

Portland Library Annual Report 2008 – 2009

Library Staff

Library Director

Janet Nocek

Assistant Director

Anne Calvert

Administrative Assistant

Gail Pititto (part-time)

Technical Services

Christopher Frank, Dept. Head (full-time)

Lynn Gildersleeve, Assistant II (part-time)

Karen Slocum, Assistant II (full-time)

Circulation Services

Patricia LaMalfa, Manager (full-time)

Information Services

Anne Calvert, Dept. Head (full-time)

Gloria Schultz, Librarian I (part-time)

Library Aide

Michelle Armstrong, Library Assistant I (part-time)

Janet Ellsworth, Library Assistant I (part-time)

Youth Library Services

(Vacant), Children's Librarian (full-time)

Lauren Coleman, Library Associate (part-time)

Maintenance

Paul Ghent

Five Year Strategic Plan

Planning Committee

Amy Collins

Alison Dillon

Gail Landry

Lorre Neville

Vern Oliver

Dave Richardson

Susan Young

Janet Nocek – Library Director

Anne Calvert – Assistant Library Director

Summary of the Portland Library Five-Year Strategic Plan 2009-2013

During the next five years, the Portland Library Board plans to improve and enhance the Portland Public Library in the following ways:

1. Maintain and improve our building/infrastructure
2. Maintain and increase programs for our patrons
3. Maintain and increase our collections

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4. Communicate with, and monitor changes and growth within the Town of Portland citizenry to keep our offerings aligned with their needs
5. Increase and update our technology to support our patrons today and in the future
6. Raise funds when possible to supplement the financial support provided to the Portland Public Library by the Town of Portland.

Portland Library Mission:

The Portland Public Library is a publicly-funded institution dedicated to the common good by serving the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community, and encouraging its patrons in the lifelong pursuit of learning and personal growth. The library will be responsive to the needs of its diverse users, advocating and supporting the use of appropriate technology, building an excellent collection, committing itself to the highest ideals of library service and the principles of intellectual freedom, and providing a welcoming meeting place for the community.

Annual Report of Portland Library

Portland Library followed a national trend in which Libraries have seen increased demand for free quality services. Families and retired persons especially enjoyed the savings on books, music, movies and magazines. Students, business persons and the rest of us found valuable information from sources, whether they were located on book shelves, films, and computers. And all enjoyed a community gathering spot at which meetings both formal and informal helped our community be a place where people work together effectively.

Statistics on use of the library demonstrate the Library's responsiveness to the needs and demands of our community members.

The number of items borrowed from the library during the year ending June 2009: 155, 819 Items were borrowed at an average of 524.5 items per day and an increase of more than 6% compared to the previous year.

Individuals used the Internet 12,023 times at the library and library databases were searched more than 20,000 times during the year.

The number of reference questions answered was 5,710, an increase of approximately 7% compared to 2008.

YOUTH LIBRARY SERVICES

The staff of the Library's Youth Services department was supported by other staff members and community members to provide a welcoming and enriching resource for children and families.

- Maintained and selected for the children's book and media collections for various levels of readers
- The Assistant Director collaborated with the public schools' media specialists to produce reading lists of recommended reading
- Promoted a program for students to read and vote on Connecticut Nutmeg books, with support from Jack Sterry and Dale Benoit.
- Provided regular sessions of preschool and baby story times, family evening programs, special performance events, and book related programs
- Developed a Teen Advisory Board that planned and held meetings and events.

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- Participated in Portland Early Childhood Council
- Summer Reading Program

During 2008, “Catch the Reading Bug” was the Summer Reading Program theme. Events for children and teens at the library included sports-themed events, a beekeeping demonstration and a well-attended and entertaining kick-off with professional entertainment.

Most importantly, youngsters were encouraged to read throughout the summer through a reading incentive program, delivered with the support of the Friends of the Library and the work of many student volunteers. Incentive prizes were earned, culminating in a free book given to each child. The prize program was funded by the Friends of the Portland Library.

Books on loan from Portland High School – purchased with a grant from the Gildersleeve Education Trust - were made available to teens. More than 300 children and 142 teens participated in the program.

The staff also provided outreach through

- School visits to promote programs.
- Second grade classes visited during November to become acquainted with the Library and to ensure that all children received library cards.
- Other youth groups hosted during events at the library include Park & Recreation’s Kiddie Kamp, Kids blast, and Chatham Court’s after school group.

Provided for teen expression and service opportunities

- The Teen Advisory Board was increasingly involved in planning programs for the young teens and those of high school age.
- The borrowing of Teen books and periodicals has increased by more than 32%.

Staff

Lori Lantos joined the Library team as Head of Youth Services, in December. She was popular with parents and children and was a welcome contributor to library service. Ms. Lantos left the library in May for another position. Currently, the position of Head of Youth Services is vacant.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Greening Our Valley

A grant from the Middlesex County Community Foundation to the libraries of the county provided for promotion and support of library services to their communities’ efforts in “Going Green”. Portland was fortunate in having many local partnering organizations who presented information, programs and/or materials to community members, through the Library facility.

Activities related to the award winning initiative were enhanced by participation from Meshomasic Hiking Club, Mattabeseck Audubon Society, Brownstone Quorum, local scout troops, Middlesex Land Trust and the Teen Advisory Board. From the visit of the Wolf Conservation Center to the display related to wildlife and free presentations by an author and wildlife expert to all ages, appreciation and knowledge of our environment was increased.

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The Clean Energy Task force donated Energy usage meters, for patrons to borrow at the library. The Clean Energy incentive program is thereby promoted and our residents find a way to conserve electricity and save dollars. The Task Force also presented Portland's Gary Yohe, a member of the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Climate Change Panel, who spoke to the public on Global Warming, at the Library.

Programs & meetings

Regular monthly book discussions and afternoon film shows were supplemented by a scholar led discussion sponsored in part by the Connecticut Humanities Council. A "One Book" community read took place with events in September and October.

Exhibits by local artists, teachers and students of all ages took place throughout the year; with receptions for the artists sponsored by the Friends of the Portland Library. One of the special events was an exhibit of portraits of Mary Flood, the former librarian for whom the Flood Room is named. Mrs. Flood's portrait was donated to the Library by the artist, the late librarian's granddaughter Katherine Sandals.

The Nifty Knitters, Memoir Writers, Ct. Writing Project, literacy volunteers of America, Mom's Club of Portland, local scout troops, and gardening clubs are some of the groups that use the library for recreational and cultural purposes, thereby enriching our community.

Many civic meetings held at the Library include the Board of Selectmen regular meetings.

The number of meetings took place: 1,057 with an attendance of 15,259, a 6% attendance increase compared to the previous year.

Library sponsored programs took place: 264, with attendance of 5,134.

New passes have been added to the collection of museum passes that is made possible through the Friends of the Portland Library. Free or reduced admission is granted with a pass borrowed from the Library. Passes were borrowed 782 times during the fiscal year. The Library and the Friends of the Portland Library displayed information and raised funds during the Family Day event on the Town Green, held in September in conjunction with the Brownstone Festival.

Innovations

Reading materials are available in audio formats, through borrowing of recorded books on CD, downloadable audio books, and Iconn.org's Read Speaker for informational databases.

The Library is a WiFi hotspot used by many laptop users.

The Web page www.portlandlibraryct.org includes the Calendar of events. This year, electronic signups for programs was added and has proven to be popular with families. Reservations for museum passes may be made from a home or office computer.

Information Services

24/7 reference assistance was available online.

Training on using popular Microsoft programs continued to be offered to patrons.

The staff produced a monthly newsletter and weekly press releases as well as fliers on programs and services, and a frequently updated web page.

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Databases for all ages and interest levels are available through the web site for users at home and at work.

Community and civic information is available at the Library during many hours that other Town departments are not open.

Financial

A freeze on purchasing was a challenge to the library's ability to provide a variety of popular materials to our patrons. Many library users and citizens stepped up to provide gifts of materials and funding for materials. However, since many needed items could not be purchased, the funds for the subsequent year have been decreased to make up for some of these losses.

Plan

The Library Board surveyed the Portland community before formulating a new Five-Year plan. The Plan is now available and includes goals related to youth services, programming for all ages, and maintenance of the 28 year old facility.

The Library is currently challenged to provide for increasing demand while the level of funding from state and local government is uncertain.

Grants to the Library

Reimbursement for Connecticard: **\$6,381.00**

The Connecticard grant provides for reimbursement to libraries for their participation in the reciprocal borrowing program that allows all Connecticut residents to borrow from any public library in the state. Thanks are due to our legislators, especially Jim O'Rourke, for their support of the Connecticard program, and Connecticard, that provides for delivery of items among state libraries.

An additional grant of **\$1,780** was received as the State of Connecticut Annual Grant to Libraries.

Other support was provided by:

Connecticut Humanities Council
Connecticut Library Consortium

Matching grants for volunteer work and donations by community members from:

The Travelers
Liberty Bank
Phoenix
Aetna
United Technologies Corporation

Other donations and grants:

Friends of the Portland Library
Middlesex County Community Foundation
Portland Board of Education's After School Program Grant.
Donations to the Memorial Fund
Donations to the Endowment Fund

Upcoming grants and opportunities for savings include:

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- Plan to obtain Comcast Cable free internet service, to supplement or provide for service currently supplied by the Connecticut Education Network.
- Continued use of discounts through the Connecticut Library Consortium for books, databases, training, equipment and supplies. A savings of more than \$24,000 on books was realized in the fiscal year, ending June 2009.
- Continued savings through utilizing electronic mail instead of paper mail
- Continue to supplement our collection of Large Print materials by borrowing from the Middletown Library Service Center, funded by the State of Connecticut.
- Use the State Library's free and low cost training opportunities to find ways to deliver improved services.
- Continue to produce in house: flyers, newsletters and brochures
- CRRA funds for improvements to the outdated energy control system that will save thousands of dollars for fuel and lower electricity use.