

Cattaraugus Free Library

Strategic Plan

2022 – 2027

Adopted November 17, 2021

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Introduction

The Cattaraugus Free Library is a small successful and well run association library, without any overall plan ever having been written for this library. The Board and its new director, Lori Antholzner, sensed that it was time to look deeper to gauge the nature of changing community needs and the way technological advancements are impacting information access. Their goal was to set a clearer course into the future, a world very different from the one that existed when Cattaraugus Free Library was founded in 1925.

The planning process has given us the opportunity to examine our past activities, programs, facility and staff, critique our present service and set goals to work toward the future.

The following is the result of the efforts of the Board of Trustees and its strategic planning committee. Five overall strategic goals with related specific objectives for the Library to focus on during 2022 – 2027.

History of our Library

On October 12, 1925 the need of a library was first mentioned at a meeting of the woman's civic league in Cattaraugus. On October 28, 1925, a committee composed of Mrs. Ida Setter, Mrs. MacIntosh, Miss Lattin and Mrs. Kilburn was appointed the task of creating a library. The committee was given \$75.00 and the duty of finding a suitable place to house the library. Miss Virginia Sterling Hunt, a settlement house worker from Erie, PA. had experience in library administration and offered valuable suggestions to the committee.

Following the October meeting, things began to happen, an intensive drive was set in motion on November 6th by Mrs. Setter chairman of the committee. Telephones began to hum, cars went flying hither and yon, everybody in the community was asked to contribute money or books to the cause. The response was most gratifying and by November 14th the drive closed with \$775.25 towards the start of the library. On November 17th it was voted to house the new Cattaraugus Public Library in the rest room of the then DeBoth Gift Shop. It was decided to have locking bookcases and charge a fee to members wishing to join the library. Mrs. Ashby and Mrs. Botsford of Little Valley gave valuable assistance with the organizing and it was learned that if state aid were to be sought, the library would not be allowed to receive fees from the membership as planned. At this time the name was changed to the Cattaraugus Free Library. By-laws were adopted and five trustees, which were to consist of three (3) women and two (2) men, were elected. The trustees would serve 5 year terms. The first trustees were President Mrs. F.E. Johnson, V. President Herman Lavery, Treasurer Stanley Eberlee, Secretary Mrs. Arthur (Bess) Mowry and Miss Alice Lattin. The library hours were set at Tuesday afternoons from 3 to 6 pm and Saturdays from 3 to 6 pm and 7 to 9 pm.

The first meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on November 22, 1925 and application was made for state aid. This resulted in the first provisional charter being issued by the State Education Department on March 25, 1926, and a state grant of \$100.00 which was to be received annually.

The library was officially opened, on April 18, 1926 with 771 volumes on hand (526 contributed, 245 purchased). The communities to be served by the library were Cattaraugus, New Albion, Otto, East Otto, Gowanda, Wesley and Little Valley.

Having out grown the space, the library moved to its present location in 1963.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cattaraugus Free Library is to enrich the lives of the community members by serving as the primary source of information and materials, in both traditional and innovative methods. The library will continue to offer impartial and inclusive access to materials, equipment, services and programs in order to encourage literacy and lifelong learning.

Vision Statement

The Cattaraugus Free Library will be the recognized source of knowledge and information, a place to gather and discuss, and a steadfast encourager of reading. The library will offer a full spectrum of services, materials and programming to support the changing needs of the community. The library is committed to leading cooperative efforts with the town, school and local organizations and being the gateway to lifelong learning for generations to come.

Our Core Values

1. To be a warm and welcoming place for community members to gather
2. To be actively engaged in the life of the community
3. To employ a collaborative, creative, and positive staff focused on library users' interests and needs
4. To being good stewards of the Cattaraugus Free Library's financial and material resources
5. To ensure ready, equal, and equitable access to library materials
6. To protecting confidentiality of library patron's records
7. To championing everyone's right to intellectual freedom

“Libraries are always in a state of transformation: as the means of information production and consumption change, so do libraries.” unknown

Goal #1

To expand the outreach program in the community

Partner with school, civic, and social service organizations to create and promote events and programs both at the Library and out in the community

Actively reach out to residents

Support efforts to involve community members as volunteers and advocates for the library and to raise funds for library programs, services, and initiatives

Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to better inform people about library services, programs, and other opportunities

Sponsor events appealing to a broad range of interests that provide opportunities

To connect with other residents and be involved in community life

Support local business by drawing people downtown through increased program attendance and library use

Goal #2

To expand programs offered to both children and adults

Provide a comfortable, accessible destination for all community members to gather, read, learn and socialize

Sponsor events appealing to a broad range of interests that provide opportunities to connect with other residents

Provide high quality instruction, programs, and materials that support personal growth and aspirations

Provide hands-on opportunities for children and adults to develop their creativity, build problem solving skills and gain first hand exposure

Offer programs and materials that pique curiosity, encourage exploration and engage all learners

Maintain our emphasis on friendly and well trained staff

Goal #3

To expand the materials available to the public in traditional and changing formats

Maintain a robust physical materials collection of books, magazines, movies and audio books

Increase access to digital formats by taking advantage of library system and state wide consortium opportunities

Offer training and high speed internet access so all can skillfully participate in an increasingly online world

Promote the enjoyment and the skill of reading for all-ages and abilities

Goal #4

Increase community awareness of and support for the library

- Develop a marketing plan using our web page and social media page to better inform people about library services, programs and other opportunities
- Raise awareness of the library as a small business resource center with office equipment, high speed internet and work space
- Involve community members as volunteers and advocates for the Library
- Increase funds for library programs, services, and initiatives by Participating in community events

Goal #5

Expand the current library space

- Evaluate current library space and office space to identify opportunities to provide additional event, meeting, and quiet space within our current building
- Look into permits and costs for expanding to the upstairs for more usable space
- Research grants, actively seek donations and implement fundraisers to cover the costs
- Create a floor plan of what the staff and community would like in the new area
- Guarantee that the area will be architecturally appropriate and accessible to all community members
- Working with proper authorities, create a time line for completing the proposed expansion

Signed; _____ President

Dated: _____

Adopted on 11/17/2021