focus additional efforts and resources in that area.

GCPL elected to use the *Public Library Service Responses 2007* as its guide to strategic planning. The underlying principle of the *Public Library Service Responses* is that public libraries should first learn about and then meet the specific needs of the communities they serve. The *Public Library Service Responses* offer 17 different responses that a Public Library may choose to meet these needs.

GCPL selected Wayne Piper of the Ohio Library Council to guide our strategic planning process. Wayne’s many years of experience ensured that the strategic plan would be effective, inclusive, and economical. Wayne encouraged GCPL to adopt no more than four service responses, to ensure that these priorities receive adequate attention.

GCPL learned about the needs of the Greene County community through a survey of registered voters conducted by Holy Cow! Consulting, the firm that surveyed the community for GCPL’s previous strategic plan in 2004. GCPL chose Holy Cow! because of its excellent reputation in the library community. Moreover, working with Holy Cow! gave GCPL the opportunity to see “apples-to-apples” comparisons of its data from 2004 and 2008. The survey was completed on October 31, 2008. It was presented to the Trustees at the November 2008 Board meeting and to the staff at the November 11, 2008 Staff Day. The survey results are available upon request.

On October 8, 2008 GCPL convened a focus group comprised of citizens throughout the county to discuss the community’s needs and how GCPL might best serve them. Wayne led the focus group meeting.

During GCPL’s 2008 Staff Day, Wayne asked the GCPL staff to share their ideas regarding what GCPL does well, what GCPL should do more of, and what GCPL should stop doing. The staff offered many excellent suggestions regarding library services and layout. Two of the service responses selected for the Plan incorporate these suggestions (Stimulate Imagination, Visit a Comfortable Place). GCPL’s senior staff offered recommendations for service responses based on the community survey results, demographic information, and their professional experience.

This information was compiled by the GCPL administrative staff and submitted a draft for comment to the entire GCPL staff and the GCPL Board. The GCPL Board then reviewed the second draft and adopted the final plan in March, 2009.

GCPL Selected Service Responses 2009

I. Create Young Readers

Recent data shows that pre-literacy and literacy behaviors among children from birth to age five are critical for success in school and life. The State of Ohio and Greene County constituent groups asked libraries to strengthen Ohio's future by promoting pre-literacy and literacy in this age group.

GCPL will ensure that children, parents, teachers, and caregivers will have access to a variety of materials, programs, and services that promote early childhood literacy and reinforce the skills necessary for children to be successful readers and learners.

We are committed to providing:

- an excellent selection of current and classic print, audiovisual, electronic materials, and other items that foster literacy skills (games, puzzles, manipulatives, etc.) for children from birth to age five;
- a friendly, approachable staff who are knowledgeable about and trained in early literacy;
- a friendly, approachable staff who can model and teach parents and caregivers the skills needed to support early literacy;
- live interactive programming for children and parents that include literature, music, and other components that promote early literacy; and
- outreach to Greene County's children through visits to care facilities.

Staff members responsible for this goal include (but are not limited to) the Director, Assistant Director, Youth Services Coordinator, Web Services Coordinator, Branch Heads, and Youth Services staff at each GCPL location.

The Staff will report to the Board of Trustees regularly on GCPL's work in this area.

II. Stimulate Imagination & Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning.

Greene County residents enrich their lives by using all aspects of the GCPL collections to fire their imaginations, learn new things, and to just have fun. Of this there is no doubt: the top request from the GCPL 2008 Community survey was to increase GCPL's audio-visual and print collections.

GCPL will provide access to a tremendous collection of books, magazines and media for all of our patrons. We will provide expert help in selecting and locating the materials and information our patrons need and want.

We are committed to providing:

- a responsive collection that meets patrons' demand for fiction and non-fiction resources in a timely manner;
- a knowledgeable staff to build a strong and current collection in all formats for all age groups;
- a friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable staff to assist users in locating materials of interest in all formats (print, audiovisual and electronic) and areas of interest (fiction, nonfiction, reference, film, and music);
- a friendly, approachable staff to present programs such as the Big Read and a summer reading program for all ages;
- a friendly, approachable staff to present programs on a variety of topics of interest to various age groups within the community, including programs that are co-sponsored with community groups;
- multiple paths of access to the collection through: in-house and online displays, programming, and other activities.

Staff members responsible for this goal include (but are not limited to) the Director, Assistant Director, Adult Services Coordinator, Web Services Coordinator, Youth Services Coordinator, Branch Heads, Department Heads, Reference Staff, Youth Services staff, and Technical Services Staff.

The Staff will report to the Board of Trustees regularly on GCPL's work in this area.

III. Visit a Comfortable Place.

The Library is a place to read, think, or meet for people who need a break from the hectic pace of their lives. GCPL will provide safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact, and open and accessible virtual spaces that invite exploration of the Internet.

We are committed to providing:

- approachable, friendly, and knowledgeable customer service to every library patron in a timely manner;
- open and equal access to everyone who uses the library.
- meeting rooms for public use wherever possible;
- a pleasant and inviting environment, including appropriate furnishings, layout, and expectations for behavior within the library;
- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliant Internet filtering;
- an up-to-date, user-friendly web site that offers a variety of online services; and
- reduced barriers to the resources and services available in the library.

Staff responsible for this goal membes include (but are not limited to) the Director, the Assistant Director, the Operations and Maintenance Staff, the Automation Staff, Branch Heads, Department Heads, Circulation Staff, Reference Staff, Web Services Coordinator, and Youth Services Staff.

The Staff will report to the Board of Trustees regularly on GCPL's work in this area.

Next Steps. GCPL thanks the patrons, staff, and community members who took the time to share their views about. There were a wealth of great suggestions that did not end up in the text of this plan, but GCPL will be using those ideas nonetheless.

A strategic plan sets the goals of an organization. It can only come to life one patron, one staff member, one step at a time. GCPL will work to grow in these key areas while maintaining a high level of service in other areas. The GCPL Board and Staff are honored that the community has entrusted us to meet the community's needs for library services, and we look forward to serving you.